# Executive Summary

Dialogue and consensus building are critical building blocks for deepening democratic systems and practices particularly in the multi-party political dispensation. This calls for neutral and impartial spaces for dialogue and consensus building that would help to deepen democratic systems and practices on a continual basis. However, the results of the 2009 comprehensive self-assessment using the platform of African Peer Review Mechanism revealed that such spaces in Uganda were limited. Much as there was an institutional framework that would favour dialogue and consensus building, their functionality was bedevilled by glaring institutional and capacity gaps.

In response to the need for strengthening dialogue and consensus building, UNDP in partnership with Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU), National Consultative Forum (NCF), The Elders’ Forum of Uganda(TEFU) and the Electoral Commission (EC) designed and implemented the “The Peace Architecture for Conflict Transformation Framework Project). The project was guided by three objectives namely;

1. Developing impartial and neutral spaces and capacities that could facilitate dialogue and consensus building;
2. Strengthening dialogue and consensus building efforts within the domain of political reform and effectively supplemented/supported by impartial and neutral spaces of dialogue and vice versa;
3. Strengthening capacities at regional level to ensure that national level actions are informed by local level aspirations.

Although the project focus was on peaceful and stable 2016 elections, the project contribution was envisaged to be felt even beyond the election agenda through strengthened institutional mechanisms with necessary capacities that could facilitate long term peace and stability in the country. Thus, the project devoted more efforts to ensure development of inclusive institutional mechanisms with explicit focus on women and youth.

Project implementation commenced in July 2014 and was ended in June 2016 but was amended to include the UN Electoral Support which caused the project to be extended up to December, 2017. The project was delivery under four tracks (IRCU, NCF, TEFU and EC) with clearly outputs and results (see figure 1).

As per the UNEG requirement a terminal evaluation is required for all UN funded projects. Thus, this evaluation was commissioned by UNDP Uganda country office to assess both process and results of the project. Thus the evaluation focus was on; assessing project implementation, including how the design of the project has impacted on implementation, results, relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability. Therefore, using a systems analytical model, the evaluation draws and articulates vivid associations among all project variables (Inputs-Processes-Outputs-Outcomes-Impact-Sustainability). This facilitated the delineation of both intended and unintended changes caused by the project which in turn formed the basis of articulating the contribution of the project towards attainment of the observed changes hence laying a foundation for lesson learning, documentation of best practices and recommendations.

Using a mixed methods approach, 49 key informant interviews 3 Focus Group Discussions were conducted with key project stakeholders between June and July, 2018. The primary data generated from these sources were suplimented by desk review of the project documents. The results are presented in the light of OECD/DAC criteria as below.

**Relevance:** The project was consistent with the national development priorities of the country as enshrined in NDP II and Vision 2040. Besides, the evaluation found satisfactory alignment between the project outcomes and ouputs with the strategic direction of both UNDP and the wider UN development framework as articulated in CDP and UNDAF (2016/20). UN agencies have successfully aligned their programmes to national development framework and to this extent therefore, their supported projects are obviously in tandem with the national development priorities.

There is a notable internal coherence as the project strategies and activities were appropriate in supporting the realization of the desired results. However, the evaluation noted some gaps in the results framework and they include;

* The causal-effect relationship was not properly articulated in the project document to justify the project activities and strategies;
* Performance targets were not clearly define using a SMART lens
* The project time was short to allow the results of the project to settle.

Despite some gaps in the project design above, the project implementation arrangement was sound and it facilitated the achievement of enhanced results. In the first place, i)DIM was the most appropriate given the short project period vis-à-vis the bureaucracies in the public sector; ii) The project ably developed strong partnership which favoured experience sharing, networking and joint activity implementation; iii) levelaging the clout of the responsible parties given their mandate; iv) attaching experts to the responsible parties especially at EC.

The project well integrated gender with deliberate and sound strategies of involving women and youths in project implementation. Through the work of WSR, women and youths were accorded adequate platform to participate in national development especially during the elections.

**Effectiveness:** The project supported the development of impartial and neutral spaces for dialogue that ably facilitated a number of conflict resolution. The functionality of the Elder’s Forum was revitalised by addressing the key impediments that existed before. Furthermore, the visibility of NCF was strengthened through its increased engagements with key stakeholders that was supported by the project. IRCU interventions at regional level were strengthened through project supported regional engagements.

