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Author: Spitz, René
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Annex 1: Questionnaire Civil Society and Accountability

The Syrian government in its 10th Five Year Plan stressed the importance of civil society not only because of the services it can provide but also because civil society is expected to help the government function in a more efficient and accountable manner. The UN and also the EC in its cooperation agreement with the Syrian government have expressed willingness to provide assistance to strengthen the role of civil society.

1. How would you define civil society? Why is civil society important? What is more important the social or the political dimension of the concept civil society?

2. What is in your opinion the attitude of the Syrian government towards civil society? Has the attitude of the government towards civil society shifted since the start of the 10th Five Year Plan? If yes, in what respect?

3. Why does the government seek partnership with civil society?

4. Can civil society play a role in policymaking and perform a role as a watchdog? If no why not? What are the conditions to be fulfilled? What are the main obstacles ("red lines") and challenges?

5. Do you have examples in which Syrian civil society organisations (CSOs) were able to influence government policies? If yes, what made these organisations successful?

6. Do Syrian CSOs have channels through which they can bring issues of concern to the attention of the government? If yes, which ones and how?

7. Does the government consult CSOs? If yes, in which manner and about which subjects?

8. Do CSOs have possibilities to control (and if necessary block) activities of the government of concern to CSOs? If no, why not?

9. Can foreign support help to strengthen civil society in Syria? If yes, what kind of support would be most helpful?

10. Do you think that foreign support to NGOs working in the field of development can be helpful in widening the space for civil society activities in other areas? If yes, why?

11. Are there other issues of relevance in your opinion linked to the above-mentioned subject? If yes, which ones and why?

12. Do you have suggestions for persons to be consulted about this subject?

Thanks in advance. Your answers will be treated in a confidential manner.

Annex 2: Questionnaire UNDP and European Commission

Background

Your organisation has a partnership agreement with the Syrian government to assist in the implementation of the 10th Five Year Plan. An argument for the government to reinforce the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) is that they can contribute to the implementation of programmes promoting socio-economic development. Stronger CSOs are also expected to contribute to a more efficient and accountable government.

Improvement of the position of women and youth is an important point of action mentioned in the 10th Five Year plan.

Questions

A. *General*

  1. Why does your organisation want to strengthen the role of CSOs? What is UNDP's view?

  2. Will stronger CSOs lead to a more efficient and accountable government?

  3. What are the main obstacles?

  4. Which conditions have not been met?

  5. Do CSOs in Syria have at present the capacity to develop and implement programmes & projects to foster socio-economic development?

B. *Your Organisation and CSOs*

  1. How does your organisation select CSOs to become partners in the development and implementation of programmes? Which criteria are used?

  2. What is the role of the government in selecting or attributing CSOs, which will act as operational or implementing for your organisation? Does your organisation need government permission to work with specific CSOs? If yes, what is the procedure to be followed?

  3. Is there a need to strengthen capacities of CSOs in Syria? If yes, how has the capacity of CSOs been strengthened?

4. Around which themes is your organisation able to find CSOs to play a role in the development and implementation of its projects?

C. *CSOs and Government*

1. Are there at present CSOs in Syria able of influencing policies of the government? If yes, in which field(s)?

2. Are there any CSOs at present involved in developing government policies and in implementing these policies?

3. Are there any indications that involvement of CSOs in development and implementation of plans, has contributed to a more efficient and accountable government?

D. *CSOs Women and Youth.*

1. Have CSOs a role in programmes & projects of your organisation focusing on women and youth? If yes, which CSOs have been selected, by whom, how and why?

2. What have been obstacles in involving CSOs in achieving concrete results in approving the position of women and youth? Can you give some examples?

3. Are there CSOs which play a role in policy development and implementation? If yes, how?

4. Are there CSOs which have been effective in influencing government policies? If yes, which ones, how and why have they been successful? If no, why not?

Annex 3: Repression in Figures 2007-2010

Table 6: Number of Known Political Detainees in Syria at the end of 2007 and the Reason for their Detention

Province	Islamic groups			Kurds	Opinion	Others/ Unknown	Total
	Muslim Brotherhood	**Islamic Liberation Party**	**Other Islamists (Salafist)**				
Aleppo	6	11	34	43	3	13	**110**
Hama	4	-	15	-	7	10	**36**
Idlib	5	1	38	-	2	6	**52**
Hassakeh	-	-	26	19	1	10	**56**
Raqqa	-	-	21	-	-	28	**49**
Deir e Zor	2	-	10	-	4	4	**20**
Lattakia	6	2	12	-	4	36	**60**
Tartus	1	-	-	-	3	12	**16**
Homs	-	9	23	-	1	24	**57**
Damascus	1	9	11	-	6	1	**28**
Reef Damascus	1	1	124	1	3	45	**175**
Quineitra	-	-	-	-	1	2	**3**
Daraa	-	2	9	-	-	1	**12**
Suweida	-	-	3	-	-	-	**3**
Others/ Unknown	16	11	70	111	4	39	**251**
Total	**42**	**46**	**396**	**174**	**39**	**231**	**928**

