



AFRICA AND NEAR EAST



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Congolese demonstrate electoral expertise in observing South African elections

An international delegation of election observers organized by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the Office of Transition Initiatives at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OTI) traveled to the Republic of South Africa from May 26 to June 7, 1999 to observe South African's national and provincial elections on June 2, 1999.

The 12-member delegation contained six individuals from Congolese civil society organizations, three high-level government officials from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and three IFES staff members. It was a rare opportunity for civil society members and government officials to work together and learn from the same experience.



The IFES/Congolese delegation in South Africa, in front of the IEC.

The purpose of the trip was to observe the South African election process and, for the Congolese members, to gain additional experience that could positively contribute to the democratization process in DRC.

Upon arrival in Pretoria on May 26, a series of work sessions were held with IFES Project Manager Joe Baxter and the president and vice-president of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Brigalia Hlophle Bam and Professor Herbert Vilakazi. The delegation also participated in an international observer briefing organized by the United Nations on May 29, and met with the South African Civil Society Observer Coalition (SACSOC), Project Literacy, an organization that supports adult literacy training and the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA).

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The international observation delegation was divided into three smaller 4-person teams, which



were deployed in three of South Africa's nine provinces: Kwazulu-Natal, Northern Province, and Eastern Cape.

In the provinces, each team met with various key players in the election process-- the Local Electoral Offices (LEOs), political party liaison committees, civil society organizations and national and international observers.

On June 2, 1999, the 3 teams observed the election in 34 polling stations. Each team witnessed the counting of the ballots, and the transmission of election results.

In particular, the teams were impressed by:

- A generally peaceful atmosphere, without violence or intimidation, indicative of a consensus with respect to the election process.
- The decentralization of the election administration apparatus and the empowerment of local election officials.
- The involvement of men and women in the electoral apparatus. (Though work was carried out collectively, the majority of election officials the team saw were women.)
- The public's confidence in the election system.
- The enthusiasm exhibited by most voters. Election day was transformed into almost a national holiday.

However, the teams also noted the following:

- Inappropriate delimitation of voting districts caused long lines at certain polling stations. Some polling stations had 3,500 voters, while others had fewer than 250.
- Inadequate civic and electoral education, particularly in rural areas.
- Inadequate distribution of logistical equipment (telephone equipment, ballots, forms, electrical generators, ballot box seals) delayed voting operations and vote-counting in some polling stations.

Upon their return to Kinshasa, the 9-person government/civil society observer delegation shared its experience with an audience of 300 civil society and government representatives as well as radio, television and print journalists. The delegation focused its message on the need to build consensus and collaboration. Four members of the delegation delivered 20-minute representations on four topics—South African political and socio-economic context; history and legal framework of the 1999 South African elections; election observations and conclusions; and lessons learned for application in DRC. After a 4-hour presentation, the audience protested at having to end the discussion. Four similar events will be held in Kinshasa and five in the provinces.

In Washington, the DRC team has produced a brochure in French entitled “The Consensus for Democracy”, which summarizes the Congolese experience in South Africa and outlines some recommendations for DRC. This document, soon to be distributed in DRC, will assist the Congolese who traveled to South Africa to spread their message of consensus and collaboration.

Benin

From April 2-June 18, 1999, IFES supported a civic education program through a subgrant to the *Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Villageoises* (ASSODIV), a Beninese NGO. The objective of the program was to inform Benin's citizens about the functions of central and local government and their roles in ensuring that these bodies behave democratically. The program explored the rights and responsibilities of citizens vis-a-vis decentralized local government and encouraged the establishment of participatory mechanisms for dialogue and problem solving.

ASSODIV designed and produced a variety of civic education materials in two local languages (Dendi, Baatonou) including a short film on



decentralization; a radio message on decentralization broadcast on Radio Cotonou and Radio Parakou; 700 audio cassettes and CDs distributed to 18 radio stations, village groups, recreation centers and the local populace; and 5,000 brochures distributed to sous-prefectures, literacy centers and NGO centers.

In addition, ASSODIV held sensibilization sessions in four sous-prefectures of the Borgou region (Nikki, N'dali, Sinende and Perere). These sessions were administered in two phases. During the first phase, meetings were held with various groups/local organizations, i.e. village groups, women's groups, local administrative authorities, and local development associations. During the second phase, ASSODIV teams met with villagers at the local level. In total, ASSODIV teams visited 67 villages in 21 communes in the four sous-prefectures.

