



MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

June 2001

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

On March 17, 2001 an IFES four-member team left for Brazzaville to conduct a two week pre-election technical assessment in the Republic of Congo. Invited by the Congolese government after a visit to the United States by Congolese president Denis Sassou-Nguesso, IFES worked with the U.S. Embassy in Congo and The USAID Democracy and Governance Center to prepare the mission.

The four-member assessment team was made up of two consultants (Juan Rial and John Clark) and two IFES staff members (Tom Bayer and Caroline Vuillemin). Aud-Frances McKernan, USAID Democracy and Governance (D/G) Center's Democracy Expert joined the mission as a fifth member to help with the assessment. IFES welcomed her participation as it allowed the D/G Center to familiarize itself with how IFES works and how it conducts assessment missions.

There were four main objectives for the technical assessment mission:

- Perform a rapid assessment of the socio-political situation
- Review and evaluate key technical aspects of the democratization/political reform process
- Initiate a constructive dialogue between the Government of Congo and civil society
- Produce a final report in French and English

Activities in the Congo began with members of the IFES team attending the official opening of the "Dialogue National sans exclusive" on March 17, 2001. This followed with introductory discussions with U.S government officials. IFES conducted a series of meetings with branches of the Congolese government, international NGOs, civil society groups, political parties, the UN, and the European Union.

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After one week in Brazzaville, the team traveled with Ms. McKernan, Mr. Bayer and Mr. Clark went to Dolisie and Pointe Noire in the south of the country. Mrs. Vuillemin and Mr. Rial went to Gamboma, Oyo and Owando in the north. These provincial trips were meant to give the team another perspective of the situation in the country, from outside of the capital. The trip north, made by car, gave IFES an idea of the logistical challenges that the Congo faces in organizing elections in areas where the jungle and poor infrastructure complicate access to citizens for the census and the elections. The timing of these trips was fortunate as it matched the opening of the "Débats décentralisés" which were regional forums that discussed the draft constitution and the text of the National Convention for Peace and Reconstruction.

The National Dialogue, which began on March 17, 2001, reflected the mixed socio-political environment prevailing in the country. Most of the important elements of the political opposition rejected the validity of the National Dialogue exercise. These elements included the exiled former President Lissouba and former Brazzaville' Mayor Kolelas, the internal political opposition, and the CNR (spokespersons for the military resistance to the Sassou regime who signed the cease fire accords of 1999).



Caption: The IFES team with the staff of the Ministry of the Interior's Electoral Affairs Commission.

Two documents were up for discussion at the national dialogue with the first being the draft constitution ("project de la constitution"), which had been prepared by a drafting committee of twenty-four members, selected by President Sassou. The second document was the Convention. Cabinet members presided over each of the actual decentralized dialogue sessions.

Based on its review of the draft constitution, interviews in the regions, and its sessions with the Direction des Affaires Electorales within the Interior Ministry, the IFES mission prepared a series of technical analyses and related recommendations for the Congolese government in three major areas: the draft constitution, the administrative and electoral census, and the electoral administration.

A final document was presented to the government in early June. The content of the mission's findings and recommendations highlighted the need for unity and reconciliation clauses in the constitution and increased efforts for transparency and openness by the government in the preparation and conduct of elections.

ARAB ELECTION LAW COMPENDIUM

Work continues on the Arab election law compendium. The compendium will include full texts of laws, background on the election process in ten Arab countries, and general analysis of each law. IFES hopes that the compendium will serve as a resource for legislators seeking to develop and revise their countries' electoral codes (as in Lebanon), newly established Arab election commissions (as in Yemen), or election law specialists and practitioners working to enhance their country's democratic systems (as in Kuwait). Likewise, non-governmental organizations and scholars may use the compendium as a tool in their endeavors related to the democratic reform processes occurring in their countries.

IFES has collected the necessary laws and is engaging regional experts to conduct an analysis of each law. The laws are to be analyzed in a historical context; include a commentary on their conformity to international standards; and provide recommendations for reform. The project is to be completed by late Fall 2001.

BURUNDI

Events in Burundi and the region underscore not only the difficult environment that IFES faces but also the importance of pressing forth with activities designed to expand dialogue and facilitate reconciliation. In spite of efforts underway at breathing new life into the Arusha Accord, rebel and military leaders have refused to participate. Recent reports from The International Crisis Group and other regional sources assert that the Arusha Accord is dead and war is inevitable. A Burundi government official was quoted on May, 21, saying that "War is the only option left." Meanwhile, reports of fighting between government soldiers and rebels continue almost daily. Events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo add to the tension as rebel groups are being pushed from the DRC back into Burundi and Tanzania.

