



**Statement of the  
International Pre-Election Assessment Delegation to  
Morocco's 2011 Legislative Elections**

**Rabat, 26 October 2011**

Within the framework of a new observation law and following discussion with relevant Moroccan government authorities, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) organized a pre-election assessment mission from October 20 to 25 as part of the Institute's overall international election observation mission for legislative elections scheduled in Morocco on November 25, 2011. The purposes of the delegation were to demonstrate the interest of the international community in the continued strengthening of democratic political processes and democratic governance in Morocco; provide an impartial and accurate assessment of the political environment and electoral preparations; and identify areas in which improvements are needed and offer recommendations to improve the integrity and transparency of these and future elections.

The delegation included: Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón (Spain), political expert, who has served as an elected member in parliament and municipal government; Francesca Binda (Canada), political party expert, currently NDI resident senior director in the West Bank and Gaza; Tova Andrea Wang (USA), electoral reform expert, currently senior democracy fellow at *Demos*; and Jeffrey England (USA), NDI resident director in Morocco.

During their stay, the delegates met in Rabat with representatives of political parties; officials of the Ministry of Interior; officials of the National Human Rights Council (CNDH), charged with coordinating observer accreditation; other government officials; civic leaders; citizen observers; media and representatives of the international community. Delegation members also traveled to Fez and Casablanca to meet with local government representatives, observers, candidates, political party leaders and other activists.

The pre-election assessment is part of NDI's overall international election observation mission. In late October, NDI intends to field a team of 10 long-term observers who will continue to observe the pre-electoral period (including voter list review, candidate registration and the campaign period), polling day and the immediate post-election period across the country. In addition, an international delegation of approximately 30 people will visit Morocco for the week surrounding election day. That delegation will deploy around the country to observe the final days of the campaign period, the polling process, counting, tabulation and the announcement of results.

The delegation neither seeks to interfere in the election process, nor to render a final assessment of the election process. All aspects of the assessment were conducted in accordance with Moroccan law and international standards for election observation set forth in the *Declaration of Principles for*

*International Election Observation.* All recommendations are offered in the hope of supporting and strengthening the democratic reform process that Moroccans have undertaken themselves.

NDI and the pre-election delegation appreciate the hospitality, openness and frankness all those who participated in the assessment. In particular, the delegation wishes to express gratitude to the CNDH for their invitation to observe this important process.

## **Executive Summary**

Legislative elections now scheduled in Morocco for November 25, 2011 come nearly one year earlier than regularly planned. This year, Morocco has witnessed popular protests demanding an increase in power-sharing among government institutions and an end to widely perceived corruption and nepotism within the ruling class. In response, a referendum was organized in July, introducing a revised constitution for the country. A large package of laws governing the campaign and elections processes was also quickly enacted, though some of those laws have yet to be finalized. Many Moroccans view the electoral process as a first test of the new constitution, the spirit with which it will be interpreted and how it will be implemented.

Despite the shortened timeframe, the current electoral environment is marked by a number of positive factors. Perhaps most notable is the enactment of a legal framework for observation by domestic and international organizations, which codifies a right provided in the new constitution. Most actors indicated that the election administration at the national level appears technically sound and professional. In addition, changes to voter identification requirements (instead of needing to present a special voter card, voters can now simply show the national identity card) are perceived as a positive development to ease the voting process. Despite some inherent limitations, political parties recognize that citizens, and particularly youth, are looking to parties for change, and party leaders acknowledge the need to address citizens' aspirations and concerns in their campaigns and platforms.

These positive elements, however, exist in the context of a continuing crisis in confidence in Moroccan political institutions and systems of governance. This crisis manifested itself as early as 2007, when turnout in the last legislative elections reached a historic low of 37 percent, and has continued in the form of ongoing public demonstrations. Leaders universally recognize the risk of low voter turnout, acknowledging the sense that the public is not satisfied with developments to date and that low turnout could jeopardize the legitimacy of the new parliament and the reform process itself. Many activists, and even party leaders themselves, say that citizens still do not perceive the political parties as vehicles for change, exacerbating apprehension that the election will be met with apathy. Broad concerns remain over the neutrality of election administration at the local level. Without any significant changes to a complex electoral system and disproportionate districting, it is likely that a splintered legislature will again be voted in and some major parties will, as in previous elections, win fewer seats than their total share of the popular vote.