At the conclusion of the program, a survey was distributed to 230 individuals. Results from the survey indicated 98% of those who participated understood the basic concept of decentralization and their role in the process. Recommendations for future activity include:

- expanding upon the civic education campaign in the four sous-prefectures and extending the campaign to other sous-prefectures over the next three years, and
- strengthening skills through leadership training and lobbying for citizens, communal advisors and citizen groups, especially women, to allow them to fully participate in the decision-making process in their communes.

Ghana

Curriculum development for the final capacity-building workshop in Project ECSELL (Enhancing Civil Society Effectiveness at the Local Level) was held June 14–18 at IFES/Ghana headquarters in Accra. IFES consultant, Elizabeth McClintock, worked with four Ghanaian consulting firms, Nkum Associations, Centre for

the Development of People (CEDEP), Development and Communications Research (DCR) and the Organization Capacity Improvement Consultants (OCIC) to develop the curriculum for the workshop entitled *Promoting Effective Civic-Government Collaboration*. Building on skills developed in the previous four workshops, Workshop V seeks to:

- Assess the impact of Project ECSELL;
- Enhance participants' skills for managing civic-government collaboration; and
- Provide a framework for sustaining civic-government collaboration in the future.

A week-long training of trainers followed the curriculum development as the four Ghanaian groups and Ms. McClintock worked with the larger group of workshop trainers to transfer the skills needed for Workshop V. This session was held from June 21 – 25.

Workshop V brings together civil society organizations (CSOs) and District Assembly officials (DAs) and seeks to institutionalize the Collaborative Analytic Problem-Solving (CAPS) approach introduced in Workshop II. Participants will strengthen conflict management, negotiation and advocacy skills developed through the CAPS methodology. This workshop also includes a grant-making component intended to solidify the collaboration between CSOs and DAs. IFES will award grants for projects and programs that are undertaken collaboratively by District Assemblies and CSOs, increase civic advocacy or support the capacity of CSOs to achieve their set objectives. Examples of activities that may be funded with the above-mentioned grants include:

- Community meetings and public forums that engage government officials with the community;
- Travel to Accra to proposal legislation or to lobby on behalf of or against legislation in Parliament;
- Fundraising trips to regional capitals or Accra;



- Technical skills building and topical seminars;
- Coalition building trips to discuss and address issues of interest to the community; and
- Skills sharing and training for groups not involved in Project ECSELL.

Income-generating activities will not be funded.

Workshop V will be held in 20 districts from July 5 – 24. The grant-making program will be presented on the final day of the three-day workshop. The application process for the grants will begin in August 1999.

Guinea

From May 19 to June 7, IFES participated in a joint mission with the European Union (EU) to study donor coordination during the December 1998 presidential elections in Guinea.

Dr. Carolyn Somerville of IFES and Mr. Michael Meadowcroft of the EU focused their analysis on:

- election-related coordination among international donors;
- coordination between donors and the Guinean government; and
- relations among political parties, the *Haut Conseil aux Affaires Electorales* (HCAE), non-governmental organizations and international donors.

Dr. Somerville spent two weeks in Conakry and one week in Washington conferring with IFES/Washington, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), USAID/Washington and other key actors. In particular, Dr. Somerville:

- Analyzed the election-related activities of international donors and their perceptions of the impact of these activities on the presidential election.
- Analyzed the Guinean government's and political parties' perceptions of donor assistance.

- Identified the aspects of election planning which were not addressed by the donors and analyzed the impact of these omissions on the election process.
- Examined the role and effectiveness of the HCAE in relation to its ability to work with international donors.
- Studied the nature of relations among the Ministry of the Interior, the HCAE, and political parties during the electoral process, and assessed how donor participation impacted to this process.
- Investigated the logistical and organizational problems identified by political parties during the election process and how these issues were addressed by the Ministry of the Interior and the HCAE, and the impact of the international donors' efforts to address these problems.

The joint IFES/EU mission drafted a final report, which is currently under review. The report will be completed shortly.

