



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1850 K Street, NW • Fifth Floor • Washington, D.C. 20006 • Tel: 202.350.6700 • Fax: 202.350.6701 • www.ifes.org

MEDIA CONTACT: Laura Osio, losio@ifes.org, (202) 350-6884

October 7, 2009

IFES Launches Innovative Civic Education Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo

USAID recently awarded IFES a \$5.2 million contract to conduct a 2-year civic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The program is designed to help fulfill the Congolese government's commitment to a process of decentralization to reverse the country's legacy of poor governance, corruption, and geographic inequality by bringing greater accountability and inclusion at the local level.

"The grassroots nature of this program will reach even the most far flung communities in DRC, allowing for true decentralization of power, which the Congolese government has committed itself to in 2007. We aim to reach over 8 million people with our civic education campaign," says Abigail Wilson, Deputy Regional Director for Africa.

IFES's Voter Opinion and Involvement through Civic Education (VOICE) Project in the DRC seeks to improve the capacity of the Congolese people to participate in the decentralization process that began with the government's pledge in 2007. To achieve this goal, IFES will conduct a range of activities aimed at enabling Congolese stakeholders to better understand and engage in democratic processes. This includes educating citizens about decentralization and the electoral cycles; motivating citizens, particularly marginalized groups, to engage in government and participate in elections; and fostering indigenous capacity to implement civic and voter education campaigns.

Building on past successes during our work for the 2006 elections, the VOICE project introduces a number of new and innovative components. These components include a contest leading to the production and broadcast of three popular songs promoting political participation, for which we will be partnering with Search for Common Ground; the creation of a comic book on decentralization; and civic education outreach through non-traditional civic education actors such as health workers and religious leaders.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1850 K Street, NW • Fifth Floor • Washington, D.C. 20006 • Tel: 202.350.6700 • Fax: 202.350.6701 • www.IFES.org

The IFES approach draws on over nine years of cutting-edge civic education work in the DRC, highly-valued in-country relationships and networks, effective local partnerships, and an extensive experience in the democratic process around the world.

IFES will be employing a Chief of Party and a Deputy Chief of Party who are both seasoned practitioners with over 20 years of experience in electoral development. IFES will also be setting up a main office in Kinshasa as well as several other provincial offices to facilitate civic education efforts throughout the entire country.

###

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is the world's premiere election assistance organization, providing countries with technical advice and tools to run democratic elections.