Though the difficulties facing them are considerable, the IFES staff in Burundi continues to achieve results in support of the program objectives. Seeking to engage the capacity of civil society groups to effectively contribute to the peace process and legal reform, IFES sponsored workshops brought together women and youth from the different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The workshops encourage people to reach across the ethnic divide and embrace dialogue as a means to resolve issues. At the same time, skills are being developed to enable people to effectively communicate their interests to key decision makers.

The workshops have proved to be so popular that word of mouth has led to greater than expected turnout. A field manual, developed by IFES/Burundi to guide workshop facilitators, has been well received. USAID would like to employ the guide as a model for other NGOs working in Burundi. IFES recently launched its Small Initiative Funds activity. The activity will award small grants to local Burundi NGOs to support their work in the area of civil society development and legal reform, while working to strengthen the local groups internal program design and management capacity.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

From April 2-6, Africa and the Near East Director Tom Bayer and Senior Program Assistant Caroline Vuillemin visited the IFES office in Kinshasa. The short visit allowed the Washington staff to spend time with their field colleagues, in sharing experiences from the head-quarters and the field office. During the visit two Resource Center' activities were held, one on "The comparison of Rule of Law in Germany after World War II and DRC today", and one on "Good governance in Africa and in the DRC". Ms. Vuillemin and Mr. Bayer met with 14 representatives from Congolese civil society platforms and groups (NGOs, unions, Churches) to discuss the expectations for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) and efforts being made to prepare for it. Washington and field staff met with Mr. Mory Toure, Kinshasa-based Administrator of the Facilitator's office. IFES reiterated its willingness, capacity and readiness to support the work of the Facilitator's office in conducting the ICD. They also met with representatives from the UN Commission for Human Rights to discuss its latest work, particularly in the East and its coordination with MONUC's deployment in the country.

In late April, IFES DRC Program Manager Marceau Edouard traveled to the United States to discuss workplans and staffing issues in DRC for the remaining period of the project. Mr. Edouardrd participated in one of the "DRC Brainstorming Meetings" that have been taking place regularly at IFES since March 2001.

The Resource Center in Kinshasa continued to receive visitors (an average of 120 people a day) with distribution of articles and information to the journalists and NGOs communities in Kinshasa at an all-time high. Copies of the May 4th Lusaka Principles were highly demanded and widely distributed. The center organized another outreach event as part of its Rule of Law program in partnership with the *Groupement Pluridisciplinaire des Femmes Congolaises* (GPFC- Multidisciplinary Network of Congolese Women). This activity took place on April 26th and was a brainstorming session on the IFES motto "Making Democracy Work" in the current Congolese context.

On May 10, four members from the three main civil society platforms in DRC (Secrétariat Technique de la Société Civile, Campagne Nationale pour la Paix Durable and Union network SYNAFET) travelled to Brussels on an IFES grant to attend the Civil Society Forum organized in Belgium for the UN summit on the Less Advanced Countries. The trip an opportunity for the Congolese to encourage European decision-makers and NGOs to support the ICD.

Finally, May 31st marked IFES DRC Program Officer Edward Kiely's last day at IFES. After leading the IFES DRC program from Washington for 18 months, Mr. Kiely leaves behind a tremendous value to the program and great memories of Congolese songs, proverbs and food. IFES wishes him all the best for the future.

EGYPT

Under the UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region, IFES has been contracted to provide assistance to the Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP.) The ACIJLP, established in 1997, is a regional non-governmental organization based in Cairo. It works for the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession in Egypt and the Arab countries. The objectives of ACIJLP are strengthening the rule of law and promoting respect for the judiciary, human rights and basic freedoms.

Lazhar Aloui, Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa travels to Cairo from May 27- June 9, 2001 to assist the ACILP in improving its institutional capacity and build the agenda for the second regional conference on justice in the Arab countries. Mr. Aloui's activities will be to conduct an operational environment assessment and organize and facilitate a strategic planning retreat for the organization. These activities will help enable the ACILJP achieve sustainability in its activities.

