CommGAP
Towards A New Agora

Communication for Governance
and Accountability Program (CommGAP)

The Missing Link
Fostering Positive Citizen-State Relations in Post-Conflict Environments

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About CommGAP

The Agora was the heart of the ancient Greek city—its main political, civic, religious and commercial center. Today, the Agora is the space where free and equal citizens discuss, debate, and share information about public affairs in order to influence the policies that affect the quality of their lives. The democratic public sphere that the ancient Agora represents is an essential element of good governance and accountability.

The Communication for Governance & Accountability Program (CommGAP) seeks to promote good and accountable governance through the use of innovative communication approaches and techniques that strengthen the constitutive elements of the public sphere: engaged citizenries, vibrant civil societies, plural and independent media systems, and open government institutions. Communication links these elements, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped about key issues of public concern. CommGAP posits that sound analysis and understanding of the structural and process aspects of communication and their interrelationships make critical contributions to governance reform. CommGAP is funded through a multi-donor trust fund. The founding donor of this trust fund is the UK's Department for Internationals Development (DFID).

Acknowledgements

Foreword

In 1992, then UN Secretary-General Boutrus Boutrus Ghali introduced the term "post-conflict peace-building" for the first time. It was a completely new concept. Initially, the need to help countries emerge from years of conflict was seen as linked to the end of the Cold War. By the end of the 1990s, however, it became clear this issue would not disappear. Today, in the first decade of the 21st century, the international community still struggles to find the right approach to assist countries challenged by the aftermath of conflict. In this search, and in recognition of the importance of strong and sustainable institutions, policy-makers focus now on a post-conflict "state-building" agenda.

Assessments of successes and failures teach important lessons and the overall understanding of post-conflict challenges, dilemmas and dynamics has greatly improved. Yet the high number of post-conflict countries sliding back into violence gives reason for concern: we are still not getting it right. If we fail to recognize the principle that people, as individual and groups, determine the success of the peace process and the future of the state, then we miss the valuable lesson to learn. Only when the citizens feel connected to their budding state institutions and perceive them as responsive to their needs will public trust develop and public support make the post-conflict state viable. Public opinion is the ultimate basis of power and legitimacy—a basic governance principle almost ignored in current post-conflict practice. This is where the gap lies.

This study by Henriette von Kaltenborn-Stachau introduces the principles, mechanisms and processes that connect citizens with each other and with state institutions. The Missing Link relates the value of public sphere processes to the challenges of post-conflict environments.

Demonstrating the shortcomings of current assistance approaches with evidence from the field, it makes a strong and convincing case for much needed change in current donor policy and practice.

This publication is one of a series that will examine governance and communication issues in a post-conflict context. Ultimately, this series will seek to analyze the ways in which dialogue and communication contribute to the crucial post-conflict tasks of managing expectations, building both trust in and oversight of state institutions, aiding the formation of an inclusive national identity, and fostering citizen engagement. I hope that in doing so, the series will contribute to the debate about the role of governance and communication in these environments and, in turn, to better policy and practice.

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Contents

Executive Summary

Post-conflict situations pose particular governance and reconstruction challenges—severed citizen-state relations, lack of public trust, high peace dividend expectations, a fragmented and traumatized society—that strongly impact post-conflict development and constitute a potential threat to stability.

What are the mechanisms and tools that can help to manage expectations, alter perceptions, build public trust in state institutions, repair citizen-state relations and generally reweave the fabric of society? How does one close the societal space that undermines the success of a transition process?

Relating these repercussions of conflict to the state-building and governance debate, this study argues that finding ways to effectively address citizen-state relations and public trust is central for successful reconstruction efforts. Donors cannot afford to simply overlook these issues. To effectively address the "invisible" consequences of conflict, civil society, media and the state need to connect and engage constructively. The analytical framework best capturing these connective processes is that of the public sphere, a platform for national dialogue.

Current "stove-piped" assistance policy and practice does not take these connective processes into consideration. The narrow, sector-specific approach that treats support to media, civil society and the state operationally and conceptually as separate program areas leaves no space for a "big picture view" and coordination. This oversight is responsible for incomplete governance assessments, loss of synergies, reduced impact and, most importantly, missed opportunities.

The aim of this study is to convince national and multilateral policy makers of the importance of the public sphere concept for democratic governance and strategic post-conflict assistance planning with the objective of positive and sustainable change in current post-conflict assistance policy and practice.

The study introduces the conceptual thinking underlying the public sphere framework and, citing evidence from different countries, highlights its relevance and calls for its application in post-conflict environments. For practitioners the study provides a public sphere assessment toolkit and a toolbox for interventions. It also offers concrete examples and recommendations on how to address the specific governance challenges identified through a public sphere analysis in three countries: Timor-Leste, Liberia and Burundi.

Introduction

The idea for this study developed in spring 2006 when renewed violence spread through Timor-Leste, displacing people from their homes and dashing hopes for a better future. The developments in Timor-Leste, a supposed showcase for international assistance, begged the question of what went wrong in the building of this new state. Were these issues unique to the small island-nation or were they reflective of more generic problems commonly overlooked in the international assistance frameworks to stabilize and transform countries after conflict?

The nature of post-conflict environments poses unique governance challenges. As a consequence of state abuse and exclusion, people have little or no trust in the fair functioning of state institutions and rely on personal networks: tribe, clan, family, religious groups. The fabric of society is torn by displacement and fighting, with non-state actors playing an important role in the absence of a functioning state. The mind-sets of individuals and groups are framed by the conflict experience and shape the way they think, act, speak and view themselves and others. People left poor by prolonged violence and displacement are hungry for a quick peace dividend at its end.

These challenges are far less visible than the obvious destruction of public infrastructure and private assets, and yet they are as real in their consequences on daily life. Ignoring them when designing and implementing assistance strategies will render such plans incomplete and somewhat ineffective.

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To address the "invisible" societal and perceptual consequences of conflict, the state, media and civil society need to collaborate and constructively engage in a national dialogue platform.

Missed opportunities in current post-conflict practice

Current donor policy places great emphasis on the importance of state building in post-conflict assistance; restoring public sector capacity and service delivery are considered central to post-conflict recovery and long-term stability. Many donors also recognize the relevance a vibrant civil society and a professional media sector have for the successful transformation of a post-conflict society. Operationally and conceptually these areas are treated as separate sectors and this stove-piping leaves no space for a "big picture view" and coordination across program areas.

Current post-conflict assistance policy and practice, this study argues, fail to pay sufficient attention to challenges emanating from high public expectations, lack of public trust, societal fragmentation and exclusion. Stove-piped practices do not support the synergistic processes that serve as connective tissue, linking state institutions, civil society and media together. This oversight is responsible for incomplete governance assessments, loss of synergies,

reduced impact and, most importantly, missed opportunities.

The study provides evidence that the analytical framework for best capturing these connective processes is the public sphere, the platform for national dialogue. The public sphere concept is rooted within the democratic framework and its process of dialogue, which establish the conditions for accountable and participatory governance structures. Enabling the national public sphere thus carries political connotations. The belief in the dynamic processes that shape public opinion and exert public pressure on policy makers is based on an understanding of a liberal democracy and its socio-political structure.

Relevance of the public sphere to post-conflict environments

The objectives of this study are to convince national and multilateral policy makers of the relevance and applicability of the public sphere concept for post-conflict environments and to contribute to a change in current post-conflict assistance policy and practice.

In the first of two parts, the study reviews the current state-building debate and introduces the public sphere framework. It argues that the national dialogue processes of the public sphere are at the heart of accountable and participatory governance structures and are particularly important for post-conflict en-vironments where public expectations, lack of public trust and an exclusive past can be addressed. Evidence from the case studies is used to support the arguments. The study highlights the dilemmas and challenges inher-ent in the concept and ends with a call for necessary policy changes. The second part provides the reader with a public sphere anal-ysis of case studies from Timor-Leste, Liberia

Media can play an important role in reconnecting state and citizens after conflict.

and Burundi and recommendations on how to address the specific challenges observed.

In the belief that enabling a national public sphere is tied closely to the long-term development of state institutions, this study focuses largely on the development phase of the post-conflict period. This does not minimize the importance of informa-tion in the immediate aftermath of conflict, the humanitarian phase, when the situation is in flux and uncertainty high. International and UN media can assume an important function by disseminat-ing credible and trustworthy information during this period. It is only later, however, when national structures emerge that interventions in support of re-enabling the national public sphere can be fully applied to make state-building efforts succeed. Naturally, planning for strategic public sphere

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interventions should start early even during the conflict when preliminary assessments take place.

Vital role of the public sphere in development

Building the national public sphere is good for development in all cases, not only in war-to-peace transitions. Although the focus of this study is on post-conflict environments, dysfunctional public spheres are an element of most fragile states. Weak institutions and governance systems characterize fragile states and constrain their ability to deliver essential services and security to their population. The deterioration of these governance structures causes the transformation of the public sphere into fragmented elements monopolized by the ruling political class. Freed from accountability and public opinion pressure, public policy decisions in fragile states are often guided by narrow political and economic interests and fall short of effectively addressing social and economic challenges. The fragmented and damaged public sphere mechanisms of fragile states contribute to their poor economic and development record. Addressing public sphere dynamics in fragile states is an important step towards improving governance and moving towards sustainable development.

The focus of this study is pragmatic: post-conflict governments are more willing to engage in the pursuit of international assistance to meet urgent needs. Unlike many fragile states where political conditions make public sphere restructuring challenging, the end of conflict and the changed political landscape open a window of opportunity to "re-build better" and to address the grievances of the past through structural changes. Often the opportunity is missed; a sizeable number of post-conflict countries return to violence within a decade. This study offers a framework that can

contribute to finding a way out of the conflict trap.

PART I FOSTERING POSITIVE CITIZEN-STATE RELATIONS IN SUPPORT OF STATE BUILDING

1. Post-Conflict State Building: The Policy Debate

Though views might differ on the necessity or desirability of state penetration of society, capacity building in this sector is a commonly agreed post-conflict priority. Assisting the state to build and stabilize political institutions and moving the country toward the rule of law help the society to move in the direction of a normal development context.[2] To strategize interventions, mobilize resources and coordinate support, donors have been working with various needs assessments tools to conceptualize, negotiate and finance a shared strategy for recovery and development in post-conflict environments.

In recent years the international assistance community has tried to establish common priorities and sequencing of state-building interventions. The UN/World Bank joint Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs)[3] process draws attention to a number of functions:[4] political reform to

Communication structures and processes are the connective tissue that link state-institutions with citizens and facilitate the development of accountability and trust; they lie at the very heart of a functioning society and democratic governance.

In all three post-conflict countries analyzed, the key governance challenges can be traced directly to the lack of attention paid to communication: dysfunctional public-state relations, poor management of expectations and lack of public trust.

return the country to democratic rule, transitional justice, security sector reform, establishment of a legitimate market economy, reconstruction of basic infrastructure and services, promotion of a national reconciliation process and dialogue, reintegration of IDPs (internally displaced persons) and refugees, and re-establishment of civil service at national and local levels. Ashraf Ghani, a former Afghan Minister, formulated an additional set of ten core state functions: legitimate monopoly on violence, administrative control, delineation of citizenship rights and duties; public finance management, infrastructure services, formation of market; international relations; management of state assets, human capital investment and rule of law.[5]

These and similar lists provide useful references for post-conflict planning. They mention national dialogue and citizens' rights respectively, however, they fail to give sufficient consideration to their core dynamics and requirements. Communication structures and processes are the connective tissue that link state-institutions with citizens and facilitate the development of accountability and trust; they lie at the very heart of a functioning society and democratic governance. In all three post-conflict countries analyzed, the key governance challenges can be traced directly to the lack of

attention paid to communication: dysfunctional public-state relations, poor management of expectations and lack of public trust. Dealing effectively with these matters is essential.

1.1 The relevance of public trust and citizen-state relations

Low economic standards created by poor governance often precede the onset of violence, destruction, displacement and loss of lives and livelihoods caused by conflict, and the pre-existing conditions contribute to the high poverty rates found in post-conflict countries. The forging of a peace deal unavoidably stimulates public expectations of a tangible socio-economic peace dividend. These hopes and expectations are bound to be disappointed as the complexities of providing accountable public services and building state institutions—combined with the realities of slow aid delivery impaired by infrastructure challenges—deliver change on the ground only slowly. Citizens not informed enough to understand the reasons underlying the delays are likely to attribute the lack of visible improvements to a lack of political will; the consequent loss of their trust in the fledging post-conflict state institutions can significantly impact political stability and governance and can be easily exploited by peace-spoilers with a vested interest in renewed unrest.

Efforts to build public trust must be a priority to promote and sustain the support central to state building. Public trust ensures the stability necessary to implement the reconstruction agenda, to attract international and national financial aid and to steer the country successfully through the lengthy and challenging rebuilding period. In the end, it is the citizens' cumulative decision to trust the state's intent and capacity to exercise its core functions fairly and reliably that will determine the stability of the post-conflict period.

Public trust develops out of constructive citizen-state relations; its basis is in responsive public institutions connected with citizens through inclusive participatory processes. Introducing participatory mechanisms gives a voice to the disenfranchised, allows the public to influence and shape policy decisions, and holds the state accountable to the public will. In the long run, participation is fundamental to developing public trust and to building sustainable democratic governance structures.

2. A Platform for National Dialogue: The Public Sphere

Participatory processes, accountable and transparent institutions, and constructive citizen-state relations require a national dialogue platform that only a functioning public sphere provides; it is here where citizens and state meet through the exchange of information and expression of opinions and where citizen-state relations and processes are shaped.[6] The public sphere shown in Figure 1 is a conceptual visualization to grasp dialogue processes in a society. State
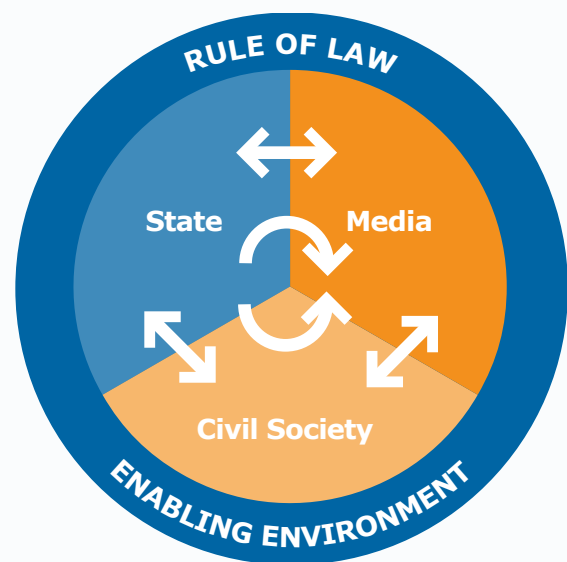
Figure 1. The public sphere is a conceptual visualization of communication processes in a society—its structure and shape will depend largely on the political system and conditions in place

institutions, civil society and media are the main elements contributing to its dynamics. These national dialogue processes are systemic; reducing them to single parts, focusing solely on media, state, or civil society, falls short of a full understanding of the dynamics shaping citizen-state relations.

From a democratic perspective the ideal public sphere encompasses a legitimate state capable of informing and responding to public deliberations and an environment that enables the operations and processes of all relevant actors. Ideally the state structure—all branches and institutions—is transparent and informs the public of its undertakings, political debates, administrative decisions and legislative acts. The media, a self-regulated and professional system, receives information and after interpretation, presents it to the public. The public shares and discusses the information and forms an opinion—a public opinion—about state performance.[7] This public opinion, articulated by civil society groups and channeled through the media, reaches the state

With its influence on public opinion formation, robust public sphere dynamics are essential for a participatory political system with a responsive state and an engaged citizenry.

apparatus and influences the acts and decisions of public decision-makers. The civil society is inclusive and empowers citizens to participate in and respond to public discourse. For the democratic government, public opinion defines the parameter of what the public accepts as legitimate decisions and actions on a given subject, and it sets the agenda for political institutions.

With its influence on public opinion formation, robust public sphere dynamics are essential for a participatory political system with a responsive
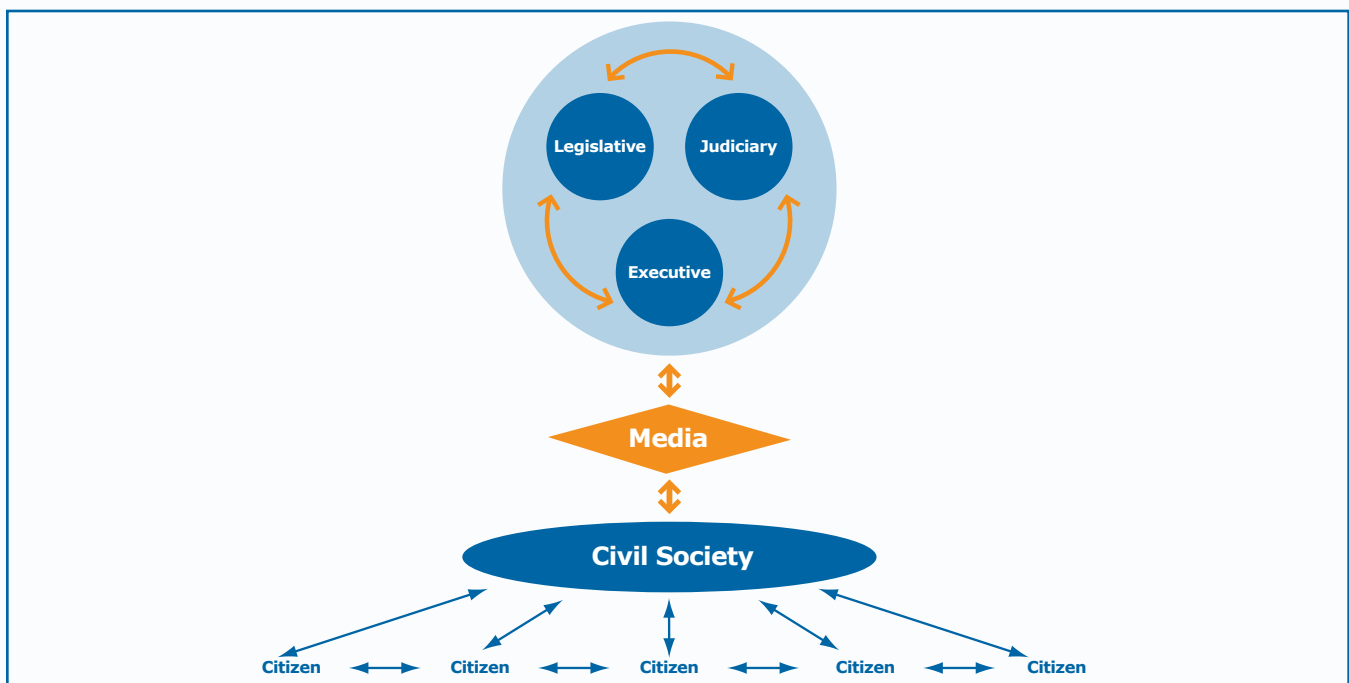
Figure 2. Dialogue and information flow in public sphere processes

No country is an island

Modern communication technology contributes greatly to the world's growing interconnectivity. TV and Internet make developments happening in one community rapidly known to others. Civic journalism with blogs and cell-phone images has greatly enhanced the "CNN" factor of politics. The public sphere of one country is linked with others, both shaping and being shaped by technical interconnectivity.

For post-conflict countries this has particular relevance, with direct financial and security implications at times. The public opinion of donor countries will be influenced by the images and information citizens receive. Politicians might be forced to react to growing public pressure and change bilateral aid and/or support to UN operations. Similar pressure coming from stakeholders and public opinion can influence international direct investment decisions.

(Re-) enabling the public sphere of a post-conflict country does not only support national peace-building processes; it also has relevance for the country's international affairs.

listening capacity of these actors. It hinges further on the capacity and professionalism of the media to select, process and shape available information before it reaches citizens. Contributors and the media are also affected by the enabling environment: the legislative and regulatory framework of the country, rule of law, and security and infrastructure conditions.

The quality of the public sphere depends on the level of engagement and interaction among the different actors—systemic excellence matters. A positive relationship between state and media, between state and civil society, and between civil society and media allows for constructive dynamics. If hostility shapes attitudes and interactions, it reduces the quality and quantity of information available to citizens, thus negatively impacting deliberations while limiting public participation.

Shape, quality and condition of a public sphere vary among countries and regimes types. Regardless of whether they are democratic, authoritarian or neo-patrimonial, all states have a public sphere; the nature and dynamics of deliberations and information flow vary widely, depending on the political system and its governance structure.

3. Public Institutions and the Public Sphere in a Post-Conflict World

Post-conflict countries have been receiving wide attention. The end of conflict is generally perceived to provide opportunities for the international community to (re-)engage with national actors to address urgent security, humanitarian and development needs and to influence the societal, economic and political processes to prevent the country from slipping back into violence. The narrow window of time makes strategic, effective and coordinated international assistance critical.

state and an engaged citizenry. Reality may not match the "ideal world," but it remains the goal.

2.1 The quality of the public sphere

The quality of the public sphere is influenced by the quality and quantity of the input— the information released by different state institutions and by civil society, as well as the

A peace accord heralds hopes for the beginning of a new era; yet, post-conflict governments unavoidably inherit the legacy of the past. Countries emerging from civil wars are often marked by a history of societal fragmentation, exclusion and civic disempowerment that lie at the very root of the conflict. Citizen-state relations deteriorate when public institutions become increasingly unaccountable and politically manipulated. The situation worsens further when the state turns against citizens, human rights violations become wide-spread, rule of law breaks down, violence ensues and the state looses territorial control and the ability to its protect its citizens from violence. The loss of public trust in the ability of the state to fulfill its key functions can result in alliances with non-state actors, capital flight of private assets abroad, refugee streams, as well as brain drain through the exodus of the educated elite.

Engaging citizens in the public sphere

Conflicts leave individuals without information, without power and without the chance to shape events, causing the complete breakdown of civil-state relations. During violent conflict, legitimate and non-legitimate military structures gain strong influence on societal dynamics, including the way people communicate. In warfare, information is power and the leak of confidential information has high-risk potential. A culture of secrecy and purposefully placed misinformation furthers uncertainty of those outside the closed circle of the well-informed. The danger of implication in hostile acts or groups makes searching for information a potentially dangerous act. Being ignorant and de-politicized becomes a valuable option as group affiliations, beliefs and visibility become sources of risk. To overcome this legacy and to build sustainable and participatory structures,
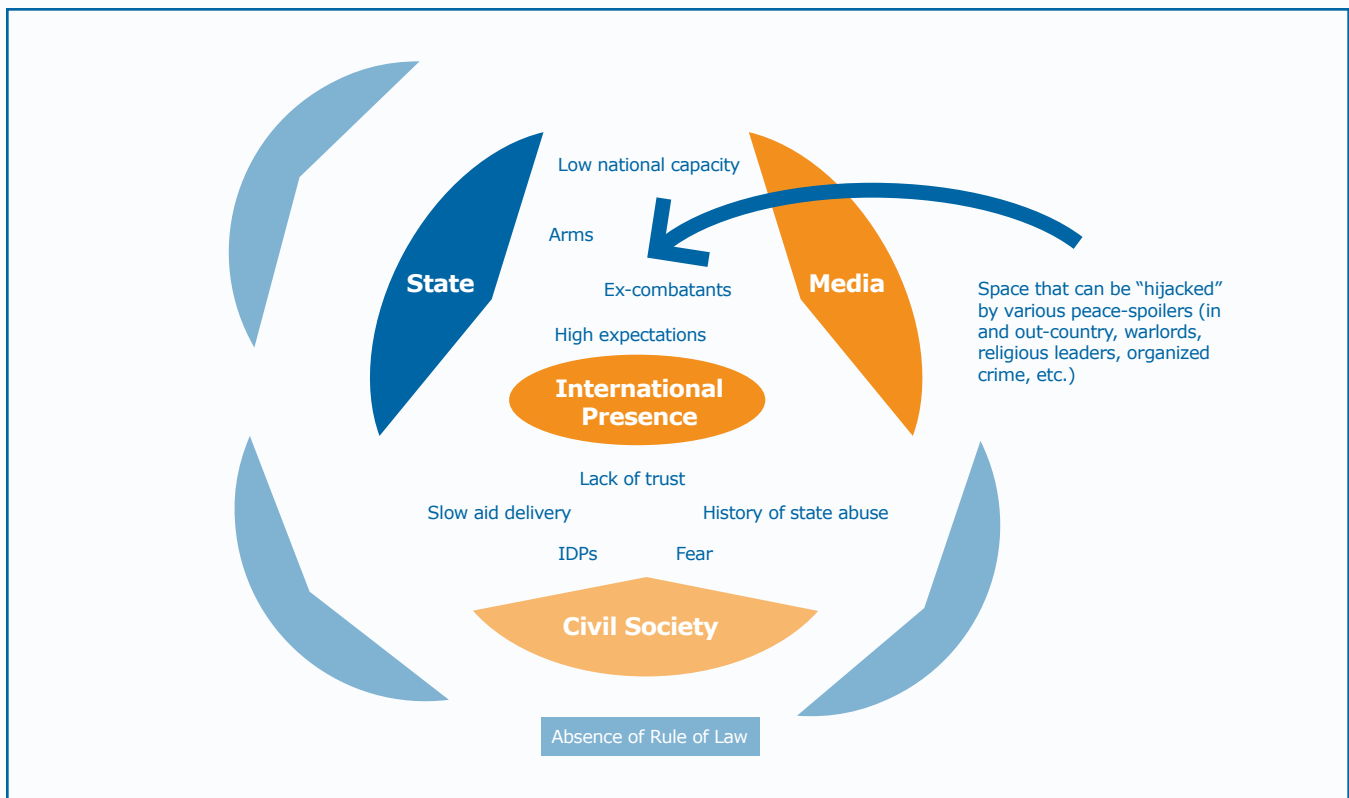
Figure 3. Shape and challenges of a post-conflict public sphere

engagement of citizens in public debate and decision making is central.

As a first victim of conflict, the national public sphere is fragmented or dismantled through repressive policies in the period leading up to open violence. As conditions deteriorate, public deliberations cease, silence shrouds journalists and civil society activists, and the public sphere structure transforms to serve the interests of the monopolizing political class. Faced with a loss of trust in state institutions, the national community disintegrates into sub-groups related to each individual's immediate personal system. It is to these immediate affiliations—religion, clan, political or tribal association—that a person turns for protection and information. With the loss of a national public sphere, the communication flow is reduced to the "in-group," and objective verification through multiple sources becomes impossible. Such a situation is easily encouraged and exploited by ethnic or political entrepreneurs seeking personal profit from national breakdown; people cut-off from objective information become easy subjects for manipulation and abuse.

The prevalence of fear and influence of rumors are two of the elements that set post-conflict situations apart from "normal" development situations. Post-conflict circumstances are also characterized by a change in the political landscape and a dearth of reliable information combined with a need for individual and collective decisions. Individuals and families must make momentous decisions: whether to stay in an IDP or refugee camp or return, whether to turn weapons in or to hide them, whether to

The many actors of post-conflict theatres

Post-conflict environments have a multitude of different political players and not all powerful interests will feel bound by a peace accord. Conflict generates possibilities and not everybody has an interest in relinquishing influence.

Limiting our understanding of the public sphere dynamics to the interaction among civil society, state and media does not give justice to the considerable range of actors beyond this group. Armed groups, militias, organized crime, ethnic leaders, warlords, etc., can yield strong influence and considerable power, which inevitably contribute to the dynamics of the public realm.

Building capacity within state institutions, civil society and media to engage effectively and constructively in the public sphere is the most effective way of dealing with voices interested in disrupting the peace process. Once citizens perceive the state as a credible and trusted source of information, the capacities of anti-government non-state actors to influence public opinion is limited. Once a participatory citizen-government dialogue is established, empowered citizens will be less likely to lend their support to destabilizing agendas—most ordinary people stand to gain more from peace than from conflict

Naturally, information and dialogue alone are not sufficient; visible reconstruction progress is essential for public support. If the government cannot live up to its promises, the voices of peace-spoilers are heard loudly.

welcome returning refugees and combatants or not, whether to join the formal economy or stay in the informal sector, and whether or not to believe those who argue for a return to violence. Additionally farmers need to decide if it is safe and worthwhile to work their land, or if migrating to the city is the better choice. Those who moved their capital out of the country need to have trust in its political stability and banking system to return their assets.

Hungry for information and facing an environment of high uncertainty, people are more likely to believe rumors. Whether rumors just emerge or are planted willfully, their informal nature render them hard to control and even harder to contradict. Because of these dynamics, rumors can be very destabilizing, particularly when feeding people's fears.