Instilling confidence among voters and the broader citizenry in the integrity of the process and institutions will be the most important challenge during this electoral process. The task will fall to election authorities to impartially and vigorously apply relevant regulatory laws, political parties to demonstrate responsiveness to the people's aspirations in their campaign programs and candidate choices, and civil society to provide oversight and help connect citizens to the electoral process. Given the shorter-than-expected preparatory timeframes, Moroccan authorities need to demonstrate

flexibility in developing regulations and ensure clarity and broad efforts to communicate the rules and procedures. As the Moroccan people look toward a new legislature and government to implement provisions of the revised constitution and address issues of critical importance to them, they need to be assured of the will of political leaders to be responsive and responsible.

## **The Electoral Context**

A complete assessment of any election must consider all aspects of the electoral process: the legal framework regulating elections, election observation, political parties and the media; the political environment before and during the campaign; voting and counting procedures; tabulation and announcement of results; mechanisms for complaints and their resolution; and implementation of the election results. Analysis must draw on information from the pre-election period, election day and the immediate post-election period.

In the context of the Morocco's recent constitutional and electoral reforms, an assessment of the election must also take into account the political environment in which reforms were initiated and the degree to which the election process will be able to respond to – and will be perceived to respond to – Moroccans' expectations and aspirations. Indeed, the electoral process may be seen as a first test of Morocco's new constitution and the spirit with which it will be interpreted and implemented.

Leading into the 2007 parliamentary elections – the first observed by an independent international delegation – Morocco had undergone a decade of significant change as the country explored greater political and social openness within the framework of a centralized monarchy. In general, NDI's international observation report in 2007 noted that voting day on September 7 for the chamber of representatives was conducted in an orderly and transparent manner. However, low voter turnout (37 percent) and a high rate of blank, spoiled or protest ballots (19 percent) indicated that the Moroccan political system had not yet overcome the challenge of inspiring voters and voter confidence in legislative institutions, elected officials, candidates and parties. In the 2009 municipal elections, stronger turnout rates (52 percent) and further professionalization of the election administration signaled a step forward. At the same time, a high rate of complaints (the equivalent of eight for every 100 voters) and invalid votes signaled that underlying issues had not been addressed. The October 2009 indirect elections for one third of the chamber of councilors revealed further discontent among and within political parties, including allegations of fraud and partiality on the part of the administration.

As neighboring Tunisians, Egyptians and Libyans took to the streets during the Arab Spring, young Moroccan organizers rallied crowds across the country in unprecedented, simultaneous street protests demanding an increase in power-sharing and an end to corruption and nepotism within the ruling class. In response to the February 20 Movement – which took its name from the first day of protests – and their continued demonstrations, on March 9 King Mohamed VI announced the formation of a committee tasked with proposing amendments to the Moroccan constitution. On July 1, less than four months later, 73 percent of Moroccans reportedly turned out for the referendum and more than 98 percent of those voted in favor of the new constitution.

Despite the overwhelming result in favor of the new constitution, the vote was also marked by continuing debates between political interests over whether the constitutional amendments were sufficient to bring about real change. Many groups pointed to significant improvements, including

the guarantee to name the Prime Minister from the party which holds the most parliamentary seats, the Prime Minister's expanded power to name senior civil servants, the pursuit of "parity" between men and women, and the recognition of *Amazigh*, the language of the country's indigenous Berber, as an official language. However, some Moroccans also expressed concern that the referendum campaign period was yet another example of what they perceive as an unfair playing field, as supporters of the constitution had access to state resources and assistance from religious authority to lock in the overwhelming approval.