GUINEA

In May IFES met with the president of the Economic and Social Council (*Conseil Economique and Social*) to seek its collaboration in an IFES-initiated national dialogue on participatory development. The national dialogue will seek to contribute to: the creation of a shared understanding of the nature and role of Guinean civil society in development; improved cooperation within and among civil society organizations; and the emergence of a shared understanding of development.

The 45 member Council, a republican institution constituted June 19, 1997 by a presidential decree, is composed of individuals from the private and public sectors who are responsible for reflecting and advising the Government on issues relating to Guinea's social and economic development. IFES would work under the aegis of the Council to conduct eight regional roundtables and a national forum in Conakry on the nature and role of civil society in Guinea's economic, social and political development.

In preparation for this national dialogue, IFES Project Manager Elizabeth Côté engaged 10 individuals to serve on an advisory council. These individuals, including journalists, teachers, youth, lawyers as well as individuals from labor unions and local Guinean NGOs, represent key sectors of Guinean civil society and provide guidance on an appropriate methodology for Guinea. In addition, IFES engaged a specialist from FOCUS International, a Malian consulting firm with expertise in participatory management, to work with the council to finalize the methodology and develop reference material for use throughout this participatory process.

From June 3-8, IFES consultant Bakary Fofana will travel to several regional capitals to assist local consultants in preparing for regional roundtables. During his trip, he will assist regional teams in identifying potential participants representing a broad spectrum of civil society.

From June 18-30, IFES, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will organize eight regional roundtables in Labé, Mamou, Kindia, N'Zérékoré, Kankan, Faranah and Boké and Conakry. The roundtables will include several plenary sessions as well as working groups on economic, social and cultural and political development. Information obtained from these roundtables will be analyzed to encourage a shared understanding of the nature and role of Guinean civil society in development. The results of these collective discussions will be presented at a national forum in Conakry on July 18-20 where regional delegates, in addition to representatives from a broad spectrum of Guinean civil society, will review the roundtable findings and identify strategies for the future.

LIBERIA

In May, Monrovia-based Radio Veritas took receipt of

the IFES procured broadcasting and studio equipment. Since resuming its broadcasting operations in 1997, Radio Veritas has produced and broadcast quality human rights, educational, reconstruction and national reconciliation oriented programming on short wave (SW) and FM. With the Liberian government's closure of STAR Radio on March 15, 2000, Radio Veritas is the sole independent radio station capable of reaching a majority of Liberians within and outside the environs of Monrovia. IFES' equipment support will enhance the station's broadcasting quality, operational capability and increase transmission capacity and expand its audience. IFES' support to Veritas is scheduled to be completed in July 2001.

MALI

In late March, IFES extended a sub-grant to FOMADDH, a Malian NGO, to design and implement a program aimed at encouraging rural women's involvement in the political process. The program concentrates on promoting the experiences of elected women mayors and communal councilors through a nationwide civic education campaign.

In early April, FOMADDH organized a two-day roundtable to discuss the design of the civic education campaign. IFES Project Manager Elizabeth Coté traveled to Bamako to participate in the roundtable. Roundtable participants concluded that interviews with elected women mayors and communal councilors should address the role of women in politics and the importance of political participation of all citizens. They also determined that the interviews should focus on portraits of the selected women leaders, encourage solidarity among women and sensitize men to support women in politics. The participants also identified potential implementing partners - The Union of Independent Radio and Television Broadcasters (Unions des Radios et Télévisions Libres, URTEL) and the Malian Radio and Television Agency (Office de Radio et Télévision du Mali, ORTM) - and decided audio and videocassettes should be complemented by written articles and radio During the roundtable, the theater group shows. Troupe Pasani was identified as a potential partner.

Following the roundtable, the FOMADDH communication specialist produced a strategic plan outlining guidelines for the implementation of the campaign. The plan recommended that the cassettes be broadcast in four languages appropriate for the regions in which they air: French, Bamanan, Fulfuldé, and Sonraï. The plan also suggested that the written articles be published in two local magazines - Madina and Faro - and be translated in Bamanan, Peulh, and Soninké for publication in the Malian Press and Publicity Agency' magazines (*Agence Malienne de Presse et Publicité*, *AMAP*).

In May, FOMADDH interviewed five newly elected women mayors, four women councilors and three women political leaders on audiocassette and produced a videocassette focusing on the five women mayors. Each production team responsible for coordinating the interviews included women, and FOMADDH relied on local radio announcers to facilitate the interviews. By using this participative approach, FOMADDH provided local radio stations with an added incentive to broadcast the audiocassettes they helped produce.