Conflict leaves people traumatized and depressed, resulting in widespread feelings of powerlessness and apathy with a generic sense of doom and fear. "Fear is a bad adviser" in any political environment and particularly so in unstable post-conflict environments. Reassuring a traumatized population and addressing the pervasive sense of fear is important when seeking to engage citizens under stress. Those issuing assurances for personal and political gain can exploit people easily. Restoring trust, community spirit and sense of power over one's destiny are important measures in fighting trauma-induced depression and in restoring the ability to engage with others and to live up to one's productive potential.

Reshaping the public sphere dynamics
(Re-)enabling the national public sphere and improving its complex dynamics through strategic and coordinated interventions is central to repairing citizen-state relations, rebuilding public trust and managing expectations; it is the key to sustainable state-building efforts.

In Liberia years of public mismanagement, endemic corruption and state abuse led to a long period of violent conflict and generated a high level of public cynicism. The post-conflict government now has to overcome cynicism to gain public support for its administrative reform and state-building processes. Achieving this objective inter alia depends on the state's willingness and capacity to constructively engage in the public sphere, to be transparent about activities and challenges encountered, and to be inclusive and responsive to public views and opinions. Timor-Leste and the violent unrest of 2006 provide us with an unfortunate example of a country paying a heavy price for the government's failure to engage constructively with its citizens in the post-conflict period.

Undermining budding public trust and loosing public support are the most dangerous peace-spoilers of all.

Civil service reform

Civil service reform needs to be comprehensive and go beyond adjustment of salary scales. The recruitment and training of new and old civil servants and the introduction of a new code of conduct provides the opportunity to create a public system with higher responsiveness, accountability and transparency. A civil service can be designed to acknowledge the accountability of government to the people and the fundamental right of citizens to be informed and to demand this accountability. Comprehensive civil service reforms take time and need sustained political commitment. Capacity building of and through civil servant academies is an important part of the process.

3.1 Transparency and participation

The creation of transparent and accountable institutions is recognized as central to successful post-conflict recovery. To achieve this goal, the state ought to provide accurate and meaningful information about legislative decisions, political programs, rulings, verdicts, administrative guidelines, decrees and policies that impact and set public policy. To be participatory and allow public opinion to influence policy formation, state institutions should listen to the public voice, provide entry points for public participation, (re-)enable a national dialogue through state regulatory and legislative acts that allow for civil society and media participation.

As Liberia, Burundi and Timor-Leste demonstrate, information flow is insufficient in post-conflict state institutions. Each of these nations needs to establish transparent and participatory processes into their governance systems and back them with political will.

A Public Information Act, as currently proposed in Liberia, is an important step in establishing a citizen's right to access public information and a state's duty to make information accessible. Such legislation, however, remains without much value if the state does not develop the will and capacity to deliver it. Political will, based on a foundation of transparency and participation in governance, is necessary to enable the public sphere; prolonged conflict often undermines this understanding.

A culture of secrecy and hierarchical decision making characterizes military operations, particularly those in opposition to the government it continues to frame the behavior of former resistance or rebel-group members after they assume official functions. This effect is seen in the management and communication style of Timor's political leaders, reflecting long years of clandestine existence and secretive behavior. Their culture of closed, exclusive decision

Political will, based on a foundation of understanding of the relevance of transparency and participation for governance, is necessary to enable the public sphere; prolonged conflict often undermines this understanding.

making and opaqueness severely limits the state's contribution to the public sphere and leaves the population without informed opinions and participatory structures. Without systematic ways to influence public policy and constructive means to express discontent, violent flare-ups like seen in spring 2006 become a safety valve for Timor's civic frustration.

Fostering political will to support the public sphere

Understanding the need for information sharing and the value of participatory processes for stability and democratic governance requires a change of mind-set in post-conflict governments. When the political will for open channels of information and participation is built, the important first step towards transparency and institutional public engagement is taken.

Once legislation is in place and supported by political will and understanding, the technical issues in delivering public information assume an important role. To be re-established as a credible information source, state institutions must demonstrate consistency in their public engagements, coordinating government information becomes a key element in this process. With the right capacity and safeguards in place to prevent them from becoming an instrument of control, Ministries of Information can play

this role. In the right political environment, a Ministry of Information can be a champion for information flow and an instrument for state transparency, helping to define an enabling regulatory environment for the public sphere and its actors. In today's Liberia, the Information Ministry has the potential to assume an important role in the public sphere, if it is provided with the right technical and human resources to develop and implement a strategic public sphere vision for the country.

Listening: Media monitoring and public polling

The functioning public sphere relies on the state's capacity not only to provide information but also to receive and respond to emerging public opinion. While having the capacity to monitor and respond to the "public pulse" is important for all state institutions, it becomes particularly relevant for the executive branch as the pre-dominant "public face" of the state. Media monitoring and regular public polling are tools that provide governments with the capacity to perceive public opinion at an early stage and to develop adequate reactions to influence public opinion formation and to build public support in return. The value of the public sphere lies in shaping citizen-state relations by creating a myriad of opportunity for engagement and responsiveness. These essential listening capacities do not exist in any of the three countries studied—a reflection of a general deficit in post-conflict environments.

Post-conflict governments often base their election success on a platform that promises change toward better governance and accountable public service delivery. Even if supplemented by real political will, the change agenda is likely to run into resistance by those in the administration who have been profiting from or are dependent on a neo-patrimonial governance system at the national or local level. As the government's survival—and often the survival of the fragile peace—depends on visible service results, public sphere deliberations can expose the blockages and create public demand for these services.

Security sector reform

Security services, both military and police alike, are often state agents of repression and human right violations during conflict. Security sector reform, therefore, is an important component of post-conflict interventions. Central to rebuilding public trust is developing communicative and procedural structures that establish transparency in these reforms and that provide for accountability of the security sector. Building a national consensus on what national security needs are and how they can be met, establishing a national security policy and security-related legislation, and ensuring clarity on political control and on parliamentary and judicial oversight measures are important aspects of a transparent security sector reform process.

Wider legal sector reform is important if countries are to achieve a functioning system of law and order. The public needs to understand and to inform the judicial reform processes. In the long run, only belief in the accountability and fairness of judicial processes establishes trust in a nation's peaceful conflict resolution capacity and prevents a return to violence.

Leadership matters

In the absence of strong institutions, strong leaders can assume great importance in the public domain of post-conflict countries. Publicly endorsed leaders like Nelson Mandela, Xanana Gusmao and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf have been trusted to deliver on an agenda of change. Almost equally important, the international community also trusted them and was forthcoming with pledges of support. With governance structures to be defined and the fabric of society to be rewoven, national leadership can play a decisive role in securing public buy-in and moving the peace and reconstruction process forward. The importance of national leadership goes beyond key public office figures and includes different levels of decision making and different parts of society.

In the absence of an institutional framework, strong civil society leaders can emerge whose personality and communication style set the stage for civil society-state relations. These individuals often come from the educated urban elite. While these individuals are important in the initial stages, it is essential to build inclusive civil society structures that are accountable to a large constituency to ensure continuity and stability. Personality-driven institutions most often lack downward accountability and are subject to rapid decline should the leader leave the country or the institution.

The challenge is to use the space and support generated by strong leadership to create the institutions necessary to deliver results. Succession inevitably becomes an issue at some point and, if not addressed early on, can challenge the very process the various leaders supported.

Establishing an administrative language

Administrative use of language is a crucial element that shapes public debate, influences inclusive participation and affects citizen-state relations. The choice for political reasons of a language that is spoken only by a minority can limit participation and generate societal friction and exclusion. The high political and societal long-term costs associated with this choice should be carefully considered during the decision-making process.

3.2 Legislature

Within state institutions, the legislature plays an important function in setting the legal framework for social relations in the country. Transparency and information flow in the institutional context is not only a fundamental requirement to enable citizens' participation in the shaping of public policy, but also relates directly to the accountability of the elected representatives. Liberia's National Assembly does not provide public information on voting or attendance records nor do they offer information on legislation sponsorship, making it impossible for constituencies to hold their elected representative accountable for legislative performance. With legislative elections only held every six years, representatives have neither the incentive to keep their constituencies abreast of developments nor the desire to seek their views on a regular basis. For constituents, there are no channels to express their demands in this regard and, as

a consequence, rural areas in Liberia continue to be without voice in legislative processes and disconnected from national economic and social developments.

Strengthening constituent relations and providing the public with information about pending draft legislation, committee work and voting records informs public deliberations, enables constituency access and gives public opinion opportunity to influence legislative processes. To allow public opinion to influence formal deliberations, the legislative body should provide entry points for public participation through specified proceedings, such as public hearings and obligatory civil participation in committee meetings.

Post-conflict countries can face a situation where elected representatives are not familiar with legislative processes, are not well informed about substantive issues and, in extreme cases, are illiterate and not able to benefit from printed material. Their ability to develop an adequate legislative framework that reflects the needs of the country and sets the stage for future developments might be severely limited. Input from international and national experts, adequate support staff, and resource materials for relevant and timely information might help mitigate the situation and improve decision making.

3.3 Information flow within and among state-institutions

The quality of the public policy debates and decisions in the different branches of government depend on the quality and quantity of the information flow within and among these state institutions.

Information flow in the Legislative

Elected representatives · Committees · Civil Society Groups · Experts · Civil Servants · Media · Constiuency
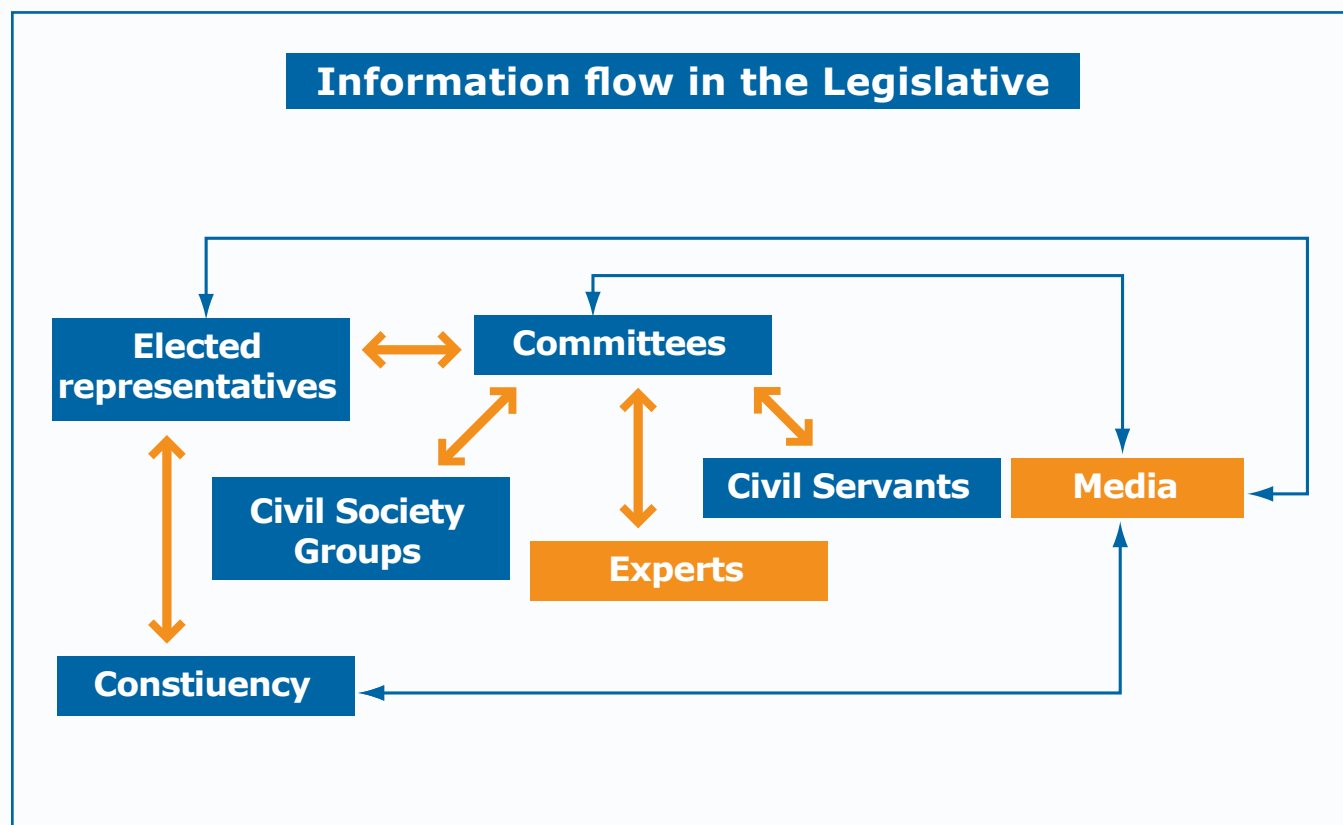
Figure 4. Ideal information flow in the legislative process

While seemingly mundane, an inefficient internal information flow caused by dysfunctional mailing and filing systems has wide-ranging impact on the administrative capacity of state institutions and causes deliberations and decisions to suffer as a consequence. Information loss caused by deficits in information-sharing mechanisms among ministries has the same result. While these deficiencies matter, far more serious in consequence for inclusive participation and governance is the lack of information flow between the administrative center in the capital and the district and county administrations. Traditionally the rural poor are the most excluded and voiceless citizens; their inclusion and empowerment are part of post-conflict state-building challenges. Ensuring that local administrative centers are informed about national developments, and can thus educate the local population, is as important as their ability to inform the center about needs and developments in the periphery, thus contributing to the shape of national policy deliberations and decisions. The decentralization process in Timor-Leste is attempting to achieve this goal, as are preliminary decentralization considerations in Liberia. In both countries, current realities are far from ideal and rural areas remain disconnected from national developments; which in the case of Timor-Leste contributed significantly to the political unrest in 2006.

Traditionally the rural poor are the most excluded and voiceless citizens; their inclusion and empowerment are part of post-conflict state-building challenges.

4. Civil Society: Often Voiceless after Conflict

In civil society, e.g., general interest groups, religious communities, advocates, intellectuals and social movements, people engage in informal every-day, face-to-face talk. It is in the outcome of these informal deliberations that civil society representatives contribute to the national dialogue platform to shape public thinking and to influence policy makers; this is how citizens' views enter the public realm.

Enhancing the constructive role of civil society

Conflicts not only decimate the capacity of state institutions, but they also affect the capacity of civil society to operate effectively. In order to be meaningful contributors to the public sphere, civil society representatives require the capacity to formulate and present the views of their members in a substantively and argumentatively consistent and convincing manner. To be effective, civil society needs to understand its role and value in a post-conflict period, particularly if their self-understanding had previously been shaped by the experience of political resistance. In Timor-Leste, the experience of many civil society members in the overthrow of the Suharto regime by Indonesia's civil society and student movement and in their participation in Timor's clandestine movement against the Indonesian occupation has framed their understanding of civil society-state relations as one of hostility and antagonism. This background has limited their understanding of a possibly constructive role of civil society from progressing beyond opposition to the government. The aggressive communication behavior of Timor's civil society leaders did not facilitate a productive engagement in the public sphere. Their exclusive use of the public sphere as a platform for government criticism instead of an issue-focused approach was not stimulating

public debate; instead it contributed to a general feeling of public discontent, which eventually led to political unrest.

Depending on the history of the country and the conflict, a change of mind-set by state actors can be a critical development to enable civil society to play its meaningful role. Working with civil society to develop a more constructive understanding of its role and to enhance communication and negotiation skills can help to improve its input to the public sphere significantly and can contribute to more constructive citizen-state relations that are required for long-term state building.

Conflicts not only decimate the capacity of state institutions, but they also affect the capacity of civil society to operate effectively.

Promoting inclusion in civil society

In a post-conflict period, civil society often suffers from donor dependency that drives the development of their activities and their contributions to the public sphere. Frequently civil society organizations are based in the capital, run by a small elite and in danger of falling out of touch with rural developments and citizens. In Liberia donors contribute to this generic problem by advertising calls for tender or job openings in Monrovia-based newspapers only, thereby depriving rural organizations of these opportunities. For civil society to be a meaningful contributor to the public sphere, it needs to be able to reflect the debates and express the concerns of an inclusive group of citizens, including the marginalized—rural populations, women and youth. In Timor, civil society groups with roots in the clandestine movement are used to advocacy and operational strategies that somewhat ignore the principle of democracy in

decision making, applying a hierarchical form of top-down governance and resulting in programs that do not necessarily meet the priority needs of their beneficiaries. Under these operational principles and conditions, civil society organizations fall short of truly representing member views, which limits their value to the national public sphere. Donors in Liberia, recognizing the need for social inclusion have started supporting the creation and strengthening of national youth and women networks, but results have yet to show; social exclusion of large parts of society continues to be a reality in the meantime.

Promoting an inclusive civil society with internal democratic management structures that allow for rural and gender-equal participation and providing rural civil society organizations networks with access to funding and capacity to engage in the public sphere is essential. Bringing the issue of social exclusion to the public debate contributes to more inclusive public policy decisions.

Facilitating information access and sharing in civil society

Access to information to educate their internal, informal deliberations is a challenge for civil society groups. Despite its potential remedial value, information sharing within civil society is limited due to absent formal networks and competition for donor funds; this limited information flow impacts the quality of civil society contributions. As demonstrated in Liberia and Timor-Leste, the challenges deepen as the humanitarian phase ends and donor funding becomes more limited. In this phase, the information-sharing networks initially created by the international community to support civil society often breakdown. Facilitating access to information and establishing institutionalized, sustainable information-sharing networks would improve the quality of civil society contributions to the public sphere and thus strengthen

public debate and increase civil influence on policy decisions.

5. Media: Lacking the Skills to Shape the Debate

Media can play a powerful role in shaping and influencing public debate and opinion. By giving a voice to the otherwise voiceless, media brings marginalized actors into the public sphere and allows them to influence the public debate and to pressure policymakers to act. This role can be pivotal, as in Burundi where private media played a significant role in the country's national public sphere when it successfully facilitated the public support of the peace-process and the acceptance of the Arusha Peace Accord. Through the openness of the media—radio stations in particular—rebel groups were able to broadcast their views and contribute to the public debate; their courage inspired the hitherto stale public media to discuss political issues more openly, changing public opinion significantly. The mounting public pressure contributed significantly to the government's final willingness to engage in the political dialogue resulting in the Arusha Accord.

How media can shape public debate

The power of the media in the public sphere lies in its role as facilitator. From the input provided by the state and civil society, media professionals select the information they want to disseminate and shape it before it reaches citizens in the public realm. In selecting and providing an interpretative view, media is not merely a neutral transmitter but actively shapes

In a diverse linguistic environment, the languages used for broadcast and print determine who has access to information.

public debate and perception. The broadcast of hate-speech in Rwanda and in the Balkans instigated widespread violence, demonstrating the media's powerful role is not necessarily one of benign nature. These events highlight the need to monitor and ensure media quality particularly in politically and socially vulnerable post-conflict conditions.

Media does not only serve citizens in their private capacity, but it also serves as an agenda-setter for political action by informing policy makers about emerging trends and public opinion on government activities. The ability to draw attention to public affairs and to question government processes and activities provides media with a powerful watchdog function vis-à-vis the state, which makes it essential for the development of accountable and transparent state institutions. Media in Burundi, for example, has been playing an important role in bringing corruption to the public agenda, forcing politicians and legislators to address the issue.

Role of international donors in raising post-conflict expectations

The immediate post-conflict period is marked by an absence of structure and a focus on humanitarian aid delivery. The public sphere in the humanitarian phase is still disintegrated into sub-national units, and foreign media continues to play an important role, as it is to them that citizens turn for credible information and analysis. It is most often through these international media outlets that the news of highly publicized international donor conferences and multimillion dollar pledges reaches the country and creates vast hopes for quick improvements on the ground. Most of the time there is no awareness—even in the new leadership—that only parts of these pledges will be disbursed and even that will take a long time to materialize. The failure

of bi- and multilateral donors to establish early public clarity and inform leadership on the speed and processes of aid delivery has negative repercussions on public expectations, trust and credibility in post-conflict settings. Early efforts in international aid transparency would help to shape realistic public and political expectations at the formative stage and prevent the new leadership from making promises on which they cannot deliver.

Communication strategies supporting inter-national humanitarian activities focus on the external world to create and maintain donor interest and support. When the first elections draw close, donors often turn their attention to the creation or support of national media outlets as voter education vehicles. In this context, one often sees that community radio stations are funded without particular attention to their local buy-in or sustainability. This kind of support reflects the short-term thinking that prevails in the humanitarian phase and often creates sustainability problems later on.

UN radio in the humanitarian phase
Radio stations set up as part of a United Nations' peacekeeping operation during the humanitarian phase can become an important albeit temporary part of the national public sphere. UN radio's value lies in its technical capacity to reach a large part of the population and in the impartial information it broadcasts. Often UN programming is initially intended to inform about the arrival and role of the UN forces and to reassure the population on issues of safety, law and order. Depending on the complexity of the mandate, programming can extend to accompany the reconstruction process and to educate the public on issues such as health, disarmament, vaccination campaigns, back-to-school programs and other initiatives implemented and supported by UN partners and agencies. Normally UN Radio has the largest population coverage capacity and its programs, mixing music and entertainment, often become popular in many mission areas.

UN radios were developed originally as tempo-rary structures to be dismantled together with the mission at the end of the mandate. The UN media exit-strategy should be a timely event, carefully planned and managed so that it avoids generating an information vacuum at a time when the departure of UN troops and associated changes to the security environment heighten
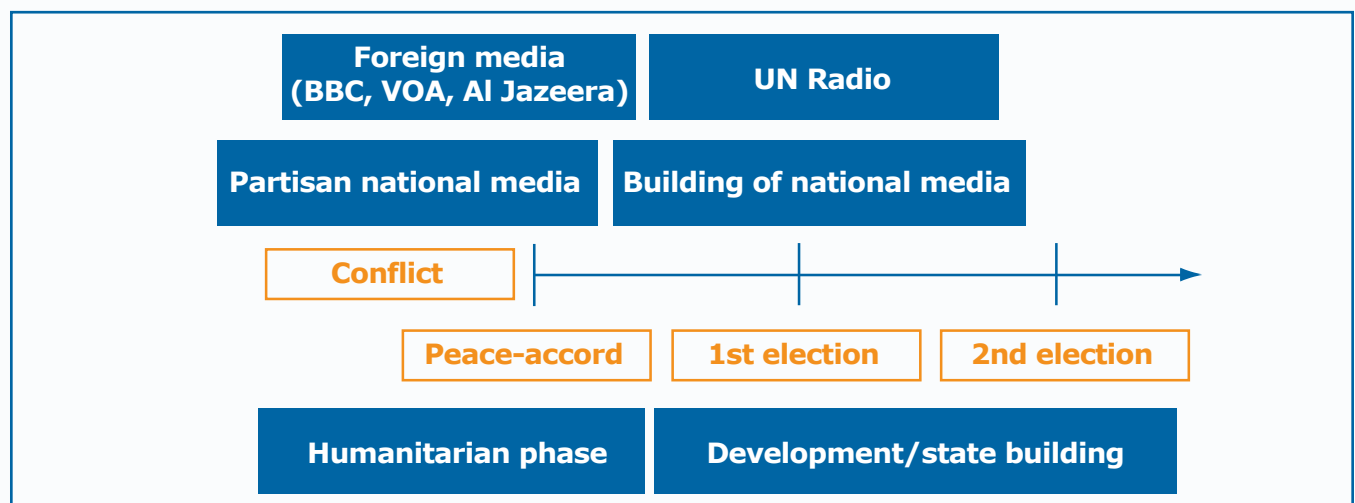
Figure 5. Post-conflict media landscape - changes over time

civic and political uncertainty. The evolution of peacekeeping mandates has yet to be reflected in adequate UN media policies that take into account complex nation-building mandates and outline capacity-building and hand-over processes of UN radio equipment and structures. The departure of UN radio can have a significant impact on the quality of the public sphere in a post-conflict country, leaving a potentially destabilizing information void.

Rebuilding a professional media
Though the media role is a potentially powerful one, often the conditions of the sector in a post-conflict environment do not allow for it to fully assume its function, thereby downgrading the quality of the public sphere. Conflict decimates capacity in all sectors, including media. Most of Liberia's journalists and editors went into exile during the years of conflict and the journalism profession is now almost entirely comprised of high school graduates whose limited experience and skills are reflected in the poor quality of journalistic work done; Timor's journalistic cadre is of similar composition and shows equally poor professional standards. Their lack of skills and substantive comprehension makes it difficult for these young journalists to relate

complex issues of state-building processes and challenges to a larger audience, and as a result, their work does little to inform the public debate. Normally this low-level of capacity applies throughout the media profession, including editors and media managers. Often journalistic training facilities that could remedy the situation are not in place and universities are woefully equipped should they offer a degree in communications at all.

In the post-conflict period, the development of a professional media can enhance the quality and quantity of information flow and thereby improve the public sphere. Assistance to raise professional standards through sustained training programs that not only provide skills—writing, investigative journalism, beat journalism and ethics—but also go beyond to equip journalists as well editors and media managers with knowledge on state institutions and legislative processes are useful to improve

The power of the media in the public sphere lies in its role as facilitator.
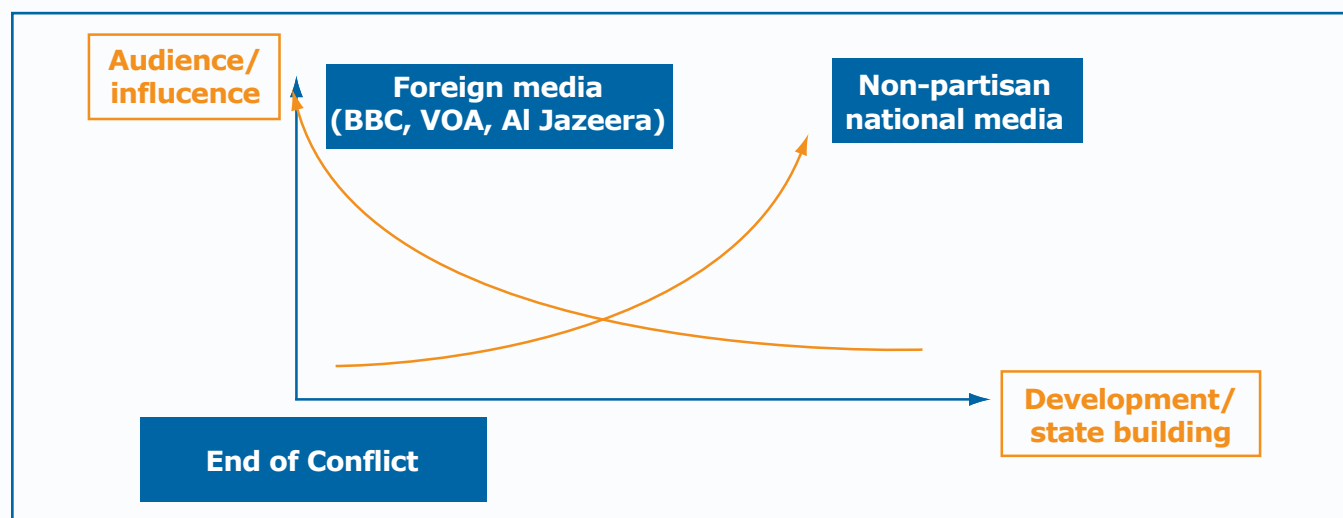
Figure 6. National and international media relevance over time

the level of public debate and understanding. Investing in training, however, does not necessarily result in long-term improvements. Working conditions for journalists in post-conflict environments are poor; salaries in Timor and Liberia are below the standards of all other white-collar professions. To escape this professional environment with few resources, low pay and potentially hazardous assignments, journalists with higher skills or more talent often leave to work for international organizations or move on to the private sector. Often journalist and press associations that are an important lobby group for journalists' rights and professional standards are not well developed in post-conflict environments and need support to become true advocates for their profession and colleagues. Journalist associations also play an important role in influencing professional behavior through the formulation of a commonly agreed code of conduct and by acting as a peer pressure group to enforce professional standards and journalistic integrity.

Challenges to information flow within post-conflict countries

Besides the quality of media content, simply reaching populations is a challenge in itself. Looking at evidence from Liberia, Timor-Leste and Burundi, three issues emerge that establish exclusion in the public realm: language, illiteracy and infrastructure. In a diverse linguistic environment, the languages used for broadcast and print determine who has access to information. Community radios can serve as important bridges between national broadcasters and local communities by transmitting information in the local lingua and by relating content to the local environment. Illiteracy denies access to print media; if it is prevalent, broadcasting becomes the most important media source of information. Infrastructure technology determines how much of the population can receive the signals and listen. In Timor, a small but mountainous

Media can play a powerful role in shaping and influencing public debate and opinion.

country, even the largest national broadcaster reaches only part of the population; in Liberia only Radio UNMIL has almost national coverage.

