

**COTE D'IVOIRE**  
**National Reconciliation & the State of Democracy**

*An Assessment Mission Report*

*July 2 – 13, 2001*

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# COTE D'IVOIRE

## National Reconciliation & the State of Democracy

### *An Assessment Mission Report*

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#### **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

From July 2 to July 13, 2001, an NDI delegation visited Côte d'Ivoire and met with leaders of the main political parties, members of government including Prime Minister Affi N'Guessan, the leadership of the National Assembly including Speaker Mamadou Koulibaly, representatives of civic organizations involved in democracy support activities, leaders of labor unions, journalists, religious leaders, other Ivorians interested in the political process and members of the international community resident in Abidjan.<sup>1</sup> Members of the delegation also traveled to Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire's second-largest city. The delegation's mission was to assess the current political environment and to develop recommendations for strengthening national reconciliation and democratic processes in the country.

Members of the delegation included: Hon. Audrey McLaughlin, former head of the New Democratic Party of Canada; General Lamine Cissé, former Senegalese Minister of the Interior; Lisa Ferrell, an attorney and former member of the Arkansas State Assembly; Guy Bethell, Executive Director of the Ontario Liberal Party; Chris Fomunyoh, NDI Senior Associate for Africa; and Alioune Tine, Executive Secretary for the *Rencontre Africain pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme*<sup>2</sup>. The delegation was joined by Hervé Razafimbahiny, NDI's Resident Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and was assisted by Sef Ashiagbor, NDI Senior Program Officer and Gregory Houel, NDI Senior Program Assistant.

Côte d'Ivoire is in a precarious state as frustrations from recent partisan political battles linger beneath a superficial calm and sense of normalcy. The delegation noted that with a few exceptions, Ivorians freely expressed themselves without fear of intimidation or reprisals. However, the controversial circumstances under which President Gbagbo came to power, the unresolved status of General Guéï and other former members of the military regime, the tenuous balance of power in the country, and other outstanding questions of political participation and national identity continue to generate heated debate and emotions. While there is an improvement over the experiences of last fall in terms of political tensions, insecurity and human rights violations, most Ivorians seem to recognize that the situation could deteriorate quickly depending on political developments over the next few months. The current government seems fragile as it struggles to consolidate its hold on power, just as there is uncertainty about the next moves of its opponents including opposition political parties and remnants from the previous military regime. Despite the government's publicly stated commitment to national reconciliation, prospects for genuine reconciliation could be

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<sup>1</sup> A list of the team's meetings is in Attachment 1.

<sup>2</sup> The delegation's bios are in Attachment 2.

jeopardized by distrust, lack of dialogue among the lead political actors and disagreement over the conditions under which a meaningful national reconciliation should take place.

Suspension of donor assistance, mismanagement and corruption have had a severe impact on the Ivorian economy, increasing the potential for further exacerbation of the current crisis. Although the government has re-established relations with the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, resumption of normal aid relations is subject to conditionalities related to economic reforms, good governance and national reconciliation. The timing of some of the economic reforms could also generate a social backlash. For example, initial discussions with the IMF and World Bank created a call for electricity rates to increase, thereby stirring concerns among Ivorians about their purchasing power at a time of high unemployment. In parts of Western Côte d'Ivoire, there are unresolved issues of land tenure and noticeable concerns among parts of the population that application of land tenure legislation could cause them to lose access to the land, which is their primary source of income. This combination of pressing political, economic and social problems could explode into civil strife and violence if extraordinary steps are not taken by Ivorian political and opinion leaders.

The delegation identified five critical issues that could undermine prospects for national reconciliation and democratization in Côte d'Ivoire. These include: the nonrespect of the political and civic rights of Ivorian citizens; a prevailing sense of impunity for human rights violations; a dearth of high level and public interparty dialogue; insufficient political will for national reconciliation; and ambiguity over the content and process of national reconciliation. These issues should be resolved in an open and credible manner that inspires the confidence of Ivorians and the international community that the political will exists to move Côte d'Ivoire towards inclusive, democratic governance. The delegation is concerned that should these issues persist, they could undermine political stability and prospects for democratization in the country.

From NDI's experience in more than 50 emerging democracies around the world, it is clear that once the confidence of large segments of the public in the political process is shaken --as is usually the case following a military coup, controversial elections and political violence --extraordinary steps by the government and political leadership are required to reestablish confidence in the country's political processes and institutions. Such measures must be guided by the principle of fairness and in the higher interest of the nation. In the spirit of international cooperation, NDI offers the following observations and recommendations.

The delegation commends efforts underway for a National Reconciliation Forum and calls on all the political leaders of the country – in the Ivorian spirit of peace, dialogue and reconciliation – to avoid actions and rhetoric that may raise tensions, threaten the political stability of the country and endanger prospects for national reconciliation. All political parties should be allowed to contribute freely and fully to a discussion of issues of national importance. Political dialogue among all political leaders should seek consensus on concrete steps that can be taken to move the country's democratization process forward.