Following an agreement with URTEL, the audiocassettes were edited and distributed to 30 private, regional and communal radio stations throughout the country. The videocassette was edited and broadcast by the national television network, ORTM. Both the audiocassettes and videocassette will air for one month broadcasting, from May 23 to June 23, 2001. During this time, the audiocassettes will be broadcast every day for 30-35 minutes. They will be complemented by a series of 5-minute radio sketches.

NIGERIA

On May 7, under a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IFES launched a series of two-week workshops in Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT) in the Nigerian states of Yobe, Gombe, and Katsina. The BEAT program will eventually provide training in basic principles of election administration to 884 local and state election officials throughout Nigeria. Phase one of the BEAT program will train, in addition to those citied above, 326 officials from the states of Zamfara, Niger, Kogi, Oyo, Anambra, Rivers, Lagos, Delta, Imo, Taraba and the Federal Capital Territory.

The BEAT training workshops cover the following topics:

- Principles of Election Administration
- •Principles of Free and Fair Elections
- •Election Planning
- •Election Logistics

- •Ethics in Election Administration
- •Conflict Management
- •Increasing the Role of Women in the
- Administration of Elections
- •Electoral Law and Guidelines
- •Media Relations



Caption: Abdu Garba Talasse, Electoral Officer, Kwami Local Government Area, Gombe State makes a point during the Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT) workshop in Gombe, Gombe State, Nigeria while IFES election administration trainer Jim Heilman looks on.

Participants are taken through an intensive two-week program of discussions, role-plays, and structured activities to increase their knowledge of the role of the election administrator in a democratic Nigeria. The workshops bring together election officials at the local and state levels in Nigeria for organized training activities for the first time since 1992.

David A. Kanga, Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, Hayford Ampomah, former Director of Training of the Electoral Commission of

Ghana and James Heilman, a former election official from the state of Virginia in the United States are facilitating the workshops. Each of the facilitators has many years of experience as an election administrator in his own country and has worked in a number of elections abroad. This wealth of experience brings an added dimension and depth to the training workshops. During 2002, IFES hopes to complete its training program in the remaining 23 states of Nigeria. In May, the International Foundation Election Systems awarded a grant to Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), a Nigerian non-governmental organisation, to bring together civil society groups and election officials to discuss a voter education framework for Nigeria. Under the grant, CAPP will conduct a workshop on June 16 in Jos, Plateau State, for 25-30 Nigerian small civil society organisations (CSOs) to meet with officials from the Independent National Electoral Commission. The CSOs will be drawn from a variety of backgrounds and different regions of the country. They will represent a selection of people and areas that are not normally reached by INEC's voter education messages, which are usually designed and broadcast in English, Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo. The workshop will aim to explore the most effective methods for the delivery of voter education messages to communities who do not use the major languages of Nigeria in their every day interaction. The workshop will also explore approaches for INEC to cooperate with small, locally based civil society organisations to deliver voter education messages to these often marginalized groups.

SIERRA LEONE

Under Project STEPP (Supporting the Electoral and Peace Processes), IFES and its London based sister organization, IFES Ltd are working to support the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Sierra Leone. Project STEPP is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the British Department for International Development.

In January-February 2001, IFES supported the NEC's development of a Strategic Plan, which sets out the Commission's longer-term vision and guiding principles as well as the specific goals and objectives to be achieved in the shorter-term. Within this plan, the NEC proposes to conduct presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone in December 2001, with voter registration under taken in September 2001.

In April-May, the NEC focused its efforts on two objectives: the development of an elections budget, and consultations with the people of Sierra Leone on the type of electoral system to be used in the parliamentary elections. IFES is assisting the NEC in the achievement of these objectives.

For four weeks in March and April, IFES consultant E.

Q. Sakyi, the Director of Finance and Administration at the Electoral Commission of Ghana, provided technical assistance to the NEC in the development of the elections budget. The resulting budget details expenditures for voter education, voter registration, the conduct of the elections for Paramount Chief members of Parliament, the conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections, and the conduct of a presidential run-off election. The NEC has been holding extensive discussions with the government of Sierra Leone and the international community to seek funding for this budget.

