

turning knowledge into practice

Good governance in fragile states: how much is enough?

Derick W. Brinkerhoff

*US Agency for International Development
Democracy and Governance Partners Conference
Washington, DC
June 12-13, 2008*



RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute

701 13th Street NW, Suite 750 ■ Washington DC, USA 20005-3967
Phone 202-728-2479 Fax 202-728-2475 e-mail dbrinkerhoff@rti.org

Good governance: too much of a good thing?

- The idealized good governance agenda includes:
 - Rule of law
 - Free and fair elections
 - Civil and political rights
 - High levels of transparency and accountability
 - Effective management/provision of public resources/services
 - Control of corruption
 - Significant civil society and citizen participation



Good enough governance

- Restored governance is needed to address deficits in
 - Security
 - Effectiveness
 - Legitimacy
- Good enough governance: setting priorities according to characteristics of the context
 - Sources and degree of state failure/fragility
 - Capacity and political will
 - Features of governance interventions
 - Path dependence and history
 - Availability of resources

Illustrative governance priorities

Governance outcomes	Collapsed← State		→Transitioning State		
	Citizen safety and security	P	P		
Conflict resolution systems in place	P	P			
Agreement on rules for political power contestation		P	P		
Government able to fulfill basic administrative functions		P	P		
Government able to provide services to most citizens		P	P	P	
Government able to assure equity in service provision and access to justice				P	P
Government decision-making on policy and programs open and transparent				P	P
Government responsive to citizen and CSO participation				P	P
Government fully accountable for decisions, policies, outcomes				P	P

Developing a good enough governance strategy

- Build state capacity to fulfill governance functions through resource and skills transfers, institutional design, and improved management systems.
- Build constraints on state actors through increased accountability, transparency, oversight, and checks and balances.
- Track progress through impacts on outcomes.

Good governance: a picture of the end state