Liberia

During the month of June, IFES/Liberia continued constructing and refurbishing the election magistrate offices nationwide. During this phase, IFES/Liberia is concentrating on building and equipping offices in the Southeast region of the country. When completed, the offices will give ECOM a presence in the towns of Zwedru, Greenville, Kaweaken, Barclayville and Harper. Although transportation problems and the lack of supplies have made the office construction very challenging, IFES/Liberia envisions the offices to be completed by the end of July. In addition to supervising the office construction and refurbishment, IFES/Liberia Project Manager Ted Lawrence presented 17 motorcycles, helmets and spare parts kits to the ECOM at a handing over ceremony in Monrovia. Procured by IFES/Liberia in May, the motorcycles will help fulfill the transportation needs of the rural magistrate offices. Representatives of the US embassy and USAID in Liberia also attended the handing over ceremony. Before receiving the



motorcycles, all the magistrate officers underwent a half-day motorcycle operation and maintenance seminar conducted by IFES and ECOM.

To further support ECOM's institutional development, Joe Baxter, IFES' Senior Advisor for Election Administration, completed his report on his May 1999 assessment mission to Liberia. The report provided recommendations for the improvement of ECOM's organizational structure, election budgeting and various other mechanisms in conducting successful local government and by-elections. Mr. Baxter's report also outlined prospects for future IFES assistance to the ECOM. Copies of the report were distributed to members of the ECOM and USAID/Liberia.



While on his May assessment mission to Liberia, Joe Baxter (left) is pictured with an assistant magistrate officer at the Gbartala Magistrate office in Bong County.

Also in June, IFES-funded Star Radio hired a new Liberian Station Manager named James Moral. A former Deputy Director General for Broadcasting of the state owned Liberia Broadcasting Network, Mr. Moral will oversee Star Radio's transition to an economical viable and independent Liberian radio station. In the meantime, IFES continued its support of Star Radio by signing a contract modification with Fondation Hironnelle (Star Radio's manager)

which provides Star Radio with additional financial assistance through December 1999.

Malawi

On June 15, Malawians voted in their country's second presidential and parliamentary elections. IFES continued election activities in support of the election process in a number of different areas through the date of the election.

IFES Technical Resource Persons (TRPs) continued their activities in support of the Regional Election Officers. IFES TRPs assisted Regional Election Officers to develop and manage logistics plans for polling centers in the North, Central and Southern regions of Malawi. IFES, in collaboration with the German organization GTZ, co-sponsored the National Tally Center at Comesa Hall in Blantyre. The National Tally Center served as the temporary headquarters for the Malawi Election Commission (MEC) and was open 24 hours a day, from 15 to 18 June, to receive the records of election results. Once received, the election results were recorded and posted for public viewing. Throughout the reporting period, international journalists, international observers, and political party agents were able to observe the reporting process.

IFES also fielded an eight-member technical monitoring team to observe the June 15 general elections. The members of the IFES technical monitoring team were deployed, on June 13, in four two-person teams to all of Malawi's three regions. One team traveled to Mzuzu, in the Northern Region, and covered polling in Mzuzu City, Mzimba and Nkhata Bay. Another team traveled to the Central region and observed polling stations in Nkhotakota South and South East constituencies. The remaining two teams were deployed to the Southern region. One team concentrated on constituencies in the Blantyre urban area and made a visit to Mwanza Central Constituency (for which new ballots had been printed during the evening of June 14). The



second team observed polling in Chiradzulu District. In all, the IFES technical monitoring team observed the voting at 45 polling stations throughout the country.

The technical monitoring teams provided both IFES/Malawi and the Malawi Electoral Commission with basic information, which will be used to evaluate the outcome of the IFES input to the electoral process.

On June 22, the IFES technical monitoring team released a statement incorporating the observations from all four teams. The statement is excerpted below:

- X As during the Voter Registration period, the MEC failed to effectively utilize their Regional Offices, choosing instead to deliver the extremely limited supply of ballots directly to the Districts. Constituencies in Dedza, Kasungu and Nkhotakota Districts were sent the wrong National Assembly ballots, but these problems were resolved by action at the Regional level in co-operation with the Returning Officers. In Mzimba West a number of Polling Stations failed to open on June 15 because of a lack of ballot papers. Mwanza Central received ballot papers with the photographs of the UDF and MCP candidates reversed, and actions to correct this was taken using a Blantyre printing company on the evening of 14 June. Polling Stations in several locations in the South ran out of ballots well before the close of poll, and voters were denied the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote. This is a serious matter, and together with irregularities, which occurred during Voter Registration is likely to lead to a number of legal challenges in the High Court.
- X Returning Officers in the Districts which the IFES teams visited performed

effectively, taking action to deal with identified problems as far as possible within their resources. They had good relationships with the Police and Defence Force personnel providing security cover in their District. Returning Officers in the Southern Region seemed to have significantly more problems than their colleagues in the other regions in organizing their Voter Registers in numerical order prior to sending them to Polling Centres. The failure to do this was a major factor in the slow processing of voters and the confusion at a number of the centres visited.