Community radio

Community radios have become popular and inexpensive donor initiatives to reach the population and normally receive particular attention as a tool for voter education. Often these radio stations are not sustainable as they lack the financial base, technical and managerial experience to continue operations after the donor support comes to a halt. In Timor and Liberia the community radio sector was set up by donors before the elections. It later suffered from a lack of sustainability due to limited local ownership capacity and with volunteer operation a too costly concept for people struggling to recover from conflict. Although community radios could play a positive role of bringing national developments and news closer to the local population, they often experience lack of access to current news and national public sphere exclusion. It is also in the very community orientation of these radio stations that rests a potential danger; without access to the national public sphere, the community radios' sole focus on local developments can contribute to a sense of disconnect from the national state and strengthen local identities in detriment to state building.[9] Syndicated national programming management, technical training, financial support and a framework that connects community radios laterally and up to the national level could allow community radios to play a more powerful role by bringing the voice of the marginalized rural areas to the national public sphere.

Print media

Though in post-conflict environments such as Liberia, Timor-Leste and Burundi, poor road conditions and low rural literacy levels restrict the availability of print media to the capital and its immediate surrounding areas, print media is still important as it informs the urban-based elite, acts as the agenda-setter for public debate, and in its tangible form, is an important archive of national debate that deserves support and preservation.

Public broadcasting

A national public broadcaster can be another powerful tool to inform and shape public debate. Financed through the government but governed by an independent commission, public broadcasting can play an important public sphere role in serving the public with programming dedicated to public education and independent information and by addressing the needs of linguistic and other minorities that are not be served by commercial interests. Though potentially beneficial for the public sphere, donors advocating for the establishment of public broadcasting in post-conflict environ-ments should consider both the national budget implications in light of many other unmet priori-ties and the question of the sustained political will necessary to back up the institution.

Developing the political and conceptual un-derstanding for a structure that requires both state funding and independence might be a challenge. This problem was encountered in Timor where the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) handed over its broadcasting station to the Timorese government to become the young nation's pub-lic broadcaster: Radio Television Timor-Leste (RTTL). Prior to departure UNTAET had put into effect a public broadcasting law that defined

RTTL's operational and legal status, which was meant to safeguard its independence. Despite the laws, there was only limited conceptual understanding of the role and function of a public broadcaster among the Timorese political leadership. The initial perception was that RTTL would be the mouthpiece of the government, and it took over five years for the government to accept the independent role of the public broadcaster; during that period the broadcaster faced considerable political pressure and was not able to fully play its originally envisioned public sphere role.

6. The Enabling Environment

6.1 Governance: Security, safety and the rule of law

The absence of state institutions and processes to establish and enforce the rule of law can make life and work precarious and even dangerous at times. Journalists and civil society activists can easily become targets under such conditions. Initiatives meant to restore the capacities and dynamics of the public sphere are severely hampered if the situation is marked by lawlessness. These conditions generate a certain dilemma: without public exposure of lawless behavior there is no pressure on policy and political will to change the situation, particularly if powerful vested interests profit from the illegal activities. On the other hand, bringing journalists and activists into harm's way is not a desirable outcome to any support activity. There is certainly no easy answer to this dilemma. In the end national actors in the public sphere must make the professional and political judgment on how far they will go to push the security envelope.

The presence of UN troops and police often helps to stabilize the post-conflict situation;

their departure can leave a security vacuum. The importance of rule of law programs is commonly recognized as crucial for long-term stability and transformation. The protection of public sphere activities is part and parcel of this agenda.

6.2 Civil society

Legal/regulatory

Civil society can continue to operate under the most repressive regimes, yet it is served best by a legal framework that guarantees the rights of citizens to assemble and speak freely. In addition to laws that enshrine the right to free assembly, to form political parties and to free speech,

a regulatory framework that allows civil society groups to register, to receive financial support, and to be tax exempt is an important enabling factor. The effectiveness of these legal and regulatory frameworks is embedded in the capacity of the state to implement the rule of law.

Financial

Access to finances enables civil society to operate and impacts their sustainability. Donor dependency, often a trademark of post-conflict civil society, does not allow organizations to establish and advocate for positions reflective of their member's discussions, as it alters accountability structures from a downward membership-based approach to an upward

Journalism can be a dangerous profession

Working in conflict and post-conflict countries can be exceedingly dangerous for journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) end of year analysis (CPJ December 2007) reported that sixty-five journalists were killed in direct relation to their work in 2007, the highest death toll in more than a decade. For the fifth straight year, Iraq was the world's deadliest country for the press. Its 32 victims accounted for nearly half of the 2007 toll. Somalia was the second-deadliest country, with seven journalist deaths.

Reportedly the 2007 toll is second only to that of 1994, when 66 journalists were killed amid conflicts in Algeria, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

 CPJ documented that consistent with previous years, about seven in 10 journalist deaths in 2007 were murders. Combat-related deaths and deaths in dangerous assignments accounted for the rest of the cases.

Also Reporters Without Borders reported 2007 as the deadliest year for journalists since 1994 with Iraq being the most dangerous place to work for journalists. They recently released a report on the high number of journalists that had to flee Iraq out of fear for their lives.

These reports demonstrate the effect that worsening rule of law conditions have on public sphere dynamics. There is no other element that has a comparable impact on the "enabling environment" of media operations. The very nature of the work of journalists and the visibility it implies make them easy targets for stray bullets, as well as targeted attempts designed to silence them. Overlooking these very real issues while planning public sphere interventions would not only be naïve but also negligent.

> Initiatives meant to restore the capacities and dynamics of the public sphere are severely hampered if the situation is marked by lawlessness.

donor response. Whereas funds are easily available during the humanitarian crisis, they are significantly reduced over time. In Timor-Leste donor funding became more limited after the transition to development phase and the increased reporting and accountability demands put considerable strain on civil society actors who are struggling to adapt to the changed donor environment. Timor's Dili-based civil society groups and leaders also do not profit from the close contact and input from the informal deliberations with their members inside the capital and thus are not in the position to truly project their concerns and views.

The provision of core funding and of managerial capacity building for civic organizations is necessary to allow civil society to grow internal structures and to develop membership-owned projects and positions that can be then be presented in the public sphere.

6.3 Media

Journalists and media operations need a legal regulatory and market environment that allows them to operate freely and safely, while also safeguarding public interests and professional standards. Laws that guarantee free speech and freedom of expression provide professional freedom for journalists; civil libel laws protect the public from the worst form of journalism.

Legal/regulatory

The legal and regulatory framework establishes the media's "room to maneuver" and defines its relationship with the state. In all three countries studied, the legal and regulatory framework has been, or is in the process of being, changed to reflect the new reality of democratic processes and to allow the press to operate freely. The experience in Timor demonstrates that technical and political expertise in media legislation is not always readily available and might need to be brought in to ensure media laws and regulations reflect international standards while being grounded in the realities of the country. In post-conflict environments marked by low professional media standards, civil libel laws protecting public officials and the state from defamation and instigation through unprofessional media coverage are important measures to protect the public sphere and to avoid drastic defensive measures by public officials. Depending on the particular history of a conflict and the role media played, hate speech legislation might be necessary to stem manipulative use of communication. In cases where media played a highly incendiary role, judicial regulation during the initial phases of state building might be necessary to avoid a derailing of the peace-building process. Building such an enabling media environment in post-conflict situations is a technical and political challenge and the conditions generated will remain vulnerable and subject to political turmoil and lawlessness.

Financial

The ability to run financially sustainable operations impacts the capacity of media to play

> Access to finances enables civil society to operate and impacts their sustainability.

Civil society can continue to operate under the most repressive regimes, yet it is served best by a legal framework that guarantees the rights of citizens to assemble and speak freely.

its public sphere role. In post-conflict environments, the media sector can expect to encounter problems common to private business in this environment. In Timor media owners, as any other business person, face gaps in key areas of legislation and regulation, and institutions needed to enforce and administer those laws and rules lack capacity. Specifically in the media sector, with its dependence on advertisement, are sustainability problems related to the larger poorly developed economic environment. Such economic constraints impact the quality of the public sphere, as media outlets, dependent on high sales in lieu of advertisement, have to rely for survival on "sex, crime and sports" stories to attract a wide audience.

Resource-strained media resort to mixing entertainment and politics, simplifying and minimizing complex developments, and doling out piecemeal information: practices that are detrimental to building an informed and engaged citizenry. Security and other conditions that allow for the recovery of the private sector and thus increase commercial activities and advertisement revenue are crucial for an economically sustainable media sector. As the private sector develops, media is able to rely on advertisement revenue. In the meantime, sustained donor support and government assistance to the media sector can alleviate the economic pressure and give space for some quality media to develop and survive.

7. Interactions in the Public Sphere

State, media and civil society are distinct actors in the public sphere but do not exist in isolation. The quality and extent of their interaction and the degree of mutual understanding of and respect for their respective roles determine the constructive value of the public sphere. The more frequent and constructive the interactions are, the higher the quality of public deliberations, opinion formation, influence on policymakers and citizen-state relations will be.

Journalists and media operations need a legal regulatory and market environment that allows them to operate freely and safely, while also safeguarding public interests and professional standards.

State and media
The relationship between state and media is not an easy one in a post-conflict environment where the "rules of the game" change fundamentally with state and media redefining their respective roles and operations with limited capacity. In all three countries observed, state-media relations face moments of tension. The low level of professionalism and the sensationalist reporting in Liberia and Timor cause considerable frustration on the side of the government. In both cases, journalistic work is impaired by lack of entry points in the state structure. Access to government information is a key challenge for journalists, and central to this relationship's function is the provision of informed entry points into the state structure for the request and receipt of information, allowing the media to plays its role. Spokespeople and media professionals in key state institutions are

State, media and civil society are distinct actors in the public sphere but do not exist in isolation.

important mechanisms for constructive engagement between state and media. A spokesperson, however, is only as useful as the information provided, as seen in Liberia and Timor-Leste where the spokespeople and public information officers' credibility and usefulness suffer from a lack of access to key documents and policy knowledge within their administration—an issue that goes back to the weak information-sharing culture within post-conflict state institutions.

Creating an independent media commission as a regulatory body for media affairs can shape media conduct without giving the government the chance to control the sector, which might improve media-state relations. An independent commission, however, can only play a useful role if backed by political will. In Burundi, the 2005 constitution established the National Communication Council charged with the regulation of the media. It was largely meant to become a self-regulatory organ for the press, but so far, with all its members appointed by the President of the Republic, the body is not able to play the role envisioned in improving state-media relations.[10]

Understanding and accepting the watchdog function of the media in a democratic political system can be challenging for elected officials and state institutions, particular in countries that have no experience with healthy public sphere processes. This lack of experience can result in heavy-handedness towards critical press coverage. In Burundi the government perceived the media as hostile and jailed several journalists, forcing others to flee into exile. In Liberia government officials complain

about the complete lack of understanding of the working of legislative processes among the journalistic cadre. Creating an understanding of respective roles, procedures and limitations improves state-media relations and builds the basis for constructive engagement in the public sphere, which has benefits through an improved information levels, higher quality of citizens' deliberations and informed public opinions that influence policymakers.

Media and civil society

For effective engagement, civil society needs media not only to understand the importance of the agenda it brings to the public debate, but also it requires sustained media coverage to advocate for civil society positions. In countries where the partnership is not sufficiently developed, like Liberia, the possibilities for civil society to inform and influence public debate are limited. In Burundi an alliance of mutual support has developed with civil society and media more frequently intertwined; many civil society organizations have even established media outlets to better reach their audiences. This rapport between media and civil society is a marriage of convenience in a country where public information can be hard to come by and where civil society is a source of information for media and vice versa. These developments in Burundi seem exceptional and in contrast to Timor-Leste where media and civil society relations have developed more in line with other post-conflict environments with media taking only limited interest in advocacy and civil rights issues. Often journalists are not able to follow or comprehend the relevance of issues, and civil society organizations lack media strategies and fail to influence public debate and opinion formation effectively.

Initiatives to enrich public deliberations and policy debate include providing civil society with the skills for media strategy and outreach and

developing a mutual media and civil society understanding of the value of their sustained and constructive relationship for advocacy and public policy purposes.

State and civil society

The degree of freedom in which civil society operates, level of information available and quality of participatory structures allowing civil society to advocate and influence public policy decisions impact the quality of state-civil society relations. Understanding and respect for these mutual roles is an underlying issue that frames the citizen-state relationship at large.

In Timor-Leste the government lacks an understanding of the important role and potential capacity of civil society; it does not engage in dialogue on many of the justice and civil liberty issues in which civil society groups have taken an interest. Society, on the other hand, has an existing distrust of government systems

and authority and a lack of interest in and understanding of the challenges faced by the government, leading to an atmosphere of hostility under the first post-independence government. The relationship between state and civil society is characterized by poor information sharing, mistrust and an inability to define common objectives and information needs, causing citizen-state relations to deteriorate further.

Lack of access to information is a common problem for civil society in post-conflict environments. In Liberia, Timor-Leste and Burundi impaired access to draft legislation and budget documents make it difficult for civil society to inform and lobby public debate on policy issues. Consultation with civil society on key policy issues is inadequate for the most part in Timor and Burundi and is unstructured in Liberia. In Timor the state structure does not offer

From peacemaking to peacebuilding

The foundation for reconstruction is laid long before the first donor conference. Peace-treaties are setting the first building block for the post-conflict country's future shape and structure. Not only does the content of the treaty matter, also the proceedings leading to its signing impact the chances for successful implementation. Who mediated the process and whose views were considered during the negotiations will largely determine the perceived legitimacy of the document.

Though wide consultations might make the mediation and negotiation process cumbersome and slow the inclusion of relevant stakeholders on different levels of

power-hierarchies will ensure greater public buy-in of the final accord and increase its chance for implementation.

Naturally the contents of a peace accord are tied to the specifics of the country and the conflict. In cases where a distortion of the public sphere was a central aspect of the conflict, a solution to the problem should be explored in the negotiations and reflected in the final accord. An early agreement on key public sphere principles will not only ensure that public sphere matters are not relegated to low priority level but also facilitate political buy-in for measures that aim towards the (re-)enabling of public sphere dynamics.

> The relationship between state and media is not an easy one in a post-conflict environment where the "rules of the game" change fundamentally with state and media redefining their respective roles and operations with limited capacity.

entry points for interaction and engagement, neither on the national level nor in the districts. The closed nature of state institutions leads to public disempowerment, effectively disconnecting the state and its people—all symptoms of a dysfunctional public sphere. In Burundi, lack of access to public documents and of entry points for public opinion to shape policy plus a lack of consultative mechanisms are shortcomings of its national public sphere, which impair citizen-state relations. Developments in Timor illustrate the slippery slope generated by public sphere dysfunctions: without clear venues and skills capable of voicing views and debating issues, Timor's civil society relies on strategies used in the past—street protests. In reaction, guided by mistrust of civil society's intent and by a number of demonstrations that turned violent, the government passed a law that imposes tighter regulations on assemblies and demonstrations—a move that civil society felt pushed them deeper into the corner and increased hostilities.

To improve its engagement in the national public dialogue, the state should provide access to public documents, know how to relate to the media, give a voice to civil society, and establish entry points for public participation, particularly in legislative processes. These

steps are important to ensure a constructive and informed dialogue with citizens, to gain public support and to ensure post-conflict reconstruction and long-term stability.

8. Conclusion—National Dialogue: Not a Consequence of State Building, a Prerequisite for Success

Institution building is essential for the war to peace transition process and for long-term stability. Normally early post-conflict assessments are carried out to capture needs, establish priorities and ensure coordination. While some donors focus on state institution building, others get involved in media development and civil society support. Coordination within each sector is challenging; coordination across sectors simply does not take place. Often neither donors nor implementing partners are aware of what others are doing—duplication and gaps result.

Though public capacity building is considered central, current aid practice fails to take into account the structures and processes that are required to effectively connect public institutions with citizens to ensure accountability and transparency. These processes are particularly important after conflict, as they are instrumental in managing high public expectations and in building public trust, which are key challenges in post-conflict situations.

Government as a reliable information source

The essence of these processes lies in the dynamics of a robust public sphere that provides a national dialogue platform. Experiences from Liberia, Timor-Leste and Burundi show that creating the structures and capacities required for such a dialogue platform is essential. Post-conflict environments face particular public sphere challenges that are related to the prevalence of fear, rumors and uncertainty caused

by displacement, disempowerment and loss of livelihoods. The absence of the rule of law, combined with the prevalence of weapons and a lack of trust in public institutions and formal networks, make any peace-spoilers a particular threat to stability. The absence of a national public sphere generates a gap that can be filled by rumors and those spreading them—a situation easily exploited by informal networks and the religious or ethnic entrepreneurs leading them. Developing a national dialogue helps post-conflict governments to counter peace-spoiler strategies. Establishing the government as a reliable source of information able to listen and to address public concerns builds public trust, ensures public support of the reconstruction process, and minimizes the space in which peace-spoilers operate.

International community responsibilities

An important player in post-conflict transitions, the international community has to increase transparency and accountability in their own operations as an important contribution to a post-conflict national dialogue process. This is true for aid programs and UN Peacekeeping operations alike. The latter can play an important role and clarity about their mandate and exit strategy is crucial for long-term stability.

For effective engagement, civil society needs media not only to understand the importance of the agenda it brings to the public debate, but also it requires sustained media coverage to advocate for civil society positions.

Building public trust and inclusive public participation present challenges particularly where citizen-state relations carry the legacy of disempowerment and abuse, and when legal and social frameworks, as well as mind-sets, need to be changed with limited resources. Only strategic and well-coordinated interventions among sectors and donors allow for optimal resource allocation and use. A good analytical understanding of the capacities and dynamics in place is the starting point. As each country faces particular challenges related to its history and the nature of its conflict, there is no "one for all" approach; each public sphere strategy should be tailored to the specifics yet all can be based on the same analytical framework.

Public sphere: Strength against fragmentation

The elements that make and shape a public sphere are many; capacities need to be created in public institutions, media and civil society alike. In addition to capacities, positive dynamics need to be generated among the different players based on a common understanding of and respect for respective roles. With the passing of time, if overlooked, the damage done by not setting the foundation for a national dialogue platform makes any afterthought on public sphere intervention more difficult and more costly. It is suggested, therefore, that the public sphere framework be included in post-conflict needs assessments to inform early strategic interventions and to facilitate coordination.

Post-conflict interventions and reconstruction efforts create the opportunity to address the root causes of the violent past and to work towards an inclusive and accountable social and political system by setting the foundation for sustainable governance structures that withstand the forces of fragmentation through the equal participation of citizens. Applying the concept of the public sphere in post-conflict needs

Figure 7. Building state, media, and civil society capacity, as well as platforms of interaction and dialogue between them, is essential to close and reduce the exploitable space and to create the foundation for governance in post-conflict contexts.

assessments and intervention frameworks allows the international community to address strategic state-building issues, such as citizen-state relations, public trust, exclusion and expectations. Incorporating the public sphere framework in post-conflict assistance work would be an important step towards sustainable peace and democratic governance.

***Some key recommendations*:**

- Apply the public sphere governance frame-work in early post-conflict assessments.

- Think systematically. Ensure cross-sector planning and donor coordination to create syn-ergies and to capture public sphere dynamics.

- Work with civil society, media and government to ensure a common understanding of and respect for their respective roles, and promote programs to increase interaction.

- In building state institutions pay particular attention to the creation of entry points for public participation and to listening capacity in both central and local structures.

The elements that make and shape a public sphere are many; capacities need to be created in public institutions, media and civil society alike.

- Pay attention that media development and communication capacity within government go hand-in-hand, as one outpacing the other carries the risk of manipulation or alienation.

- Promote inclusive national civil society networks and internal, downward accountability within the networks.

- Support civic education programs that promote public understanding about the right of citizens to information.

- Develop legislative frameworks and cultivate political will and resources—engage in strategic advocacy.

- Do not accept that language choices are of purely political nature; provide evidence and advice on the economic and social cost of exclusive language policies.

- Donor behavior tends to be exclusive and to lack transparency: practice what you preach!

Public Sphere Assessment Toolkit

Media Sector Capacity

a. TV: Number of stations, affiliation, ownership, geographical reach, contents, financial health

b. Radio: Number of stations, affiliation, ownership, geographical reach, contents, financial health

c. Community Radios: numbers, financial status, location, national community radio network

d. Print: Format, circulation of main publications, ownership and type of content (religious, political, entertainment, etc.), provinces vs. capital

e. New media: Blogs, online presence of traditional media. Interactive possibilities: for a, real-life events, etc.

f. Languages used by the different media in relation to languages spoken in the country

g. Diaspora media: if existing, distribution and content

h. Refugee camps outside country: outreach and content

i. Interactive media: phone-in possibilities, letters to the editor, email and sms messages from the public

j. Rural interests/issues coverage: national/capital-based coverage, local coverage

k. Machinery and technology for various media (printing press, transmitters): ownership, financing, constraints to access

l. Relevance of outside media (international, regional, neighboring country): capital vs. provincial and rural.

m. Presence of UN radio: relevance vis-à-vis local media, content, focus, plan for post-conflict pull-out

n. UNPKO: involvement in media-capacity building

o. Donors involvement in media development:
   i. Type of activity
   ii. Target of activity
   iii. Timeframe
   iv. Challenges faced
   v. Aims and objectives

p. Specify donor coordination mechanisms

State Media

a. State owned/controlled media outlets

b. Languages used

c. Coverage/Circulation

d. Number of employees/selection

e. Financial situation: budget, subsidies, profit/loss

f. Independent public service providers: initiatives to development, constraints

Journalists

a. Work conditions: number, level of training, workplace conditions, safety, salaries, gender balance, equal treatment of both genders

b. Ethics: code of conduct, independence, procedures in cases of unethical behavior

c. Sources: formal and informal access for public policy issues, social issues

d. Professional associations: number, affiliation, political links, national or regional level

e. Compensation in public/private media: salary levels, competition across field/sectors, methods to complement income

f. Education: percentage of journalists practicing without a journalism degree, with no university degree at all

Journalists' Training Institutions

a. Journalism schools, university programs, selective enrollment, absorption capacity, level of teaching and curriculum

b. Resources: budget, funding

c. New media and technologies: in training, on-the-job, public vs. private

d. Public-private media partnerships: internships, news gathering interaction

e. International exchanges: where, with whom, content, length of training

Media Users

a. Media formats: most widely used, popular forms for rural/urban and elite/base

b. Media consumption habits: area, gender, income and education.

c. Literacy rate: gender, region, access/affordability of radios, TVs, computers/internet access

d. Media markets: language usage, service to language groups

e. Public perceptions: independence of journalists, honesty and credibility of public/private media

f. Internet cafés: number, popularity, location—provincial vs. capital

State Institutional Capacity

a. Central government public communication/ information structure: location within government, level of influence

b. Appointments: appointment procedure, access to top officials, reporting structure

c. Budget

d. Employees: number, selection process, education, salary level (living wage issues)

e. Ministry of Information: mandate, capacity

f. Spokesperson for President's Office, Army, Police, etc: skills, resources, professionalism

g. Ministers' roles: number acting as spokesperson, number with media advisers

h. Relationships between various communication services

i. Coordination of public communication

j. Strategic media monitoring capacities

k. Typical government public communications' activities: press conferences, background info, releases, media breakfast, stakeouts, interviews, etc.

l. Budget for government public communications: total, allocation, Internet access,

technology available for communication at different levels-capital vs. provinces

m. Sector, agency-level and/or local level communication structures

n. Decentralized communication services: geographical distribution, organization, budget

o. Audience reach: rural citizens, women, poor, young, ethnic groups

p. Level of centralization: center to periphery communication and periphery to center information flow

q. Access issues: selection of press for Executive press conferences, trips on "Air Force 1," conditions, fees.

r. Public information and local languages

s. E-governance projects: access, promotion

t. Filing/mailing system: to be built, under construction, mechanism established

u. National Archives

v. Public Information Act

w. Codification system

x. Civil Servants Academy

   i. Curriculum

   ii. Ethics

   iii. Negotiation and communication skills

   iv. Understanding the role of the state

   v. Concepts of accountability and transparency

   vi. Quality of staff/training material/ infrastructure

y. Legislative: Communication capacity and challenges

   i. Public hearings

   ii. Public draft laws

   iii. Public consultations

   iv. Voting records

   v. Constituency relations

   vi. Public info material

   vii. Press coverage

   viii. Archive

z. Donors in state-capacity building and community-capacity building:

   i. Type of activity

   ii. Target of activity

iii. Timeframe

iv. Challenges faced

v. Aims and objectives

Civil Society Capacity

a. Groups: number, level of organization, management

b. Religious groups: number, role, service provider, assembly space

c. Links: to international civil service organi- zations, to diaspora

d. Position and goals: message development, publicity, method of advocacy

e. Strength of traditional informal communi- cation networks: poets/writers, churches, mosques, truck/bus drivers, marketwomen

f. Networks created/reinforced during conflict: political parties, tribes

g. Role/influence of current/former army or traditional strongmen

h. Channels of information: means to receive information on public policy, on government activities, on activities of other organizations

i. Information transmission: ownership of media and of publications, usage of other media outlets

j. Staff skills and resources: quality of man- agement, key sources of financing

k. Intellectual leadership: contributions of think tanks, universities, etc., availability of skills and resources?

l. National vs. communal associations: connections, information sharing

m. Lobby groups: number, effectiveness

n. Private sector and related associations: role, strength

o. Key issues of concern: funding, access, independence

p. Safety of civil rights advocates: legal protection, police protection, media fairness

q. Donors in civil society development:

i. Type of activity

ii. Target of activity

iii. Timeframe

iv. Challenges faced

v. Aims and objectives

Quality of the Enabling Environment
Legislation and Regulations

a. Legislation on insulting head of state or nation, on religious offenses, on "offending public morals"

b. Slander and libel legislation: method and availability of effective judicial recourse

c. Hate crimes legislation: method and avail- ability of effective judicial recourse

d. International human rights instruments: government ratification, enforcement

e. Status of effective freedoms of expression, association and reunion

f. Civil society and media legal framework: legal identity, financial viability and indepen- dence

g. Media ownership: status of anti-trust legislation, foreign ownership limits, media ownership transparency

h. Electoral advertising: rules/limits in public/ private media.

i. Official Information Act: implementation?

j. Ombudsman Office: existence, indepen- dence, political will and support

k. Media regulatory body: independence, control, organization

Media

a. Media licenses: allocation, renewal, trans- parency

b. Taxes/Subsidies available

c. Journalist safety

i. number in jail for political reasons—cite specific cases

ii. violence and deaths in last year

iii. news outlets banned or closed last year, reason given/understood, length of suspension

d. Public procurement of state advertising and

public announcements: method of operation, budget, allocation of funds, exercise of controls

Civil Society

a. Government control: method, degree

b. Registration: process, fees, taxes, subsidies, oversight of finances

c. Freedom of religion: restrictions on affiliations, free practice

d. Financial conditions: methods of support public, private, combined; tax status

e. Donor dependency: extent of donor/ government relationship, private sector interests

f. Restrictions to foreign organizations

g. Safety of activists: number of arrests/ deaths

h. Restrictions on activists: travel, speech, funding

Quality of Interactions

State x Media

a. Media ownership: does it influence, dictate or bias on coverage; foster communal, religious or political tension?

b. Media content: are there political or commercial pressures on journalists, editors or owners?

c. Self-censorship: what is degree of practice, by whom and in what cases?

d. Journalists' corruption: what is degree of incidence; does pay to appear or pay not to appear exist?

e. Public perceptions of state media

f. State engagement with media: is it constructive or adversarial; is role recognized or not?

g. Relationship between members of government and media: in capital and on local level, is there any involvement in community radio?

h. Access to government information: is provision for media and journalist

access at various state levels adequate or inadequate? If not, what could be done to improve the situation?

i. Does the state providing regular information to journalists regarding the reconstruction process? If not, what could be done to improve this situation?

j. Are public policy issues considered "newsworthy?"

Civil Society x Media

a. Press attitudes: Is there media bias toward NGOs and other civil society groups?

b. Are any civil society representatives considered prominent public figures?

c. Civil society media skills: do organizations have skills/resources to deal with media (press people/press releases/press conferences)?

d. What is civil society attitude towards the media? Is there trust?

Civil Society x State

a. Government engagement with civil society: Is it effective at the center and at the periphery? If not, what could be done to improve this situation?

b. Generic or preferential treatment of certain groups: do business lobbies have better access to public authorities than civil society; how does preference/exclusion occur?

c. Does the state providing regular information to civil society regarding the reconstruction process? If not, what could be done to improve the situation?

d. Public protests: are they allowed to take place; for what reasons?

Grafitti has become a popular way of communication and expression in many conflict and post-conflict countries.