In mid-July, the Ministry of Interior initiated discussions about the date for early elections as a necessary next step following constitutional reform. Following a series of consultations with political parties, November 25, 2011 was announced as the polling date. Meanwhile, political parties, civic groups and other interested parties turned their attention to reviewing and seeking to make their voices heard on the package of revised electoral laws, including the laws on the chamber of representatives, political parties, observation, electoral districting and the electoral list, all of which were presented to party leaders in draft form by the Ministry of Interior. While broad agreement was reached on the need for elections earlier than the regularly scheduled October 2012 date, the November 25 date left little time for meaningful discussion, review, consultation and input into the various pieces of legislation.

This process of review of the electoral legislation was critical; it was the first test of whether the parliament and parties could and would reach their potential to play a more meaningful role as provided in the new constitution. The electoral framework content was equally important; decisions about the electoral system, districting, political party regulation and observation will determine whether the forthcoming elections will result in a parliament that will look and be able to act differently. At this stage, however, not all legislation, decrees or related regulations have been clarified, finalized or publicized.

Some of the specific aspects of the electoral context for the 2011 parliamentary elections are discussed below.

**Electoral Framework:** Following the constitutional referendum, the Ministry of Interior presented political party leaders with hard copies of the initial package of draft revised laws in mid-July, including the laws on the chamber of representatives, political parties and observation. After the Ministry shared the draft laws, a series of discussions between the administration and political parties took place. Political parties were able to offer input and suggestions on the legal framework during this period, though there was a relatively short amount of time to review the drafts and provide input given the volume and scope of the legislation. For civil society, party members and other actors, the reform of the framework seemed to take place through closed-door discussions with no opportunity for outside input. Little debate took place in either of the chambers of parliament; in fact, less than one quarter of the elected members in the lower house attended sessions when voting on the legislation took place. While the resulting laws do provide for some changes to the electoral framework, the legislative process raised concern and reinforced public perceptions that the way in which decisions were made was business as usual.

The 2011 revisions maintain the same proportional representation, largest remainder system both for multi-member districts and a national list as existed in 2007.<sup>1</sup> The minimum threshold to take seats in the parliament for the district lists was maintained at six percent while the threshold for the national list was decreased to three percent at the request of smaller parties. While NDI heard differing views on the threshold, no one with whom NDI met expressed strong feelings about the thresholds on either lists. This system inherently creates splintered legislatures given the number of parties because it is virtually impossible to win more than one seat in a district. The complexity of the allocation of votes and the fact that it produces outcomes other than those expected also seems to lead to misunderstandings and suspicions among citizens and party officials.

*Candidate Lists:* Recognition of parity among men and women in the new constitution is a strong step for ensuring women's participation, in political processes and more broadly across Moroccan society. While the national list had been reserved exclusively for women since its introduction in 2002 on the basis of an informal agreement among political parties, the new electoral law codifies the reservation for women. Though the law reserves 60 seats exclusively for women on a separate national list, many women activists expressed disappointment at this outcome; with the increase in the number of seats overall, the law only increases women's representation from 9 percent to approximately 15 percent of the legislature – not the parity some women's organizations were originally seeking or even the one third or one quarter quotas that were subsequently suggested. Moreover, many women would have preferred that the full 90 seats of the national list be reserved for women. However, the new electoral law also provides for the inclusion of 30 male youth seats on the national list.<sup>2</sup> Although encouraging the participation of youth in politics is a positive step to address many of the concerns raised during the February 20 protests, women's groups have questioned whether limiting the youth seats only to men respects the letter and spirit of pursuing gender parity guaranteed by the constitution.

The electoral system also seems to significantly impact the internal party nomination process for district-level lists. Knowing that most parties will only win one seat per district, parties can only afford to put their most popular candidate – often someone with financial means and/or a high public profile – as the first person on the list. This presents a dilemma for parties that wish to respond to the almost universal demand among the politically active and civil society for change and “new faces” in politics, but that understand that often the incumbents under the given system are better poised to take the only seat the party will be able to secure. While most voters choose according to the party symbol, it is widely known they are essentially voting for the candidate in the first spot. This seems to continue to create a barrier for women and youth participation on district lists, as well as for allowing for new, non-incumbent candidates.