- X Training of Polling Station staff was generally well done, with polling procedures well understood. At a number of Polling Centres, IFES teams found training in progress on 13 and 14 June. Additional training on completion of accounting forms and closing procedures, together with clearer instructions on the counting procedure to be followed and the physical organization of the counting place, should be provided in future.
- X Polling Centres were adequate and well organized. Staff were co-operative, helpful and adapted well to local circumstances. However, when crowds of waiting voters became restive this put additional pressure on personnel already stretched by an unnecessarily complicated set of procedures. A simplification and streamlining of these procedures will be required for future elections.
- X The Ballot Issuers provided clear and unbiased instruction on how to fill out the ballot. This was reflected in the low level of Null and Void ballots. In a



number of centres in Chiradzulu District, the IFES Team noted party agents standing at the polling booth and attempting to influence voters. The Presiding Officers were not taking effective action to prevent this.

X The Voters contributed in no small measure to the success of the elections by their calm and patient approach to the often lengthy wait to cast their votes.

X Counting was slow (partly due to the very low light levels under which it had to be carried out) but was nonetheless adequately done. Ballot reconciliation principles and procedures were poorly understood, and the filling out of forms (in particular MEC 065 and the Public Declaration of Result) was not well done. Forward preparation of these forms would have reduced the time staff had to spend on duty. Transmission of results to the Returning Officers also proceeded slowly. The internal MEC target of transmission to the National Tally Centre within 24 hours of the close of poll proved wholly unrealistic given the practical constraints of limited transport over difficult rural roads, and placed unnecessary pressure on Returning Officers.

X At the National Tally Centre at Comesa

Hall in Blantyre, the accumulation of both National Assembly and Presidential results reflected the logistical problems of results transmission, with the bulk of results not being available until early on Friday 18 June, and the announcement of the Presidential poll result coming after 5pm on that day. This was done at this time because the law requires announcement within 72 hours of the close of poll. However, it led to the Presidential result being announced with a number of serious anomalies and queries still outstanding, and may again provide grounds for legal challenge.

X Notwithstanding the 72-hour deadline, the MEC delayed the announcement of the Presidential result until after the winning candidate had conducted a victory rally broadcast live to the nation. The function of the Commission is to conduct polling and announce the results in an impartial manner. To allow that function to be usurped casts doubt on the Commission's independence and integrity.

IFES currently is considering several options for follow-on activities in the post-election period, including NGO capacity building and voter registration issues. A report on the election process from 1988 through 1999 will be issued in late July.

Nigeria

Throughout the month of June 1999, IFES worked collaboratively with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria to conduct a post-election needs assessment. The assessment drew from the experience gained by the INEC and its permanent and temporary staff, in the conduct of the 1998-1999 transitional elections. In addition, the assessment looked to the future by examining the needs of the INEC as the



administrator of elections in Nigeria. Funded by the Department for International Development (United Kingdom), the Office of Transition Initiatives at the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, and the European Commission, the objectives of the mission were: 1) to assist the INEC in further strengthening its ability to conduct credible elections; and 2) to inform both the Nigerian government and the international donor community of the potential need for assistance in some areas to enable the INEC to further meet its responsibility as an independent and permanent election authority.

The mission’s final report will be presented to the INEC and to interested international donors in early July.

In conducting this post-election assessment, international consultants joined with senior staff from the INEC in a Joint Working Group (JWG). The JWG primarily considered two areas of the electoral process: 1) the administration of the elections and 2) election procedures. In assessing these areas, the JWG focused on:

- The legal mandate of the INEC;
- INEC’s administration of the electoral process;
- The organisational capacity of the INEC;
- The voter registration process;
- Election day procedures (accreditation, voting, counting and collation);
- Training of the INEC’s permanent and temporary staff; and
- INEC’s voter education programme.

