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EXPERTS GATHER IN GHANA TO DEVELOP IMPROVED STANDARDS FOR AFRICAN ELECTIONS

ACCRA, GHANA – More than 100 practitioners and experts on elections from 25 African countries will convene in Accra Nov. 12-14, to assess recent elections across the continent and develop recommendations for standards that could mitigate conflict and improve election processes. Recommendations from the colloquium will be aimed at enhancing prospects for credible elections in Africa by heightening standards of professionalism among election administration officials, political parties, civic groups, security services and the media.



The *Colloquium on African Elections: Best Practices and Cross-Sectoral Collaboration* will focus on Ghana's 2008 elections, which were universally viewed as credible despite heated political tensions and a razor-thin margin between the candidates. Participants hope to draw on lessons from the experience in Ghana, where for the second time in less than a decade, political power has changed hands from the ruling to an opposition party through the ballot box. Effective collaboration among all sectors of the electoral process helped ease tensions, enhanced transparency and built voter confidence in the election results.



Participants will also explore the differences between the Ghanaian experience and elections in other countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe, which experienced gross irregularities, fraud and conflict. They will identify the factors that contributed to different outcomes in each of these cases and discuss how to foster credible elections on the continent based on these case studies.



“This is an opportunity for Africans to reflect on our own experiences and build upon our successes. As a regional initiative, this conference will bolster electoral reformers, and civic and political stakeholders on the continent,” said Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, chair of the Electoral Commission in Ghana.



At the conclusion of the colloquium, participants will release a communiqué summarizing their discussions and sharing their recommendations for election standards in Africa.



Co-organizers of the colloquium include the National Democratic Institute, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Open Society Initiative for West Africa and United Nations Development Programme.