The political elite, which shapes public opinion and controls the majority of the press, must bear responsibility for the deterioration of the political climate in the country. It must carry most of the burden for safely shepherding the country through its current crisis. Ivorians expect no less of their political leaders and stated as much in discussions with the delegation. The current leadership of the country should use the period leading up to the “National Forum” to create the conditions for a meaningful and inclusive process that will help guarantee conditions for the democratic governance of the country.

Specific steps that could be taken to strengthen key democratic pillars such as political parties, civil society, religious groups, the media, governance institutions, electoral processes and security forces in the country’s democratic consolidation are identified in the main section of the report.

## **II. POLITICAL CONTEXT**

On October 26, 2000, following a failed attempt by General Guéi to steal the already controversial presidential election, Laurent Gbagbo was sworn in as the president of Côte d’Ivoire having garnered 59 percent of the vote. The new government inherited a country reeling from a divided and highly politicized military, political violence in the days immediately following the presidential election and a polarized political environment. Although the most publicized incident of violence is the mass grave of 57 bodies discovered at Yopougoun, hundreds of Ivorians are said to have lost their lives through political violence in fall 2000. In October 2000, political violence appears to have occurred in two waves: the first, a result of security forces’ efforts to quell demonstrations calling for Guéi’s departure on October 24 and 25; and second, during demonstrations by *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) supporters on October 26 to call for new elections. Although Guéi’s efforts to remain in power were thwarted, many Ivorians still viewed the 2000 presidential election as fatally flawed since candidates from major political parties were prohibited from running for president.

After a temporary reprieve, a third wave of violence hit the country on December 4 and 5, when RDR supporters demonstrated to protest the disqualification of Alassane Ouattara as a candidate for parliament. Tensions continued to build in January when the government announced the failure of an alleged coup attempt. These incidents occurred against a backdrop of ethnic tension and laws that could be interpreted to exclude some Ivorians from fully participating in the political process, leading many Ivorians to call for concrete steps towards national reconciliation.

Despite continuing violations of human rights and the imprisonment of several leading members of the RDR, all major parties fielded candidates for the March 25, 2001, municipal elections. Ivorians generally accepted those elections as legitimate, creating new possibilities for addressing longstanding grievances regarding inclusive political participation in the country. Ivorians also hoped that the period of relative calm that followed the municipal elections would be used to identify and bring to justice those responsible for incidents of political violence.

Recently, on behalf of a support group for Ivorian victims of political violence, *Prévention Genocide*, a Belgian NGO filed a lawsuit against President Gbagbo, the Ministers of Interior and Defense and former military ruler General Guéï for crimes against humanity. The Belgian prosecution attorneys plan to pursue these charges.

President Gbagbo's government has publicly stated its interest in promoting national reconciliation and a number of modest steps have been undertaken thus far. At a seminar in Grand Bassam in April 2001 sponsored by the *Comité de Médiation pour la Réconciliation Nationale*, political party representatives, religious and traditional leaders made recommendations for resolving some of the main issues of contention. In May, the government dispatched cabinet ministers to all of the country's regional capitals to consult with citizens on the national reconciliation process. Soon thereafter, President Gbagbo met with political party, civil society, religious and traditional leaders to elicit their input on the national reconciliation process. The government also announced plans for a "National Reconciliation Forum". Originally scheduled for July 9, the Forum may now be held in October. Former Prime Minister Seydou Diarra has been appointed to chair the Forum and is coordinating preparations for the event.

### **III. THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PROCESS**

#### **A. FINDINGS**

##### *Political and Civic Rights of Ivorians*

The NDI delegation heard continuing debate about the eligibility criteria for public office, especially centered on the elimination of Alassane Ouattara from the presidential and legislative elections. Many Ivorians also complained that they had been unfairly deprived of identification documents or had experienced tremendous difficulty in establishing national identity cards simply because they had names associated with Northern Côte d'Ivoire. These discriminatory actions seriously impede the ability of citizens to exercise their political, economic and social rights. The delegation noted considerable confusion in popular discourse about the conditions for Ivorian citizenship, eligibility for various elected public offices, and for active participation in politics, the last two of which have changed in the last seven years. Many Ivorians also complained about what they felt was an unfair application of the existing legal requirements for issuance of identity documents and the alleged distribution of large numbers of falsified national identity cards.

##### *A Sense of Impunity for Human Rights Violations*

While the assessment mission was in Abidjan, a number of high profile judicial proceedings were being planned: the trials of eight gendarmes charged in connection with the discovery of the mass grave at Yopougon, and of leading members of the RDR charged with disturbing the peace. Many Ivorians were concerned that because the accused gendarmes had not been detained, witnesses may be reluctant to come forward for fear of retribution. They argued that the lawsuit in Brussels against President Gbagbo, two of his Ministers and General Guéï, was an indication of the frustration and lack of confidence that aggrieved parties in the country feel in the Ivorian justice system. The delegation heard numerous

complaints by Ivoirians over the independence of the judiciary and the need for those responsible for any acts of violence to be brought to justice irrespective of their rank or status in military or civilian life. The delegation noted that in transition societies such as South Africa, where amnesty was granted to former perpetrators of human rights violations, initial investigations into the veracity of the accusations and proper identification of the culprits were necessary first steps in the national reconciliation process.