TOOLBOX: A SELECTION OF PUBLIC SPHERE INTERVENTIONS

Enabling Environment	State Institutions	Media
Support the establishment of rule of law conditions	Support development of a common understanding of the respective roles of state, civil society and media	Support development of a common understanding of the respective role of state, civil society and media
Advocate for the protection of legally enshrined civic freedoms (free speech and assembly, etc.)	Advocate for a language policy that allows all citizens to access and comprehend public information, decisions and official documents	Support national institutes offering journalism education (universities, colleges)
Support civil libel laws	Promote gender sensitivity in public policy	Support development of media associations functioning as journalists' advocates
Support development of media regulations	Support a national public information and consultation strategy	Advocate for a professional code of conduct enforced through peer system
Advocate for a Public Information Act	Promote consultations and outreach with the diaspora community	Introduce the concept of an independent media commission
Provide support to develop national expertise on media rights and legislation	Advocate for a Public Information Act	Advocate for appropriate work-conditions (salary, equipment, safety, etc.)
Advocate for tax and registration fee exemptions for community radios	Support a continuous center-periphery dialogue	Train journalists and editors in • ethics • journalistic skills • conflict-sensitive reporting • gender sensitive reporting
Review market conditions for media and advocate for development of sustainable media sector	Promote the appointment of spokespeople with budgets, staff and access to information throughout all major public institutions	Train editors and media management in media ethics and media business skills
Advocate for initial tax breaks on printing facilities	**Executive** Support civic education programs that inform citizens on their right to information and on what information should be available to them	Promote females in media industry
Assess and assist the development of an advertising market		Support the development of synchronized programming for community radios

Civil Society	Donor Community
Support development of a common understanding of the respective roles of state, civil society and media	Reflect the essential nature of dialogue processes for state building and successful war-to-peace transitions in program planning
Support civic programs to educate citizens on their right to information and on which information should be available	Include the public sphere framework in early assessments and program planning
Build strategic tools and skills for advocacy, media work and outreach	Cultivate political will to implement public sphere interventions
Promote institutionalized information-sharing platforms	Avoid stove-piping; ensure coordination across program areas
Support the development of downward accountability	Facilitate interactions among state, civil society and media
Develop participatory consultation skills	Be aware of mind-sets shaping communication patterns, particularly when dealing with former members of armed groups and clandestine movements
Develop negotiation and mediation skills	
Provide core funding	Establish early and clear transparency on aid processes and delivery speed to new government and public at large
Support the development of inclusive, national networks	
Advocate for gender equality and sensitivity in programming and administration of organizations	Have a clear exit strategy; in case of UN Radio/TV develop hand-over strategies early to prevent an information vacuum
Build management skills	In project implementation avoid putting "donor visibility" over "government visibility"
Support the development of national polling capacity, ideally located in a university	Pay attention to peace spoilers capturing the public sphere
	Building dialogue processes takes time; stay engaged

Enabling Environment	State Institutions	Media
	Executive (continued) Advocate for communication and coordination function to have mandate, financing and clear location (Ministry of Information, PM Office, etc.) Advocate for establishment of spokespeople in key ministries and institutions with budgets and access to policy makers and information Support development of media monitoring capacity Train state officials in media, negotiation and outreach skills Support the development and implementation of a whistleblower protection policy Support the development of National Archives Advocate for a National Information Classification Act and support its implementation Support the development of a common filing and mailing system Promote interdepartmental coordination and information-sharing bodies Support the development of a clear understanding of roles and mandates between and within institutions	Support a national community radio network Promote sustainability and local ownership in planning for community radio Promote understanding of the concept of a national public broadcaster (where applicable)

Civil Society	Donor Community

Enabling Environment	State Institutions	Media
	Executive (continued) Support capacity building of a Civil Servants Academy and a curriculum that shapes an understanding of the role of state and the concepts of accountability, transparency, ethics plus communication skills **Parliament** Establish Press Office and Public Information Center Establish office facilities for legislative journalists Produce public information material on the workings of parliament Develop regulations/guidelines for public consultations Guarantee public/civil society input into committee work Advocate for public debates/ media coverage of deliberations Establish constituency relations offices Support public voting, attendance and tabling records Ensure that draft legislation is publicly available Develop a parliamentary archive Advocate for a regular legislative journal free of charge for state institutions and universities	

Civil Society	Donor Community

Enabling Environment	State Institutions	Media
	Parliament (continued) Promote understanding of the importance of civic rights legislation Support parliamentary work with library/research material and well-trained staffers **Judiciary** Suggest the appointment of a spokesperson with capacity: budget, access, etc. Support public education of the legal system and its application Create a public reporting system on abuse: Ombudsman offices **Security Service Reform** Support the development of a national consensus on national security needs and strategy Advocate for gender equality and sensitivity Advocate for transparency of the process	

Civil Society	Donor Community

PART II THREE CASE STUDIES

The three empirical studies were carried out in May and June 2007 and the analyses reflect the situation at that time. The objective of the field research was to illustrate the theoretical public sphere concept with concrete evidence and examples. Time has passed since the assessments took place and it is almost certain that some things have changed; yet, the main structural public sphere and governance issues are likely to remain pertinent for some time to come.

A. DASHED HOPES: A NEW STATE DISCONNECTED FROM ITS PEOPLE

After some 450 years of colonization and occupation, Timor-Leste finally reached independence in May 2002. As a new country it has been building state institutions from scratch and administering state affairs with human resources of limited experience and skill. Timor-Leste's public sphere issues have to be understood in the context of the country's challenging governance environment, which is marked by high poverty levels, displacement,
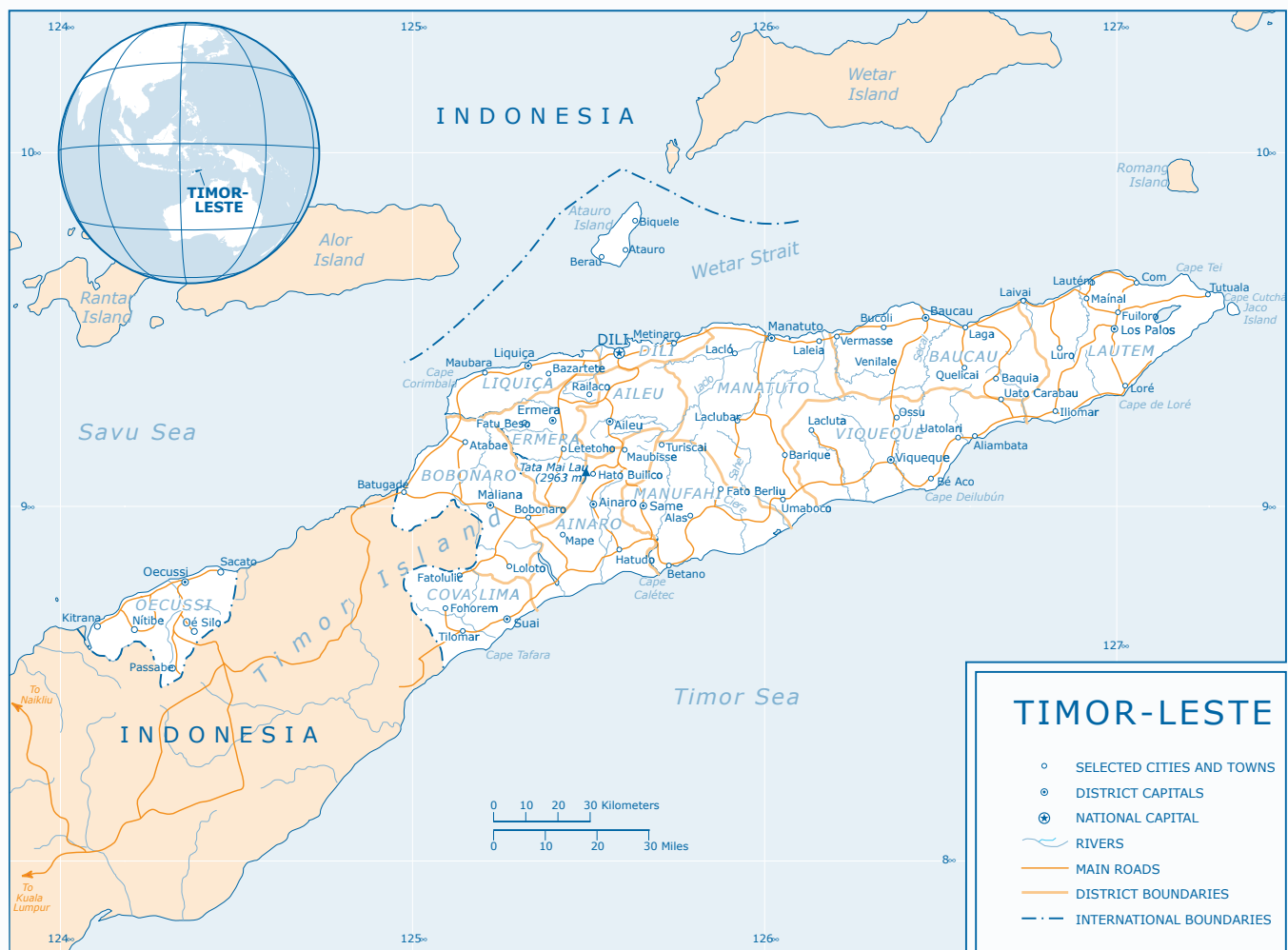
Figure 8: Map of Timor-Leste

destruction, low levels of education, multilingualism and limited capacities in public administration, civil society and media.

The majority of Timor-Leste's population is poor, young and rural, and an estimated half is illiterate. Hopes that independence would deliver improved living standards were not met; they are, by and large, the same as in 2002, particularly in the rural areas. The state, which as a new democracy is affected by an immature political climate, has not been effective in managing expectations and in educating the public about reasons for the slow pace of reconstruction and the challenges confronted. In 2006 the information and discourse gap caused rumors and fear to spread widely, prompting violence and giving space to peace-spoilers to grab public attention. The leadership style shaped by years of clandestine existence combined with language barriers and a limited understanding of state and societal roles caused relations among state, media and civil society to deteriorate sharply and led to a citizen-state disconnect.

1. A Brief History of Modern Timor

The Portuguese arrived at the coast of Timor around 1515 and stayed until 1974 when the Portuguese Carnation Revolution triggered their hasty departure.[11] The departure led to indigenous political activity in Portuguese Timor. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) was formed in May 1974, and *Associação Social-Democrata Timorense* (ASDT) shortly thereafter to become the Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of East Timor (FRETILIN) in September 1974. The relationship between these two parties had deteriorated by mid-1975; on August 11, UDT launched a pre-emptive armed attack upon FRETILIN and the counterattack was launched on August 20, 1975. A short civil war ensued in which thousands of people were killed in

The state, which as a new democracy is affected by an immature political climate, has not been effective in managing expectations and in educating the public about reasons for the slow pace of reconstruction and the challenges confronted.

combat, hundreds of political prisoners were executed and tens of thousands of civilians were displaced to West Timor. On September 7, 1975, the UDT leadership issued a petition calling for the integration of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. On December 7, Indonesia invaded Timor-Leste.

For 24 years the population of Timor-Leste maintained a staunch resistance against the Indonesian rule, characterized by near universal popular support and effective coordination between the armed wing of the resistance, the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL), an elaborate and active network of civilian supporters, "*clandestinos*," and representatives in the diaspora. One-third of the population is estimated to have died as a result of the occupation. Following the fall of President Suharto in 1998, Indonesia agreed to hold a referendum allowing the territory a choice between autonomous status and an independent state. An overwhelming majority of Timorese voted for independence. The referendum was accompanied by a well-planned campaign of violence led by armed militia that left over 1,000 people dead, the majority of the population displaced and most of the private and public physical infrastructure destroyed.

Establishing public credibility and building effective state-civil relations are two key challenges faced by the new coalition government.

Following the intervention of a multi-lateral peacekeeping force, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established with supreme executive, judicial and legislative authority. In the 2001 elections for a constituent assembly, Fretilin won with 55 of the 88 seats. Following the adoption of the constitution, presidential elections were held in April 2002 and won by

independence leader and Falintil Commander Jose Xanana Gusmao. The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste fully restored its independence on May 20, 2002.

Renewed violence: The crisis of 2006[12]

In 2006 unfulfilled hope for an independence dividend, high youth unemployment, politicization of the state structures and neglect of communication, participation and public-state relations led in 2006 to the worst political and governance crisis since independence. A humanitarian crisis resulted that, with a high number of IDPs and infrastructure destruction, was reminiscent of the 1999 militia rampage.

Timor-Leste

Comparison between 2006, 2002, 1998 (top-bottom order)

Source: Kafumann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2007; Governance Matters VI:
Governance Indicators for 1996-2006
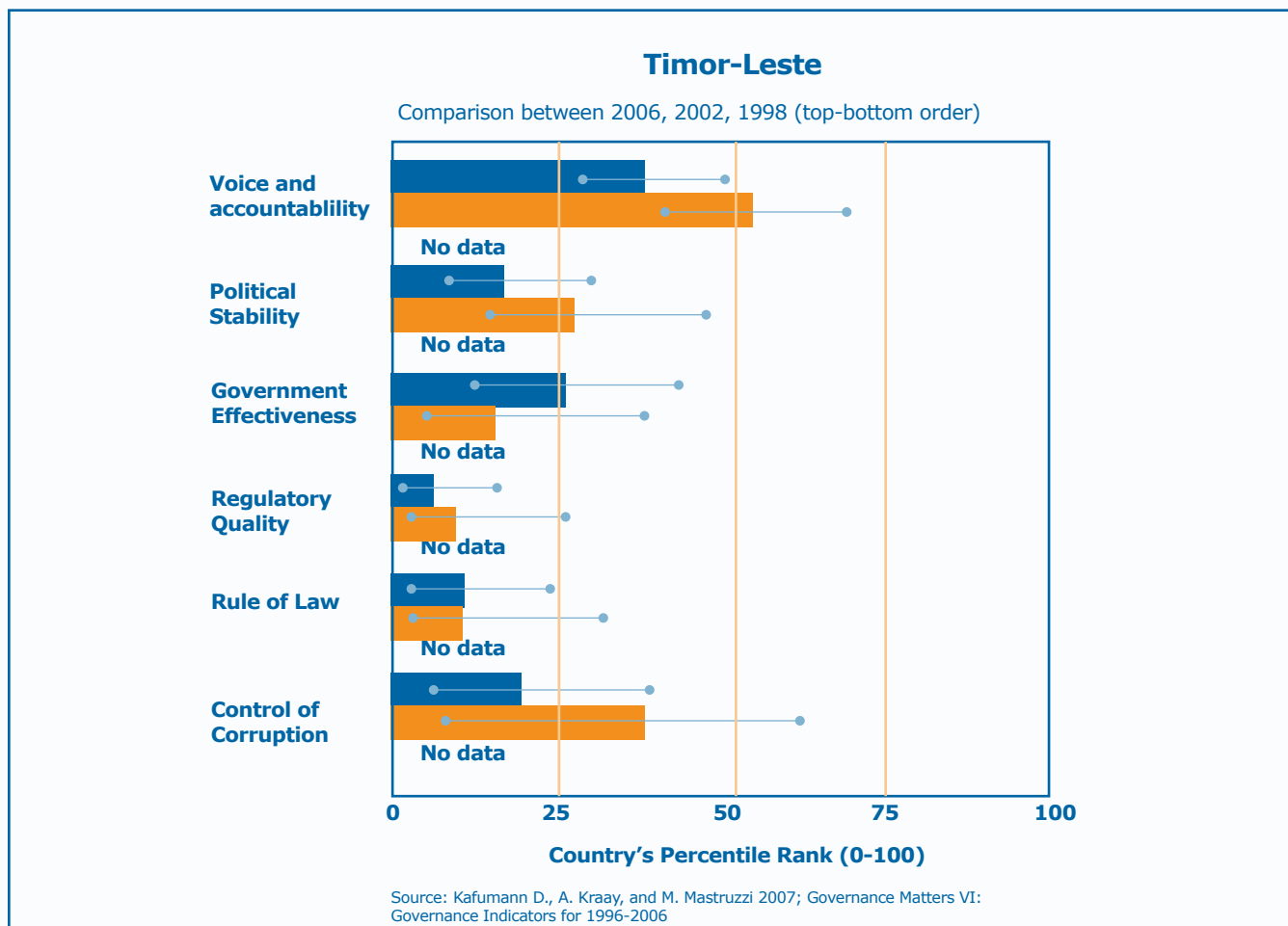
Figure 9: Timor-Leste governance indicators 1996-2006

As a consequence, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri was forced to resign. In the regularly scheduled May 2007 elections, Jose Ramos-Horta became president with nearly 70 percent of the votes and replaced Xanana Gusmao. In July 2007, Gusmao took part in the legislative elections but failed to wrest power from Fretilin and gain absolute majority. After initial negotiations for a unity government failed, President Horta appointed Xanana as Prime Minister, sparking violent protest from Fretilin supporters.[13] A coalition government that was formed without Fretilin ended the monopolization of state institutions by one political party. There is hope that this governance arrangement will allow for more active, formal, political deliberations within state institutions, and that the change of formal political discourse will lead to a more informed and engaged public sphere contribution by the state, making way for improved citizen-state relations. Establishing public credibility and building effective state-civil relations are two key challenges faced by the new coalition government.

2. Disillusioned and Disempowered: Public Sphere Challenges Impair Timor's State Building

The 2006 crisis demonstrated that Timor's government had yet to adapt to the changed environment and heed the calls of a democratic

Timor's mountainous structure creates challenges for communication and transport alike

> The 2006 crisis demonstrated that Timor's government had yet to adapt to the changed environment and heed the calls of a democratic society for participation, citizen-state engagement and dialogue.

society for participation, citizen-state engagement and dialogue. Timor's political leadership as an elite group failed to engage with society; it did not explain the challenges of state building nor seek public understanding for the slow pace of the state-building and reconstruction process. The lack of engagement and effective communication, as well as unfulfilled hope for an independence dividend, caused severe damage to citizen-state relations. This background contributed to a disillusioned and disempowered population who consider state institutions as politicized, distant and not serving the public interest. Lack of reliable information and citizen-state disconnect gave space and voice to destructive non-state actors, such as the leaders of the 2006 crisis who manipulated civic grievances.[14]

Neither media nor civil society has been effective in forging a constructive dialogue with the government and state institutions; the interactions are a reflection of the generally poor citizen-state relationship. A combination of pre-independence mindset and lack of capacity are responsible for the absence of constructive engagement and poor civil society-state and media-state relations. Under these conditions, Timor-Leste's public sphere has been unable to develop functional features, and as a consequence, the state-building process has been severely damaged.

2.1 A state-structure built from scratch

Timor-Leste was built up under UN auspices and only came into independent existence in 2002. Capacity limitations are considerable as governmental institutions and processes are being developed from scratch with staff inexperienced in the management of public administration. Though Timorese were allowed to join the civil service under the Indonesian occupation, most were not promoted to higher levels in the administration; those who succeeded were generally pro-integrationist and left together with the Indonesians in 1999. The semi-island was left with almost no experienced administrative capacity and knowledge when independence arrived. The government that emerged had no experience in building a participatory governance structure, and thus, it did not recognize the importance for state building of developing constructive citizen-state relations and failed to engage in the public sphere. This conceptual and operational shortcoming led to serious governance and stability challenges for the country.

2.1.2 Clandestine experiences shape leadership style

The political leaders of Timor-Leste were prominent figures in the resistance movement. Many of them supported the movement from exile in Mozambique or Angola; a few, notably Xanana Gusmao, fought as leaders of the armed resistance against the Indonesian army. To comprehend today's political deadlock, one has to understand that Timor's political leaders have known each other for over thirty years and stories of personal animosity, love and betrayal have been shaping their levels of mutual trust and their political interactions to present.[15]

The communication style of the first post-independence government led to frequent accusations of arrogance, aloofness and being

"out of touch." A component of this problem was lack of care in crafting public leadership messages, both formal and informal. At present some top and mid-level leaders have adopted a more trust-inviting style of communication, the crafting of key messages remains a general weakness.

The leadership and communication style of Timor's political leaders reflects the long years of clandestine existence that necessitated secretive behavior: information was kept close to the chest and decisions were taken alone or after consultations with a few trusted peers. The affected population was not consulted; decisions were taken for them with rumors and misinformation spread willfully to confuse the Indonesian army and to advance operations.

> The leadership and communication style of Timor's political leaders reflects the long years of clandestine existence that necessitated secretive behavior: information was kept close to the chest and decisions were taken alone or after consultations with a few trusted peers.

Timor-Leste suffered high levels of infrastructure destruction in the 1999 post-referendum violence.

Until today Timor's political leaders still adhere to this closed communication and leadership behavior. Most ministers do not disclose information beyond a small group of trusted advisers; information sharing and transparency are not only considered irrelevant but sometimes directly discouraged. The question of public participation is not given due consideration, and in the few public encounters, senior government officials have often been dismissive of ordinary citizens and their concerns. Given that public institutions are new and without a previous communication culture to counter these tendencies, the leadership style and behavior have been factors in decisively influencing the culture of the new public administration and in shaping their way of communicating internally and externally.

Languages in Timor

Some thirty local languages exist in Timor alongside the "foreign" languages of Bahasa Indonesia, Portuguese and English. With its difficult history and its far-reaching societal consequence, language has become a highly controversial political issue in Timor-Leste.

During the 400 years of colonial rule, Portuguese was introduced as the language of administration and instruction; during the Indonesian occupation, Portuguese was outlawed and Bahasa Indonesia became the official language of Timor. Today Timor-Leste's two official languages are Tetum and Portuguese. Each carries significant constraints as mediums of communication: Tetum is a *lingua franca* (only 13 percent refer to Tetum as their mother tongue but it is the most widely spoken and understood local language) whose vocabulary and syntax is not sufficiently developed for use as a language of administration; on the other hand, only 10–15 percent of the population speaks Portuguese. Bahasa Indonesia, in which approximately 50 percent of the population is literate and which can serve as a language of administration, is formally a "working language" under Timor-Leste's constitution, but as the language of the "occupier," was abandoned quickly by the post-independence government.

In 2000, the Timorese leadership, citing the link between the language and country's national identity, decided on Portuguese as the language of administration and instruction of the country. Timor's political leaders feel strongly attached to Portuguese, as it was used by the resistance fighters in the hills and spoken in the countries of exile.

The reluctance to use Bahasa Indonesia and a general inflexibility in the implementation of the language policy affects the basic functioning of the civil service, development of media, and communications between state and civil society. The language policy creates a generational divide, particularly as most Timorese under the age of 30 who received their school education in Bahasa Indonesia and went to Indonesia for their university studies have no linguistic or emotional affiliation to Portuguese.

The Portuguese-speaking political class literally speaks a language not understood by the majority of its constituency.

> **The lack of information flow and coordination within and among state institutions has severely limited the quality both of official deliberations and negotiations and of decisions taken.**

It is this culture of closed, exclusive decision making and opaqueness that has severely and negatively limited the state's contribution to the public sphere, and hence limited the chances of the population to establish informed opinions. The lack of interest on the side of the state in public participation has resulted in a lack of participatory structures as feedback mechanisms. As the public has not been provided with regular channels for influencing public decisions and constructively expressing discontent with public decisions, violent flare-ups like in spring 2006 have become a safety valve.

2.1.3 Dysfunctional internal communication

Timor's internal communication and information flow faces numerous challenges: Timor's authoritarian culture does not promote self-initiative, as action is taken only on the basis of explicit authorization—seeking instructions and requesting information from superiors is simply not done.[16] Work-plans are often not known or only shared among few, and anecdotal reports suggest that civil servants have only a limited understanding of the role of their respective ministry in general and of their unit in particular. Dysfunctional filing and mail systems hamper internal communication.[17] The difficulty of filing and mailing is compounded by the inability of administrative support staff to comprehend official documents in Portuguese. IT capacity and e-communication are in their infancy. Most

ministries are highly centralized; the exchange between the capital and district administrations is undeveloped. Capital-district communication lines are ministry specific and quality of interaction varies.

The attitude that the political leadership has taken towards information flow, together with the lack of systems, has significantly impeded communication among ministries and among key organs of sovereignty: the executive (including the Office of the President), parliament and judiciary, with most official communication reduced to exchanges among individuals. Intra-state communication is further negatively affected by the lack of clear coordination mechanisms between ministries and agencies, combined with a highly centralized institutional culture within government and parliament.[18]

The lack of information flow and coordination within and among state institutions has severely limited the quality both of official deliberations and negotiations and of decisions taken. The low quality of official decisions and the divided institutions have caused public opinion in Timor to be very critical of the state and to doubt its credibility. After the 2006 crisis, awareness about the communication challenges started to build in some quarters of the government; the Ministry of State Administration, in the lead for the decentralization process of Timor Leste, has recognized the importance of improving center-periphery information flow and plans on becoming the focal point for communication between the central government and the district administration.[19]

> **Dysfunctional filing and mail systems hamper internal communication.**

2.1.4 A state not talking or listening to its people

One of the key weaknesses across the new state is ineffective communication with the public.[20] This has manifested itself in lack of information about government programs and planning, poorly or non-existent explanations for policy decisions, and difficulties in finding a communications style that effectively resonates with the public. The use of Portuguese as the administrative language furthermore severely hampers communication with a public that has only limited comprehension of this language.[21] As the state provides little or no reliable input into the public sphere, citizens and civil society in Timor-Leste rely on rumors and informal information channels to influence their debates and opinion.

> One of the key weaknesses across the new state is ineffective communication with the public.

The lack of information is particularly detrimental to the shaping of public opinion and related actions as Timorese who are disappointed in their hope for improved post-independence living conditions want to know why the government is not delivering on socio-economic improvements. No visible change on the ground combined with no explanation for slow process results in an ill-informed, dissatisfied and frustrated population with a negative opinion of the government. Out of touch with their government and hungry for information, Timorese turn to alternative sources of information to fill the vacuum. Giving space to alternatives sources that have their own political agenda carries great risks, as the events of 2006 demonstrated. The potency of the riots and the high number of IDPs can be attributed largely to fast spreading rumors fueling the conflict and

causing fear. Further destabilizing information discrediting the government came from a video statement by one of the leaders of the 2006 riots that aired on Indonesian TV and sold widely in Dili.[22] These developments show how a public sphere vacuum, resulting from a lack of input by the state, is filled by forces and sources that are hard to control and that influence the public with negative repercussions for political stability and state-building efforts.

2.1.5 The new parliament

The national parliament of Timor-Leste is a unicameral assembly of 65 members (88 in pre-2007 election). Most representatives have limited or no experience in the roles, rules and functions of elected political representatives or in the workings of parliament. The discussions are in Tetum and Portuguese; draft laws are tabled in Portuguese.

With their limited experience in parliamentary work, formal political negotiations and decision making, the elected representatives have been slow in dealing with a large body of laws that needs to be passed. Most discussions are not well informed and shaped by party positions rather than subject expertise. As there are no procedures and rules applied to ensure early public engagement and expert consultations, some of the laws passed have been heavily criticized by civil society. Although parliamentary sessions are open to the public and RTL Radio (Radio Timor-Leste) broadcasts special sessions of the parliament (budget debate, plenary sessions with the prime minister or the president, annual opening and closing sessions, etc.), the larger population knows little about the laws that have been passed, including law enforcement officials. There is no public information center or communication activity attached to the parliament. The official gazette, *Journal of the Republic,* which is the key means of disseminating information on new legislation,

> There is great confusion about legal oversight and about equal respect and protection for the rights of citizens.

is published erratically and in Portuguese only; furthermore, issues must be bought, making it difficult for public offices to obtain even if they could read the content.

Timor's legal environment is particularly complicated with some laws coming from the Indonesian period, some passed during UN-TAET's regime and newer post-independence ones. There is great confusion about legal oversight and about equal respect and protection for the rights of citizens. Transparency and public participation in the law-making process is particularly important to create a legal body that reflects the needs and views of the population: otherwise the public perceives the process as hijacked by minority political elite and rejects it. Particularly in a newly democratic country like Timor-Leste, the parliament and law-making processes have to be connected to the public sphere, not only to provide the public with information but also to receive input from the public on the societal and legal parameters what it wants from its new governmental institutions.

3. Timor-Leste's Media[23]

3.1 Radio matters
Radio is the most important media sector in Timor-Leste; nearly half of the population has a radio set at home; batteries power two-thirds of them. Nearly two in three Timorese occasionally listen to radio compared to about one in three who read a newspaper occasionally. The main barrier to radio listening is the cost of or

difficulty in obtaining batteries, followed by reception problems, power outages and cost of buying a radio set.

Sources consist of the public sector broadcaster, Radio Timor Leste (RTL), a handful of Dili-based community/commercial hybrid stations, and several community radio stations at the district level. The biggest challenge for commercial and community radio stations alike is sustainability. There is no advertisement culture in Timor and no audience research is being undertaken to attract the few possible advertisers. Technical issues hamper radio signal penetration, and even the national broadcaster RTL does not have national reach and coverage.

During the transitional administration period, donors set up some 15 community radio stations to carry information to Timor-Leste's districts. By October 2006, nine were still active. Realizing that the crisis of 2006 was partly triggered by a lack of reliable information and furthered by rumors, donors renewed their support of community radios and re-activated those that had ceased operations.

