



AFRICA AND NEAR EAST



June 2000

AAEA

Association of African Election Authorities

The AAEA Executive Secretariat, headed by Dr. K. Afari-Gyan, is in the process of compiling the second edition of the AAEA newsletter, which is expected to be distributed to African election officials and election-focused NGOs in early July of this year. The second AAEA newsletter is expected to include articles on Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda. The first AAEA newsletter was published in February of this year and featured articles on Ghana's party laws, local election offices in Liberia and the upcoming referendum in Uganda. All AAEA newsletters are published in English and French.

The Executive Secretariat has also started the planning process for this year's AAEA Advisory Board meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for the week of August 24-31, 2000. Advisory Board members from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Senegal, Uganda will be discussing future AAEA activities and strategic objectives.

Burundi

Rule of Law

In April, the IFES/Burundi team engaged Jean Lavoie to initiate

IFES' rule of law program in Burundi. From April 24-26, Mr. Lavoie visited IFES/Washington, meeting with IFES staff, officials from USAID, the Burundi Ambassador to the U.S. Thomas Ndikumana and representatives of select international non governmental organizations.

In May, Mr. Lavoie identified an office/housing site and began drafting the required documents to register IFES as an INGO in Burundi. He met with representatives from the U.S. embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Human Rights, CARE, Search for Common Ground, Africare and local Burundian NGOs including League ITEKA to further develop ideas for program activities.

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Democratic Republic of Congo

Peace, Democracy and Rule of Law

Parties to the Lusaka accord signed a new cease-fire agreement that took effect on April 14. The cease-fire generally seemed to be holding in most parts of the country. However, there were reports of limited fighting in Equateur province and sporadic attacks in South Kivu including the reported massacre of 300 civilians in Katagota. Over the last two months major reports by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and UN Human Rights Rapporteur Roberto Garreton have deplored massive human rights abuses by all the warring sides in the DRC conflict.

A UN Security Council delegation visit in late April culminated with the signature of an agreement between the DRC government and the UN for the deployment of the 5,537 military observers and peacekeeping troops approved by the UN in February. Nigeria and South Africa both pledged to contribute troops to the mission as civil society groups in Kinshasa called for rapid deployment. But when the “casques bleus” (blue helmets) would actually arrive in country was still not clear.

Serious fighting between Ugandan and Rwandan troops that broke out in Kisangani in early May was eventually quelled. With the mediation of the UN Security Council delegation, both parties agreed to withdraw their troops from the city.

In mid-April former Botswanan president Ketumile Masire released his workplan for facilitating the Inter-Congolese Dialogue – a critical element of the Lusaka peace accord. The plan calls for a preparatory period from April through June and the dialogue itself to begin July 3 in Kinshasa or another African city. The

government promptly rejected the plan on grounds that the dialogue should start much sooner, also insisting that the dialogue take place in Kinshasa. The rebel Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) and the unarmed opposition UDPS party both reiterated that they would not accept Kinshasa as the venue for the dialogue.

After visits to Kinshasa and Eastern DRC in May, Mr. Masire announced the creation of a 20-person preparatory committee for the dialogue composed of representatives of the government, religious confessions, four political parties, civil society, and the armed opposition. He planned to convene a meeting of the committee from June 5 – 7 in Benin to seek agreement on the venue, agenda, criteria for representation, and rules of procedure for the larger dialogue to take place starting July 3. Rebel factions agreed to attend, but Kabila declined to meet with Mr. Masire on his return to Kinshasa from the East and the government announced shortly thereafter that it would not participate in the Benin meeting. The government has also re-announced plans to establish a transitional Constituent Assembly – outside the dialogue process – by July 1.

IFES/DRC Program Manager Jeremy Heep met with Mr. Masire in Goma during a weeklong mission to North and South Kivu to explore the possibility of launching IFES program activities in eastern DRC. IFES provided Mr. Masire and his team with copies of important briefing papers on civil society in DRC, as well as copies of key reports issued from the National Consultation that concluded in March. IFES has been communicating with Philip Winter, the facilitator’s technical advisor, regarding other possible assistance that IFES could provide the facilitator’s office. That assistance might include continued document provision and document translation, as well as identification and provision



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of technical specialists that could assist the dialogue process in one form or another.