*Districting:* A redistricting process has been taking place as part of the electoral reform package. Little information is available about how this process was undertaken and whether a set of clear criteria,

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<sup>1</sup> Under the *method of largest remainder*, seats are effectively distributed in two rounds: first, seats are awarded to parties who have achieved the electoral quota, which is defined according to the Hare method as total votes divided by total seats. The quota is then subtracted from those parties' vote totals. Next, all parties with votes above the legal threshold are awarded seats according to who has the greatest number of votes – or, “largest remainder” – until all seats are allocated. The Moroccan system is a closed-list system, meaning each party fixes the order in which the candidates are listed. See Appendix D of NDI's *Final Report on the Moroccan Legislative Elections, September 7, 2007*.

<sup>2</sup> “The slates shall comprise the successive names of two female candidates followed by the name of a male candidate. Leadership of the slate shall be assigned to a female candidature while the age of the male candidates on the list shall not exceed forty years at the time of the election.” (Article 23, Bill Number 27-11 on the Lower Chamber of Parliament)

which had been proposed by some political parties, was applied. In fact, NDI heard from officials at the Ministry of Interior, responsible for administering the elections, that there was no systematic process for determining the delineation of districts relative to population. Moreover, a number of seats and districts appear to have been added without any systematic correlation to changes in population size or demographic breakdown. What is known is that there remains significant variation in the size of the districts throughout the country.

NDI noted a mixed opinion among the political actors with whom the delegation met concerning the districting issue. While some, particularly in smaller parties, pointed to the advantage given in larger districts to candidates and/or parties with more resources (to the point, it was claimed, that only the wealthy could afford to run in such districts), others noted the potential over-representation of rural votes in many districts, which could skew the election outcomes. Similarly, while smaller parties suggested that large districts would dilute geographically concentrated support, others pointed to the fact that larger districts dissuade corruption and vote buying, as well as strengthen the role of parties over individual candidates.

Nonetheless, based on the information currently available, the significant discrepancies in the number of voters represented by an elected member has not been addressed and disparities of such magnitude effectively value some citizens' votes over others'. In 2007, for example, a seat in the Tiznit province represented 45,373 voters while one in Zagora, within the same geographic area, represented 66,977, a variation of 32 percent.

The importance of consistent district size has been recognized by the Venice Commission's 2002 *Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters: Guidelines and Explanatory Report*. The Code, along with other international norms, recommends a discrepancy in district population size no greater than 15 percent: "The permissible departure...should not be more than 10 percent, and should certainly not exceed 15 percent except in special circumstances (protection of a concentrated minority, sparsely populated administrative entity)." The Code emphasizes the importance of basing district delineation and seat distribution on demographic considerations, such as overall population or number of registered voters.<sup>3</sup> Although Morocco's districting process is yet to be fully publicized, the discrepancies among some districts far exceed these margins.

The maintenance of the proportional representation, largest remainder system and the districting will likely result, once again, in no party winning a substantial plurality, much less a majority, in the chamber of representatives. In contrast to popular will and the spirit of proportional representation, some major parties are likely, once again, to win fewer seats than their total share of the votes.

**Political Parties:** With the shortened timeframe to prepare for the elections, parties and some newly emerged coalitions of parties are still in the process of developing their strategies, campaign messages and platforms. In the interim, many parties are attempting to mobilize citizens for voter registration, given the concern they acknowledge over voter participation rates. These are positive indicators. Based on conversations with party representatives from across the political spectrum, parties recognize that citizens are looking to parties for change. Though it is not always clear how campaigns will specifically respond to this demand, party officials acknowledge the need to address citizens' aspirations and concerns in their campaigns and platforms. Related to the public calls for

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<sup>3</sup> The full text is available here: <http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2002/CDL-AD%282002%29023rev-e.pdf>

change, most parties acknowledge that youth are an important demographic that needs to be engaged in the political process and in party action.