Community radios experience a range of challenges. Many stations are not accepted by the community and remain a donor initiative. Volunteerism is not the answer to community radio sustainability. Populations in poverty can ill-afford the demands of volunteer work and it is not embraced in Timorese culture. Even if a community wants to keep a station going, the necessary financial resources may not be available, given the weak rural economy. Most community radio stations suffer from lack of technological and managerial know-how and spare parts. Electricity is unreliable and generators costly to operate. As a reaction to these challenges, many community radio stations reduced their number of programs and hours on air.[24] Access to current national news remains a problem for community radio journalists. Programming is

often reduced to local news unless the journalist manages to access a newspaper or RTL. Although community radio stations may be able to deliver NGO-funded programs on issues such as gender, health, and sanitation—all of which are valuable to the community—this content does not substitute for a reliable stream of accurate news.

For media to be participatory and to facilitate public debate effectively, outlets need to be interactive and allow for a two-way flow of information. In this regard, Timorese radio sector embraces "talk-back radio" and other interactive broadcast formats with great enthusiasm. Even community radio stations with limited resources are attempting to implement more interactive programming, allowing the community to debate local issues. As cell phones are expensive, some stations invite public officials to discuss local issues on the air and then invite the community to provide feedback by coming to the station.[25] These direct interactions facilitated by media bring great value to public debate and thus enhance the quality of the public sphere.

3.2 The challenges of the public broadcaster

The national *Radio Televisaun Timor Leste* (RTTL) is a combined national public radio and TV broadcaster. The radio part is Radio Timor Leste (RTL); the TV arm is known as TVTL. RTL is the single most relied on source of information in Timor-Leste. It is the program with the widest national coverage and non-commercial content dedicated to informing the public. RTTL is the only media outlet that receives government funding; it also profits from continuous donor support. It is unlikely that RTTL will ever be able to generate sufficient operational funds from advertising revenues and will continue to be in need of government funding.[26]

RTL reception is a problem for many listeners. Of RTL listeners, 43 percent report good

reception and the remaining 57 percent have varying degrees of difficulty. RTL is in the process of expending its reach beyond the estimated 50 percent of the population it already serves. The mountainous landscape makes it challenging and expensive for nation-wide FM coverage. The renovation of an existing AM transmitter site is in process. Once complete, RTL hopes the AM signal will reach at least 90 percent of the population. Approximate national coverage would give a larger percentage of the population access to national news and developments through the public realm.

3.3 Limited access to TV

Access to television is more limited. Just less than one in five Timorese lives in a home with a television. About two in five watch television with usage highest in Dili. Fifty-five percent watch TV at a neighbor's home or participate in other ways of communal viewing.

TVTL has a monopoly on TV broadcasting. Until recently its live broadcasts were limited to Dili, it is now in the process of expanding coverage beyond the capital. Satellite dishes are still a luxury but are appearing in slowly growing numbers—particularly in the more wealthy urban areas. Electricity supply continues to be a problem but citizens use large car batteries to feed satellite dishes and TV sets.

Though TV does not have the reach of radio, it is relevant as it is most often watched with groups of friends and family and directly facilitates debate about the information just received.

A survey shows that Tetum is the most favored TV language; some 40 percent of viewers would also like to hear Bahasa Indonesia. TVTL broadcasts its own programming in the morning and evening; during the day it feeds shows from the Portuguese RTP. Timorese with satellite dishes can avoid the language and cultural barrier of these programs by switching to Indonesian TV during the day and back to TVTL for the Timorese news and programming in the evening.[27] Though TV does not have the reach of radio, it is relevant as it is most often watched with groups of friends and family and directly facilitates debate about the information just received. When the national public broadcaster provides programming in a language that only few comprehend, a disconnect from its audience is created, greatly limiting the station's ability to contribute to public opinion and to shape debate. This creates a vacuum that in this case is filled by Indonesian TV. Given the history of the two countries and persistent negative Indonesian sentiments about the loss of Timor, the information that Timorese receive on Indonesian TV may not facilitate a positive public opinion of Timor's state-building efforts.

3.4 Newspapers are for the few

Newspapers and other print publications set the agenda for the country's elite and for broadcast outlets. Although illiteracy, cost of purchase and distribution problems limit newspaper readership, Timor-Leste boasts a number of print publications. Tetum, Portuguese and Bahasa Indonesia are the languages used in the various papers published daily or weekly. The high number of publications is largely due to multiple media donor grants available preceding and following the country's independence; it is unclear whether a market the size of Timor-Leste's will ultimately be able to support numerous print publications. Although many donors contributed start-up capital, equipment and other material

> Although many donors contributed start-up capital, equipment and other material and technical support at the time, few donors have engaged in long-term, sustained capacity building in the newspaper sector.

and technical support at the time, few donors have engaged in long-term, sustained capacity building in the newspaper sector.[28]

The print media suffers not only from economic problems but also from serious professional deficits. Media observers cite continuing problems with the prevalence of one-sided, single-sourced articles: a common complaint is that newspapers tend to reprint press releases verbatim with almost no analysis. In print outlets editing is also an issue. Senior editors are overworked and few are available to serve as critical guides to shape story generation and development. This weakness in editing may explain why news and opinion are indistinguishable at times with little attempt to establish objectivity. Distribution of newspapers is also a problem with at least one to several days delay outside of Dili, which in turn affects news distribution to community radio stations, as stations rely on the papers' headlines for their national current affairs coverage.

Despite its limited leadership and distribution, strengthening the quality of the print media would be a valuable contribution to Timor's public sphere, as newspapers can play an important agenda-setting role with their reach to and influence of policy-makers.

The challenges of moving from UN Radio to public broadcasting

When the UN's Transitional Administration closed down at the dawn of Timor-Leste's independence, Radio UNTAET was handed over to the Timorese government to become the Radio Television Timor-Leste (RTTL). Prior to departure, UNTAET put into effect a public broadcasting law that defined RTTL's operational and legal status.

Almost all larger UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) have radio stations for public information purposes. These radio stations are meant to be temporary in nature; the equipment departs with the rest of the mission at the end of the PKO's mandate period. Timor was the first time that the UN handed over its equipment to the government as part of its nation-building efforts.

The hand-over process led to a number of challenges that limited the capacity of RTTL to operate effectively and negatively impacted its ability to inform and facilitate public debate. Coming during a politically volatile period in the years after independence, RTTL was not able to fill the information vacuum. These shortcomings severely reduced the prospects for the population to receive accurate information, and an opportunity was lost to create public support and understanding for the slow reconstruction process, thus impacting Timor-Leste's state-building efforts. The lessons learned are listed here to serve as a guide for future handovers:

a) Although the laws were in place, there was only limited conceptual

understanding of the role and function of a public broadcaster among the Timorese political leadership. The model they had seen and experienced was first that of the Indonesian state radio and later of the UN radio. UN Radio mixes public information with news and current affairs and is quintessentially a form of state media in a slightly altered shape. The initial perception was that RTTL would continue to be the mouthpiece of the government.

b) The journalists who were employed by UNTAET and who were consequently employed by RTTL received their initial training from state-owned Radio Republic Indonesia, and then acquired further experience with Radio UNTAET. In both cases they were trained to frame stories around key people not around events and issues. Neither experience provided them with an understanding of the requirements of journalistic work in public broadcasting.

c) All administrative work (procurement, finance, budget, etc.) for Radio UNTAET was done by the administrative arm of the UN peacekeeping operation. After the hand-over RTTL had no administrative component in place. RTTL suffered equally from a lack of managerial structure and skills, as UN international staff had performed all these functions. Basically RTTL had no budget and nobody knew how to access government funds.

d) The UNTAET-drafted broadcasting law is strong on the function and role

of broadcasting but weak on issues addressing the composition and role of the board, finance and relationship with the government. The law fails to stipulate clearly that staff cannot be civil servants. Timor suffers from a lack of separation between state and politics; therefore government civil servants carry a political identity. The issue arose with public broadcasting of how to create a state-financed institution without turning it into a political tool. Frequent comparisons to Portugal were not helpful as the Portuguese RTP is a government broadcaster and could not serve as a model for the public RTTL.

e) TV was not a UNTAET priority and the equipment left was basic, which at least did not create high expectations. The UN left many computers but rendered them useless by not leaving the server or the administrative password. RTTL managed to establish a server to store and share files and to have log-on capability only in December 2006.

f) The UN left no spare parts for its equipment. Due to frequent electricity swings, equipment goes out of service quickly. Voltage regulators would have been helpful to prevent equipment burnout—an issue not recognized during the generator-supported UN period.

3.5 The popularity of cell-phones and the lack of Internet

Access to the Internet is almost negligible in Timor-Leste. Research shows that Internet is used by only 4.2 percent of Timorese with only 1.1 percent reporting every day or nearly every day usage. All users live in the larger cities and most rely on Internet cafes. Cell-phones are expensive and available in only one of ten households. SMS has become a popular form of communication among the youth with access. Frequent use of SMS is reported to spread information fast; it is hard to assess the influence of this new feature of Timor's public sphere.

3.6 Young and poorly trained: Timor's journalists

On average Timor-Leste's journalists are young, inexperienced and poorly paid. There is no journalism school in Timor-Leste; the subject is not even taught at the university.[29] Many journalists have only a high school degree. Education in Timor-Leste, including high school, is based on rote learning and does not encourage creative thinking and writing skills. In light of the absence of training and experience, many journalists lack basic professionalism and skills, the quality of reporting is weak, and serious investigative or beat journalism does not exist. The sensationalist and unprofessional behavior of Timor's journalists and editors had severe consequences when news reporting on alleged massacres furthered the violence during the 2006 crisis.[30]

There is no agreed upon national code of conduct applying to commercially employed journalists and no peer review process or pressure. The Timor Lorosae Journalist Association (TLJA) has developed a code of conduct for its members, both a general one and one specifically for the elections. The print media and community radio stations have codes of conduct developed with the help of Internews; RTTL operates under codes of conduct left from the time of UNTAET, the board has yet to approve a new code of conduct. Despite these fractured attempts to establish professional discipline, general agreement on professional standards and peer enforcement systems are lacking.

Improving journalistic skills, standards and ethics and providing journalists with an understanding of state structures and legislative processes is essential to help improve the quality of Timor's public sphere and to allow the media to establish a better-informed citizenry and to contribute more meaningfully to the public debate.

3.7 Poor advocates for their trade: Timor's media associations

A number of professional media associations have been formed, in part incubated by Internews and USAID. The *Asosiasaun Radio Komunidade Timor-Leste* was formed to provide an umbrella support organization for all community radio stations. Timor-Leste photojournalists founded the Timor-Leste Photographers Association and there is also an investigative journalism association. The Timor Leste Media Development Centre (TLMDC) is transforming into a media development organization with support from a number of international donors.

There is a divide between the two main journalists' associations, the Timor Lorosae Journalist Association (TLJA) and the *Sindicato Journalista,* which stems from the perceived difference between "professional" journalists versus "activist" journalists, apparently underpinned by long-standing personal differences.[31] The professional associations are weak, lacking cooperation and coordination between them. The associations could play two important roles in relation to the public sphere: by advocating for better work-conditions for journalists, they could improve the supportive nature of the environment, and secondly, by establishing peer pressure systems, they could impact the professional conduct of journalists and editors in the country positively. Both potential impacts would improve the quality of the public sphere and thereby of public debate and opinion-making processes.

4. In Opposition: Timor's Civil Society[32]

In Timor-Leste many, if not most, civil society members are former student activists who studied in Indonesia and experienced the overthrow of the Suharto regime by Indonesia's civil society and student movement. A large number took part in Timor's clandestine movement against the Indonesian occupation and these two experiences have framed their understanding of the civil society-state relationship as one of hostility and antagonism. There is only a limited understanding of a possibly constructive role of civil society beyond opposition to the

We really need someone to tell us what civil society is. Is church part of it? The church says no, but I think yes. We lack a basic understanding of the concept of civil society.

— Vigilio, civil society leader, Dili, May 2007

government. The aggressive communication behavior of civil society leaders has not facilitated a productive engagement in the public sphere. The exclusive use of the public sphere as a platform to criticize the government rather than an issue-focused debate forum has not been useful in stimulating a public debate around important societal issues. It has only contributed to a general feeling of public discontent without constructive value.

Beside the Catholic Church, which is an important player in Timor, the national network of civil society is severely limited and in many cases reduced to a presence in Dili alone. Those civil society groups with roots in the clandestine movement are used to advocacy and operational strategies not guided by principles of democracy in decision making. Their traditional hierarchical top-down governance still develops programs and priorities that do not necessarily meet the priority needs of their beneficiaries. Under these operational principles and conditions, civil society organizations fall short of truly representing member views, limiting their value to the national public sphere. Donor dependency and competition for funding further limits the capacity of civil society organizations to be the true spokespersons for the concerns of citizens.

Civil society can strengthen its voice in the public sphere by building alliances and cooperation among local groups and NGOs, which is rarely done in Timor-Leste where civil society networks are weak and information sharing between groups limited. The relationship among groups is often based on the relationships of their respective leaders, and there are no systemic, organizational links that could further mutual advocacy or capacity-building goals.

Most civil society organizations have yet to develop an operational and strategic capacity to engage with the public sphere. Few groups

publish regular reports, only those with strong donor backing have a website. One notable exception is the children's magazine *Lafa'ek*, which goes to every child in Timor-Leste, delivering development and civic education messages designed to be absorbed not just by children, but also by their parents. This magazine, which has succeeded in facilitating public debate, has been an important contribution to the public sphere.[33]

5. The Enabling Environment of Timor-Leste

The quality of the national public sphere depends on the capacity of state and civil society to give and receive, as well as on the media's ability to facilitate and shape public debate. In turn these actors depend on an environment that offers the legal, regulatory, safety, economic and social conditions to develop and to contribute to the public sphere.

5.1 Media

Legal and regulatory issues
Timor-Leste's government introduced a revised penal code in 2006; as a reaction Freedom House downgraded Timor-Leste's media environment from free to partly free.

The revised penal code contains severe penalties for defamation of public figures. Under Article 173, anyone could be jailed for up to three years and fined for publishing comments seen as defaming public officials. The code sets no limits on fines or other penalties for defamation. Responding to public pressure then President Xanana Gusmao neither signed nor vetoed the bill, and in February 2006 sent it back to the Ministry of Justice for reconsideration. The new government will have to decide on it.[34] There is a fear among some legal analysts that should a criminal defamation law pass, the police would have relatively free rein to

determine who should be arrested and/or tried for defamation. For its part, the government feels that a criminal defamation law is necessary to encourage responsible reporting. Despite all concerns raised by the draft law, Timor-Leste's media environment compares favorably to regional standards. In general Timor-Leste's media enjoys a favorable atmosphere for press freedom and legally is enabled to serve its public sphere role.[35]

There is no government-wide access to information policy or freedom of information legislation in place in Timor-Leste and the lack of access to information remains a considerable impediment. Legislation establishing an access to information act, together with political will and state capacity to implement the act, would significantly improve Timor's public debate and engagement.

Radio regulations

The Ministry of Telecommunications has an office that handles frequency allocation; however, it does not grant licenses or deal with any other regulatory issues. Any broadcast regulation that passes will be influential in determining the future shape of the commercial and community radio sector, and thus influence the radio's ability to shape the public sphere. With Timor-Leste's high illiteracy rate, radio remains the most important provider of information and facilitator of public debate. Passing a broadcasting regulation that enables a vibrant radio sector to facilitate national debate and to create a link between

In general Timor-Leste's media enjoys a favorable atmosphere for press freedom and legally is enabled to serve its public sphere role.

local and national developments would be an important step. An emerging broadcasting regulation should take community radio concerns into account. In light of Timor's language diversity and its large rural population, the community radio sector could make an important contribution to informing and facilitating local debate; yet, connecting it to the national level will continue to be a challenge.

RTTL

Radio Televisaun Timor Leste was designed as a public broadcaster, governed by a board of directors that provides citizens with independent information not controlled by government. Public broadcasters are judged as bringing high value to a public sphere: through government funding they operate free from commercial pressures but stay independent in content and programming. Under the first independence government, RTTL reportedly experienced political pressure not to broadcast reports critical of the government; there has been no such experience with the new government. A new public broadcasting law has been drafted and would, if adopted, limit the independence of RTTL. This law would alter RTTL's legal directive to present the views of Timorese opposition parties, and on a similar note, would not continue its current commitment to present the views of NGOs.

Given that RTL is the only non-commercial radio station and has almost nationwide coverage, a legal status guaranteeing independent programming and a government commitment to maintaining RTTL's independence would be important contributions to an informed public debate and to the shaping of Timor-Leste's national public sphere. Giving a voice to the marginalized and non-state actors is an important part of the value RTTL brings to the public sphere.

Sustainability/economic issues

The private media sector experiences problems common to private business in Timor.[36] There are gaps in key areas of legislation and regulation, and the institutions needed to enforce and administer the laws and rules do not yet have the capacity to do so effectively. Specific to the media sector are ongoing, severe sustainability problems. The business sector is only weakly developed and advertising revenue is consequently limited. The number of media outlets, particularly newspapers, is surprising given the economic difficulties and the poverty, illiteracy and distribution problems that considerably limit readership.

Over time an organic end to some of the papers can be expected, in the meantime, the need to survive through sales drives the market and increases the prevalence of easy to sell "sex, sports & crime" stories with their widely negative impact on the quality of Timor-Leste's public sphere.

5.2 Civil Society

Legal issues

Freedom of association and assembly are guaranteed by the constitution of Timor-Leste. In December 2004, the parliament passed a Law on Freedom, Assembly and Demonstrations that regulates political gathering and prohibits demonstrations with the aim of questioning constitutional order or disparaging the reputations of the head of state and other government officials. The law requires that demonstrations and public protests be authorized in advance.

The Decree Law on Non-Profit Making Corporate Bodies was published in mid-2005. It provides an essential framework for the creation and registration of civil society organizations, particularly foundations and associations. The registration process has caused frustration among some civil society actors after a number experienced application rejection, which led to complaints that the law does not reflect adequately the realities in Timor-Leste. NGOs receive a tax identification number, but report difficulties proving their NGO tax-free status when importing goods through the ports—an issue of particular concern for INGOs.[37]

Despite these challenges, the general legal and regulatory environment in Timor-Leste does allow civil society groups to form, operate and engage in the public sphere.

Sustainability/economic issues

Donor funding is more limited in the development phase. Reporting and accountability demands increased putting considerable strain on civil society actors who are struggling to adapt to the changed donor environment.

Donor dependency in Timor-Leste results, to a degree, in a civil society detached from its base. With few exceptions, Timor's civil society groups and leaders do not profit from close contact and constant input from the informal deliberations of their members, and they are not in a position to project their concerns and views in the public sphere. A capital-based civil society leadership is more accountable to donors than to its base members. Only in limited ways does Timor-Leste's civil society give a voice to the otherwise voiceless rural poor, which severely limits its contribution to the public sphere.

6. No Trust: State-Media-Civil Society Interactions

Timor's state, media and civil society do not exist in isolation. Their interactions and their mutual understanding of and respect for each other's respective roles determine the value of the public sphere; unfortunately it is not ideal.

6.1 State and media

State-media relations have become increasingly strained since independence. The poor relationship has been influenced by Timor's language policy, unprofessional media conduct and low quality reporting, as well as limits of media knowledge and lack of entry points for state information.

Recognizing the need for more effective outreach and communication with the public, the government, with donor assistance, established the *Centro de Formacio em Relacoes Publicas (CFRPG)* where government staff from key ministries receive 9-10 months of training and mentoring in communication, media liaison and community outreach skills. The graduates speak highly of the course but acknowledge that their professional success depends largely on access to information within their ministries; many of them are junior and do not have access to information or don't know how to handle the information received.[39]

Although some ministries have media officers and units, Timor lacks appointed spokespeople working for the government or parliament. This lack of designated entry points makes it difficult for journalists to get information without directly approaching and aggravating ministers or senior officials. There is no communication strategy and no directive that gives guidance on how to answer media inquiries or on which official speaks on what issue. Often interviews are given on the basis of the official's language

Spokespeople are essential to building and maintaining media relations, developing media strategies, and deflecting in moments of crisis.

Civil society in Timor is still trying to understand its constructive role in a democratic system and the processes that apply in this context.

skills, not their portfolio or technical expertise. Not having spokespeople makes it difficult to provide journalists with discrete background information or to use the option to retreat from a story that has backfired. Spokespeople are essential to building and maintaining media relations, developing media strategies, and deflecting in moments of crisis.

Most journalists are young with only a high school education and have difficulties correctly portraying complex issues. Because the majority of journalists cannot understand Portuguese and are unable to read press releases issued in Portuguese, the state language policy has negatively influenced state-media relations.[40] Government officials often express frustration at these limitations and accuse the press of spreading rumors or making news based on rumors.[41]

With the CFRPG assistance, government communication skills are slowly outpacing the poor capacity and skills of media professionals.[42] A serious imbalance could develop between the government's ability to tell its side of the story and the media's ability to critically analyze and understand government spin.

Language will remain a considerable issue. Issuing press releases and conducting press conferences, media interviews and other official communications in a language understood by most journalists would help to increase understanding and facilitate media-state dialogue.

6.2 Media and civil society

Advocacy, participation and other watchdog functions of a democratic society are little understood by the media or civil society in Timor. Media-civil society relations are not well developed. The media takes only limited interest in advocacy and civil rights issues; often journalists are not able to follow or comprehend their relevance. Civil society organizations do not display any media strategy or savvy around their issues and fail to use the public sphere to influence public debate and opinion.

6.3 Civil society and state

State-civil society relations are characterized by mistrust and hostility.[43] Until the 2007 parliamentary elections, state institutions were perceived as dominated by the executive and monopolized by members of Fretilin. The government was considered haughty, arrogant and dismissive of the primarily young, Indonesian-educated civil society members.[44] The government, on the other hand, considered civil society as politicized and in opposition to the state, and to Fretilin by association. As a consequence, poor information sharing, mistrust and inability to define common objectives characterize the relationship between state and civil society. The government projects a lack of understanding of the role and potential capacity of civil society, as well as a lack of interest in dialogue on many of the justice and civil liberty issues in which civil society groups have taken interest. Civil society displays an instinctive distrust of government systems and authority and a lack of interest in and understanding of the challenges faced by the government. Language barriers between the Portuguese-speaking political leadership and the Tetum/Bahasa-speaking civil society groups deepen the divide.

Civil society in Timor is still trying to understand its constructive role in a democratic system and

the processes that apply in this context. It has also yet to reach an understanding and appreciation for the role of a democratic government and how to access it for influence.

Lately positive signs of cooperation have been developing. The newly operational Office of the *Provedor dos Direitos Humanos e da Justica,* which combines the functions of human rights commissioner, ombudsman and anti-corruption agency, has been cooperating with a number of human rights organizations.[45] The Ministry of Water and Sanitation outsourced the organization of local networking to the local Red Cross to facilitate ownership and public buy-in in the discussions of some projects. Pressure to enhanced budget allocation might lead to further government-NGO engagement on project implementation in the districts and improve interactions on technical issues.

As a consequence, poor information sharing, mistrust and inability to define common objectives characterize the relationship between state and civil society.

The closed nature of the state institutions and the lack of public entry points for communication have led to public disempowerment and disconnection between the state and its people. Without clear venues for interaction and skills for voicing views and debating issues, civil society relies on strategies used in the past: street protests. Mistrust of civil society's intent and demonstrations that turned violent led the government to pass a law that imposes tighter regulations on assemblies and demonstrations—a move that pushes civil society deeper into the corner. To reduce frustration and to

connect with their citizens, the new government will have to repair the systematic relations in the public sphere. Creating entry points for public participation and improving its contribution and engagement in the public sphere will help. Civil society also will have to understand its role and responsibilities and seek more constructive ways to engage other actors in the public sphere.

Donor coordination and information exchange is compartmentalized into categories of media, civil society, and state support with no coordination among the sectors and limited within them.

Timor-Leste's Leadership & Communication Capacity for National Renewal Program: A program to build bridges and increase understanding and communication

Responding to the 2006 crisis, which revealed the consequences of a fragmented and disconnected leadership cadre across society and an ongoing weakness in communication among key state actors and with the broader public, the post-crisis government agreed to a World Bank program designed to address these challenges.

In October/November 2007, the Leadership & Communication Capacity for National Renewal (LCCNR) Program began a series of retreats with follow-up mentoring, focusing on negotiation skills, conflict management, leadership and communication skills, and more effective management of strategic external and internal relationships

LCCNR Program Objective: to encourage more open and effective communication inside and among the institutions of the state, and with the population; to broaden *the leadership skill set; and foster win:win negotiations by leaders in Timor-Leste with key stakeholders.*

The LCCNR program targets three broad groups of leaders: 1. formal and non-formal national leaders (including political leaders, as well as civil society, business leaders, senior media people, the church, senior judiciary, senior military and police, etc.), 2. the "emergent" leaders of tomorrow in Timor-Leste, and 3. the managers of critical state institutions (political appointees and/or senior civil servants, i.e., those who have institutional influence).

The content of the LCCNR program is "process-focused," meaning that the program does not offer solutions to problems but rather assist leaders in creating the frameworks necessary to find their own solutions to the problems they confront.

7. Donor Support Needs Strategy and Coordination

Timor-Leste's state-building efforts have been dependent on donor assistance. Support has been provided in media development, civil society projects and particularly to the nascent state structure. Donor coordination and information exchange is compartmentalized into categories of media, civil society, and state support with no coordination among the sectors and limited within them. The lack of strategic vision and coordinated approach has resulted in limited donor attention to constructive citizen-state-media engagement and mutual understanding of respective roles and responsibilities. The crises of 2006 brought to light the magnitude of the citizen-state disconnect and caused donors to look at these relationships and to renew media development activities. A few donors are now seeking to create and improve the much-needed public sphere interaction links; the Timor-Leste's Leadership & Communication Capacity for National Renewal Program is a noteworthy project in this regard.

8. The Way Ahead

Timor-Leste's governance challenges and its recent crisis relate closely to the deficits in its national public sphere. Insufficient state communication has been poorly facilitated by low quality media with little to inform citizens and to shape debate; as a consequence, Timor's citizenry remains ill-informed, using rumors to sustain its information needs, creating easy prey for manipulation.

The communication capacities of media, state institutions and civil society, and the poorly managed relationships among these actors prevent the development of a national dialogue. State and citizens are disconnected and the 2006 governance crisis demonstrated

The renewed hope for improvement caused by the recent elections offers the government a window of opportunity to prioritize the building of a platform for national dialogue to improve citizen-state relations and create a more participatory governance structure.

the cost of public disempowerment and poorly managed expectations.

The renewed hope for improvement caused by the recent elections offers the government a window of opportunity to prioritize the building of a platform for national dialogue to improve citizen-state relations and create a more participatory governance structure. Strategic and sustained support addressing the current deficiencies and enabling the sphere's systemic nature would be a significant step toward improving Timor's governance situation and moving the new country forward.

9. Recommendations for Action

A comprehensive set of interventions to address the capacity challenges identified in the different public sphere components is recommended to approach Timor-Leste's instability and governance challenges. A national outreach and dialogue strategy developed by the government in collaboration with media and civil society should guide these interventions. Such a framework would allow national and international stakeholders and counterparts to develop a vision and define a roadmap toward the desired state of citizen-state relations and public participation. Given the present degree of mutual distrust, it is advised that the strategy prioritizes interventions that enhance mutual understanding and interactions between the state and non-state stakeholders.

The following is a list of possible interventions to improve the nature and status of Timor-Leste's public sphere and its related governance processes:

Government

1. National outreach and dialogue strategy and implementation plan—With civil society and media, develop how the population, particularly those in rural areas, will receive information and how the government will connect with its citizens in a two-way flow of information. Build on synergies between the strategy and the decentralization process.
2. Donor coordination—Coordinate international support for the national outreach and dialogue strategy.
3. Language policy
   a. Initiate public debate and consultations on the use of languages in Timor-Leste with the possibility of a public referendum on the issue.
   b. Review the use of language for government communications and issue press releases/press conferences/ speeches in Tetum and in Portuguese.
   c. Draft laws in Portuguese and Tetum.
   d. Publish Gazette in Portuguese and Tetum.
4. Government-media relations
   a. Establish spokesperson posts in key state institutions and define which official speaks on which issue.
   b. Give media units access to policy information and a budget to operate.
   c. Facilitate exchange between government media professionals (managed by CFRPG).
   d. Make Council of Ministers decisions public.
5. Legislative
   a. Develop policies for the accessibility of draft laws and for the participatory processes involving civil society and public consultations.
   b. Distribute Gazette regularly free of charge to public institutions and the university.
6. Security sector reform—With transparency, build national consensus on security needs and procedures, establish a national security policy and security-related legislation, and clarify political control issues, including parliamentary and judicial oversight measures.
7. National youth—Consider establishment of a national youth corps with media capacity (youth radio programs). Organize regular meetings between Secretary of State for Youth and youth leaders.