Program Manager Heep's trip to the east found that despite a very difficult setting, civil society in North and South Kivu continues to be active, dynamic, and effective in its efforts to promote peace, democracy, and the respect for human rights. Civil society groups and the authorities expressed enthusiasm for IFES programming in both North and South Kivu. Within the next few months, IFES/DRC hopes to establish a Documentation Center in the east in collaboration with the International Human Rights Law Group, and to conduct a second exploratory mission focused on how to implement the Peace, Democracy & Development civic education program in the eastern provinces.

In Kinshasa in early May the IFES/DRC team facilitated a two-day workshop to launch the next phase of the Peace, Democracy & Development civic education program for the western provinces where the program has enjoyed wide diffusion and excellent success. Participants stayed in Kinshasa after the IFES workshop to attend additional training on the rule of law, organized by the International Human Rights Law Group; and on civic education related to elections, organized by the NGO Network for Election Support in Southern Africa (NGONESSA). Equipped with newly revised trainer's manuals and picture boxes, the participants returned to the provinces for follow-up activities to update the training of the 750 extension workers who facilitate the civic education sessions across the country.

In the IFES/DRC Rule of Law project, the Working Group for Institutional Reforms (formerly the Rapid Response Legal Committee) continued to meet and plan its program of technical assistance to civil society for activities

focused on judicial reform, law development, and most immediately, preparing for the Inter-Congolese dialogue. The team made initial contacts with media organizations to begin planning media training around rule of law issues.

At the end of May, IFES/DRC was finalizing arrangements to send a delegation of Congolese civil society representatives on a study tour to Benin during the last two weeks of June. The tour will afford the Congolese participants a valuable "behind the scenes" look at Benin's historic transition and an in-depth review of current initiatives designed to address democratic consolidation and sustainability. On their return to DRC, the participants will share their learning with their compatriots in a series of "report-back" activities.

Ghana

Preparations for the December 2000 Elections

The Electoral Commission completed the first of its major activities in the run-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held on December 8, 2000. For a period of ten days, May 6 to May 15, 2000, the Electoral Commission opened revision centers in the 20,000 polling areas to update the register of voters. The last revision of the register of voters in Ghana was in 1997. There are presently 9.6 million voters on the nation's voter's roll. During the revision period, the Electoral Commission sought to add newly eligible voters (those who had turned 18 years of age since the last election), add voters who had not previously registered, and excise the names of deceased voters. Ghanaian voters had the opportunity to cross check their names in the register or, if necessary, have their names transferred from



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their old polling sites to new ones. The revised voters register must be displayed in the first week of July before it can be authenticated for use in the elections.

Below are the dates for the main activities on the Electoral Commission's election calendar:

- Issuance of Photo IDs to all voters: July 18 - Oct. 31
- Exhibition of Register at all polling stations: June 30 - July 9
- Receipt of Nomination of Candidates: Sept. 12 - 13
- Election Day: Dec. 8
- Presidential Run-Off (if necessary): Dec. 29

In addition to providing technical assistance to the Electoral Commission through the electoral process, IFES will provide funding for planning and training activities in the immediate run-up to the elections. Between June and November, IFES will support five meetings of the Commission to plan strategies with its regional directors. IFES will also fund a total of five training workshops for over 100,000 temporary poll workers and 400,000 candidates' agents. This support is intended to enhance the technical competence of the election field staff and to build the trust of the political parties in the electoral process.

Promoting Fair and Equal Access to the State-Owned Media

Activities to monitor the performance of the state-owned media in providing fair and equal access to all contesting political parties started in April. IFES' sub grantee, Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), an Accra-based nongovernmental organization, held forums in April and May at which editors from the state-owned and private media establishments exchanged views with representatives from all the political parties. CDD also trained and deployed independent media monitors throughout

the country to assess media coverage of the parties on day-to-day basis. Their reports will be discussed at the monthly forums of the parties and the media.