#### *The Absence of High Level and Public Interparty Dialogue*

The delegation was struck by the lack of visible interparty dialogue on critical issues at stake in the country. While a few private meetings had taken place between some party leaders of opposite camps, the delegation noted that most party supporters at the grassroots level were unaware of these contacts and therefore continued to harbor hostility towards those who hold opposing political viewpoints. Although the delegation noted a slight reduction in political tensions as compared to fall 2000, the delegation was concerned that unless the country's political, religious and civic leaders seize the opportunity for dialogue on ways to be more tolerant of each other the situation could deteriorate rapidly.

#### *The Political Will for National Reconciliation*

Ivoirians from all of the major political parties questioned whether the political will exists for a meaningful reconciliation process although each group pointed the accusing finger at the other side. Some opposition groups view the government's efforts as a smokescreen designed merely to reassure the international community of movement on the issue, with the ultimate goal of re-establishing normal levels of international assistance. They point to recent comments made by President Gbagbo in Paris about Alassane Ouattara's nationality as evidence of the lack of political will on the government's side. Conversely, pro-government parties argue that opposition leaders and some human rights and media organizations are engaged in a smear campaign to tarnish the country's image overseas thereby undercutting government efforts to resume relations with the major powers and international financial institutions. The delegation noted many Ivoirians' comments that in the few instances when political leaders made conciliatory statements, inflammatory editorials in media outlets controlled by the same leaders undermined efforts to create an enabling environment for national reconciliation.

#### *Ambiguity Over the National Reconciliation Process*

The delegation heard conflicting views about the objectives and expectations of Ivoirians regarding the national reconciliation process. Many Ivoirians expressed frustration that previous recommendations arising from the Grand Bassam seminar, the ministerial visits to the interior and meetings between President Gbagbo and the country's main political actors, had not been implemented and that no agreement has been reached on concrete steps for arriving at a genuine reconciliation process. While some argued that the National Forum should be used to negotiate binding solutions to outstanding issues such as the controversial presidential and legislative elections, the release of political prisoners, and the status of former President Bédié, General Guéi and RDR President Alassane Ouattara, others stated

that participation in the Forum should be unconditional with a free flowing agenda as a demonstration of the political will on all sides for national reconciliation. The leaders of many of the political parties emphasized the need for an independent and neutral individual to chair the Forum. Many Ivorians also stated their reluctance to participate in a National Forum whose organizing structure, objectives, agenda, and participants were unclear. The ongoing debate over the mechanics as well as the purpose of the Forum raise concerns that without adequate preparation, the National Forum could exacerbate rather than lower tensions in the country by creating expectations that may not be met in the short term by one single event.

### *Economic and Social Issues*

The delegation found that most Ivorians now make the link between the country's pressing economic and social issues and the prevailing political situation. For instance, some Ivorians argued that while the country's traditional hospitality to immigrant labor from neighboring countries contributed to economic growth in the past, these immigration policies were no longer sustainable given the economic downturn and levels of unemployment. They also described tensions over land ownership among Ivorians -- some indigenous to the west and southeast, and others migrating from other parts of the country in search of more fertile land -- as a simple struggle over scarce resources. Some Ivorians argued that efforts at stabilizing the country would remain futile unless lasting solutions were found to these economic and social problems at the same time as ongoing efforts to resolve tensions at the political leadership level.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Protecting the Political and Civic Rights of Ivorians*

To avoid jeopardizing political stability in the long run as a significant percentage of the citizenry feels alienated from the country's political life, government officials and the public as a whole need to be sensitized on the requirements for Ivorian citizenship. A public awareness campaign should be undertaken nationally to better inform officials and ordinary citizens on the qualifications for public office, citizenship and permanent residence in the country. While each of these categories may have different political rights and privileges, the government of Côte d'Ivoire bears ultimate responsibility for the protection of people living in the country. National identity documents should be issued to all people who qualify without discrimination based on their region of origin. Citizens from all parts of the country should meet the same requirements and receive similar favorable treatment from functionaries of the state.

### *Ending Impunity*

Members of the judiciary and the political leadership of the country should uphold the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary as core principles of a democratic society. Citizens need to have full confidence in the independence of the judiciary. While recognizing the principle of separation of powers between the various branches of



government, the executive branch has access to resources that can strengthen the credibility of the justice system just as the legislature has the responsibility to exercise oversight. Given the concerns Ivorians expressed about the independence of the judiciary and the unpredictable manner in which Ivorian courts have functioned in the last two years, the legislative and the executive branches should take steps to ensure that investigations and trials are conducted expeditiously and fairly. Necessary steps should also be taken to ensure that victims of political violence have the opportunity to be heard about their experiences and if appropriate, confront the perpetrators of the violence without fear of retribution. More legal training and reform of the judiciary would also enhance public confidence in the independence of the judiciary.

