

2019 DPPA Constitutional Focal Point

Constitutional Assistance and Support Provided by DPPA



The Constitutional Focal Point (CFP) of the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) is an initiative dedicated to strengthening DPPA's capacity to provide constitutional guidance and support to UN missions, Country Teams, desks, and Member States. The CFP was established in 2013 in response to increased demand for UN assistance in constitution-making processes which has had concrete implications for the Department and its work on political transitions. The CFP is based in the Policy and Mediation Division, Mediation Support Unit (MSU).

The CFP's effort to strengthen DPPA's institutional capacity to provide consistent and coordinated constitutional support centres on six pillars:

- (1) Contributing to new **UN policies and approaches** to providing constitutional assistance;
- (2) developing practical **resources and tools**;
- (3) strengthening **UN system-wide coordination**;
- (4) providing **capacity building and awareness raising** programs on constitution making issues and the nexus between constitutions and sustaining peace;
- (5) strengthening UN relationships with **external actors** providing constitutional assistance and leveraging their capacities to support UN efforts; and
- (6) providing direct **technical constitutional support** to the UN field and headquarters officers, and Member States.

Examples of Services Offered by the CFP

Identification of Experts: The CFP assists UN field staff and headquarters officers to identify short- and long-term constitutional experts. The CFP has access to a wide network of academics and practitioners.

Access to Guidance, Lessons Learned and Best Practices: The CFP in partnership with UNDP launched UN Constitutionmaker in January 2015, an online tool that serves as a repository of knowledge and lessons learned from UN constitutional support missions. The CFP has organised workshops on lessons learned around constitutions support and is engaged in initiatives to strengthen awareness of the linkages between constitutional issues and political and conflict analysis.

Assistance Missions: The CFP provides direct technical assistance based on international comparative practice to constitution making officials, civil society, and other national actors upon the request of UN field entities. In providing this the CFP can draw upon the services of the MSU Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers. <http://peacemaker.un.org/mediation-support/stand-by-team>

Strategic Assessment and Planning Missions: The CFP conducts constitutional assessment missions to advise on constitutional issues and strategic planning exercises and help explore the circumstances under which the UN should provide constitutional support.

CFP Highlights

Direct Constitutional Support: The CFP has participated in assistance missions to Guyana, Liberia, Libya, Philippines, and Yemen; and has additionally provided remote assistance to BNUB, MINUSCA, UNAMI, UNSOM, multiple UNDP Country Offices, and DPPA regional divisions.

System Wide Coordination and Information-sharing: The CFP leads an informal coordination structure comprised of DPPA, DPO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, and UN Women dedicated to information sharing and making UN constitutional support to Member States more effective and efficient.

Constitution Making Newsletter:

The first edition of a system-wide quarterly newsletter on UN constitutional assistance was published in January 2014. The newsletter contains reports from UN Missions and Country Teams providing constitution support, articles on constitution making themes and practices, and a digest of recently published topical papers.

View past issues of the newsletter at:

<https://peacemaker.un.org/Constitutions/Newsletter>

Subscribe at: constitutionmaker@un.org

Capacity Building at HQ and in the field: To engage UN staff in current debates and developments in this area, the CFP, in coordination with other UN agencies and DPPA divisions, conducts regular seminars and training programmes on emerging constitutional issues. The CFP has also arranged closed off-the-record briefings for DPPA officers with constitutional subject matter experts.

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