Support to Ghana's Civil Society

With additional support from USAID, IFES was able to extend its Project ECSELL (Enhancing Civil Society Effectiveness at the Local Level) until January 2001. In April, IFES visited each of the 20 districts in which it has been working since 1998, to prepare its civic group partners for a second round of grants. During the first round of grant making (December 1999 to February 2000), twenty-four civic associations won awards to either carry out activities for increased civic advocacy, engage in collaborative problem solving with District Assemblies, or to build the capacity of other groups. IFES will review the second series of applications submitted by groups that are not among the first group of awardees, with a view to making new awards soon.

During the district visits, IFES assessed the interest of the civic unions in IFES' new a IFES initiative, sponsoring parliamentary debates. Civic leaders in 18 of the 20 districts indicated that they wished to organize multiple debates by the parliamentary candidates in their constituencies. (There are 110 administrative districts in Ghana and 200 constituencies in Parliament). In May IFES began the process of organizing a debate-planning workshop where the civic leaders will learn how to sponsor a political debate. The workshop will be held in late July.

Guinea

Technical Elections Support

In May, IFES sought and received support from USAID for a 4-month program to provide technical



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advisory services to election stakeholders in support of Guinea's 2000 elections. The program seeks to improve communications among the Government of Guinea, political parties, civil society stakeholders and international donors on issues related to the preparations for the elections; provide technical advice on election administration; and facilitate the consolidation of lessons learned in the organization and implementation of the elections, to encourage improvements in the administration of Guinea's elections.

On May 26, IFES Project Manager Dominique Thiriet traveled to Conakry to represent IFES on the ground. Municipal elections are currently scheduled for June 25; legislative elections for September; and communal elections for December.

Liberia

IFES Activities wind down

In his first public statement since closure of the IFES-funded STAR Radio, Liberian President Charles Taylor stated in a May 5th press conference that STAR Radio could re-open if its representative met with the Ministry of Information and if the station's future reporting be "reviewed" by the Ministry of Information. The Liberian government closed STAR Radio on March 15, 2000, stating that the radio station was illegally foreign-owned and its news programming had posed a "security risk." In response to this development, the STAR Radio board of directors issued its first public statement on the closure of STAR Radio, releasing a press statement on May 22 emphasizing that the station is Liberian owned, managed and operated. In the statement, STAR indicated its willingness to meet with the Liberian government to clarify any issues relating to its ownership.

On May 31, 2000, IFES/Liberia closed its Monrovia office. With its 1994 USAID grant, IFES assisted with preparations for transitional elections under a succession of peace agreements. IFES opened its field office in Monrovia in January 1997 to provide both technical and commodity assistance culminating in the conduct of the 1997 presidential and legislative elections, marking the end of the Liberian civil war. Following the elections, IFES applied its institutional expertise in election assistance, information dissemination and civil society to assist Liberia in consolidating its democratic process and to encourage participatory government at the national and local levels. May 31st also marked the completion of IFES/Liberia Project Coordinator Samuel Bolay's tenure as IFES Project Coordinator, a position he held since November 1999. Prior to being promoted to the Project Coordinator position in November, Mr. Bolay had served as the IFES/Liberia Office Manager/Accountant since November 1997. IFES thanks Mr. Bolay for his steadfast dedication to the challenging Liberia program.

Morocco

Regional Rule of Law

In May, IFES held the opening seminar of its Morocco rule of law program, a pilot project in continuing judicial education. The seminar, entitled "The Role and Powers of Judges: A Comparative Perspective from the Anglo-American Tradition," took place May 20-21 at the Ministry of Justice in Rabat. Forty judges attended, representing administrative and commercial court throughout Morocco including: Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fes, Meknes, Agadir, Tangiers, and Oujda. The Minister of Justice, Omar Azziman, the Secretary General of the Ministry, Ahmed



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Ghazali, and the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy Maureen Quinn each spoke at the opening ceremony.