More generally, however, despite adjustments within the revised political party law and some efforts that parties shared with the delegation, there is still the perception among the public that the behavior or approach of most parties has not fundamentally changed. The public points to closed internal mechanisms for choosing candidates, failure to enunciate clear positions or platforms, and failure to engage directly with the citizenry. On an optimistic note, most parties acknowledge this state of perception and the possible impact it could have on voter turnout on election day and express a desire to respond. Given the truncated timeline for these elections, the delegation acknowledges that parties have little opportunity to engage in meaningful and extensive internal party consultations for candidate selection.

*Political Party Funding:* The delegation was encouraged by reforms to the political party and chamber of representative laws and related decrees that provide increased and clearer regulation of party financing and candidate spending. These include broadening and clarification of state financing for party operations and campaigning, spending limits for candidates and proposals to encourage women's candidacies. They do not, however, expressly limit spending by national-level political parties in campaigns. Ensuring the enforcement of these regulations with seriousness and equity will be critical to building confidence in the legal framework and the neutrality of the state. Further refinement of the framework for financing of campaigns will be important for future elections.

*Media Access:* The delegation appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Higher Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA) and notes the uniqueness of such a regulatory agency in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, as well as the professionalism it seems to display. While it is commendable that there is oversight of the media by a semi-independent agency and that equitable access to public media is regulated by law, some parties with whom the delegation met believe that the formulas for allocation of air time are to the detriment of parties with limited or no representation in parliament.

The NDI delegation notes that there are no clear criteria or formulae on the allotment of the timing of coverage provided to political parties. Since the HACA acknowledges that they are only mandated to regulate overall access, there are no mechanisms to ensure that parties receive equitable coverage during "prime time" viewing hours or that differences are made among different types of programming related to the elections. The shortcoming on the timing of allocation is compounded by a further weakness, in that the allocation of equitable time is applied to the whole campaign period, rather than on a daily or weekly basis. It is conceivable, therefore, that smaller parties could be allocated all of their – already limited – time at once, at the end of the campaign, during a time of day when viewership is low.

Moreover, since analysis of the level of coverage of the parties is not concluded until after the election, there is no enforcement of the rules that would impact the course of campaigns.

**Voter Participation:** Overall, the primary concern among virtually all of the actors with whom the delegation met related to the level of voter turnout for the elections. Several times, breaking the 50 percent turnout level was mentioned as a satisfactory (and still challenging) rate. These concerns seem to stem from the experience of the historically low 37 percent rate experienced in 2007, and are reinforced by the sense expressed by many that the public is not encouraged by developments to

date. Although widely expressed, the concern over the potential impact of low voter turnout had various interpretations. Some said turnout would determine the legitimacy of the overall reform process, others that it would establish the credibility of the new parliament and the likelihood of continued discontent, which could, in fact, be further inflamed. Although the information is anecdotal, there is a widespread perception that election campaigns are fraught with corruption; negative perceptions about the integrity of the system can also lead to cynicism toward the efficacy of the political system as a whole and, hence, to voter apathy.

**Election Administration:** Under the revised electoral framework, the Ministry of Interior remains the body responsible for administering the elections. Almost all actors indicated that the election administration at the national level is technically sound and professional. It is noteworthy that the reform of the voter list administrative committees, in which judges are now placed in charge of collection and review of voter lists, was seen as a positive sign by virtually all parties and actors. The elimination of presenting a special voter card in favor of using the national identity card is perceived as a positive development, as there was some confusion over the distribution of voting cards in the past. Similarly, the outreach efforts to encourage eligible citizens to register to vote are taken as encouraging signs.

While distinctions were made between the operation of election authorities at the national and local levels, many people with whom NDI met remain skeptical that the Ministry would remain neutral. For their part, Ministry officials with whom the delegation met seem to see themselves as implementers of the law with no flexibility to create supporting regulations or to interpret the legal framework where there are ambiguities. Decisions and interpretations inevitably need to be made in election processes.