### *Fostering Interparty Dialogue*

Consensus should be developed by the leadership of the country on the content and operational details of the Forum such as the numeric representation of parties, the agenda and the make up of the governing bureau. The governing bureau should take all necessary steps to encourage “buy-in” from the various political actors and assist participants to prepare for the event. Advance planning and prior agreement on the key rules of engagement would foster interparty dialogue. In preparing for the Forum, Ivorian leaders should look at the experiences of other countries such as South Africa that have dealt with the framework, mechanics and content of negotiations and national reconciliation. They should commit to finding negotiated settlements on important and sensitive matters related to political participation and eligibility for public office. A study mission could help provide focus to Ivorian leaders as they deal with the current debate in Côte d’Ivoire. It can also spur party leaders to interact in a substantive way in a neutral environment as they examine steps that have been taken in other political systems to overcome similar obstacles. Upon their return, members of the delegation should share lessons learned from the mission with their colleagues and discuss the feasibility of adapting the techniques and content of other countries’ successes to the Ivorian context.

### *Creating an Enabling Environment for National Reconciliation*

Given recent political tensions, the Gbagbo government needs to take the lead in providing additional assurances of its commitment to a meaningful reconciliation. Other national leaders need to publicly state their commitment to the process too. In the period leading up to the Forum, all political actors must observe a truce to increase the chances for dialogue. Political leaders on all sides should publicly declare their commitment to the reconciliation process and take noticeable steps to avoid inflammatory language by their supporters and media organs affiliated with these parties.

### *Defining the National Reconciliation Process*

Conclusions drawn from earlier initiatives such as the Grand Bassam Seminar, and the ministerial visits to the interior should be made public in order to bolster assurances that the government is committed to a coherent plan of action for national reconciliation. Such a

public release would also reassure Ivorians that their contributions to national reconciliation thus far are being taken seriously and are helping to move the process forward.

While the Forum will likely be a key event, it cannot be the end product in a national reconciliation process; rather, it should build upon past efforts at reconciliation and create new opportunities for continuing dialogue on healing the scars that have resulted from undemocratic and military rule in Côte d'Ivoire. The Forum should consider bringing closure to outstanding issues such as constitutional and electoral reform, the unresolved status of General Guéï and other members of the military junta, redress for human rights abuses, former President Bédié's return to Côte d'Ivoire and Alassane Ouattara's status. These issues should be resolved in a transparent and participatory manner that inspires confidence in the existence of political will for a meaningful reconciliation process.

Government, ruling and opposition party leadership should consider setting up a special committee representing all sides of the political divide to monitor the implementation of recommendations adopted at the Forum. It may also be appropriate to conduct multipartisan explanatory missions to the interior of the country to sensitize citizens at the grassroots level on positive steps taken at the Forum and progress made towards national reconciliation.

#### *Economic and Social Issues*

While the delegation could not fully investigate the economic issues at stake in Côte d'Ivoire, it noted that from the experience of other transition countries, unresolved political tensions such as those being currently experienced in Côte d'Ivoire, generally inhibit the country's ability to tackle economic and social problems. The experience of other countries also demonstrates that the most effective way of addressing pressing economic and social issues is through participatory and accountable democratic institutions that inspire more government accountability and transparency.

## **IV. POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **A. FINDINGS**

Although most of the country's major political parties have written platforms, the delegation heard little discussion of political ideologies or public policy issues. Rather, political discourse centered primarily on the national reconciliation process, grievances surrounding the parameters for political participation, and concerns over the country's image abroad. Ivorians also complained that presentations at party-organized events are often based on rhetoric rather than on the exchange of ideas or information that can strengthen democratic culture. Most political parties are still locked in the battle for power as experienced over the last two years, even as ordinary citizens increasingly view the political elite as principally preoccupied with individual agendas and self-interests.

There are visible disparities among the country's principal parties in terms of resources, direction and priorities. At the same time, all of them face considerable challenges

as they seek to resolve leadership issues, maintain party unity and discipline and adjust to new roles in the country's political life. The *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI)'s ascension to power, though marred by the seriously flawed presidential election of October 2000, has given President Gbagbo a platform from which to negotiate greater legitimacy for his government. The party's influence in the National Assembly is weakened by the lack of an absolute majority and the number of FPI deputies who hold ministerial positions and who therefore do not actively participate in the legislature. From July 16 – 20, FPI held an extraordinary congress and elected its new leadership following Party President Gbagbo's election as President of the Republic. Party delegates also discussed ways of improving interal party structures, the implications of the party's transition from an opposition to a ruling party, and FPI's performance in the municipal elections.