The seminar provided the Moroccan participants with an overview of the US and Canadian legal systems, and an introduction to the role of the judge in those systems, highlighting the differences and similarities with the civil law system followed in Morocco. Minister Azziman's remarks captured this theme of opening up to new ideas and systems:

“The work you, judges, are undertaking [at this seminar] fits into the larger framework of Morocco's judicial reform program, which involves streamlining and upgrading our justice system. To accomplish this, we rely on the leverage of the outside world and on foreign knowledge and expertise in the judicial field.

This seminar has historic importance for us. Morocco has traditionally always looked North –to Western Europe—when it has cast its eye outside, especially to France and Spain. This is true, of course, in the economic field, and it is especially true in the legal and judicial fields. Therefore, in these fields, we have learned very little about the Anglo-American system. We have not borrowed from them. This cannot last any longer. Because the Anglo-American tradition has a very important influence and very important methods and systems that will be of great benefit to us here...”

The seminar also covered topics in administrative and commercial law, and introduced the judges to practical techniques used by judges in the US and

Canada. A simulation of a bankruptcy case was conducted, followed by discussion. A central focus throughout the two days was the ways in which the Anglo-American system protects the independence of the judge.

The IFES experts conducting the seminar were Judge Samuel Bufford of the 9th Circuit US Federal Bankruptcy Court in Los Angeles, Jacques Fremont, Dean of the Law School at the University of Montreal, and David Gruning, Professor of Law at Loyola University of New Orleans.

Future continuing judicial education seminars are expected to cover topics in administrative and commercial law, legal reasoning, case management and arbitration.

Nigeria

Taking the Draft Electoral Law and Voter Registration Plans to the People

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria will take its draft electoral law and plans for a new computerized voter registration system to the people of Nigeria for comment through a series of six public fora around the country beginning on July 4th. The fora are designed to obtain the views of political stakeholders and civil society on the future electoral process in Nigeria. A forum will be held in each of Nigeria's six geo-political zones and last for two days. Prior to the series' kick-off on July 4th, the Commission will distribute copies of its draft electoral law and a question and answer fact sheet on voter registration to political parties, elected officials, traditional leaders, professional organizations, and scores of civil society organizations around the country. IFES is assisting the INEC in planning and publicizing the events and in producing copies of the laws



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and the fact sheet through a grant from USAID. The conduct of the fora and the determination of a national consensus on the issues concerning the future of the electoral process are among the objectives in INEC's three-year strategic plan and contribute to the Commission's strategic goal of a more credible election process in Nigeria.

The draft electoral law represents an effort by INEC to consolidate, into one document, the various decrees that governed the 1998 and 1999 transitional elections. The law was drafted as a starting point in building a broad consensus on the future direction of the electoral process in Nigeria. Political stakeholders and civil society will be asked to comment on the draft law at the public fora and make specific recommendations for improvement of the process. Major areas of discussion during the fora are expected to be the process for the formation and registration of political parties, the local government election process and the candidate nomination process. Following the fora, the INEC will review the recommendations presented at the fora before presenting a final draft law to the Attorney General. The establishment of a universal electoral law was a pivotal recommendation of a joint INEC/IFES Post-Election Assessment conducted in June 1999.

INEC's plans for voter registration represent an extensive six-month review process of options available to Nigeria. The plans are an outgrowth of a study conducted by IFES on behalf of the Commission in October 1999. The study, which was funded by a grant to IFES from the British Department for International Development (DFID), looked at the various options for computerization of the voters' register in Nigeria. INEC's preliminary plans include the establishment of 120,000 registration centers to handle the expected 45–50 million registered voters and the use of optical mark recognition

(OMR) forms for rapid data entry into the computerized database. The resulting voters' register will be the largest in Africa and one of the largest in the world. Registration would take place over a two-week period in late 2000 or early 2001. Through the public fora, INEC hopes to develop a consensus around such issues as the recruitment and training of a registration staff of 360,000 people, the elimination of multiple registration, voter education, and the identification of eligible citizens 18 years of age and older. The Commission is also working with the Department of National Civilian Registration (DNCR) to determine if the two agencies can combine resources to conduct national civil registration and voter registration at the same time. If successful, the collaboration would allow the collection of civil registration data and the production of National ID Cards prior to the general elections in 2003.