The project support production and dissemination of knowledge products that have been instrumental in building the capacity of the institutions of peace building and conflict transformation. With the support of the project, the functionality of these institutions has been strengthened and as such, they have mediated in a number of conflicts including inter alia; Kasese peace agreement, negotiations on a number of electoral reforms and processes.

The project support to the electoral commission was significant as it facilitated a number of processes and activities such as media engagements that helped to improve EC’s public relations. It is apparent that by strengthening the capacity of these institutions, their participation in national development especially in the arena of deepening democracy was enhanced.

The strengthened capacity of these institutions lays a strong foundation for continual engagements and advocacy for democratic processes in the country. Besides, the project partners have established partnerships that are likely to continue beyond the project period.

The regional peace structures were mobilized during the project and were equipped with skills for proper mediation and conflict resolution. It was noted that despite the closure of the project these structures have remained functional as evidenced by their continuous engagements even past the project period.

The success of presidential debates was notably the most outstanding achievement of the project. Several stakeholders consulted revealed the project ably redirected the politics of Uganda from personality-based to issues-based. The political debates, prayer breakfasts that were organised with the project support brought all key stakeholders on a same table to discuss the national development. As such, the spirit of tolerance was steadily cultivated in the political landscape of the country.

However, whereas great achievements are noticeable, the absence of the clear targets constrains full assessment the achievements in respect to these targets. Nevertheless, the project supported the rejuvenation of institutional engagement in dialogue and conflict transformation which is a key step towards democratic systems and practices.

**Efficiency:** Project resources were fairly availed on time and was appropriately utilized. Project expenditure was well aligned with the work plan and the budget. As such the project was implemented with positive variance. UNDP’s programming and financial management systems were vital in ensuring better alignment between the project outputs and expenditures. DIM was instrumental in ensuring timely project procurement. Although cases of delayed disbursement of funds were revealed by the implementing partners, their magnitude is less compared to what would have happened if NIM was used.

**Sustainability:** There is strong potential for sustainability of the project results. This is because; i) the project activities have been integrated in other running projects in accordance with the strategic plans of the implementing parties; ii)There is government commitment to supporting project initiated activities and processes especially the national dialogue; iii) There was great volunteerism spirit especially among the regional peace structures that they are willing to continue with the conflict transformation work even beyond the project period.

**Conclusion:** The project ably supported the creation of a peace architecture that provides great opportunities for conflict transformation. However, the responsible institutions still require more capacity strengthening for effective functionality. Much as the non-state actors have played a significant role in peace building and conflict transformation, their success depend on government commitment to dialogue and democratic values. It on the basis of the results presented in this report that the evaluation makes the following recommendations.

**Recommendations:**

**IRCU**

* Measures for enhanced impartiality of the peace committees should be step up in order to build public confidence in the committee.
* The secretariat need to enhance transparency in order to facilitate commitment and effective participation of their structures at various levels
* IRCU should strengthen its strategic management system in which a clear view about its strategic direction (Vision, Mission, strategic objectives and actions) is created among and appreciated by all its multi-layers structures in order to achieve enhanced alignment of their actions with the strategic direction of the entire organization.

**NCF**

* More support is required for institutional capacity strengthening especially for NCF. There is need for NCF to have its fully ledged secretariat with its own staff and equipment for enhanced institutional performance.

**Government**

* Finalization of the peace policy should be fast tracked in order to give a strong base to the peace initiatives in the country. It will form a strong basis and framework for mobilizing resources and other support for the peace processes in the country
* Equip the elected LC committees with conflict resolution and mediation skills. The government should take advantage of the LC system that has recently been revitalized by equipping them with kills mediate and resolve local level conflicts
* National dialogue processes should also be fast tracked with strong government support and ownership while ensuring effective participation of all key stakeholders. Government should be at the helm of national peace initiatives if they are to be effective and sustainable

**EC**

* Citizen education should be an on-going initiative not only being influenced by the upcoming election.
* EC and stakeholder engagements should continue to achieve improved EC public relations.
* Presidential debates should be planned long enough and include on the electoral road map.

 **General**

* There is need for an update conflict mapping and analysis report to inform future programming more holistically.
* Quick responses to conflicts are needed in order to contain conflict escalation. This calls for putting in place early warning mechanisms
* Need for focused grassroots engagements on peace and conflict resolution
* The peace and conflict resolution through dialogue and mediation is still evolving in Uganda and still need combined effort both internally and externally.