The December 1999 coup had a crippling effect on the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI). Former Head of State and party president Henri Konan Bédié continues to live in Paris. Several leading members of the party aligned themselves with General Guéï and have now formed a new political party, *Union Pour la Démocratie et Pour la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire* (UDP-CI) with strong links to the General. Some analysts believe that the large number of former PDCI members who ran as independent candidates in the legislative and municipal elections and the emergence of factions within the party indicate further divisions within the party. Nevertheless, the PDCI remains a significant political force in the country. Shortly after the assessment mission's departure, PDCI's leadership embarked on a series of political rallies around the country. Preparations are also underway for a party congress in October 2001.

After RDR's boycott of the presidential and legislative elections, its success in the municipal elections questioned the tendency of critics to describe the RDR as a party with little support outside northern Côte d'Ivoire. RDR's leadership acknowledges that the party faces a number of difficult challenges that include whether to continue pressing for new presidential and legislative elections, the party's possible participation in the Gbagbo government and the status of RDR deputies who were elected into the National Assembly despite the party's boycott of the elections. Recognizing that Alassane Ouattara has become a symbol for many Ivoirians who feel unfairly excluded from the country's political life, the party must also struggle with the question of whether to pursue its political goals through protests or rather through negotiations with the government.

The events of the past 18 months have also redefined relationships between the political parties. Given the demise of the *Front Républicain* and the end of PDCI rule, new alliances have emerged. Parties such as *Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs*, *Parti Africain pour la Renaissance Ivoirienne*, *Parti pour le Progrès et le Socialisme*, *Union des Sociaux Démocrates* and now UPD-CI, that have traditionally fallen in line behind the larger political parties may also seek to influence agreements brokered by the major parties regarding the country's future.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Promoting Public and Visible Interparty Dialogue*

Ivorian party leaders need to develop and strengthen mechanisms that promote regular interparty dialogue at the highest possible level. They need to revive initiatives such as the now-defunct political party forum so that it meets regularly to discuss issues of national concern. They should also envisage holding regular meetings between political parties and officials of the Ministry of the Interior that have oversight over political activities.

The participation of all parties in a process that is deemed fair and equal to all political actors is critical to the success of any post-conflict transition. The process of developing and implementing a political party code of conduct can help ensure that parties respect the basic tenets of tolerance and civil discourse in democratic societies despite the in-built competition of multiparty politics. The process of discussing and reaching consensus on a political party code of conduct encourages inter-party dialogue, increases confidence in the use of elections and negotiated agreements to effect peaceful change, reduces tension and creates opportunities for the institutionalization of a level playing field in the political arena in Côte d'Ivoire.

Although Ivorian political parties have agreed on codes of conduct in the past, no binding self-regulatory mechanism currently exists in Côte d'Ivoire. The experience of other countries shows that in addition to developing a code of conduct, political parties must inform their members on the provisions of the code. Any existing codes of conduct should be revived and emphasis placed on the creation of a mechanism for the filing, arbitration and settlement of any complaints that may arise due to violations of the code. The code should also make provisions for regular interparty meetings that would encourage prompt identification and resolution of potential problems or areas of disagreement.

### *The Role of Political Parties in the Reconciliation Process and in Civic Education*

Even as they grapple with deep feelings resulting from the intense political competition of the last two years, Ivorian political parties need to create opportunities for multiparty forums that can demonstrate to party members and supporters at the grassroots level the virtues of national reconciliation, tolerance and mutual respect. These forums should be replicated in towns and villages across the country with active participation by regional or local party representatives and citizens at the grassroots level. Such forums could provide an opportunity for political party representatives to educate the public on a variety of issues such as democratic principles and practices, good governance and land tenure. Such forums could also demonstrate to the Ivorian public that possibilities exist for civil interparty dialogue on issues of national and local interest. In addition, they could provide a channel for average citizens to express their grievances and have them resolved peaceably. Summaries of the forums could be broadcast on national radio and television, further enhancing the parties' ability to reach out to the population at large.

Because political parties draw captive audiences in various constituencies around the country, they should continue to conduct civic education beyond the national reconciliation process in order to increase awareness among the general population about democratic practices, strengthen the capacity of the parties to inspire participation in the political process, and refocus political discourse on citizen rights and responsibilities rather than on divisive rhetoric that has so far exploited religious and ethnic diversity.

## **V. CIVIL SOCIETY**

### **A. FINDINGS**

Most Ivorians stated to the delegation that they found the country's civil society organizations to have become partisan, divisive and to have weak institutional capacity. Many observers of Ivorian society as well as political and civic leaders admitted that civil society organizations had been negatively impacted by the divisive political wrangling of the last two years. They doubted the ability of Ivorian NGOs to regain their credibility and to contribute to national reconciliation and the country's democratic consolidation in the short term, given the public stances taken by some of the civic leaders during the partisan battles of the last two years. Although a number of donors continue to provide funding for NGO activities, they too, are concerned about the neutrality or nonpartisanship of some civic organizations.