Donors (including INGOs)

8. Constructive Engagement—Enable a platform for constructive engagement through support to projects that provide civil society and state actors with an understanding of respective roles; particular focus should be on district officials and civil society organizations as support to the decentralization progress.

9. Coordination—Adopt public sphere framework. Increase information sharing and coordination among media/civil society/public sector support.
10. Transparency—Be transparent in the work of your own organization.
11. Technical assistance to the public sector
    a. Support to develop and implement a national communication strategy.
    b. Develop a common filing system for ministries and training of administrative staff.
    c. Develop a national document classification policy and system
    d. Review media law and regulation drafts
12. Civil society support.
13. Support a Right to Information campaign and civic education programs about the principles and processes of participatory democracy.
14. Support the creation of polling capacity at Timor-Leste National University and of regular opinion polls on government performance and civil-state relations.
15. Support communication and negotiation training for civil society leaders.
16. Support civil society groups and networks outside Dili.
17. Provide media sector support
    a. Two-year work-study program, affiliated with the university that provides journalistic skills combined with professional experience (in Tetum).
    b. Media associations for the development of a code of conduct and a peer pressure system for adherence.
    c. Training on journalistic ethics offered to editors and media owners/ managers; support to management and journalistic training for community radios.
    d. Regular and broad professional training for working journalists.
    e. Community radios for syndicated programming and for a Dili-based

correspondent office that feeds districts with national news and arranges for district-to-district programming and news exchange.
    f. Review the market conditions for media and recommendations for the development for a sustainable media sector.

Civil society

18. Strengthen civil society—Reach a common understanding of the role of civil society in a democratic political system and society. Increase cooperation and information sharing.
19. Rural constituencies—Strengthen interaction and develop rural networks.
20. Communication skills—Develop media and outreach strategies. Improve communication, negotiation and presentation skills
21. Advocacy—Understand national policy-making processes and identify ways to influence policy developments.

A national outreach and dialogue strategy developed by the government in collaboration with media and civil society should guide these interventions.

Media

22. Advocate for training
    a. Two-year work-study program, affiliated with the university that provides journalistic skills combined with professional experience (in Tetum).
    b. Promote conflict-sensitive reporting.
    c. Develop journalistic ethics in reporting, editing and media management.
    d. Provide journalism and management skills for community radios.

23. Community radio—Establish syndicated programming and a Dili-based correspondent office that feeds districts with national news and arranges for district-to-district programming and news exchange.

24. Professionalism—Establish a professional code of conduct and peer pressure system. Increase professional skills on all levels of media operations. Strengthen media associations and consider the establishment of a single national association with increased influence.

Women are among the most vulnerable and the most excluded citizens; providing them with an entry into public debate is crucial for post-conflict recovery and development.

B. LIBERIA: A LONG WAY TOWARDS RECOVERY

A decade of conflict causing widespread destruction and massive population displacements marks Liberia. A history of social exclusion, endemic corruption, poor rule of law, poverty, high unemployment and warfare creates a challenging backdrop to Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Infrastructure needs to be repaired and public and judicial services need to be restored; however, far more challenging is the need to reweave the fabric of society, building public trust in government institutions and re-establishing civil-state relations afflicted by deep-seated cynicism. An inclusive society with equal access, addressing the concerns of all Liberians—irrespective of age, gender or ethnic affiliation—must be a priority for the new government to maintain peace. The volatility of the region and flows of refugees and weapons do not facilitate this task.

Lack of public trust and high expectations for a peace dividend on the one hand and complex and slow reconstruction efforts on the other are a potentially explosive mix that could be exploited by forces interested in derailing Liberia's peace process.

1. A Brief History of Modern Liberia[46]

Freed US slaves established Liberia as Africa's first independent country in 1847. In 1980 Liberia's tenth president, William Tolbert, was overthrown in a military coup led by Samuel Doe. After nine years of misrule and decline, several rebel factions, including one led by Charles Taylor, mounted an uprising against President Doe, beginning an eight-year civil war that devastated the country. A peace agreement, brokered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), ended the fighting

in 1997 with a round of presidential elections. The winner of that election was one of the rebel leaders, Charles Taylor.

Sworn in for a four-year term in August 1997, Taylor failed to eliminate armed opposition to his rule. Instead of serving the public interest, his kleptocratic rule led to further economic, social and governance decline. In June 2003 Taylor abdicated when his government crumbled under the combined effect of rebel attacks and two years of punishing sanctions imposed by the United Nations for Taylor's meddling in Sierra Leone's civil war. In August 2003, Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra, Ghana, and among its provisions was a two-year, all-inclusive National Transition Government of Liberia (NTGL).

> An inclusive society with equal access, addressing the concerns of all Liberians irrespective of age, gender or ethnic affiliation must be a priority for the new government to maintain peace.

From October 2003 to January 2006, Gyude Bryant acted as both head of state and head of government for the NTGL. While peace was consolidated during Bryant's tenure, essential state institutions were not reformed and endemic corruption continued. In January 2006, Ellen Johnston Sirleaf was sworn in as Liberia's new president. The international community warmly welcomed the election of this Harvard-educated candidate who ran on an anti-corruption platform.

Figure 10. Map of Liberia

> A Liberian youth of 30 years today has lived in a state of civil conflict virtually all of his or her life, with the last fourteen years being in full-fledged armed conflict.
>
> — A National Youth Policy for Liberia: A Framework for Setting Priorities and Executing Actions

The cost of conflict

The costs of Liberia's long conflict were high. Approximately 450,000 Liberians were displaced as refugees and some 100,000 as combatants, many of them minors. The war was conducted with extreme brutality, pulling families and villages apart and unraveling the fabric of society. Women were targets of systematic rape as a weapon of warfare; even today, high incidents of rape continue to be a source of strong concern in Liberia.

During the war many houses and roads were ruined; at present water, electricity, and landline telephone systems are essentially non-existent. The majority of communities have neither a functioning school nor a basic health facility within their boundaries. Public civil service is demoralized, low in capacity and riddled with corruption. The population is approximately 3.02 million of which half are believed to live in the capital, Monrovia. There are 16 indigenous ethnic groups with a corresponding number of languages. English is the official language of the country and together with Liberian English widely spoken and understood.

Social statistics illustrate some of the nation's challenges. Unemployment is 80 percent in the formal sector and 76 percent of the population lives on less than US$1 per day with 52 percent on less than 50 cents per day. There is a high fertility rate and 40 percent of its citizens are below the age of 15. Today, Liberia's infant and maternal mortality is estimated as one of the highest in the world. Health and education facilities were destroyed in the war and staff killed or displaced. The national literacy rate is thought to be 37 percent and net primary school enrollment is around 35 percent.[47]

Since 1989, 86 percent of all Liberian households were displaced at least once; most IDPs had returned home by 2006.[48] Today there are still about 80,000 refugees to be repatriated from various countries in the sub-region, as well as 16,253 refugees from Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and other countries residing in Liberia.[49] The return of the refugees raises concerns of land-ownership disputes with those now residing in their former houses and villages that could prompt ethnic tension.

Liberia is rich in natural resources; in the 1960s and 1970s the export-oriented concession sector generated about one-third of government revenue. The lucrative extraction industry had led to severe corruption in the past and the new government is in the process of reviewing all concessions to establish transparent processes.

The United Nations mission

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established in September 2003 with a wide-ranging mandate to take over from ECOWAS. Some 14,000 blue helmets, over 1,000 civilian police and numerous civilians are deployed in Liberia to support the ceasefire agreement, humanitarian and human rights assistance, security reform and implementation of the peace process. Depending on security developments and the build-up of national security forces, the mission is scheduled to complete its staged withdrawal by the end of 2010.[50]

2. Cynicism and High Expectations: Fostering Public Trust Central for Liberia's State-Building Objectives

Liberia's new government is faced with the challenge of delivering on its many promises that raised public expectations. The government pledged to eliminate the past politics of marginalization and exclusion and to establish an inclusive and participatory democracy with citizens engaged in governance processes. It promised to use national resources for the benefit of the people and to build effective institutions of governance. The slow pace of visible developments is eroding initial public trust and affecting the government's high initial standing. To maintain stability, the government will need to address the restoration of citizen-state relations, seek public engagement and manage public expectations.

Liberia

Comparison between 2006, 2002, 1998 (top-bottom order)

- Voice and accountablility
- Political Stability
- Government Effectiveness
- Regulatory Quality
- Rule of Law
- Control of Corruption

Country's Percentile Rank (0-100)

Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2007; Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006
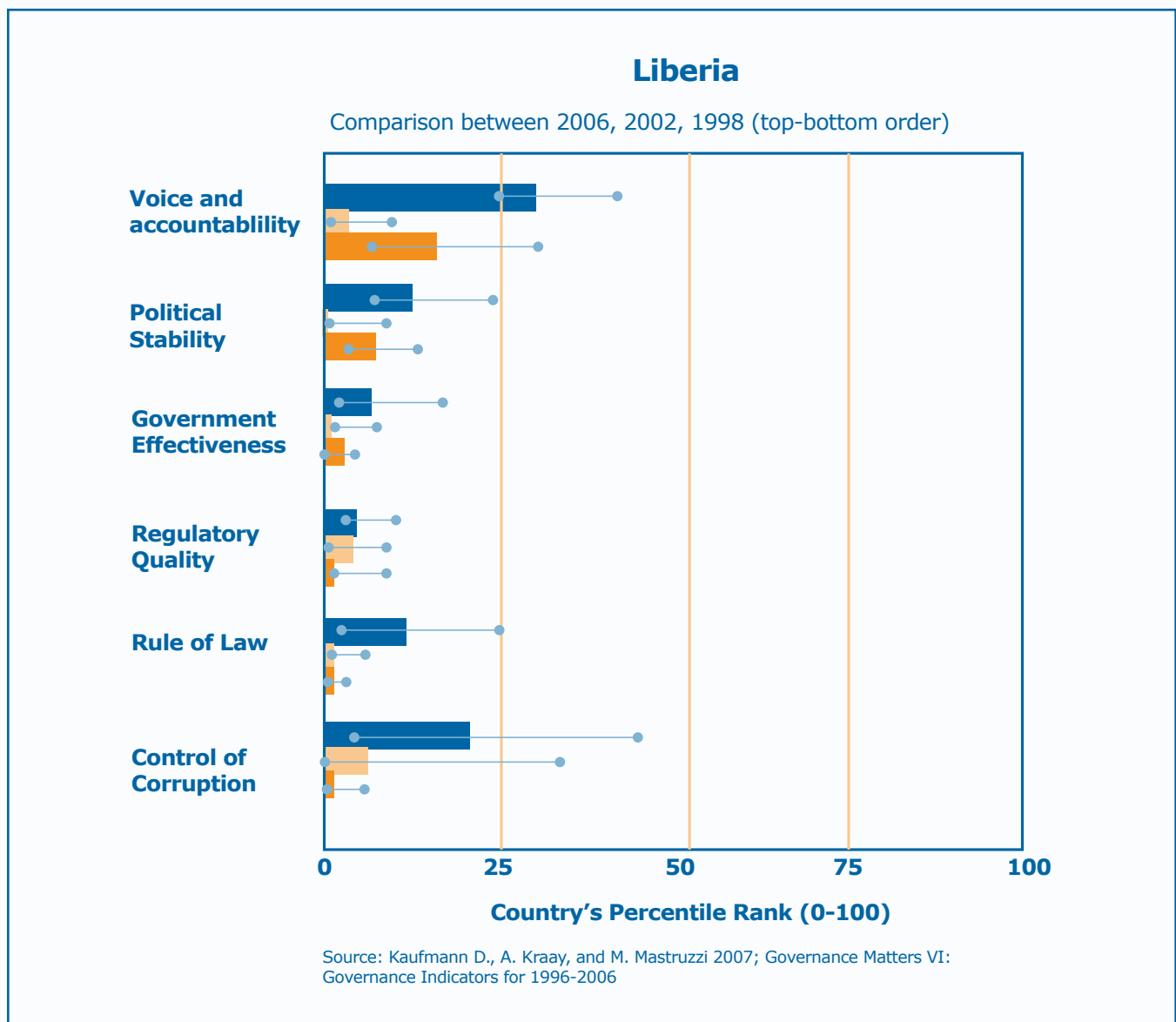
Figure 11. Liberia Governance indicators 1996-2006

Reconstruction is a cumbersome process and delivery of services is slow. Establishing a framework for public debate would help to build citizen's faith in state institutions. The Liberian government must provide information and establish channels for feedback, so the state can listen and citizens can be assured that their concerns are heard. In the end results matter, yet, informed citizens who understand the challenges and have a stake in Liberia's future will be more willing to give the government time and less likely to be manipulated by potential peace-spoilers. To this end, Liberia needs to re-establish its national public sphere. A functioning public sphere will enhance information flow, facilitate public debate on reconstruction efforts and improve civic-state relations. Liberia's successive oppressive regimes and the long war destroyed state, media and civil society institutions alike. Building capacity in all sectors and constructing an enabling operational environment is crucial for the future.

2.1 New government under performance pressure

Corruption and abuse of power are longstanding problems in Liberia; the message of the new government is strong and clear on the need for anti-corruption measures and accountability. This message, though, stands in contrast to the endemic corruption still existing in Liberia's public service. A complete reform process will take time; in the meantime, ongoing corruption practices can damage the government's credibility. The establishment of transparent and accountable institutions supported by a mechanism through which citizens can report cases of corruption will encourage citizen patience and engagement. Visible public follow up to corruption cases will demonstrate that changes, albeit slowly, are taking place.

President Johnson Sirleaf's administration needs to show equal commitment and action on

its pledges to increase social inclusion across ethnic, gender and age lines. Ensuring that underrepresented voices are heard and have influence governmental decisions is an important step towards shaping Liberia's peaceful future.

2.2 Unaccountable and unconnected: Liberia's legislature

Liberia's legislature is a bicameral National Assembly consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives. Members are elected by popular vote to nine- and six-year terms respectively; the last election for both was held October 2005. Few members have previous legislative experience and some have educational deficits that prevent full comprehension of print materials. The assembly's library has few books, no reference materials and support staff with only little experience.[51] The quality of parliamentary debate is low and ill-informed.

With no system in place to create either a verbatim record of proceedings or a voting-record, there is no way to track legislative accountability of parliamentarians and senators. As the electoral period is long many disconnect from their electorate, particularly if they come from remote areas. Structures are not developed to facilitate representative-constituency communications; there is no system for constituencies to inform representatives of their needs and

To improve the quality of Liberia's public sphere, Liberia's legislature needs to become transparent, have representatives accountable and requires media coverage in both houses to inform the public accurately.

views, and there is no reporting on legislation progress.[52] The absence of channels for citizen-state communication impedes opinion formation and educated public debate, hindering public influence on policy making.

Media coverage plays an important part in facilitating public understanding of legislative processes. Reporting creates transparency in governance important for a qualitative and functional public sphere. Liberia's legislature has a press office; sessions in both House and Senate are open to the public with UNMIL Radio broadcasting some. Unfortunately not all members of the press corps have the capacity to analyze adequately and to report respon-sibility on more complex legislative processes and outcomes, while the legislative press office faces serious constraints with experience and resources itself. Without a visitors' center and information materials in place, it is difficult to provide interested citizens and groups of citi-zens with a basic understanding of the workings of the National Assembly. To improve the quality of Liberia's public sphere, Liberia's legislature needs to become transparent, have representa-tives accountable and requires media coverage in both houses to inform the public accurately.

2.3 The challenges of internal communication

Liberia's current picture reveals major information flow challenges. Communication and information sharing among government institutions is severely limited: ministries lack even basic filing capacity, most buildings are in the process of being completely renovated or constructed, and systematic capacity for the handling information is minimal at best. Although ambitious thinking on information technology to further governance takes place: current reality is that there is no e-communica-tion and filing capacity, no government server and ministries rely on private yahoo e-mail

There is little trust or exchange of information between the new executive and the legislature.

accounts.[53] Confusion about respective ministerial mandates aggravates the situation further. Often past institutional mandates developed around ministers' personalities; now the government is in the process of properly defining mandates for a more functional administration.[54]

Executive-legislature
Some prominent members of the legislature were past "strong men" and are affiliated with the corrupt and violent history of the country. There is little trust or exchange of information between the new executive and the legisla-ture.[55] The tension affects lawmaking processes: draft laws originating in the executive get a critical reception in a parliament that is not a rubberstamp for the President's reform agenda and the executive questions the intentions of the representatives as self-preservation. This tension features widely in the press and does not build trust in the workings of the new state institutions.

Center-periphery
Liberia has a centralized political structure, and local government is organized in a hierarchy with the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the top. The Liberian constitution does not guarantee a functional, structural relationship between central and local government. Local elections have not been held for many years; many appointees are holding positions without con-nection to the citizens. The local government survival is wholly dependent on the central government without local accountability.[56]

The government pledged to decentralize and introduced the District Development Committees framework, which has the potential to enhance the engagement of local communities in local economic development, providing a link to resources in and outside of respective districts. With no e-communication, landlines or postal service, the communication exchange between central government and districts is severely limited.

National public policy deliberations that reflect the needs and views of citizens throughout the country are crucial. Establishing mechanisms to inform decision making at both district- and national-level will improve the public sphere and help the government to demonstrate its will to establish a more decentralized and inclusive national governance approach.

2.4 Reaching its people: citizen-state communication

The government of Liberia requires strong public support to succeed with its challenging reconstruction and reform agenda. To achieve its objectives, the government needs strategic, sustained and constructive engagement with civil society and media in the public sphere. For the public sphere to function successfully, the government must not only present its own agenda but also listen to where the public stands on issues and react to criticism professionally. Entry points through which public opinion can influence the formal policy debates of Liberia's state institutions are necessary for progress.

The government of Liberia requires strong public support to succeed with its challenging reconstruction and reform agenda.

The executive branch is realizing the importance of informing the public and the President is addressing the nation on radio regularly. Admitting that more needed to be done for national reconciliation and inclusion, she also began outreach and consultation tours of the counties.[57]

The difficult accessibility of the cities and villages the slow decentralization process will make media use central to the government's effort to reach citizens. Although cabinet meetings are followed by regular press briefings, the press conferences were criticized for being selective in the choice of invited media outlets and in particular for excluding community radios.[58]Community radios play an important role in the public sphere as they relate the relevance of national developments to the local context of their audiences, often in local languages. Ensuring that community radios receive national news is a way for the government to inform the rural population, and syndicated programming is another way of achieving that end.

Several ministerial "Government of Liberia" websites have been established. Although Internet access is limited within Liberia, web-based information is an effective way of reaching Liberia's large diaspora. To secure needed diaspora support, the government has to identify ways to include them into the national public sphere, not only by keeping them informed but also by allowing for entry points for their views and concerns to be heard and considered in public policy making and deliberations.

The Ministry of Information

Liberia's Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICAT) is mandated to serve as chief spokesman of the government and to voice official government position on international and national issues and programs. The MICAT is also supposed to inform the public on government programs and activities, and to manage

> The difficult accessibility of the cities and villages and the slow decentralization process will make media use central to the government's effort to reach citizens.

the cultural heritage of Liberia and its tourism activities. It regulates all information-related entities, such as radio and television stations, newspapers, news agencies, advertising agencies, cinemas, printing presses and any kind of media-related activity.

Given its mandate, the MICAT has a powerful role to play in the reconstruction of Liberia's public sphere. MICAT not only handles the information "input" function of the government, ensuring that it speaks coherently in one voice, but also, through the regulatory function, it facilitates information to the public sphere. Currently the capacity of the ministry is too limited to serve its two-fold mandate properly. As with many others during the war, the MICAT building was destroyed and all its files, studio recordings and broadcasting equipment destroyed or looted. An increase in production capacity would allow the government to develop public information material and civic education programming that could be aired through community radio stations and shape public debate.

Spokespersons and public information officers are important entry points for media and contribute directly to the quality of state-media interactions and the public sphere. Civil society and media judge that Liberia's official public relations officers (PRO) are reduced to issuing press releases and performing PR functions rather than acting in proper public information roles. A lack of access to policy thinking and

documents is the public information officer's biggest professional shortcoming.[59] In April 2007, MICAT organized a seminar for PROs with the objective of beginning to enhance their capacity for effective coordination and dissemination of government information. The seminar was a good initiative; yet, unless they are provided with access to policy formulation and related documents in their respective ministries, the PROs will not be able to carry out their important public sphere role effectively.

Liberia Broadcasting System: State-owned broadcaster

The Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) was established in the 1940s and comprised of the FM radio station, ELBC, a short wave radio and a TV station. Following the end of the conflict in 2003, LBS was in a serious state of disrepair; only after a donor provided technical equipment did output increase considerably. Since September 2006 the station has been featuring the President on the last Tuesday of every month, it has a website and its signal is received all along the country's border with Sierra Leone. Recently the Government of China has offered to provide additional large-scale technical/equipment support and LBS's management is considering the establishment of a TV channel that would broadcast nationwide.

As a voice of the government, LBS could play an important role in informing the public about government processes, programs and national developments, generating informed public debate. In light of the country's history of state abuse, it is questionable how much credibility the public places in the state-owned broadcaster. In light of critical information needs and the eventual closing of UN radio, turning LBS into a public broadcaster with programming independent of government influence could create greater public credibility. This change of status would not only require legislative steps but also

timely measures to educate the legislature, executive and public about the role and nature of a public broadcaster to ensure a conceptual understanding of its independence despite the financial support it receives from government.

Creating a sustainable public broadcaster would require the administration's long-term financial commitment, which might not be feasible in light of vast and competing reconstruction demands. As it is now, LBS ought to generate 40 percent of its income despite Liberia's difficult business and advertisement environment. The financial architecture of for a possible public broadcaster should be carefully crafted to ensure programming driven by public needs and not by commercial pressures, which would limit its public sphere contribution.

3. Liberia's Media: Not yet Equipped to Play its Role[60]

Media in Liberia has increased in numbers and diversity in the past years. There are reportedly some 50 commercial radio stations registered in the country. In addition there are approximately 47 community stations outside of Monrovia, out of which less than 35 are active. Only three stations, Radio Veritas, ELWA, and Star Radio, operate both on FM and short wave and can reach audiences in the remote districts. The only radio station with a nation-wide FM network is UNMIL radio.

Commercial radio stations

About fifteen commercial radio stations operate in Monrovia, broadcasting in English only (compared to local languages). Professional and technical standards are generally low. The local radio stations of significance are Star Radio and Radio Veritas. With almost national coverage, local languages use and informative programming, these two radio stations are important contributors to deliberations in Liberia's public

sphere. Difficult economic conditions and low advertising revenues will make sustained donor support an important factor in the survival of these critical public sphere facilitators.

UNMIL Radio

In the absence of national capacity, the UN has been playing an important role in the revival of Liberia's national public sphere, both as a facilitator and as a contributor. Established in accordance with the UN mandate for Liberia, the station broadcasts 24 hours a day and is estimated to reach two-thirds of the population. It broadcasts 12 daily news bulletins in both English and Liberian English, and plans on starting additional news broadcasts in local languages.[61] UNMIL has correspondents throughout the country to ensure that district developments are reported in the national public sphere. To serve as the feedback system of the public sphere, UNMIL's Media Monitoring and Development Unit provides daily media analysis to the mission's senior management and to the Liberian government. This analysis includes monitoring of community radio broadcasts and thus also reflecting on local and rural issues. The same unit is supporting the development of Liberian media's legal framework, institutions and professionals to improve the quality of Liberia's public sphere.[62]

Difficult economic conditions and low advertising revenues will make sustained donor support an important factor in the survival of these critical public sphere facilitators.

UNMIL Radio programs focus mainly on the operations and programs of UNMIL, UN agencies and the government, thus following a public information model rather than a journalism model, thereby becoming a contributor to the public sphere in its own right. The combination of the two roles has reportedly caused listeners to view UNMIL as a mouthpiece of the government and has reduced its credibility.[63]

No decision has been taken on the future of UNMIL's radio station and equipment at the end of the mission's mandate; no concrete planning has taken place yet to turn it all over to the Liberian government. To avoid an information vacuum at UNMIL's withdrawal, which would give dangerous space to rumors and uncertainty at a politically sensitive moment, the future of UNMIL radio should be a priority consideration. If a hand-over is envisioned, timely preparatory steps should be taken to avoid a sudden drop in technical, managerial and programming capacity. Should the hand-over not materialize, the government must ensure that other media outlets are developed sufficiently to fill the space now taken by UNMIL's news, civic education and multi-language programming. With resources and planning, improving the community radio network could achieve this goal. In line with such preparatory strategic thinking, the government should also develop its media monitoring capacity to cover community radio stations.

Community radio stations

At present there are about 47 community stations outside of Monrovia of which less than 35 are active. Many were pre-election initiatives and donor support ended in 2005.[64] Community radios broadcast in local languages and in English; professional standards are low and technical equipment basic. With a signal strength limited to approximately five miles and with a weak advertising base, most stations are not economically viable. Many

In the absence of national capacity, the UN has been playing an important role in the revival of Liberia's national public sphere, both as a facilitator and as a contributor.

stations broadcast programs produced by Talking Drums Studios, UN agencies and others for a fee. While some of the stations have developed different kinds of programs to attract revenue ("10 cents for a song," etc.), community engagement and long-term sustainability remain important questions.

The low levels of professionalism and problems in accessing programs generate a tendency towards sensationalist and exaggerated stories in community radio programming. As a result, the sector does not play its potentially valuable public sphere role. Liberia's community radios need donor support to build financially sustainable structures, develop and deliver programming, and increase professional standards. The community radio sector could take on an important and constructive role for Liberia's public sphere and thus for the country's statebuilding efforts. Yet without access to national news, quality control, syndicated programming and a program exchange network, as well as financial support, they will not be able to exercise their potential.

A few privately-owned television channels have appeared in Monrovia, reportedly operating with few skills; two are allegedly associated with political entities, the Unity Party of President Johnson Sirleaf and the Congress for Democratic Change of George Weah. There is no functioning national television station. The TV channel of the Liberian Broadcasting System has not been

operational for over a decade with no plans to revive operations. International television channels are easily accessible by satellite and are available to the wealthy and to those with access through their workplace or other communal sources.

TV can be an important facilitator in the public sphere, given its popular entertainment value. As it is often watched in groups, its programming can stimulate direct debate in audiences. In Liberia, however, TV has yet to develop a relevant national role.

Newspapers: Setting the trend and lacking in professionalism

Although the high rate of illiteracy in Liberia makes radio the most important media sector, print media is an agenda setter catering to Monrovia's elite. It is, therefore, an important part of Liberia's public sphere.

There are approximately 38 newspapers in Liberia, although only 13-18 publish with regularity. Most newspapers reportedly sell less than 3,000 copies a day across the country. Papers sell for approximately 20 Liberian Dollars (about 40 US cents): a high price given income levels in the country. Most have 8 pages and the quality of journalism is low. Besides the high price partly caused by high printing costs, high levels of illiteracy and infrastructure challenges restrict distribution and sales both in and outside Monrovia. For the print sector to play a more

Liberia's community radios need donor support to build financially sustainable structures, develop and deliver programming, and increase professional standards.

constructive and meaningful role in Liberia's public sphere, journalistic standards need to increase significantly, and better mechanisms for national distribution need to be developed.

Although new media is a powerful public sphere agent in global terms, in Liberia its public influence is still minimal, as Internet access is limited to Monrovia and Internet-cafes are expensive and unreliable. There are no landlines, nevertheless, use of cell phones is growing rapidly and various service providers now cover most counties. Currently most people use only the call option and not the far more powerful multiplier of text messaging. Although Liberia's current infrastructure and economic conditions make a powerful role for new media in the near future unlikely, adequate regulatory frameworks should be developed now to enable the growth of Liberia's IT sector in the long run.

Liberia's journalists: Low standards prevail

Political repression followed by years of outright conflict forced Liberia's journalists and media professionals into exile for decades. Many of the country's experienced broadcasters and journalists fled or changed professions and professional standards had no space to develop. Today, Liberia's journalists tend to be uneducated; most have only high-school diplomas and are poorly paid. Only an estimated 30 percent have received formal professional training, and the field as a whole is deficient in professional skills in media management, business management, fundraising, budgeting and strategic planning.

The low levels of both salaries and professional ethics have contributed to envelope journalism and blackmailing practices.[65] Without standards, Liberia experiences extremely poor quality media with the publication of sensationalist material

> **A particular challenge in Liberia's journalism environment is the under-representation of and discrimination against female professionals.**

plus speculative and opinionated writing and broadcasting.

A particular challenge in Liberia's journalism environment is the under-representation of and discrimination against female professionals. The low number of female journalists and the sheer absence of senior female media professionals is particularly worrisome in light of Liberia's history of gender-based violence and continuing high rates of domestic abuse and rape with few cases prosecuted. There is an urgent need to bring these issues to the public debate and to influence public opinion and initiate societal change. Female journalists would have easier access to victims and a different understanding of the significance of these violations, making them more powerful advocates for their rights. Liberia needs more female media practitioners at all levels of seniority.