The type of electoral system to be used for the parliamentary elections is a key issue to be addressed by the people of Sierra Leone and the NEC in the coming months. Under Sierra Leone's constitution, elections are to be conducted on a constituency basis, which each constituency returning one member of Parliament. However, in 1996, due to the inaccessibility of some areas of Sierra Leone as a result of the civil war, the parliamentary elections were conducted under a national list proportional representation (PR) system, with voters casting their ballot for a party, each of which fielded a slate of candidates for Parliament. The NEC plans to make a recommendation to the government of Sierra Leone within the next month on the type of system to be used.

To inform the people of Sierra Leone and to solicit their opinion about this issue, the NEC is conducting several public fora at the national and regional level. On 29 May 2001, the NEC held the first of these public meetings in Freetown. Sponsored by IFES through Project STEPP, the forum brought together approximately 375 leaders of political parties, members of Parliament, civil society activists, members of the police and army, representatives of the press, traditional leaders, and members of the public. The forum presented three panels on the legal framework, the constituency system and the proportional representation system. The panels each consisted of a presenter, who had prepared a paper for the forum; a discussant; and a moderator.

The audience participation was lively and rich. Many of the participants urged against the national list PR system used in 1996, saying that it did not promote accountability between members of Parliament and their constituents. Many speakers also noted that the Constitution should be upheld with regard to the electoral system. However, in the post-conflict environment of Sierra Leone, some participants noted that proportional representation systems can provide increased representation for minority parties and promote representation of populations that are displaced throughout the country. The option of a mixed PR system was examined at some length. Throughout the month of June, the NEC will hold additional fora in the regions to promote discussion around this important issue.

UGANDA

In continued support of local monitoring efforts for Uganda's June 2001 parliamentary elections, IFES established a field office in Kampala in March 2001. As part of its technical support, IFES is providing funding for the training and monitoring efforts of the National Elections Monitoring Group (NEMGROUP). With the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) taking the lead, the group is comprised of Action for Development (ACFODE), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE-International), Uganda Journalists Safety Committee (UJSC) and Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U).

In addition to IFES' financial support, IFES Project Manager Frank Vassalleo assisted the NEMGROUP during the months of April and May. Mr. Vassalleo aided in developing manuals for NEMGROUP trainers of trainers program. He also provided constructive comments on the group's final report and recommendations on Uganda's March 2001 presidential elections.

YEMEN

In early April, a new government was formed in Yemen. Comprised by 35 ministers, it includes the first female minister in the history of the country. Among the newly appointed ministers was the Chairman of the Supreme Elections Committee (SEC), Mr. Alawi Al-Attas, who was nominated Minister of State. The deputy SEC Chairman, Mohammed Damaj, became a member of the Shoura Council, the President's consultative council. As a result, Mr. Khaled Mohammed Abdulaziz, one of the SEC Commissioners, was appointed to the chairmanship of the SEC, covering both positions with a temporary mandate.

Following the formation of the new government, President Saleh issued a decree expanding the number of the members of the Shoura Council from 56 to 111. This was a follow-up to the constitutional amendments passed by the Parliament in October and approved with the national referendum held in February. During this time, the new government also disclosed its two-year program, which, besides addressing important economic, administrative, and social reforms, it also prioritizes the reform of the voter registration system, the redrawing of the electoral constituencies, the amendment of the election law and the decentralization of the local administration.

The recent local council elections and the Constitutional referendum clearly demonstrated the inadequacy of the present system of voter registration. The system has neither the confidence of the Yemeni electorate or the political parties. Moreover, the information contained in the voters' lists is inaccurate and outdated, posing a serious problem for future elections. At the request of the Supreme Elections Council (SEC), IFES will engage in a voter registration diagnosis. The Diagnosis will examine different options, identify and recommend the most appropriate system, and determine the costs and the timeframe for the re-registration of the Yemen electorate before the 2003 parliamentary and local council elections.

IFES will resume training courses in institutional and capacity building for SEC members and senior staff. English language courses for the SEC staff and Director Generals are already underway and will continue through November 2001. Computer training (Oracle), external relations & networking, and indexing/archiving courses are also set to begin in mid-June.

Plans also include supporting the SEC in the establishment of a permanent training unit. Although the SEC currently facilitates technical training, it has yet to establish a permanent training department. With the expected parliamentary and local government elections in 2003, the SEC will need to emphasize the training of the officials who will administer this complex process.



MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

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IFES provides technical assistance in the promotion of democracy worldwide and serves as a clearinghouse for information about democratic development and elections. Since its inception in 1987, the Foundation has pursued democratic initiatives in more than 120 countries. IFES activities are made possible, in part, by the United States Agency for International Development.

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