Côte d'Ivoire has seen an explosion of new NGOs over the past two years and a certain amount of distrust between the leadership of new and pre-existing groups. Many NGOs remain members of civil society networks with common interests or goals. At the same time, in a few notable cases, there are competing networks within the same issue areas, each network representing different "interests" within the political spectrum. For example, there are two main networks of women's organizations, one of which is generally perceived as pro-FPI, while the other is viewed as pro-RDR. The same applies to youth organizations at the University. As a result, networks or coalitions rarely coordinate activities to avoid duplication; rather they have become de facto rallying grounds for competing political positions. Fortunately, there are examples of civic groups that defied these divisions and cooperated to achieve common goals. A loose coalition of NGOs jointly conducted voter education in the lead up to the municipal elections. Similarly, two civic groups agreed to coordinate their observation of the March 25 municipal elections despite the hardened differences between the leadership of both organizations.

There is no coordinating body for NGOs in Côte d'Ivoire and therefore no existing self-regulatory or information sharing mechanisms to promote discussion and build consensus among civil society organizations on appropriate conduct in support of the country's democratization efforts.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *The Role of Civic Groups in the Democratic Process*

Ivorian NGOs should undertake an organized review of their contribution to democratization in Côte d'Ivoire in the last decade and draw upon best practices and lessons learned that would strengthen their capacity to implement future civic participation programs. A series of workshops on themes related to the role of NGOs in promoting democracy, coalition building, mechanisms for coordinating NGO activities, and maintaining neutrality could contribute to an improved understanding by Ivorian NGOs of how to conduct themselves in consolidating democracy.

Ivorian NGOs should also explore the feasibility of establishing acceptable standards for NGOs involved in democracy and governance issues. They could discuss and adopt guidelines for member organizations in order to lend more credence to NGOs that meet the requirements of professionalism and nonpartisanship. Such guidelines could require that NGOs be more forthcoming in disclosing information about their sources of funding and the activities that they conduct around the country.

### *Improving Coordination of NGO Activities*

To contribute more effectively to national reconciliation and further democratization, Ivorian NGOs should seek strategic coalitions to achieve common goals. They should resuscitate past efforts at coordination as demonstrated by joint elections observation and voter education activities. Such joint activities can help reduce biases; they also promote constructive dialogue on strengthening democracy in the country.

Coalition building can also create a multiplier effect for civic education efforts. To further enhance the impact of civic education campaigns, NGOs could develop materials that would be used by political parties and grassroots organizations as part of a nationwide campaign on national reconciliation, tolerance and democratic principles. Such materials could use illustrations and be translated into local languages, particularly for populations in rural areas.

### *Skills Building*

Ivorian civic groups should also seek additional technical assistance to strengthen their capacity to conduct specific program activities. For instance, many Ivorians expressed the need for civic education on the roles and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, public institutions and government in a democracy, and on the actual legal requirements for Ivorian citizenship. In addition, given steps being taken to enact enabling legislation regarding institutions provided for in the new constitution, civic education will be required to sensitize the public on the issues at stake, the legislative process and the means through which the public can provide input to the debate on these matters. Such activities would broaden the base for political participation in the country and enhance prospects for increased public confidence in the country's political process.

## **VI. RELIGIOUS BODIES**

### **A. FINDINGS**

The delegation noted that the religious community, like most sectors of Ivorian society, has been shaken by the political tensions of the last few years in Côte d'Ivoire. Many Muslims feel that they are the primary victims of the political violence in the country and view Alassane Ouattara as a symbol of the challenges they face in exercising their civic and political rights. On the other hand, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church rejects any speculation that they are biased in favor of the government. Despite the existence of the Religious Forum -- a mechanism designed to promote dialogue among the different religious communities -- political tensions in the country continue to be sharply reflected in the religious community. Clergy of various denominations lament the fact that at various points during the political crisis, places of worship were attacked and defiled. Although there have been no published results of investigations into these incidents, some Ivorians argue that the manner in which the media reported these "random acts of vandalism" fuelled tensions by creating or reinforcing the perception that these crimes were perpetrated by members of one religious denomination against the other. At the same time, believers on both sides, stated repeatedly to the delegation that these incidents were indeed religiously motivated.

The delegation also learned that traditional mechanisms for promoting peaceful co-existence have broken down. In a widely repeated anecdotal example, during the 2000 Tabaski festival, Muslims are said to have offered meat to their Christian neighbors. According to Muslim leaders, Christian clergy are said to have warned their church members against accepting allegedly poisoned meat from the Muslim community. According to official statistics, about 70 percent of Ivorians are either Christian or Muslim, and religious leaders weave tremendous influence within their respective communities. Unfortunately, though, a Christian-Muslim divide would reinforce existing north-south or ruling-opposition party cleavages that already polarize the politics of the country.

### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

As long as the religious leaders of the country are viewed as partisan, they lose the ability to play a mediatory role at the same time as their declarations could exacerbate tensions. Ivorian religious leaders therefore need to regain their impartial and apolitical role in society. Ivorian religious leaders face the immediate challenge of addressing the origins of their differences, and identifying common ground and initiatives that could contribute in moving the reconciliation process forward. These discussions should include ways to strengthen the Religious Forum as a mechanism for resolving conflict among different faiths. Religious leaders should also identify and participate in joint activities that could help reduce ethnic and social tensions in the country.

## **VII. MEDIA**

### **A. FINDINGS**

The print media continues to play a highly visible role in political discourse, particularly in Abidjan. While freedom of the press is fundamental to a democratic society, some elements of the Ivorian press have misused this liberty. Some journalists have lost the ability to report on issues accurately and without bias. The delegation noted that the very partisan nature of some media outlets in Côte d'Ivoire exacerbates political differences and contributes to an environment in which it is increasingly difficult to separate fact from fiction. This situation hinders the public's ability to make informed assessments of political developments that affect the country. It also undermines the ability of political leaders to seek moderation and compromise in the higher interests of democracy and the country.

The delegation was heartened by efforts being made by some Ivorian media groups to contribute to national reconciliation and heard favorable reports about a unique voter and civic education campaign in the lead up to the municipal elections in which print media on all sides participated. The delegation also noted attempts to set higher professional standards for the press by the *Observatoire de la Liberté de la Presse et de la Déontologie* (OLPED)'s and by *Union des Journalistes de la Côte d'Ivoire* (UJCI), although these well-intentioned initiatives have not diminished the inflammatory tone of most Ivorian newspapers. This is a critical issue, given that current media biases could determine the outcome of the national reconciliation process. Until the Ivorian press becomes more responsible and accurate in its reporting, it will continue to negatively impact political discourse in the country and could undermine the national reconciliation process too.

Most senior Ivorian journalists acknowledged the shortcomings of various publications but attributed the low quality coverage of politics to the fact that some of those who covered domestic politics may not have had the appropriate journalistic training. According to these individuals, while the editors of various newspapers had the qualifications required by the media laws of the country, it was commonplace for newspapers to recruit less qualified writers on their staff to cut costs. Some of the senior journalists acknowledged that various newspapers had allowed themselves to be dragged into partisan political battles and would find it extremely difficult to remain financially viable if they became more professional and therefore less partisan.

### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### *Professionalization of the Media*

Journalists should continue to strengthen efforts to adopt and implement ethical standards and to ensure accurate and balanced news coverage. The various media associations should identify public incentives, such as a rating system by their peers, which can motivate journalists to avoid inaccurate and inflammatory statements that further polarizes political discourse in the country. Press organizations such as OLPED and UJCI should be strengthened to exercise monitoring and quality control functions, and government



officials, staff and political party leaders better trained to enhance the nature and content of their communications with the Ivorian media.

In the medium to longer term, exchange programs between Ivorians and journalists from other countries that have surmounted similar problems could be useful in identifying practical steps that could be taken to improve the accuracy and objectivity of the press. Publications designed to promote the interests of a particular political party or group should be encouraged to publicize their affiliations and financial backers, as is the case with party newsletters and magazines published by political parties in democratic societies around the world.

## **VIII. GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS**

### **A. FINDINGS**

The delegation found that despite the undercurrent of political tensions in the country and doubts about the legitimacy of the current legislature among opposition party members, the National Assembly and municipal councils around the country meet and conduct their business normally. In contrast to the stance and rhetoric of most party leaders, elected representatives within the municipalities in which several parties are represented appear to be less partisan and have sought to work together to find solutions to the problems of resident in their localities.

The Ivorian National Assembly faces many of the challenges common to national institutions in emerging democracies worldwide. The National Assembly has 225 members and only 6 standing committees although the space does not exist for committee rooms and meetings. More than half of the current deputies are serving in the legislature for the first time and rely, for the most part, on their personal or party resources to finance some of their basic needs. Pending legislation is not routinely made available to the public, making it difficult for interested parties to express their views concerning legislation as they may seek to influence the content of the final product. However, committee meetings are open to the public and witnesses can testify if called by the committee. The rules and procedures of the current legislature are under review and the leadership seems committed to strengthening the role of the institution in the governance process.

The above-mentioned procedural and resource challenges are further exacerbated by the questions of legitimacy that arise from the conditions under which the deputies to the current Assembly were elected. Due to the controversial nature of the December 2001 legislative elections and the boycott of the election by the RDR, some Ivorians continue to question the representational capacity of the institution, especially as this legislature is expected to pass enabling legislation for key democratic institutions such as the court system and the permanent Election Commission provided for in the new constitution.