In need of support: Liberia's media associations and institutions

Liberia's media associations could play an important role in the quality of the public sphere by advocating for better work-conditions for journalists and by establishing peer pressure systems to impact positively the professional conduct of journalists and editors. Although there are a number of media-related associations, most have only small membership numbers and are financially dependent on donor support.

Support to media associations could help them to significantly improve the quality of information and discourse in the public sphere. Associations could also be a way to improve the standing of women in the media profession.

4. Competing for Donor Funding: Liberia's Civil Society[66]

Civil society organizations are important contributors to the public sphere as they express the collective views of their members and are advocates for their concerns vis-à-vis state institutions. Formulated in the informal day-to-day discussions of members, civil society organizations are the voice of their members and bring their positions to the larger public for support. By influencing public opinion, civil society hopes to be heard by policymakers and to gain influence on relevant public policy decisions. To play their important public sphere role effectively, civil society organizations need to be well managed to advance their position throughout the country and not only with the urban leadership elite. They need to formulate their positions convincingly and strategically, understand the entry points to public debate and relate to media. Liberia's civil society organizations face challenges on all of these fronts.

The high level of infrastructure destruction has a major impact on the operational capacity of civil society organizations. Office buildings are still damaged and often without electricity, office equipment is limited, landline phones do not exist, and transportation is costly. Most civil society organizations and NGOs are located exclusively in Monrovia. Because donors and international organizations advertise jobs and invitations to tender only in the Monrovia print media, it is difficult for rural-based organizations to receive information and donor support. Being Monrovia-based makes it difficult, particularly in combination with the poor

communication and transport infrastructure, to include the views of rural membership, especially those in remote districts. Few NGOs have national operations and membership; women and youth are notable exceptions, though their efforts to establish a national advocacy framework seem largely donor supported, if not driven.

In general Liberia's civil society lack organizational management and accountability structures; many are personality centered. Short of a small number of women's groups, most of civil society is male dominated; management is an almost exclusive all-male domain. The small number of women in civil society, especially in leadership positions, impedes advocacy work that needs to be undertaken to improve the status of women in the country, particularly the poor rural areas. Liberia's rural population and women have traditionally been excluded from policy considerations. With neither group strong enough to shape the agenda of civil society, women and rural areas are deprived of an important voice to join public debate and changes public policy.

The high level of infrastructure destruction has a major impact on the operational capacity of civil society organizations.

Civil society organizations have a better chance to influence public debate and to shape opinion if they share information and establish cooperatives alliances. Liberia's civil society organizations have yet to develop a platform for information exchange and networking among organizations. Some information exchange networks in Monrovia have developed around key civil society leaders and their informal contacts, but they are tied to the individual's agenda and not institutionalized for sustainability.

5. Liberia's Enabling Environment

5.1 Media[67]

Legal/regulatory issues
In general the constitution of the Republic of Liberia provides for freedom of expression, which encompasses the right to hold opinions; right to knowledge; academic freedom to receive and impart knowledge and information; right of access to libraries to obtain such knowledge; freedom of speech; right to be silent; freedom of the press; right of access to mails, telephone and telegraph; access to state information and its functionaries; access to state owned media; even to express contrary views. These rights are subject to limitations in a state of emergency declared in accordance with the constitution and/or through court proceedings with respect to defamation, invasion of privacy rights, false advertising and copyright infringement.

Although the constitution provides for a generic legal umbrella, in October 2004, a media law and policy reform process began that has recommended a range of measures to bring Liberia's law into conformity with regional and international standards. Subsequently three broad pieces of legislation were drafted: a bill on the establishment of a Media Regulatory Commission, a Freedom of Information bill and a Public Service Broadcasting bill. A component to ensure legal rights of community radios was recently added. The proposed bills have yet to be submitted to the legislature through the Senate and House Committees on Information; if paired with the political will to ensure their implementation, their passing could significantly improve the media environment and strengthen media performance in the public sphere.

Sustainability/economic

Success in its public sphere role depends on the media's ability to run financially sustainable operations. Liberia's newspapers and radios are poorly funded and undercapitalized. Given the low level of economic activities, newspapers' advertising revenues rely on announcements from UNMIL, as well as other UN agencies and relief organizations. The government places limited public advertisements and some publishers believe that certain papers are strategically sidelined and abandoned to punish critical writing.

With a poor economic environment, media outlets in Liberia survive by attracting a wide audience through "sex, crime and sports" stories. A healthier economic environment would generate sufficient advertisement revenues for media outlets to be less dependent on sales and more concerned with quality in their programming and publication. As Liberia's economic environment recovers and the private sector develops, there are reasonable expectations that advertisement revenues will become available to the media sector. In the meantime, sustained donor support and government assistance could alleviate the economic pressure, allowing for some quality media to develop and having substantial positive impact on the public sphere.

5.2 Civil Society

Legal/regulatory

Liberia's constitution guarantees the protection of privacy of the individual, family, home or correspondence, as well as the right to peaceful assembly, expression of grievances to the government, right to form and belong to associations, trade unions, political parties and other organizations, and right to refuse to associate. Liberia has a NGO/PVO coordinating section in the Ministry of Planning and Economic

> Legal and regulatory protection of civil society organizations seems to be sufficiently guaranteed and enabled to contribute meaningfully to Liberia's public sphere; the challenge of NGO performance rests in other areas, such as donor dependency and poor operational quality.

Affairs, which acts as the registering location for all NGOs in the country. Technically organizations must register to be able to work; however, the majority are not registered, and many are not sure how to register.

The same agency is mandated to monitor and evaluate the activities of both national and international NGOs and to enhance the cooperation between the government and NGOs. Some tension between the Government of Liberia and civil society developed in May 2007 when the ministry introduced a new "National Policy on Non-Governmental Organizations Operating in Liberia" that establishes procedures, guidelines and policies geared towards the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the activities of both national and international NGOs to enhance cooperation and ensure community-driven intervention, transparency, accountability, rule of law and maximum benefits to the people of Liberia.[68] This development caused concern that the government might reduce the NGO's current freedom of operations—a suggestion the government has been rejecting by underlining the need for quality control and coordination instead.

Legal and regulatory protection of civil society organizations seems to be sufficiently guaranteed and enabled to contribute meaningfully to Liberia's public sphere; the challenge of NGO performance rests in other areas, such as donor dependency and poor operational quality.

Sustainability/economic

NGOs in Liberia depend on donor funding on a project-to-project basis; few receive core funding. With the end of the humanitarian phase, funding has become increasingly scarce and NGOs are reportedly working outside their area of competence to secure funding. They struggle with increased administration and reporting demands. One NGO commented that the lack of attention to capacity building during the humanitarian emergency phase generated these problems.[69] Several organizations run by using member subscriptions, which usually apply to unions and professional organizations, but now also extend to several rural advocacy organizations that do not know how to access funding outside their village with information on fund raising limited to Monrovia.[70]

Dependency on donor-driven projects does not allow civil society organizations to advocate in the public sphere for positions reflective of their member's discussions. Financial dependence alters accountability structures from a downward, membership-based approach to an upward donor response situation. Core funding would allow civil society organizations to grow

Financial dependence alters accountability structures from a downward, membership-based approach to an upward donor response situation.

internal structures and develop membership-owned projects and positions that could enter the public sphere.

6. Space for Constructive Engagement: Interactions in the Public Sphere

6.1 State and media

On assuming power in January 2006, the Unity Party of Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf made a policy commitment to promote a vibrant media environment and to defend the growth of a free press, as enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Liberia. Since then various incidents have caused the government to criticize media for sensationalist reporting and triggered reactions that were perceived as warning signals. Media representatives acknowledge that

High profile elections, like the one of Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, can provide newly elected post-conflict government with public support and a window of opportunity.

relations have suffered but still consider media a partner not an enemy of the government and believe that the new government deserves to be given a chance.[71] Government officials differ in their assessment and judge media as lacking in constructive engagement and not working as a partner in the reconstruction of the country.[72]

State and media in Liberia need to collaborate to facilitate public sphere deliberations that illustrate, explain and support the reconstruction process. The cooperation also must give media the space to exercise its watchdog function. Finding this balance is difficult in an environment marked by poor professional standards and economic pressures on the media side, and a history of corruption and abuse of power on the state side. Building a constructive relationship is fundamental in shaping the public sphere that develops public trust and support for the reconstruction and reform process.

6.2 Media and civil society

Civil society needs to be heard through the media, not only to express the importance of the issues they bring to the public debate, but also to sustain coverage as they advocate for their positions in the public sphere. To date this media-civil society relationship is not sufficiently developed and thus limits the possibilities for civil society to inform and influence public debate. Though media outlets frequently quote and feature prominent civil society leaders, this engagement is based more on the respective persona than the issue at hand.

Civil society organizations and media have yet to form alliances around advocacy issues. The lack of sustained media interest can be explained by a combination of financial demands and lack of knowledge to report matters accurately. Civil society organizations have not helped to facilitate media engagement; most organizations plan media engagements around

certain events but have no continuing information dissemination or advocacy strategy. Addressing the shortcomings and improving media-civil society engagement would improve Liberia's public sphere by ensuring that civil society positions are given the space and attention they need to inform and influence the public debate.

6.3 Civil society and state

Generally the relationship between government and civil society is considered constructive. The government has managed to attract a number of key former civil society members to work as deputy ministers in various departments. Though there is apparently some resentment in civil society that these people have "gone to the other side," the inclusion of civil society members has created bridges for greater understanding between sectors.

Although civil society representatives have good access to policy makers and legislative committees, they find it difficult to get their hands on drafts of key policy papers and legislation, suggesting a lack of awareness in government concerning the public status of such documents.[73] Once passed, the proposed Freedom of Information Act legislation should ease access to public documents. For the legislation to be fully effective, the government must establish the relevance of the act and the responsibility for implementation within state institutions. The development of a classification policy and code

The government has managed to attract a number of key former civil society members to work as deputy ministers in various departments.

might be necessary. Once fully implemented, the Freedom of Information Act would constitute a substantial improvement in the state's contribution to the public sphere and thereby improve the quality of informed public deliberations and opinion formation.

7. The Need for Vision, Strategy and Coordination

Liberia faces complex governance and reconstruction challenges. It will take time for this large country with its infrastructure challenges, human poverty and financial constraints to rebuild lives and livelihoods. The new government is committed to building transparent and accountable governance institutions and to ensuring public participation in governance processes. And yet, the slow process of battling endemic corruption and delivering on equal access to public services is likely to lead to public frustration and to undermine the new government. Public disappointment paired with the high unemployment among youth and former combatants plus the instability and arms flow in the region could feed the interests of those waiting in the wings to derail the peace and reconstruction process.

In light of slow donor-funding mechanisms and Liberia's capacity challenges, prospects for speeding up the reconstruction process are limited. With tangible changes slow to arrive, a functioning public sphere where media, state and civil society engage constructively as partners in dialogue will be central to building and maintaining public trust in the eventual benefit of the reconstruction process.

In order to facilitate the development of Liberia's public sphere, the government is advised to take the lead in establishing a communication and dialogue strategy for the country that guides and coordinates donor support activities. Such a strategy would acknowledge the

In order to facilitate the development of Liberia's public sphere, the government is advised to take the lead in establishing a communication and dialogue strategy for the country that guides and coordinates donor support activities.

importance of each public sphere actor—state, civil society, and media—establish capacity needs and outline how donor support would contribute to each sector's capacity development and effective interactions. The strategy would pay particular attention to the development of "listening" capacity of the state and entry points for public participation throughout the different government branches.

In the establishment of desirable benchmarks, the communication and dialogue strategy would profit from being synchronized with UNMIL's withdrawal to prevent an information vacuum. A regional component for outreach to the refugee population should be considered, as well as a strategy on how to integrate the Liberian diaspora in public debates. The national strategy should explore cooperation with community radios and investigate the benefits of government-supported syndicated programming.

8. Recommendations for Action

Hope for change and a better future is prevailing in the country. This post-conflict momentum provides the chance to set the foundations for public sphere conditions and capacities that will help the country to step out of the conflict trap into a future of sustainable, participatory and accountable governance.

A comprehensive set of interventions is required to develop Liberia's public sphere. The following is a selection of proposed interventions that would help develop Liberia's public sphere and move the country towards participatory and accountable governance processes:

Government

1. National outreach and dialogue strategy—With civil society and media, develop a plan that outlines how the population, particularly outside Monrovia, will receive and impart information to influence public debate and decision making. The strategy should take account of Radio UNMIL's withdrawal plans and include a regional component for outreach to the refugee population.
2. Donor coordination—Facilitate information sharing, prioritize activities, ensure donor adherence to national dialogue priorities, and secure funding for the strategy implementation.
3. Ministry of Information
   a. Review structure, policies, and operations.
   b. Establish information-sharing mechanisms within and among public institutions.
   c. Work with Ministry of Planning to support the decentralization process with policies, operations and structures to ensure information flow between the counties and the capital.
   d. Organize a regular roundtable with media editors to improve relations.

e. Explore cooperation with community radios and investigate the benefits of government-supported syndicated programming.
4. Legislature
   a. Develop guidelines for public hearings and committee briefings.
   b. Train legislators in constituent relations.
   c. Develop civic education campaign to explain the working of the legislature and how to access and influence public policy.
   d. Develop, publish and distribute a legislative journal (Gazette), if possible also on-line.
   e. Develop recording system to ensure accurate transcripts.
   f. Invite executive officials to brief the legislative committee and explain executive reform proposals.
   g. Provide the library of the University of Liberia with all legislative documents and a budget draft.
   h. Ensure radio coverage of legislative sessions or weekly summaries to distribute to community radios.
   i. Organize legislative beat training for journalists.
   j. Develop basic public information material.
   k. Develop basic visitor's information center.
5. Security sector reform—With transparency, build national consensus on security needs and procedures, establish a national security policy and security-related legislation, and clarify political control issues, including parliamentary and judicial oversight measures.

Donors
Strategic issues
6. Coordination—Apply public sphere framework. Improve information sharing and coordination within and between programs. Build on synergies.
7. and inclusion—Be transparent about the work of your own organization and the speed of delivery. Publish tender information, funding and

vacancy announcements on radio and community radios outside of Monrovia.

Public sector support

8. Assistance to the Ministry of Information.
9. Support the development of a media protocol and training on messaging and media relations for senior government officials and parliamentarians.
10. Assistance to the creation of a national archive system and a government printing house.
11. Improve Liberia's legislative communication capacity and accountability measures.
12. Advocate for training and equipment for the Legislature Media Office; training from a US press officer would be helpful given the similar systems.
13. Support the implementation of the NGO Policy Framework for Liberia, particularly as it relates to quality control and coordination of NGO activities.
14. Brief Liberia's law reform commission, once established, on the media legal environment.

Civil society support

15. Support a Right to Information campaign.
16. Support a national civil society umbrella and information exchange network.
17. Support continuing and coordinated capacity building of civil society organizations in urban and rural areas, including nonproject-related organizational and management skills.
18. Advocate for gender sensitization and training in participatory techniques for civil society organizations and community leaders.

Media

19. Survey communication habits and media usage to inform the development of a national communication and outreach strategy.

20. Review market conditions for media, and recommend measures for a sustainable media sector.

21. Establish a one-year, praxis-oriented professional training facility for media professionals with a focus on investigative journalism, beat journalism, professional ethics, and writing and broadcasting skills. Attach it to the national university.
22. Provide awareness training for media owners and professionals to battle current female discrimination in the media trade.

Civil Society

28. Polling—Develop public polling capacity at the University of Liberia and procure regular public polls to capture public opinion.
29. Academic excellence—Enter partnership programs with African and non-African universities, including academic exchange programs for teachers and students to support the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Liberia.
30. Strengthen civil society—Build national networks and strengthen relations to rural constituencies. Establish civil society centers for information-sharing purposes and networking. Ensure gender-sensitive programming and accountable management processes.
31. Media relations—Develop media and advocacy strategies. Improve interaction with journalists on civil society agenda.

Media

32. UN Radio—Apply lessons learned from other missions to plan for sensible hand-over process early on.
33. Professionalism—Increase professionalism throughout media sector. Apply code of conduct rigorously. Strengthen media associations to improve ethical standards and working conditions for journalists. Ensure gender sensitive programming.
34. Community radio—Develop nationally-syndicated programming and networks for community radios.

C. BURUNDI: A COUNTRY OF FRAGILE PEACE AND DEMOCRACY[74]

1. A Brief Recent History

Ethnic conflict, fuelled by political elites over access to land and power, has afflicted Burundi throughout its post-independence history with large-scale fighting in 1965, 1972, 1988, and 1993-2003. In 1993, the country chose its first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu from the Frodebu party *(Forces pour le développement de la démocratie)*. When Tutsi army extremists assassinated Ndadaye three months later, Burundi slid into civil war between Hutus and Tutsis. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 sparked additional violence.

The Arusha Accord was signed on August 28, 2000, by the Burundian government, 17 political parties and some armed opposition groups. The accord foresaw ethnic balance in the army and government, as well as fresh multiparty elections. A transitional government was sworn in on November 1, 2001. After some delays, the government managed to accomplish the passing of a new, democratic constitution to carry out local and legislative elections and to successfully transfer power to popularly elected authorities.

The long years of conflict and ethnic rivalry dismantled Burundi's public sphere, and citizen-state relations suffered as a result of years of ethnic domination of state institutions and abuse of power. Rebuilding public trust and establishing positive civil-state relations are among the key challenges facing Burundi's government in its quest for political stability.

Burundi and its two closest neighbors, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo have all endured civil wars, causing widespread refugee movements. Tanzania an-

Figure 13. Map of Burundi

nounced that all of its 10 refugee camps would close by the end of 2007.[75] About 480,000 refugees will be sent home, including 150,000 Burundians. The return of a high number of refugees is likely to further distributional conflicts between ethnic groups and to advance tension in Burundi. Establishment of a national debate for the peaceful expression of public concerns and followed by visible government efforts to address the issues will significantly reduce the likelihood of violent escalation.

2. Post-Conflict Burundi: Capacity and Constraints

The capacities of all relevant Burundian public sphere actors—state, media and civil society alike—have suffered in the years prior to and during the recent conflict.

2.1 Government

After a period of deteriorating relations, state authorities, especially the executive, have shown over the last months more willingness to engage with media, civil society and the public through increased face-to-face contacts and press conferences; however, these developments are hampered by material and human resource constraints.

To increase transparency, the government established that press conferences on the ministerial, vice presidential and presidential level take place frequently and regularly. This initiative will be an important step towards increasing the state's public sphere input. Another important step, mitigating the effects of political and administrative centralism, is an order that every ministry "adopt" a province to monitor and visit for important events. This measure would facilitate the flow of information from the capital to the periphery and also establish an entry-point for direct interface between rural communities

and the government. To have real impact on citizen-state relations, these visits need to take place regularly and predictably; be conducted in a format that allows for an open exchange of views; be reported on by the press and ultimately feed back into formal political deliberations in state institutions.

The government itself has little capacity to engage and provide input in the public sphere. Although the Minister of Communication functions as the government's spokesperson and directs the communication service, the spokespeople in different ministries lack basic technical capacity to fulfill their functions and work for ministers who often fail to see the need for sharing policy information. The government has hardly any press monitoring capacity to take "the pulse" of public debate.

The absence of separation of powers is a serious governance and political issue. Executive power effectively controls the judicial and, until recently, the legislative branch. The legislative branch is asserting an increasing independence with regard to executive power; this change in dynamics decreases the flow of information between the institutions and further limits the information reaching the public sphere.

Public authorities outside Bujumbura lack Internet access, limiting internal center-periphery information flow. Restrictions on two-way information flow create problems for both the centralized administrative structure and the rural area periphery, inhibiting information flow on national and local developments and impeding the exchange of views for public policy discussions.

The legislature

Among state institutions, the legislature plays an important role in setting the legal framework for societal relations. To fully reflect their will,

The capacities of all relevant Burundian public sphere actors—state, media and civil society alike—have suffered in the years prior to and during the recent conflict.

the legislators need to be connected with citizen throughout the drafting process; much of the quality of the adopted legal framework depends on the quality of the process preceding it. In Burundi neither the formal legislative deliberations nor the public information process are well developed, which impacts negatively on public opinion formation.

Until recently the domination by the executive branch meant Burundi's legislative debates were merely rubberstamping executive decisions. Although this has changed, the National Assembly still has to mature into an accountable and transparent institution. There are no processes in place for public consultations and no entry points for public opinion to influence policy deliberations and legislative decisions. Draft laws are not published or officially shared with civil society or media, and committee meetings are not public or accessible. Voting records are not made public. These limitations impede debate in the public sphere, leaving no entry points for the public to hold representatives accountable for their decisions.

Although there is a constitutional quota of 30 percent for women in parliament and senior political positions, several women have been dismissed from prominent posts and replaced by men. In light of the ongoing discrimination against women in Burundi, the absence of females as role models and advocates in the legislature restricts discussion in the public

sphere on vital gender issues and thus blocks attitude change in society.

Language plays a central role in the public sphere deficiencies of Burundi's legislative process. The official languages are Kirundi and French, and although 97 percent of Burundians cannot read it, the language of administration has remained French. Its administrative use further marginalized the role of the uneducated, especially women and peasants. According to the constitution, all laws must have an original version in the national language, Kirundi. Despite this, many current laws exist only in French while most new laws are also drafted and published only in French. This use of French generates problems for political processes as an estimated half of the members of parliament cannot read French and rely on radio information

to learn about the bills under discussion. Many legislators literally have no comprehension of pre-vote debate, which significantly reduces the quality of the assembly's deliberations and results.

The Burundian authorities recognize the pressing need for having all its laws in the national language but have yet to remedy the problem. As long as the language issue exists, the quality of the legislative process, the accountability of the representatives, as well as the possibilities for non-French speakers to access information in the public sphere will remain severely limited to the detriment of public debate and opinion formation.

2.2 Media
One of the current challenges of Burundi's media lies in its history: before the process

Burundi

Comparison between 2006, 2002, 1998 (top-bottom order)

Country's Percentile Rank (0-100)

Source: Kafumann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2007; Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006
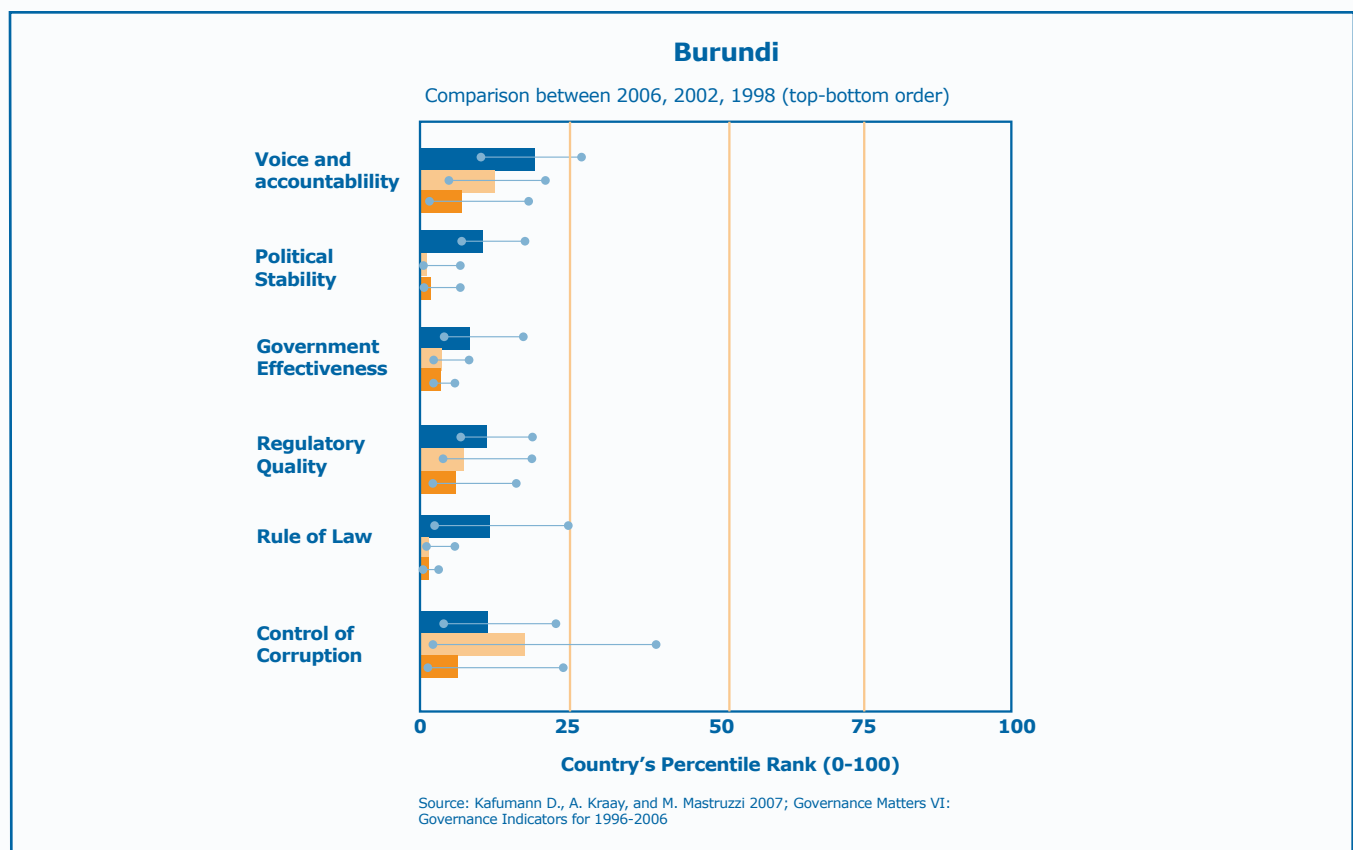
Figure 14. Governance indicators in Burundi 1998-2006

of political liberalization in the early nineties, the state media was monopolized by the lone presence of the Catholic Church's bi-monthly *Ndongozi* (the Guide). Now over 10 private radio stations and several private print media exist.

Burundi's private media was a significant influence on opinion formation in the national public sphere when it facilitated public support of the peace process and the acceptance of the Arusha Accord. Through the openness of the media, in particular radio stations, rebel groups were able to broadcast their views and contribute to the public debate. Their courage inspired the hitherto stale public media to discuss public issues more openly and changed the public sphere dynamics significantly. The resultant mounting public pressure contributed significantly to the government's final willingness to engage in the

Burundi's Ministry of Justice

The administration of justice is weak in Burundi. Gangs and former combatants roam the streets and countryside, constituting a threat to the safety of the population. Many refugees are too afraid to return home. The justice administration's failing to adequately address numerous land disputes is causing tension between returning refugees and those who stayed.

The Ministry of Justice receives less than three percent of the government budget; as a result in the provinces NGOs equip courts with copies of legislation and other basics such as chairs, tables, paper and pens, etc. With this scarcity, courts increasingly suffer from bribery to influence judicial processes. As significant as these resources issues are, the main problem in the judicial branch remains the lack of independence. The executive has the power to cut the salary of court staff and to replace judges in the middle of a case.

Impunity remains a problem. Temporary amnesties have become de facto pardons for war crimes. Political foot-dragging impedes the work of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation to review war crimes. Civil society feels excluded from the whole process, while international donors and the population demand accountability.

To improve transparency, the Inspector General of the Ministry of Justice has been appointed as spokesperson but has not received extra resources to carry out his added responsibilities, limiting his media and outreach activities to an occasional press release. He has neither the time nor the capacity to engage with civil society or interest groups. With no subscriptions to publications and press monitoring services available, responding to emerging public views is not possible. Before the conflict, the ministry published a legal review in French, but a lack of resources has prevented its reappearance and there is no way for the public to review legal developments.

Many Burundians believe the state does not protect their legal rights, which affects the legitimacy of those in power. To rebuild public trust, the government has to step into the public sphere to reaffirm the value of justice. The state must demonstrate its clear commitment to address the atrocities of the past and to introduce measures for accountability. The resources committed to this crucial effort are woefully inadequate.

political dialogue that resulted in the Arusha Accord. Today, Burundi's radio stations are still providing a voice to many stakeholders, including the remaining rebel groups and the poorest strata of society.

During the electoral period in 2005, the media again contributed dynamically to public debate and opinion formation, when they utilized synergies and pooled resources to travel together and to cover the elections. This cooperation fostered peer control and enhanced objectivity in reporting; the intense media scrutiny also pressured political actors to play by the

rules. Burundi's independent media plays an important public sphere role and this active role elicits heavy governmental criticism.