Source: Shril, 2007: Without a page number. Panorama, Syrian political prisoners.
    * Group arrests in Oteiba, Qatana, Drosha, Al Tal, Artouz, Arbeen, Shaba'a, Areha and Madaya

Table 7: Arrested and in Detention

Date	Number of Political Prisoners
Prior to 1999	9
1999 – mid-February 2005[1]	318*
Mid-February 2005 – End 2006	461**
2007	140**
Total	**928**

Source: Shril, 2007: Without a page number. Panorama, Syrian political prisoners.
* Almost all have been tried.
** Most of them have not been tried

The definition of a political detainee is arbitrary. In practice, it is a person who is sentenced by special courts established under the Marshal Law without a fair trial in the period 2006-2010. Prisoners of conscience tried by the criminal court in Damascus form an exception. Besides these persons, there might be a number of prisoners still in pre-detention at investigation centres of the security services. The actual number of political prisoners is higher. Included are also an estimated 100 other PKK prisoners who have probably been arrested after the extradition of the PKK leader from Syria. Persons who have been detained for political reasons and released during the year have not been included. In 2007, 234 persons were arrested for political reasons; 140 of them were still in detention at the end of the year. Especially at the end of the 1970s and beginning of 1980s, thousands of people whose fate is not clear have been arrested. Either they have been released, died in detention or during the fighting in Hama and other cities. Most persons have been tried by the State Security Court, a few by regular criminal court and one by a military field court. The number of persons arrested for unknown political reasons (231) is high due to the fact that these people have not yet been tried. It may be presumed that most of them have been accused of being Islamists.

The Kurdish prisoners are mainly PKK but a few are from other banned Kurdish political parties. In 2008, some leaders of the Future and Azadi party were arrested. The others, including most

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[1] The timeframe February 2005 is chosen, because most arrested people after mid-February 2005 have not been tried at the end of 2007.

likely 90% of the still unknown cases are Islamists. Of the total 928 political detainees, 692 persons or about 75% are in detention because of Islamist affiliations. The prisoners of opinion (39) are for the most part high profile cases of secular regime critics. They also include a number of students as well as people who have been arrested because of alleged political comments they made about the regime and/or the President.

While the number of detainees from the city of Damascus is low, the countryside is strongly represented with 19%. The actual figure might be higher, given the large number of unknown detainees. The conservative Sunni urban centres of Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, Raqqa and Homs, are also suppliers of alleged Islamists. Although a stronghold of Alawi's, Lattakia also has a large Sunni community. In the town of Quamishli (Hassakeh province: a predominantly Kurdish area), also a substantial number of persons has been arrested and accused of being active on behalf of Islamists groups. In its introduction to the 'List of Syrian political prisoners 2010', SHRIL notes that lists published by Syrian human rights organisations have always remained far from the real figures for several reasons:

- The weakness of the human rights groups' organisational structure and their lack of branches in different Syrian cities, a result of their not having been granted necessary licenses and of the pressure and oppression from the authorities that they suffer, which significantly weakens their ability to observe and document;

- Most citizens are afraid of resorting to those organisations because of the oppressive security atmosphere, or because of their ignorance of how to contact them, or their lack of trust in the organisation's ability to help;

- Most of the arrests, especially among Islamists, are concentrated in distant rural areas;

- Lack of widespread use of the Internet among ordinary Syrians especially in the countryside and borderlands with which they would be able to contact organisations and activists more easily.[2]

SHRIL estimated the number of arbitrarily detained people for 2010 to be between 2500-3000, of which some 1500 were detained in Sednaya military prison. SHRIL noted that in 2010 registration of detainees, of which 246, including 14 women, new cases of arbitrarily detention

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[2] Shril, 2011: 2 and 3.

was mainly restricted to Kurdish and pro-democracy as well as human rights activists. As in 2009 SHRIL noted that the arrests of Islamists were only poorly covered, despite the fact that Islamists throughout the country were arbitrarily arrested on a large scale.[3]

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[3] Ibid., 3.

