



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NDI DELEGATION TO ASSESS PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT IN ZAMBIA**

**LUSAKA, Zambia** – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is conducting a pre-election assessment of Zambia’s preparations for presidential, parliamentary and local elections to be held on Sept. 20.

The five-day assessment, Aug. 14-18, reflects the international community’s interest in and support for credible elections in Zambia. It is intended to provide a preliminary assessment of the electoral environment and preparations for the elections as well as a framework for an NDI long-term international observation of the September polls.

“NDI looks forward to a successful and peaceful election in which the citizens of Zambia can freely cast their ballots and where the outcome will be accepted and respected by all,” said Pat Merloe, NDI’s senior associate and director of election programs. “It is the people of Zambia who will ultimately determine the credibility and legitimacy of the electoral process.”

The delegation will be made up of His Excellency Quett Ketumile Masire, former president of Botswana; Thomas Daschle, former U.S. Senate majority leader and vice chair of NDI’s board of directors; Ayo Obe, chair of the Goree Institute’s board of trustees in Senegal and former president of the Civil Liberties Organization in Nigeria; Merloe; Keith Jennings, NDI’s senior associate and regional director for Southern and East Africa; and Xoliswa Sibeko, NDI’s resident director in South Africa.

While in Lusaka, the group will meet with senior government officials; election administrators; political party candidates and representatives; civil society, business and women leaders; media representatives; citizen monitors; security forces; religious leaders; and representatives of the international community who are supporting the electoral process and political development.

The delegation will assess the prevailing political environment in Zambia and preparations for the elections, and identify areas where improvements may be needed to guarantee the integrity and transparency of the polls and increase public confidence in the electoral

process. The mission will prepare a statement of its findings that will be shared with Zambian government officials, election authorities, political parties, civil society and the international community.

On Aug. 8, NDI deployed 10 long-term international observers, including members of the Southern African Development Community's Election Support Network, throughout Zambia's nine provinces.

The international observers will conduct their activities in a nonpartisan manner in accordance with applicable law and international standards for election monitoring set forth in the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#). Over the last 25 years, the Institute has conducted more than 200 election observation missions worldwide.

NDI's Zambia election program is supported by the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In addition to the international observation, the Institute is assisting a nationwide domestic election observation coalition; working with political party trainers from across the political spectrum to strengthen their poll watcher training; and supporting women's political participation through campaign training. NDI provided technical assistance to Zambian civic organizations doing election monitoring in 2008 and 1991.

*The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).*

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