State media

The state owns and controls the National Radio and Television of Burundi (RTNB, *Radio Télévision Nationale du Burundi*), consisting of a radio station and the sole television in the country.[76] The government also owns a daily French-language newspaper, the weekly Kirundi-language *Ubumwe* (Unity), and the national press agency (ABP, *Agence Burundaise de Presse*), which has a website in French. As of today, there are no plans to

The Université Lumière, which offers a degree in communication, lies in the outskirts of Bujumbura.

develop an independent public service provider.

Although the state provides public media with offices and the Ministry of Communication pays the salaries of employees, they all run deficits and suffer from chronic underfinancing. The public sphere role of all state-owned media outlets is limited, as they are believed to reflect the agenda of public authorities and are met with significant public skepticism.

Private print press

Burundians' low literacy levels and the country's oral tradition make it hard for print media to thrive. The conflict deeply disturbed printing capacities, paper supply, distribution channels and readers' purchasing power; distribution is often limited to Bujumbura. Burundi's recent membership in the East African Community might increase the economic and political integration with neighboring countries, which might result in the availability of their more sophisticated news publications and magazines. This competition has potential to further aggravate local market conditions.

To overcome distribution and printing costs, some private information agencies distribute their products electronically and by fax with plans to introduce online subscriptions. Other than this limited advancement, high printing costs, distribution difficulties and low literacy rates limit the influence of Burundi's print media. Its importance, nevertheless, should not

The Burundian authorities recognize the pressing need for having all its laws in the national language but have yet to remedy the problem.

Today, Burundi's radio stations are still providing a voice to many stakeholders, including the remaining rebel groups and the poorest strata of society.

be underestimated given its role as an agenda-setter for the Bujumbura-based policy elite.

Private radios

Radio is the most popular and vibrant sector of Burundian media—the only one with national reach. All stations are based in Bujumbura; the country has no community radios. Unlike print media, private radio stations receive strong donor financial support. They broadcast mainly in Kirundi and French, with Swahili a distant third.

Journalists' associations own Burundi's leading radio broadcasters. The Catholic Church owns two radio stations and the Pentecostals' one station is the only private radio to include regular programs in English. Private radio plays an important role for Burundi's public sphere. Its diversity in programming, languages and ownership, as well as a clear sense of its watchdog role, make these stations vital contributors to public debate and important additions to the state-owned media.

Foreign and online media

RFI *(Radio France Internationale),* BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and VOA (Voice of America) contribute to Burundi's public sphere and act as counterweights to governmental-owned information channels. BBC and VOA broadcast in Kirundi; regionally, Radio Rwanda, broadcasting from the neighboring country, is also considered influential.

Satellites make international television channels easily available in the capital. A number of websites offer current news and articles on Burundi; most of them are in French and based abroad, targeting academia and the diaspora. New media impact in the country is limited with Internet only available in the capital and two other cities, Gitega and Kiremba.

Journalists' education and training

Burundi's school for journalism closed in 1991. Most Burundian journalists have degrees in fields other than journalism and learned their profession on the job; a small group studied journalism abroad.

Since 1997, media professionals have had the chance to improve their skills in workshops and seminars organized by the donor-financed Press House. Starting in 2000, Burundian students

have been able to study communication at a private university, Université Lumière. The language of instruction is mostly French, with occasional English-language lectures by foreign professors; the only course in Kirundi is a language course. Of the sixty or seventy graduates each year, about twenty major in audiovisual communication, including print press; the rest prepare for public communications jobs in development organizations.

Despite the limited educational possibilities, the standards of journalistic professionalism are high, and the media has succeeded in establishing itself as an important facilitator in the public sphere.

2.3. Civil society

Civil society organizations are important contributors to the public sphere, as they express the collective views of their members and are advocates for their concerns vis-à-vis state institutions. These positions are formulated in

Radio is the most popular and vibrant sector of Burundian media—the only one with national reach.

the informal day-to-day discussions of their members. As the voice of their members in the public sphere, civil society organizations inform the larger public and seek to gain support for their positions. By influencing public opinion, civil society hopes to be heard by policymakers and to influence relevant public policy decisions. To play their critical public sphere role effectively, civil society organizations need capacity: management that captures the positions of their members throughout the country, not only the urban leadership elite; formulation of convincing and strategic positions; comprehension of the entry points to public debate and media savvy.

In recent years the availability of international financial support has fuelled the growth of Burundi's civil society. The political and security environment has become more conducive to the development of civil society organizations, and they are providing important public services in the absence of strong state institutions.

Insufficient resources restrict civil society organizations' ability to maintain offices in the provinces, therefore, the country's political centralization in Bujumbura is reflected in civil society as well. This centralization means civil society cannot fully reflect the views of the rural poor population. Civil society organizations in Burundi do try to participate in the public sphere, but with limited resources, their messages are often considered unfocused and ineffective.

The limited capacity of civil society, restricted

access to public documents and national culture of impunity with little whistleblower respect or protection limits civil society's effective contribution to the public sphere. The Catholic Church, which occupies a preeminent place in Burundian society with abbots and bishops considered important public figures, is the most influential civil society actor, advocating for the global Catholic Church's agenda.

3. Burundi's Enabling Environment after the Peace Accord

The 2005 constitution enshrined the freedom of the press and established the National Communication Council charged with the regulation of the media. The council is meant to become largely a self-regulatory organ for the press, but so far the President of the Republic appoints all its members, contradicting the notion of an independent body. Since incidents of press freedom violations in 2005-06, working conditions for journalists have improved, enabling them to perform professionally. A major challenge remains the

Studio Ijambo—Search for Common Ground

In 1995 to prevent the use of media as a tool for ethnic propaganda, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) opened the first independent radio studio to broadcast in Burundi. Studio Ijambo became well known for its multi-ethnic team of journalists that provided trusted, balanced reporting. After a first focus on news, the studio went on to produce many other types of programs, including magazines, call-ins, special features, etc. Broadcast by all the main radio stations, Studio Ijambo's most well-known program is the soap opera *"Our Neighbors, Ourselves"* that promotes and models reconciliation.

Key to the success of such programming is the ability to strengthen the media messages with initiatives on the ground. Evaluations recommended that SFCG should capitalize more on the synergies between its media work and its community-outreach program, which focused primarily on capacity-building work in conflict resolution and civic education.

Another key to SFCG's success is their ability to adapt to a changing context. Initially Studio Ijambo was slow to engage governmental authorities once they were legitimized by national elections. The government was also not forthcoming in embracing independent media activities and reconciliation issues. Studio Ijambo redefined its strategy with key partners, including the government, to better support sensitive national processes, thereby ensuring that the population is well informed and able to engage. The Studio is also moving away from direct production to focus increasingly on capacity building. It supported the creation of a series of independent radio stations, providing them with training and equipment and bringing them together in a coordinated network, Synergie Média, to cover national elections. An external evaluator for USAID in Burundi recognized that over the course of its intervention, SFCG had changed journalists' approach within Burundi and contributed to a more active, investigative media landscape.

poor functioning of the justice system, which impedes adequate protection against slander, libel and intellectual property rights. Such legal deficiencies impact the public sphere, as they make officials less likely to engage with the press and also increase the likelihood of self-censorship among media professionals.

The Press Law of 2003 foresaw the establishment of a Press Promotion Fund, but the fund has yet to be created and the private press complains about not receiving adequate public support in light of the challenging economic environment.

Civil society organizations have to register with the government, a routine administrative procedure that does not include fees or taxes. There are no reports of any national or foreign organization facing obstacles in this regard. After a difficult period in 2006 that included the arrest of civil society members, at present civil society is free from government undue control and pressures.

Finally, Burundi's state of destitution is an inescapable fact shaping the public sphere's environment, especially in the provinces. Poor infrastructure, scarce electricity supply, limited Internet access and expensive road travel that can still involve security risks affect any activity that public sphere actors try to perform. The partial lawlessness of the country has made media and civil society operations difficult at times.

4. We All Know Each Other: Interactions in the Public Sphere

4.1 State and media
State-media relations suffered from the heavy handedness of the democratic government elected in 2005. The government perception of the press as hostile agents led to a breakdown of constructive relations and severely limited

The mailbox in front of the headquarter of Burundi's OLUCOME—Observatoire de la Lutte contre la Corruption et les Malversations—allows citizens to report corruption cases anonymously.

Private media focuses their attention on corruption that is widespread at the higher levels of government and continues to drain scarce public resources. The unveiling of corruption scandals is the most frequent cause of friction between state authorities and media and civil society. The high level of corruption is seen as a strong impediment for building trust between public officials and citizens. In an environment of prevalent corruption and weak rule of law, the watchdog role of the media takes on a crucial function in the public sphere to inform public debate and to raise demand for accountable state institutions.

4.2 Media and civil society
An alliance of mutual support has developed between the fledgling media and civil society: they help one another survive and grow. Civil society and media are frequently intertwined. Many civil

society organizations have established media outlets to better reach their audiences: various churches own radios and print media, the Chamber of Commerce owns a radio station, and journalists' associations stand behind the most successful private radio stations.

During the transitional period, media and civil society groups worked hand in hand to provide civic education, developing campaigns to explain the new constitution and the stakes of democratic elections to Burundian citizens. The difficult environment created by public authorities cements the excellent rapport between media and civil society. It is a marriage of convenience in a country where news and facts are hard to attain, and civil society and media provide both information and audience for each other.

This close relationship, however, can lead to an imbalance in coverage. The media focus on political events leads to neglect of a critical appraisal of civil society. Although it is clear that civil society organizations have agendas, media has focused more on their idealistic side and good works.

The generalized lack of public communications capacities and training in civil society organizations has not damaged their ability to access and relate to the media, and Burundi's public sphere is profiting from the good and close relations of these two important actors.

Radio is the most popular and vibrant sector of Burundian media—the only one with national reach.

4.3 Civil society and state

Although public authorities rely on civil society to provide services and carry out government policies, civil society-state interactions to not extend to the realm of public policy formulation. Civil society organizations report difficult access to public information is difficult; they are forced to fall back on sharing information internally and with the media and on using unofficial channels by enlisting the help of civil servants as citizens and as members. Contacts with public authorities are frequent but unsystematic and depend on the goodwill of public officials. There are no consultations with civil society in the formulation of public policy.

The shortage of entry points for public opinion to shape policy and the absence of consultative mechanisms are serious shortcomings of Burundi's public sphere, significantly impacting citizen-state relations. Access to public documents and the ability of civil society, independent of ethnic background, to influence policy formulation is critical for Burundi's reconstruction and long-term stability.

5. Burundi on the Radar-Screen: Donor Involvement in the Public Sphere

Donors have been realizing the negative impact created by the low capacity and quality of Burundi's public sphere and have initiated a number of activities to address related challenges:

Building and improving interactions

The Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP) began in late 2002 and lasted for 18 months. It was directed by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars with the support of the World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund and supplementary assistance from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Its objective was to build a cohesive, sustainable network

of leaders from the political, civil society and media fields who could work together across all ethnic and political divides to advance Burundi's reconstruction.

The World Bank Institute is currently implementing a Capacity Development Leadership Program to help leaders to tackle implementation challenges related to its poverty reduction strategy. The President-appointed steering committee leads the process, supported by the World Bank Institute. Leaders include the head of state, his deputies and cabinet, as well as key leaders in the private sector and civil society.[77]

The UN Peacebuilding Commission plans to set up frameworks to make Burundi's social partners engage in dialogue within the year. This arrangement involves the government, parliament, civil society, media and local-elected authorities and is meant to create a platform for constructive engagement and dialogue.[78]

In a similar vein, the UN has assisted the Burundian government to launch a Roundtable of Partners of Burundian Development. Its first conference took place in May 2007, uniting representatives of the government, parliament, political parties, civil society and the private sector, together with international donors. Follow-up meetings are scheduled for every six months. The Roundtable has created more opportunities for civil society and the private sector to network with public authorities, obtain public information and participate in shaping public policy. Moreover, this UN initiative is giving public authorities first-hand experience of working in cooperation with non-state actors to achieve common goals. As an added benefit, it enhances the status of civil society as an important player in state affairs.

Media development

The mandate of the UN in Burundi includes the promotion of press freedom and the reinforcement of the legal and regulatory framework for media and communications.

An alliance of mutual support has developed between the fledgling media and civil society: they help one another survive and grow.

In recent years, several international donors helped to launch a host of private radio stations, providing them with funds, equipment and technical assistance. The Swedish development agency, SIDA, financed training for journalists for reporting on environmental matters. UNESCO helped launch the *Maison de la Presse* in 1997 and supported it until 2004; this initiative assisted in building journalistic professionalism and in teaching about the role of journalists in a peaceful society.

In 2005 UNESCO organized a workshop on media coverage of elections. The much-praised cooperation among the journalists for the coverage of the 2005 elections started there: media outlets got together to share the costs of the operation, UNESCO and some international NGOs paid for material, and Search for Common Ground paid for travel costs and cars, all enabling the Burundian media to create a unified election team.

UNDP has supported media development since 1997. It gave two computers to the *Maison de la Presse,* financed training programs before the elections, helped private radio stations set up emitters in the provinces, and financed journalists' training abroad. Various cooperation agencies still finance national and private radio

stations and the public print press.

The various media development programs have helped to establish capacity, enabling media to become an important public sphere facilitator in Burundi. Sustained involvement and better co-ordination will further improve media capacity.

Support for state communication capacity

UNDP financed a number of consultants to advise the government in preparing the press law of 2003 and the setup of the National Com-munication Council. Additionally the Ministry of Communication gets support from several international donors: The World Bank, the French, Belgian and British embassies, UNDP and UNESCO.

Together with the NGO Global Rights, USAID supports a program that, among other things, teaches officials at various levels how to man-age, write reports, speak in public, and work in partnership with civil society and the press.

6. A Fragile Peace

Burundi is a poor country and a young, fragile democracy with complex ethnic, geographic and clan dynamics plus a history of social exclusion, state abuse and violence. Its landlocked posi-tion in central Africa has made commercial and cultural exchanges difficult. The traditional low

The mandate of the UN in Burundi includes the promotion of press freedom and the reinforcement of the legal and regulatory framework for media and communications.

status of women in Burundian society deprives over half of its citizens of basic rights, acting as a further brake to the country's development.

Burundi's slow but developing progress shows that political will, combined with free media and civil society, and the support of the international community can bring peace. Since the Arusha Accord, Burundians believe in the power of negotiations over weapons, and yet, the risk of sliding back into authoritarianism and violence is serious. To diminish political instability in this weak institutional context, more transparency and accountability need to be established.

Donor involvement in support of the public sphere yields positive results. The jumpstart to private radio stations has paid off handsomely, as they have played a crucial, positive role during the transitional phase and thereafter. Private media will require sustained and well-coordinated support to ensure their economic survival until the business conditions are such that advertising revenues can cover costs and support further development of professional standards and ethics.

The state requires support not only to develop capacity, but also to contribute better to the public sphere across state institutions. It also needs assistance in establishing entry points for public opinion and participation to influence formal deliberations and public policy formation.

In light of Burundi's centralization, offering a voice and public access to the rural population, particularly women and youth, is an important step toward an inclusive national public sphere. Similar support is required for civil society to develop advocacy skills and to sustain rural grass-root organizations and networks.

Without further international support to improve the capacity and conditions of its public sphere

components, Burundi might face daunting prospects in search for a durable peace. With national cooperation and international assistance, mutual understanding and respect for the roles of each actor plus a shared vision of possibilities within Burundi's public sphere will help to ensure a peaceful future.

7. Recommendations for Action

Burundi's governance situation and processes would greatly benefit from a set of comprehensive interventions aimed at improving the capacity and conditions of its public sphere components. A joint vision developed by government, civil society and media would facilitate and coordinate donor support, creating the environment necessary for Burundi's public sphere to develop its vital role in shaping an inclusive and participatory reconstruction and state-building process.

The following is a set of interventions to improve the capacity and conditions for Burundi's public sphere components and thus facilitate improved governance:

Government

1. Assist further decentralization efforts, including decision-making power and human and material resources.
2. Justice sector—Implement judicial reform to provide independence for the judiciary branch. Consider the justice sector a budgetary priority, giving the judiciary adequate resources and equipment to carry out its functions with special attention to the local-level courts. Grant women equality before the law. Set up the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation. Translate legislation and guidelines for legislative processes into Kirundi.
3. Media relations—Increase support for private media, especially print media, and for the application of the Press Law of 2003 and

Without further international support to improve the capacity and conditions of its public sphere components, Burundi might face daunting prospects in search for a durable peace.

establishment of the Press Promotion Fund. Re-open the journalism school. Facilitate the creation of the independent National Council of Communication.
4. Civil society—Establish the National Youth Council. Make sustained financial contributions to civil society for their expenses on social services.

Donors

5. National dialogue—Assist public authorities at all levels in setting up organized two-way information channels to media and civil society, and facilitate systematic consultation mechanisms between public authorities and civil society.

6. Donor to donor—Improve information sharing and coordination on capacity-building initiatives to avoid gaps and duplications. Improve transparency of your organization's operations.
7. Inclusion—Extend the use of Kirundi as means of reaching the populace, including its use in radio and print communications and on websites.
8. State-media relations—Assist government and parliamentary groups in organizing the production and distribution, down to the local level, of a regular media monitoring service. Assist public authorities and civil society in receiving public communications training.
9. Pursue follow up initiatives, such as the

Burundi Leadership Training Program, that address the conflict's legacy of perceptions and attitudes. In any capacity-building initiative, target the groups able to drive attitudinal change.

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Civil Society and Academia
Association of Women Entrepreneurs (Association des Femmes Entrepreneurs)
Association of Women Jurists (Association des Femmes Juristes)
Association of Women Journalists (Association des Femmes Journalistes)
Burundi Bar Association
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burundi (Chambre de Commerce et Industrie du Burundi)
Institut Panos Paris
League Iteka—Burundian Human Rights League (Ligue Iteka-Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l'Homme)
Lumière University, School of Communication (Université Lumière de Bujumbura, Faculté de Communication)
National Council of Churches of Burundi (Conseil National des Eglises du Burundi)

Network of Journalists for HSD (Human Sustainable Development), (Réseau des journalistes pour le DHD (Développement Humain Durable))

Network Woman and Peace and Development in Burundi (Réseau Femme et Paix et Développement au Burundi)

New Generation

OAG (Observatory of Government Action, Observatoire de l'Action Gouvernamentale)

OLUCOME (Observatory of Fight against Corruption and Economic Embezzlements, Observatoire de lutte contre la corruption et les malversations économiques)

SONERA League (Ligue SONERA—Ligue burundaise pour la Défense et la promotion des droits de l'homme)

Burundian Media

African Public Radio (Radio Publique Africaine)

Arc-en-Ciel

Burundian Press Agency (Agence Burundaise de Presse)

National Radio (Radio Nationale)

National Television (Télévision Nationale)

Net Press Agency (Agence Net Press)

Radio Isanganiro

Public Institutions

National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministère des Affaires Étrangeres)

Ministry of Justice (Ministère de la Justice)

Ministry of Information, Communication and Relations with Parliament (Ministère de l'Information, de la Communication & des Relations avec le Parlement)

Integrated Bureau of United Nations in Burundi, BINUB (Bureau Integré des Nations Unies au Burundi).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO

United Nations Development Program, UNDP Delegation of the European Commission

United States Agency for International Development, USAID

Endnotes

[1] Fragile states represent nine percent of the population of developing countries, however, they account for almost a third of the extremely poor; nearly a third of all child deaths and 29 percent of 12-year olds who did not complete primary school in 2005.

[2] State structures create and sustain the legal and political framework in which a society negotiates different positions and arbitrates fairly between competing demands. States uphold the societal consensus on what constitutes the rules of co-existence and provide the public goods that underpin peace and development, such as justice, security and public infrastructure. States are fragile when their structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction and development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population. Conflict, in particular its civil form, is an expression and result of the inability or unwillingness of a state to perform theses key functions.

[3] PCNAs often serve as the foundation for national recovery plans and the basis for resource mobilization at international donor conferences. State-building requirements are a central part of this assessment tool, which results in a Transitional Results Matrix that specifies prioritized interventions. United Nations/ World Bank. January 2007. "PCNA Review—In Support of Peacebuilding: Strengthening the Post Conflict Needs Assessment," New York and Washington, DC. January.

[4] United Nations/World Bank. August 2004. "Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations," World Bank. Washington, DC.

[5] United Nations Development Program/World Bank. September 2005. Workshop on "Rebuilding Post-Conflict Societies: Lessons from a Decade of Global Experience."

[6] Habermas, J.(1990) Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit; Surhkamp, Frankfurt am Main. Habermas explored and developed the public sphere concept. The public sphere concept is not new to democratic thinking, it goes back to the idea of the Greek "agora" as a forum for citizen's debate. This paper, for ease of understanding, takes the liberty of working with a simplified version of his theory.

[7] The majority public opinion makes manifest what a large sector of the population considers, in light of available information, to be the best interpretation and judgment of the issue at hand. Minority views might form a differing opinion. Ibid.

[8] Military structures, regardless of whether it is national army, rebel or resistance movement, have highly centralized decision making and information character; in warfare, information is power and the leak of confidential information is potentially high-risk. A culture of secrecy and purposefully placed misinformation furthers uncertainty of those outside the closed circle of well informed.

[9] There has been debate about the impact of a community station in Los Palos in regard to the tension fueling notion of a national "east-west divide" in Timor.

[10] Based on this study's May 2007 assessment.

[11] Japan occupied Timor-Leste from 1942 to 1945, but Portugal resumed colonial authority after the Japanese defeat in World War II.

[12] Report of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste (UN S/2006/822).

[13] Fretilin had won 21 seats in the 65-member parliament.

14 In speeches made at the time of the inauguration of the new government in July 2006, President Gusmão and Prime Minister Ramos-Horta acknowledged one of the underlying causes of the 2006 crisis was the failure of government to engage with the people.

15 Speech Xanana Gusmao June 22, 2006.

16 The author believes that Timor's authoritarian culture can be seen as a consequence and legacy of colonialization, occupation, Catholicism and military resistance.

17 In the absence of standard operating procedures for filing, each ministry has been developing its own with great variation in quality.

18 Licus Implementation Trust Fund Integrated Proposal Overview, World Bank 2006.

19 The establishment of a communication unit and the design of a communication strategy are planned as part of the decentralization process.

20 Licus Implementation Trust Fund Integrated Proposal Overview, World Bank 2006.

21 See box, Languages in Timor, for more details.

22 The same person, Maj. Alfredo Reinado, was killed in February 2008 during an assassination attempt on Timor's President Jose Ramos-Horta.

23 This section draws on a) Timor Leste National Media Survey, Foundation Hirondelle, May 2007; b) Timor-Leste Media Assessment, Shanthi Kalathil, February 2006; c) Country Profile: Timor Leste, Ben Hopper, April 2006; d) Communication Habits and Resources in Timor Leste, RTTL-TLMDC-UNICEF, December 2005.

24 Pedro Gonzaves, Community Radio Station Ermera, May 2007.

25 Pedro Gonzaves, Community Radio Station Ermera, May 2007.

26 Ben Hopper, Country Profile: Timor Leste, Dili 2006.

27 Field visit to city of Ermera, May 2007.

28 Shanthi Kalathil, ibid.

29 A project to establish journalism courses was rejected by the university after it refused to accept Portuguese as the language of instruction, arguing that students would not be able to follow the classes. The Timor Leste Media Development Centre (TLMDC), which spun off from Internews in late 2005, is providing limited training on specialized skills. Editors and senior journalists do not consider the outfit equipped to provide training adequate to their level. The Timor Post newspaper has reportedly run a basic five-week journalism training course for roughly $10 per participant since 2001, and its graduates have gone on to seek employment in the media sector.

30 Interview with AusAID, Dili, May 2007.

31 In July 2007, a third media association, the Press Club, opened its doors and reportedly is considered another breakaway union for media.

32 Engaging Civil Society—Final Project Evaluation, CRS 2005, provided me with background to the challenges of civil society in Timor-Leste and is used as reference in this text.

33 Each issue of the magazine, funded by the Ministry of Education with World Bank funds and implemented by Care International, is based on the school curriculum.

34 The drafting process of the penal code is reflective of Timor's weak legal capacity and lack of consultative processes. The law was reportedly drafted by Portuguese lawyers who worked as advisers to the Ministry of Justice. Without experience in media legal issues, they copied the relevant Portuguese law. In Portugal defamation is a criminal offense but legal experts believe that the supporting legal institutions in

that country make it difficult for anyone to be successfully tried under that law, and that even if a criminal defamation case were to be brought to trial, defendants would be granted a full array of legal resources. In Timor, with its weak legal structure and non-functioning appeal courts, this "way-out" process is not applicable.

35 Reporters Without Borders, Annual Report 2007.

36 Timor-Leste: The Business Regulatory Environment, World Bank. June 2006.

37 Interview with Belun, Dili, May 2007.

38 CFRPG Program Overview, undated.

39 Interview with CFRPG graduate in Dili, May 2007. There is no classification regulation in place in Timor-Leste.

40 Janet Steel. Timor Leste Press Essential in Building National Identity, Pacific Media Watch, 2006.

41 Janet Steel. Timor Leste Press Essential in Building National Identity, Pacific Media Watch, 2006.

42 A communications officer said that often reporters ask for press releases to be given on a flash drive as to not have to retype them—they are just re-printed without further analysis done.

43 Engaging Civil Society Project: Final Evaluation, CRS, 2005.

44 Former Prime Minister Alkatiri has disparaged the Timorese educated at Indonesian universities as "super mie" (Indonesian instant noodles) graduates whose education is not worth much. ICG Update Briefing. Timor-Leste's Parliamentary Elections, June 2007.

45 Interview with Advocates sans Frontieres, Dili, May 2007.

46 World Bank internal Liberia webpage, 2007.

47 UNDP, Liberia National Human Development Report 2006. Also, Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey, 2006.

48 UNDP. Liberia Human Development Report, 2006.

49 Fifteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia, United Nations, 2007.

50 Fifteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia, United Nations, 2007.

51 Fifteenth Legislative Needs Assessment, Center for Legislative Development, February 2006.

52 ibid.

53 Liberia Information Communication and Technology for Development (LICT4D) "Policy: An Inclusive Framework for the Realization of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS)." [draft]. Government of Liberia, undated.

54 Interview with INGO Representative, Monrovia, May 2007.

55 Cook, Nicolas, "Liberia's Post-War Recovery: Key Issues and Developments," CRS, Report for Congress, 2006.

56 Mitullah, Poe and Haines, "Liberia Local Government Capacity Assessment Study," UNDP and Government of Liberia, 2006.

57 ibid.

58 Meeting with community radio manager in Gbarnga.

59 Interview with civil society and with media representatives, Monrovia, May 2007.

[60] Media information taken mainly from Strengthening Liberia's Media: A Review of Media Support in the Post-Conflict Transitional Period and Recommendations for Future Action (draft), February 2007, The Partnership for Media and Conflict Prevention in West Africa.

[61] UNMIL website, www.unmil.org

[62] Interview with UNMIL Media Monitoring and Development Unit, May 2007.

[63] Interview with Search for Common Ground—Talking Drums. Monrovia, May 2007.

[64] USAID financed this initiative in the pre-election period.

[65] Interview with Radio Veritas, May 2007.

[66] McKeown and Mulbah, Civil Society in Liberia: Towards a Strategic Framework for Support, Search for Common Ground, April 2007.

[67] Strengthening Liberia's Media, February 2007.

[68] National Policy on Non-Governmental Organizations Operating in Liberia. Government of Liberia, May 2007.

[69] Interview with FLY Representative, Monrovia, May 2007.

[70] Civil Society in Liberia, 2007.

[71] Strengthening Interview with PUL representative, May 2007.

[72] Interview Ministry of Information, May 2007.

[73] Interview CEDE, May 2007.

[74] This Burundi report, including desk and field research was contributed by Erika Casajoana, an independent consultant. The author of the report edited the text.

[75] The camp closing did not proceed as announced and many Burundian refugees remained in Tanzania as of April 2008.

[76] In 2006, the National Communication Council awarded a TV license to Renaissance TV, an off-shoot of private radio Renaissance FM. Broadcasting is expected to begin in 2007.

[77] World Bank Institute Capacity Development, Leadership Program, http://go.worldbank.org/TM8KET22S0.

[78] The work of the Peacebuilding Commission has progressed since the drafting of this case study. A number of public sphere issues are addressed in its Strategic Framework for Burundi, issued July 2007 (UN Document PBC/1/BDI/4*).

CommGAP

Towards A New Agora

High expectations for a quick "peace dividend", a public that does not trust the state, and state-citizen relations severed by years of exclusion are among the most challenging issues national governments, and the international community supporting them, encounter in planning and executing post-conflict recovery programs. These issues are too often neglected by policy makers. Experience has shown the cost of this oversight. Because of their direct relation to long-term stability and governance, dealing with these issues needs to be at the very heart of post-conflict work. This study applies the public sphere as a framework to deal with the "connective tissue" of state-building and calls for change in current post-conflict assistance policy and practice.

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