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KENYA, IFES TO HOST AFGHAN ELECTION DELEGATION

Washington, DC – DECEMBER 14, 2007 – Four top Afghan election officials will visit Kenya this month to study the East African country’s presidential and parliamentary elections. The study tour, organized by IFES, will give the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan an inside look at Kenya’s elections on December 27, including the application of the country’s electoral law, its election dispute process, campaign practices and participation by civil society organizations and the media.

The Afghan delegation will be in Kenya December 17-29. They will attend campaign rallies, meet with political parties and election commission authorities, and visit district election offices. On Election Day, the delegates will visit several polling sites in Nairobi and nearby districts. The delegation is headed by General Mohammad Ayub Asil, deputy chairman of the commission.

Two issues will be of special interest to the Afghans: Kenyan political parties and election administration. Afghanistan is currently grappling with the role of its new political parties—introduced after Taliban rule—as it considers reforming its electoral law. The Afghans will also be looking to exchange information with their Kenyan counterparts on administrative issues including voter registration, dispute resolution, staff training and vote counting procedures.

“As Afghanistan strategizes for a complex voter registration undertaking, there are a number of lessons to be learned from the Kenyan experience,” said Mary Cummins, IFES’ chief of party in Afghanistan who will accompany the delegates to Nairobi.

IFES has worked in Afghanistan since 2002, helping the Independent Election Commission build its electoral infrastructure so that the country can manage elections with minimal international assistance. Currently, the commission is preparing for the next round of national elections in early 2009. IFES’ work in Afghanistan, including the visit to Kenya, is funded by the United States Agency for International Development

IFES has provided technical assistance to the Electoral Commission of Kenya since 2002 in its efforts to strengthen the country’s electoral system. IFES’ work in Kenya is funded by the United States Agency for International Development and the Canadian International Development Agency.

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IFES is an international, nonprofit organization that supports the building of democratic societies.