The Joint Working Group was guided in its efforts by INEC National Commissioners Janet Tola Ajayi and Fatima Mu’azu. The eight members of the Working Group were:

INEC members	International members
B.S. Ekanem	Hayford Ampomah
<i>Director of Field</i>	<i>Director Public</i>

<i>Services</i>	<i>Information and Training, Electoral Commission of Ghana</i>
R.A. Hundu	Albert Arhin
<i>Director of Logistics and Planning</i>	<i>Director Operations, Electoral Commission of Ghana</i>
E.A. Johnson	Arnaud R. Blasco
<i>Director of Research and Statistics</i>	<i>Information technologies and voter registration specialist, France</i>
A. Madaki	Rafael Lopez Pintor
<i>Director of Legal Services</i>	<i>Election administration specialist and Professor of Political Science, Spain</i>

The Joint Working Group was supported by a two-person Secretariat of Simon Clarke, Program Manager, IFES/Nigeria; and Paul Ugiomoh, International Liaison, INEC. Additionally, Joe Baxter, IFES Senior Adviser for Elections, and Susan Palmer, IFES Program Officer for Nigeria, assisted in the compilation of the mission’s report.

In June, the Joint Working Group conducted three weeks of interviews and assessment at both the national headquarters of the INEC and at several of the INEC’s state offices (Adamawa, Delta, Kano, Lagos, and Rivers, and in the Federal Capital Territory). The interviews, with key INEC Commissioners and small groups of both permanent and temporary (ad hoc) election staff, as well as with representatives of Nigerian stakeholders, were supplemented by a questionnaire that was distributed to all Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) at the state level.

Following their interviews, the Joint Working Group worked collaboratively in the drafting of its final report. It is hoped that this report will serve as a useful resource to the INEC as it



begins to prepare for future elections under Nigeria's new civilian administration.

South Africa

IFES is currently working to close-out the sub-grant component of the IFES/South Africa project. Joe Baxter, Project Manager, IFES/South Africa, and Liam Gous, Grants Manager, IFES/South Africa are in the process of closing out each of the individual contracts and have audited the financial reports of the NGOs.

IFES assisted the NGOs in the development of their budgets and provided training in how the financial records were to be kept. IFES/South Africa also produced a guide to financial reporting for sub-grant recipients. Several of the NGOs thanked IFES for the assistance and training, remarking that they had never been required to produce such a detailed budget.

Sub-grantees were encouraged to interact with local IEC offices to let them know when they would be in their area and what they would be doing. IFES provided its election specialists in the field and the IEC provincial office with copies of the scheduled activities and encouraged them to visit sites when possible.

The sub-grant recipients conducted their activities during the later part of April and the month of May. The training workshops in which citizens sat in a classroom setting and were taught about the election process were not as popular nor were these activities as effective as the radio programs, posters and live performances. The workshops reach a limited number of people and were much more expensive than other activities. In some instances, the NGOs reported that attendees expected to be hired as trainers as they had received training and saw no reason to explain the election process to their neighbors if they would not be paid.

Particularly popular, however, were the live performances conducted by Tinkawu Theater Laboratory in the Northern Province, Siyaya Cultural Organization and the Umtata Cultural Arts Center in the Umtata Area and the Vusisizwe Development Project in and around Peddie in the Eastern Cape. IFES Advisors attended several of these performances and one performance was attended by a group of international observers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The IFES Advisors as well as the Congolese Observers reported that all the performances received enthusiastic receptions from the audience. All of the NGOs reported that once word of the performances spread through the community, the NGOs received more requests than they could fill. The NGOs also reported that individuals came up after the performance and expressed their appreciation and said they now knew about the voting process. The Umtata Cultural Organization reported that many people approached their performers wanting to know where they could register so they could vote on Election Day.

While some activities were more popular than others, overall the NGO sub-grant component of the IFES/South Africa project was a success.

IFES Senior Program Officer Laurie Cooper, returning from Malawi, spent two days in Johannesburg in discussions with the Independent Election Commission and representatives of USAID/SA regarding IFES post-election activities in that country. Among the several options under discussion at this time, IFES is considering the opportunity to conduct civic education activities oriented toward the November 2000 local government elections.

International Foundation for Election Systems



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