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### **IFES Returns to Work with Liberia's National Elections Commission**

*Well-run elections are necessary to maintain democratic order in the formerly conflict-torn nation*

Washington, DC—IFES has been awarded a five-year cooperative agreement by USAID to support various upcoming elections in Liberia: the constitutional referendum, by-elections, and national and local elections. These polls are of particular importance because of their central role in supporting the country's continued transition from a devastated, conflict-torn nation to one that is slowly building the democratic systems, institutions, and processes needed to promote long-term stability and development.

"Having worked in Liberia since 1994, we have witnessed the strides the country has taken towards a well-run democratic system. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC) and helping them build their capacity in preparation for the upcoming elections," says Abigail Wilson, Deputy Regional Director for Africa.

The aim of this *Building Sustainable Election Management in Liberia* project is to increase the capacity of the NEC to efficiently, effectively, and impartially manage the upcoming elections. IFES' support to building the NEC's institutional and professional capacity will allow it to conduct elections with decreasing levels of international support.

IFES will support the NEC's institutional development by improving its infrastructure and building the NEC's professional capacity. Both of these activities will contribute to the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of the NEC in managing elections. IFES will also help increase the transparency of and public confidence in the electoral process by increasing the credibility of voter registration, boundary delimitation, and polls; developing a legal and procedural framework that meets international



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standards; and supporting voter and civic education.

Liberia's successful 2005 national elections—the most recent and the first since the end of the civil war—marked an important step in the transition towards a stable democracy. The 2005 elections were successful in part thanks to considerable international support to the process, including IFES' assistance to the NEC. The 2010 referendum and 2011 general elections will be the first national elections since then, and the subsequent local elections will be the first since the 1980s.

IFES has a rich experience in Liberia, where it has worked over the past 15 years. IFES first became involved in Liberia in 1994, providing support for civil society strengthening and voter education, and assisting with electoral administration and post-election planning. From 2004–2009, IFES worked to increase the capacity of the NEC to administer elections, enhance the credibility of electoral operations, strengthen the electoral process through legal reform, prevent and resolve electoral disputes, and increase citizen awareness of rights and responsibilities in a democracy. IFES' current project will build upon the positive results of this past work in Liberia.

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*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.*