Preliminary forum dates and locations are:

- July 4-5: Minna, Niger State
- July 5-6: Ibadan, Oyo State
- July 11-12: Owarri, Imo State, Katsina, Katsina State
- July 18-19: Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Maiduguri, Borno State

**Sierra
Leone**

IFES Supports Roundtable Conference on Elections

Fighting broke out in Sierra Leone in early May, between the forces of the Revolutionary United Front and the Government of Sierra Leone—both signatories to the Lomé Peace Accord of July 7, 1999. Under that Peace Accord, elections are to be held in 2001 according to the constitutional timetable. At the present time, the extent to which the Lomé



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Accord, and its numerous provisions, will be impacted as a result of the renewed fighting is unclear.

In April, IFES' Simon Clarke and Susan Palmer traveled to Sierra Leone to support the efforts of the new National Electoral Commission (NEC) to begin preparations for the conduct of national elections, expected in 2001. With funding from the USAID, IFES supported the NEC's Roundtable Conference on Elections, held on April 18 in Freetown. The Roundtable served as the public launching of the NEC, which had been formally established on March 20, and afforded the opportunity for the NEC to meet in a closed-door session with representatives of the political parties and civil society to discuss electoral preparations.

In his welcoming remarks, the Chairman of the NEC, Walter O.F. Nicol, announced the formation of a Consultative Committee, which will assist the NEC in developing the framework for the electoral process. The Consultative Committee "will include representatives of all political parties as well as civil society" and "will be mirrored at the provincial level in the regional headquarters." (Bo, Kenema and Makeni.) Among the issues to be discussed within the Consultative Committee, noted the Chairman, are the registration of political parties and voters, the system of voting and the issue of displaced persons and refugees. The Consultative Committee would meet regularly with the NEC throughout the electoral process.

Following Nicol's remarks, European Union representative Aloys Lorkeers, British High Commissioner Peter Penfold and US Ambassador Joseph Melrose also spoke and encouraged the conduct of the electoral process in a credible and transparent manner. UNAMSIL Force Commander Major General V.K. Jetley also participated in the public session as did

additional representatives from the Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID; the US State Department; British High Commission; and the British Department for International Development.

At the conclusion of the public launching the NEC met privately with the political parties and representatives of civil society. This session enabled the NEC to hear the preliminary views of these actors with regard to the electoral process and provided the basis for the establishment of a permanent Consultative Committee, of political parties and civil society.



National Electoral Commission Chairman Walter O.F. Nicol addresses the April Roundtable Conference on Elections in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Attending the April 18 meeting were representatives of all the major political parties, including the ruling Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP), the United National Peoples' Party



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(UNPP), the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples' Congress (APC) and the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF), headed by Foday Sankoh. Six civil society organizations were represented at the meeting: the Campaign for Good Governance, Civil Society Movement, Inter-Religious Council, National Union of Sierra Leonean Students, Sierra Leone Bar Association and the Sierra Leone Labor Congress. The Council of Paramount Chiefs also participated.

Uganda

Assistance to Civil Society Monitoring Efforts

A group of Ugandan civil society organizations, led by the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) have formed a consortium (known as the "cluster") to monitor the campaign period in preparation for the June 29 referendum on political systems in Uganda. In mid-May, a three-judge panel formulated the referendum question. The question asks voters to choose between the National Resistance Movement system, which places restrictions on political parties other than the governing National Resistance Movement, and a multiparty political system.

In November 1999, IFES received \$400,000 from USAID through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to assist the cluster in designing and implementing a strategy to monitor and report on the campaign. IFES provided a subgrant of approximately \$25,000 to the cluster to kickstart the monitoring effort in early December. IFES' Uganda field office was established in January 2000, headed by Project Manager Bob Brandstetter. The monitoring cluster produced reports in February, March and April 2000, with the May edition due out by the end of the first week of June. The

final monitoring report will include a special section on the referendum.