Annex 4: Comparison of Given Purpose with Stated Type of Activities of Registered Associations

The EC compared the character of the associations and the given purpose, with the stated type of activities.[1]

Given purpose: Charity

Main Activity of Associations	Number of Associations	%
Charity	172	61
Basic and Other Services	97	34
Cultural and Other Activities	6	2
Cooperation & Mutual Support	3	1
Union of Associations	3	1
Unspecified	3	1
Total	**284**	**100**

Source: EC Delegation Damascus, 2007b: Without a page number.

Given purpose: Non-charity

Main Activity of Associations	Number of Associations	%
Basic and other services	85	28
Cultural and other activities	82	27
	45	15

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[1] EC Delegation Damascus, 2007b: 7.

Professional, academic and/or scientific		
Development (rural development, business development, environment and consumer protection)	20	7
Cooperation & Mutual Support	58	19
Union of Associations	6	2
Unspecified	6	2
Total	**302**	**100**

Source: EC Delegation Damascus, 2007b: Without a page number.

Annex 5: UNDAF 2007-2011

Intended outcome: Accountability of executive bodies reinforced toward the general public and in regard to committed UN conventions and treaties[1]

Output	Indicator / Baseline	Measure of Verification	UN-agency Involved in Output	Partners	Risks and Assumptions
Checks and balances mechanisms reinforced through increased oversight capacity of legislative bodies and elected representatives and civil society and media capacities to monitor the performance of public institutions and service delivery	Number of new or revised laws in integrating UN conventions and treaties, including CEDAW and CAC	Official journal	UNDP	Local elected councils and Parliament. Ministry of Justice and others	Conducive political and social environment Effective separation of powers Imple-mentation of new NGO law
Anti-corruption legislation and institutions in place	Corruption index	Official journal Transparency International	UNDP	Ministry of Justice Judiciary	Conducive political and social environment Effective separation of powers
Participatory monitoring and reporting mechanism in place, involving civil society, media and children in the context of CRC, CEDAW and other human rights related legal instruments. Information disseminated and public awareness raised	Number of independent reports on public policies, including human rights published	NGOs, academia, UN	UNICEF, OHCHR; UNHCR; UNRWA	SCFA, NGOs, Academics, OHCHR, Institutions, Media	Conducive political and social environment Effective separation of powers Imple-mentation of new NGO law
Decision makers are aware of the gender-related international conventions and treaties signed and ratified by Syria		NGOs, academia, UN; Official Journal	UNIFEM	SCFA, Women's Union	

Source: UNDAF Syria, 2007: Without a page number.

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[1] UNDAF, 2007: 31and 42.

Annex 6: UNDAF 2007-2011

Intended outcome: An empowered civil society involved in the development and implementation of public policies, planning and programmes[1]

Output	Indicator / Baseline	Measure of Verification	UN-agency Involved in Output	Partners	Risks and Assumptions
The legal framework improved and implemented to allow enhanced participation of civil society organizations	New modernised law in place for NGOs Number size and diversity of NGOs	Official journal	UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, OHCHR	Ministry of Social affairs and Labour EU	Development and approval of new law
Capacities of civil society and private sector associations enhanced, including in the use of ICT tools, to participate in reform policy formulation	Number of policies and programme developed with civil society involvements	NGO reports and surveys	UNDP	Chambers of industry and commerce. Ministry of Social affairs and Labour	Implementation of new NGO law
National dialogue on human development deficits promoted among stakeholders	Participation of a variety of NGOs	Meetings and publication of outcomes	UNDP	UNDP	Level of government Support for participation

Source: UNDAF Syria, 2007: Without a page number.

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[1] UNDAF, 2007: 32 and 43.

Annex 7: The United Nations Development Programme

UNDP takes a broad view on CSOs of which NGOs are an important part.[1] UNDP gives a core role to civil society and CSOs in its development policies. Sustainable human development requires, in the view of UNDP, active involvement of people in development planning and activities. Civil society is, in the opinion of UNDP, instrumental in ensuring the participation of citizens in the development effort. CSOs can, in the view of UNDP, play a vital role in promoting development as participants, but also because they legitimise and endorse governments' policies and actions. CSOs can act furthermore as watchdogs. Development is regarded by UNDP as a joint effort of the state, the private sector (market) and civil society. Civil society is thus a Third Sector, existing alongside and interacting with the state and private industry. Moreover, as UNDP notes, from a human rights perspective, governments have obligations to improve the situation of vulnerable groups and thus have the obligation to work with CSOs. However, UNDP acknowledges that the engagement of governments with CSOs in the areas of reducing poverty and promoting human rights and democratic governance is by nature politically sensitive. Civil society is both an arena of collaboration as well as contention.[2]

UNDP's specific interventions in the area of good governance (or democratic governance as it is called more recently, due to the attention given to political governance) can cover a broad range of issues and activities. UNDP can undertake a number of initiatives, which are meant to develop institutions and processes that are more responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens, including the poor. UNDP initiatives that focus on strengthening the electoral and legislative system enhance the access of citizens to the electoral and legislative systems as well as to the judiciary and the public administration, and improve the capacity of government institutions to deliver basic services to the needy. The underlying view is that modernisation and the economic reform programme are contingent upon introducing comprehensive institutional and governance reforms.