Having an independent election commission empowered to interpret and regulate the election legal framework solves this. The establishment of independent electoral bodies has become a common trait of elections around the world. In some countries, commissions play a role in advising the Ministry of Interior on election administration or even taking over management responsibility. Based on their ability to act as unbiased administrators among political parties, candidates and observers on behalf of citizens, independent electoral commissions can help to increase public confidence in the integrity and transparency of the process.

*Voters' List:* The voters' list for the 2011 elections is based on a 1992 voters' register that has been updated and revised periodically. The Ministry of Interior opened a voter registration process in late September that will last through October 27, and has expressed a commitment to removing names of people who have died or are no longer eligible to vote before the November 25 election. As noted, the outreach effort by parties and the Moroccan authorities to encourage voter registration is a positive sign.

The new voter registry law charges the Ministry with eliminating duplicate names on the list. Clarifications should be made to ensure that criteria beyond a voter's name are being used to determine if a voter is registered twice. It would also appear under the language of the law that voters who were already registered to vote and whose national identity card was not listed on their registration now need to re-register to vote.<sup>4</sup> This should be clarified or addressed.

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<sup>4</sup> Per provisions 12.2 in Chapter III and 5.4 in Chapter II of the Bill Number 36-11 on Renewing and Computer Processing of the Definitive General Voters' Lists in View of Their Updating.

Information about a process to check the list or appeal any mistakes or rejections is similarly unclear, as is the specific timeline for each phase of this process, including complaints and appeals. This is particularly problematic given the shortened timeline of these particular elections and a number of national and religious holidays that could affect administrative processes. Even if elucidated in the law, these elements remain unclear to the public and political parties, which will limit their ability to review and register complaints regarding errors. It is anticipated that the final voters' list will be published only days before the election, leading to potential confusion on election day and possibly even some undue disenfranchisement of legitimate voters. Civic groups and political parties have noted that this is particularly concerning given the requirement for both candidates and domestic observers to be on the voters' list to participate in the elections appropriately.

*Transparency of Vote Counting:* During its 2007 observation, NDI noted a number of issues related to the vote count, including the provision to burn all valid ballots immediately following the vote count, the handling of unused ballots, simplification of the ballot design for quicker counting and the release of results down to the polling station level. No apparent effort has been made to address these concerns.

**Election Observation:** A hallmark of the revised constitution in Morocco now is the enshrinement of conformity with international standards for the observation of electoral processes, which was codified, as recommended by international observers in 2007, as the first electoral text legislated.<sup>5</sup> The new law outlines the provisions for independent and impartial observation by Moroccan national institutions, civil society associations and foreign non-governmental organizations. This is an important development in Morocco's electoral framework and provides a foundational guarantee for citizen and international observers.

While the Election Observers Accreditation Committee was established in early October under the coordination of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH), and the CNDH has demonstrated seriousness and professionalism with its election responsibilities, the specific regulations and procedures to accredit observers were released with only a one-time, ten-day submission deadline for applications. Based on discussions with officials and domestic observer groups, the criteria for acceptance remains unclear and perhaps subjective. While it is understandable that the Committee requires time to review the applications and process accreditation, ten days is a short timeline for registration. Furthermore, no information is available about the process for appeals should applications for organizations or specific observers be denied or whether the calendar allows for a timely appeals process. In addition, no provisions are apparent to allow for replacement of observers who might be sick or otherwise unable to observe on election day, which will be almost one month after the application deadline. The CNDH indicated in meetings with the delegation that it will strictly adhere to the rule that no changes to the list of individual observers can be made after October 28, presenting a tremendous practical challenge to both domestic and international observation groups.<sup>6</sup> Given the short electoral calendar and the challenge of implementing brand new regulations, information needs to be clear, timely and widely disseminated.

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<sup>5</sup> Bill Number 30-11 to Determine the Requirements and Modalities for Independent and Impartial Election Observation. See also Article 11 of Constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco.