In April, IFES provided an additional \$95,000 to the monitoring cluster. With new project funding, IFES plans to issue a third subgrant of nearly \$170,000 to the monitoring cluster to support the training and deployment of 7,000 monitors for the referendum.

During the pre-referendum phase, the cluster is monitoring, observing and reporting on the following issues: The Legislative Framework; Referendum Administration; the Campaign; Media; Gender/Women's Participation; and Other Relevant Issues.

Central to the monitoring cluster's concern is compliance with the Referendum 2000 benchmarks. These benchmarks are:

1. Passage of legislation at least nine months before the referendum to allow all political organizations, including new ones, who wish to form political parties and participate in the referendum, to register and recruit without undue hindrance.
2. Access to state-owned electronic media is fairly allocated to those campaigning in the referendum and broadcasts are not subject to editing or censorship.
3. Those campaigning in the referendum are permitted to hold private and public meetings without interference or intimidation; those who wish to share a joint platform should be allowed to do so.
4. Apart from funding which may be approved by Parliament (which should go equally to all sides), no public funds are used to influence the outcome of the referendum. The Movement Secretariat



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should declare how it is to use funds granted under the Mass Mobilization Budget.

5. No participant uses their public position to try to influence the outcome of the referendum by inducements, intimidation or threats.

6. The question posed by the referendum and the symbols used are balanced and neutral.

7. The Electoral Commission (EC) carries out its constitutional and legal obligations to organize and monitor the campaign, and to conduct and verify the voting robustly and independently, without fear or favor.

8. International observers and Ugandan civil society NGOs should be encouraged and permitted without hindrance to witness and pass comment on the referendum process, including monitoring the pre-referendum climate.

At the time of this writing, the monitoring reports demonstrate a gap between the benchmarks and the reality of the campaign in Uganda. Essential legislation was passed in February. However, one major law, the Political Organizations Bill, was not tabled by the National Assembly. This means that even if the referendum does return a vote in favor of multiple political parties, the parameters under which those parties may register and operate will be set by the National Resistance Movement.

In March, the Electoral Commission (EC) disqualified all seven petitioners who sought approval as 'other political systems' for not meeting various requirements. The unsuccessful petitioners have expressed dissatisfaction with the qualification process, and claim that:

- The regulations on the verification of signatures in support of petitions for other

systems were not properly interpreted by the EC.

- The EC did not adequately consult the petitioners in preparation for the verification exercise.
- The mode of public signature verification permitted the intimidation of the supporters of 'the other systems.'
- The time period to mobilize supporters for the verification exercise was too short.

As a result of the disqualification of the seven petitioners, voters will select between two options. The National Resistance Movement was assigned the symbol of a bus, while the multipartyist symbol is a dove. The campaign for the multiparty movement began in mid-April. Both sides received funds from the Electoral Commission for their campaigns. However, the multipartyist side used most of its available funds within the first two weeks.

During the month of April, monitors reported that members of the government, including National Assembly and local council chairpersons were using government resources to campaign for the NRM side of the referendum. The President of Uganda and major opposition leaders have taken the campaign one step further asking voters to participate in the national elections, tentatively scheduled for February 2001. The cluster has found that popular opinion of the referendum has ranged from apathy to lack of awareness. Voter and civic education projects were implemented between January and April, but the lack of certainty regarding the referendum question impeded the educational teams' abilities to teach voters about the expectations of this unusual poll.

During the third week of May, the date of the referendum was set for June 29, 2000.



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Public Opinion Survey

In early April, IFES received USAID approval to conduct a survey of political attitudes in Uganda ahead of the referendum. The survey is designed to pose questions to ordinary Ugandans about their opinions on the current political system, their level of interest in the referendum (and how they obtained their information), their perceptions regarding women's roles in politics and society. Dr. Michael Bratton, a professor in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University, serves as the Senior Research Analyst for the project. Rakesh Sharma is IFES' Applied Research Officer for the project.