Activities in Syria

As can be concluded from the UNDAF framework, the UNDP is the central UN actor promoting good governance in Syria, including empowerment of civil society. The governance related activities under the UNDAF focus on strengthening the administrative capacity of the

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[1] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, without a date: 1 of 2.
[2] UNDP, 2001: 1 and 2.

government in order to enhance its development coordinating capacities, computerising the judiciary (a pilot project at the Dara'a court) as well as the creation of a development NGO platform. The total budget in 2009 of ongoing activities in the field of democratic governance was $ 3,7 million, of which $ 240,000 was meant for strengthening of civil society.[3] In connection with the capacity of CSOs to develop and implement programmes and projects to foster socio-economic development, the assessment by an UNDP-Syria official in 2009 was "[s]ome CSOs do and others lack experience, capacities and support-hence the NGO Platform. There is a trend in Syria of new emerging NGOs capable of implementing projects, however these are often run as private companies and the connection to the grassroots level is often vague."[4]

Regarding UNDP's relationship with CSOs, UNDP coordinates as intergovernmental organisations all its activities with the Syrian Government. "The implementing partner of UNDP in Syria is the government. CSOs often participate in project activities and contribute as contractors whenever possible. [...] UNDP needs permission to work with specific CSOs. This is done through correspondence with the ministry, acting as an implementing partner. All project activities are planned with the ministry, so implementation is thoroughly discussed and permission easily obtained. However, in order to get the permission, there needs to be a clear added value in the cooperation with CSOs."[5]

Table 8: Ongoing Projects in 2009 of UNDP in Cooperation with the Syrian Administration in the Field of Democratic Governance

Name	Target Group	Aim	Partner	Budget
Enhancing aid effectiveness and coordination	Government	Improving the capacity of the policy development and coordination of the State Planning Commission	State Planning Commission	$ 433,000

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[3] http://www.undp-org/sy/index.php/undp-syria... Downloaded 12 February 2009.
[4] Interview 14: UNDP official. April 2009.
[5] Ibid.

Empowerment of civil society through the creation of a platform for development NGOs	Registered NGOs	Establish NGO platform as a legal entity Set up mechanisms to support and promote the work of NGOs in Syria Strengthen capacities of NGOs to carry out development projects	Syria Trust for Development	$ 240,000
Modernisation of the justice sector	Government	Aim is to increase the transparency and quality of legal procedures through computerisation of judicial processes. A pilot takes place at the first instance court of Dara'a	Ministry of Justice	$ 815,000
Improving local government services	Government		Ministry of local administration	$ 1,328,500
Re-styling of the Syrian Times, a government-owned daily newspaper in English	Government		Ministry of Information	$ 400,000
Empowering young journalists in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Tawasul)	Government	Establishing and training of a journalist network publishing on socio-economic reform	Ministry of Information	$ 100,000
Capacity development for Foreign Service staff in Syria working in the field of international relations	Government		Ministry of Foreign Affairs	$ 400,000

Only one project aims directly at strengthening the capacities of CSOs to participate in planning of development initiatives as well as in their implementation, namely, the project named Empowerment of civil society through the creation of a platform for development NGOs. This project is implemented by the Syria Trust for Development, in cooperation with UNDP. The Trust is presented by UNDP and the Syrian government as a NGO. In reality, as pointed out, this is an organisation initiated and supervised by the First Lady: it is therefore a GONGO. The project, in line with the development plans of the government and the UNDAF, aims to strengthen the capacities of Syrian CSOs active in the field of development or interested in becoming active in this area. The initiative is based on the assessment that Syrian development NGOs lack capacities and knowledge as well as support and contact with policy makers. The establishment of an NGO platform as an independent legal entity would provide these CSOs with a network to share information and coordinate activities, with the possibility to strengthen their organisational, project-development and management capacities. In the initial phase of the project (2007-2008) the Trust and UNDP checked whether CSOs active as development organisations or interested in becoming active in the field of development would be interested in such a platform. A substantial group of interested CSOs gave a positive response to the initiative. In a next step, in cooperation with the Trust and the MOSAL a core group of NGOs was brought together to develop the main goals of the platform, its working process, its services and the conditions and benefits of membership. While the platform, as initially stated, could potentially evolve into a support agency helping NGOs to develop their capabilities to participate in policy discussions with the government and assist them in acquiring funding, the primary goal was to assist these CSOs with their organisational and networking capabilities.[6] In May 2011, MOSAL announced the registration of the NGO platform as an independent NGO outside the Trust, with 27 founding members. The Swiss Agency for Development, the UK and Dutch embassies in Damascus contributed financially to the establishment of the platform.[7] The EU indicated its preparedness to contribute financially to the platform in its National Indicative Programme for the period 2011-2013.