<sup>6</sup> Based on information available and depending on the accreditation results, it is expected that the *Collectif Associatif pour l'Observation des Elections*, a national coalition of civil society organizations that have observed elections since 2002, would field 3,000 domestic observers, the CNDH would field 240 of its own observers, and various other domestic groups

Unusually, the delegation heard concerns from political parties and civic groups over the high number of polling places – approximately 40,000 – and the potential for that to hinder effective election observation. At the same time, having many polling places eases access to the polls for voters. It must be determined how these polling place locations have been allocated relative to the population to make any further findings.

**Voter Education:** Voter education and mobilization efforts in 2007 were significant, with campaigns by the election authorities and public-private partnerships reaching across the nation to encourage voters to register and participate, as well as providing information about how to vote. At the moment, it is unclear to the delegation the level or effort of voter education that will take place before voting, particularly in light of the shortened preparatory timeframe. The delegation heard of no significant initiatives underway or in preparation. Effective voter education cannot be limited only to the process for election day. Information about the registration process seems to have been disseminated widely; information about the other regulatory and procedural aspects of the elections is equally relevant to voters, political parties and observers. Given the shortened timeline, some regulations are necessarily still being determined. However, the Moroccan authorities can build further confidence in the process by ensuring that information is released in a systematic and timely manner.

With the high spoilage rates for ballots experienced in 2007, recommendations were made by international observers to redesign the ballot and test it with voters. Despite the recommendation, election authorities indicated that the ballots will remain the same as they were in that election and discussion of any change seems to have been limited at best. However, those rates suggest that there is a real need for voters and polling officials to understand the rules and regulations of the voting procedure and, more specifically, the ballot.

## **Recommendations**

In the spirit of international cooperation and of the democratic values we share, the delegation respectfully offers the following recommendations:

1. Authorities responsible for coordinating observation and accrediting organizations and individual observers should clarify criteria, timelines and other vague elements in regulations. This information should be disseminated widely and in a timely manner, and polling officials should be well educated on the rights and responsibilities of observers. Further, the authorities should demonstrate flexibility as domestic and international observers tackle practical challenges in deploying within such a short timeframe.
2. The Moroccan authorities should enforce, in an even-handed and impartial manner, all the rules regarding campaigns, including the prohibition on vote buying, the prohibition on the use of public resources or religious institutions for campaigning, and campaign finance regulations. Authorities should strive to ensure that the entire election process takes place in a peaceful environment free of violence or intimidation.

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might field upwards of 400 observers. International groups might include NDI, the European Union, the Arab League and others.

3. Efforts should be made by the authorities to clarify elements of the legal framework on voter lists, as well as ensure that voters, political parties and civil society are able to check the information and file complaints that will be adjudicated in a timely and efficient manner before election day.
4. Final vote tallies should be made available publicly immediately upon their tabulation, including both aggregated totals and disaggregated tallies by polling station.
5. The practice of burning valid ballots immediately after vote counting should be discontinued in light of international norms and best practices for dispute resolution. Similarly, election authorities should continue to make all efforts to ensure the security of unused ballots.
6. Moroccan civil society itself should be sure to monitor the electoral process more broadly than just election day, covering the campaign period and endeavoring to cover areas outside of urban regions.
7. Parties should strive to earn the trust of voters through responsive platforms and voter outreach efforts, and give consideration on how to maximize the involvement of new participants, youth and women within campaigns and as candidates.
8. Over the longer term, and perhaps with an eye to early municipal elections in spring 2012, Moroccan authorities should consider revisions to the electoral system, as well as to districting, to aim for greater equality of districts based on internationally recognized criteria. Further, media regulations, campaign finance rules and other regulatory laws should be reviewed, clarified and strengthened.
9. Importantly, future reform initiatives should provide time and opportunity for more inclusive and public consultation with political parties, civil society and citizens themselves.

## **Contacts**

For further information, please contact: in Rabat, Susan Stigant at + 212 537 671 619/26; in Washington, DC, Andrew Farrand at + 1 202 728 5500.