IFES' local partner for the survey is Wilsken Afsan, Ltd. Local staff from the company will conduct approximately 2,300 interviews in districts across the country, based on a statistical sampling process. The survey will include approximately 100 questions. A preliminary report will be made available to USAID/Uganda in late June. A formal presentation of the survey results is scheduled for late August.

Yemen

Seminar on Local Council Elections

On April 16-17, IFES and the Supreme Elections Committee (SEC) held an Executive Appraisal to study the implications of the new law of Local Authority, which came into force in February 2000. The SEC is anticipating that under the new Law, the first local and governorate council elections in unified Yemen may be held on the same day as the April 2001 parliamentary elections. Preparations for the local elections are highly complex, and pose a number of challenges for the SEC. The Executive Appraisal was organized to review the law, analyze its implications for local election

organization, identify problem areas, and discuss possible solutions.

Fifty people, including SEC commissioners, senior staff, and representatives of the Central Statistical Organization, attended the Appraisal. The vice chairman of the SEC Sheikh Mohammed Dammaj (former Minister of Local Government) and IFES/Yemen Project Manager Dennis Cozens chaired the proceedings.

Several critical issues emerged during two days of discussions, including the fact that the delineation of local council areas is not yet completed (expected to number 300-350); the likely unreliability of the current voter registry data for creating accurate local council area lists; the prospect of more than 30,000 candidates being processed at the same time; the challenges of holding local council and parliamentary elections simultaneously (with regard to voter education, logistics, election worker training, and candidates); and the shortness of time before the elections. The main theme arising from the Appraisal was the need for urgency in all aspects of the SEC's preparations, and for immediate and ongoing coordination between the Ministry of Local Government and the SEC regarding the delineation of electoral districts.

As per the SEC's request, IFES plans to provide comprehensive technical assistance for the upcoming local and parliamentary elections.

SEC/IFES Study Tour to India

In May, IFES undertook the first study tour for SEC members. From May 13-22, SEC members, Mansour Sayf Chairman of the Media and Public Relations department, and Ahmed Haidera, Chairman of the Administration department, visited the national and regional offices of the Election Commission of India (ECI). They were accompanied by Dennis Cozens and



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IFES/Yemen Deputy Project Manager Mazen Luqman. India was selected because of its proximity to Yemen, the professional reputation of the ECI, and the similarity of various demographic and economic factors between India and Yemen. In addition, the ECI is a member of the Association of Asian Electoral Authorities (AAEA), founded by IFES.

The study tour visited the ECI headquarters in New Delhi, and then traveled to Chandigarh, the state capital of Punjab. There, the team met with the chief election officers and their staffs. They described their work in the conduct of parliamentary, state and district elections. The meetings included demonstrations of electronic voting machines and voter registration documents, including the use of digital cameras for the production of registrants' photographs. The team then traveled to Shimla, in Himachal Pradesh, where they held meetings similar to those in Chandigarh. They completed the study tour with a return visit to ECI headquarters, where they met with ECI Chairman Dr MS Gill.



"Chief Elections Officer of the Election Commission of India, Dr MS Gill, receives Yemeni commissioner Mansour Sayf at ECI headquarters in New Delhi."

IFES thanks the ECI for its hospitality and organization of a most fruitful study tour. IFES plans to undertake a second study tour to another country later this summer.

Training of SEC Staff

IFES' ongoing training for permanent SEC staff continued in April and May. Sessions in election worker training and election day procedures were completed. Upcoming sessions will cover public relations with political parties, the media, NGOs and other groups, and logistics. SEC computer staff completed a first course in networking. A second course in Internet training begins in June.

Africa/Near East Staff News

Middle East and North Africa Program Assistant Dalia Mroue has left IFES to work full-time toward her doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Her research explores political transformation in post-revolutionary Iran. We wish Dalia all the best with her dissertation.

After four productive years at IFES, Senior Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa Amy Hawthorne will join the Washington Institute for Near East Policy as a Soref Fellow. Her research will focus on democratization in the Arab world, and on the role of international assistance in its promotion through the 1990's. IFES looks forward to Amy's continued involvement in democracy and governance in the Middle East and North Africa.



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