Regarding the obstacles, enabling CSOs to play a role in establishing a more efficient and accountable government, an UNDP-Syria official commented the following in 2009: "In Syria, the main obstacles are from all sides: weak civil society lacking experience, donors and UN agencies are not used to working with CSOs in Syria and have often high and unrealistic

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[6] UNDP Syria, without a date: a. 1 and 2.
[7] http://www.sana.sy/print.html?sid:345977@newlang=ing... Registration of NGO platform in Syria.

demands to the organisations, the same goes for the government. On all sides there are issues of power relations, personal relations, etc. Finally, the government policy in certain areas makes it difficult for CSOs – and often also for UNDP – to engage in dialogue on policy development and implementation."[8]

At the end of 2010/the beginning of 2011, on request by UNDP an external interim evaluation took place into the contribution of three projects to the outcome "an empowered civil society involved in local community development and implementation of public policies, planning and programme."[9] The evaluation concludes that only the NGO platform had some positive effects.[10] According to the evaluators, positive factors contributing to the outcome are a general shift in governmental policy to engage with civil society and assist in development activities; a positive shift to self-organise and tackle development challenges alongside the government, as well as an increasing willingness by private businesses to work with NGOs as part of corporate social responsibility strategies, and the contribution of NGOs themselves in the platform project. The latter demonstrates that civil society can self-organise to build capacities using a grassroots approach.[11] The general shift the evaluators seem to see in the government's attitude towards civil society is to a large extent cosmetic. UNDP's approach to involving civil society in socio-economic development is part of a broad cooperation with the Syrian government on development. It restricts itself to registered NGOs active in development. In Syria, these organisations are predominantly the GONGOs. Moreover, it includes other organisations with close links to the Syrian government such as people's organisations, which are branches of the ruling Ba'ath party, for example the GWU. The latter organisation was a partner in a local elections project.[12] The most important civil society partner in the field of development is the Syrian Trust for Development, the main GONGO in Syria. The NGO platform project, while aiming at strengthening civil society's role in development, is a joint initiative of the Trust and UNDP and thus a top down initiative. Furthermore, the evaluation does not explicitly refer to the risks and assumptions mentioned in the UNDAF, namely development, approval and implementation of a new NGO law as well as level of government support for participation. The

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[8] Interview 14: UNDP official. April 2009.

[9] Salmon and Al Khoury, 2011: Without a page number.

[10] Ibid., 4. The two other projects were: a) Empowering young journalists in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Tawasul) and b) Support to Syrian Times project.

[11] Salmon and Al Khoury, 2011: 5.

[12] http://www.undp-org/sy/index.php/undp-syria/partnerships-and-resources-mobilisation... Downloaded 12 February 2009. UNDP supported the establishment of Mawred, a GONGO initiated by the First lady for support to women entrepreneurs.

negative factors mentioned in the evaluation clearly indicate that the preconditions for a successful involvement of CSOs in development activities have not been attained. Negative factors include the government's decision to ban NGOs to set up branches in more than one location under the same legal entity, limited institutionalised mechanisms for government to engage with civil society, poor internal capacity of NGOs to raise funds, plan and implement projects effectively and the persistence of a constraining operating environment. There have been no legal changes to empower NGOs.[13] The latter is one of the risks and assumptions of the UNDAF. Moreover, there are no indications that substantial progress is made during the UNDAF period 2007-2011, regarding the outcome accountability of executive bodies reinforced toward the general public and in regard to committed UN conventions and treaties. No steps have been taken to ensure an effective separation of powers. All powers are concentrated in the hands of the executive, dominated by the security services and the Ba'ath party and led by the President. There are some indications of greater willingness of the government to allow civil society to play a role in the policy debate on the protection of the rights of women, children and handicapped people as well as to implement activities for or in cooperation with these target groups. Salmon and Al Khoury indicate that the National Plan for Disability is openly rights-based.[14]

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[13] Salmon and Al Khoury, 2011: 22.
[14] Salmon and Al Khoury, 2011: 21.

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