All major political parties participated in the March 25, 2001 municipal elections and despite a few minor electoral disputes, accepted its results as a reflection of the strength of each of the parties around the country. Without a doubt, the municipal councils are viewed

as the most broadly representative institutions in Côte d'Ivoire. Given their focus on local issues that affect the economic and social well being of citizens at the grassroots level, the councils are also slightly removed from the heated debate at the national level on controversial issues such as the eligibility criteria for presidential and legislative candidates. Many Ivorians acknowledge that the proportional representation voting system used for the council elections provides a basis for constructive interparty dialogue on issues of local concern. They also hope that this interparty dialogue would serve as a model of peaceful coexistence among the country's diverse political, ethnic and religious groups.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Strengthening the Legitimacy and Efficiency of Governance Institutions*

The delegation recommends that to give more value to the political good will of members of the current legislature and to avoid their efforts from being clouded by questions surrounding the process through which they were elected, the functioning and organization of the current National Assembly should be discussed as part of the reconciliation process. A negotiated settlement on the current political crisis of the country will strengthen the ability of the National Assembly to fully conduct its legislative functions including oversight of the executive branch. Such a decision should also allow the Assembly to be viewed as representing all segments and regions of Ivorian society. As the National Assembly leadership seeks to strengthen its systems by revising its rules of procedure, comparative examples from other countries could help introduce new practices that would increase transparency and public participation in the legislature's work. The Assembly would need to create new committees in order to further decentralize the review of pending legislation. Such openness would also allow deputies to develop additional technical expertise on the role of committees in the legislative process. An increase in the number of committees or the creation of subcommittees would enhance the efficiency of the legislative process and increase opportunities for deputies to contribute more meaningfully to the work of the institution. It would also enhance the effectiveness of the institution to assure Ivorians, including those whose parties are not represented in the legislature that the body can exercise the appropriate oversight over the executive branch and legislate in a manner that is equitable and fair.

### *Constituency Relations*

Deputies need to establish a system that allows them to consult regularly with their constituents. While some may view constituency outreach as expensive given the country's pressing economic problems, the delegation realizes that pressing economic and social issues across the country, prevailing political tensions and the controversy surrounding the legislative elections make constituency relations even more critical. In societies that seek national reconciliation in a post-crisis era, strengthened constituency relations provide citizens with opportunities to discuss their concerns with their elected representatives as they provide input into transparent and accountable governance. Deputies should seek to play a role in explaining newly conceived plans for decentralization and the respective roles and responsibilities of elected officials at different levels. The National Assembly and its

members should explore cost effective mechanisms for increasing public input into the legislative process. This could include: publishing simplified guides on the role and functions of the National Assembly that could be distributed through NGOs and political party networks; organizing open days at the National Assembly; encouraging civic groups to organize orientation visits to the National Assembly; and partnering with civic groups and other elected officials to organize public meetings during which citizens can communicate their concerns and expectations to their elected officials.

### *Legislative Oversight*

The National Assembly also has an important role in contributing to national reconciliation. For instance, members of the Assembly could travel in multiparty teams around the country to conduct forums with citizens. The Assembly could also take a proactive step in holding hearings or organizing adhoc committees on issues of national interest such as incidents of political violence, the issuance of national identity cards and land tenure reform. Such activities could enhance the credibility and independence of the legislative branch and strengthen its capacity to serve as a forum for substantive debate on policy issues. The National Assembly could also play a critical role in the fight against corruption through oversight activities and enactment of codes of conduct for public office holders.

## **IX. ELECTORAL PROCESSES**

### **A. FINDINGS**

Prior to the adoption of the new constitution and electoral code, elections in the country had been organized by the Ministry of the Interior. Ivorians of all political persuasions expressed satisfaction with the composition and performance of the *Commission Nationale Electorale* (CNE) charged with organizing the transition elections. In particular, Ivorians congratulated the members of the CNE for resisting General Guei's efforts to steal the October presidential election. Shortly after the delegation's visit, the CNE came to the end of its mandate and presented its final report to President Gbagbo.

### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### *Applying Lessons Learned From the Transition*

The delegation recommends that the CNE's report be made public and lessons learned and recommendations arising from the CNE's work be given due consideration. The expertise developed by the current membership of the CNE should be drawn upon by the government and the National Assembly as they work to adopt enabling legislation on the establishment of a permanent Election Commission.

### *Ensuring the Independence and Transparency of the Election Process*

Given ongoing debate about eligibility criteria for candidates and voters, further clarification of the legal framework for elections – including amendments where appropriate -- should be considered in advance of the next elections in order to ensure the fullest possible participation and reduce the potential for politically motivated interpretation of the law. For instance, some Ivorians question how the moral probity of presidential candidates -- a requirement in the electoral code -- should be defined. Eligibility criteria for candidates and voters and other electoral rules should be refined and widely distributed well ahead of the next general elections in order to obviate the perception of last minute changes or interpretations designed to eliminate particular candidates or favor others.

It is important that election authorities be impartial and effective and that they are perceived to be so by the electoral contestants and the public. The strictest separation should be maintained between candidates or other partisan interests and the administration of the electoral process. Political parties and nongovernmental organizations should continue to have full access to oversee every aspect of the electoral process including registration, the campaign period, balloting, tabulation and publication of final results. As Côte d'Ivoire prepares for other electoral contests in the not-too-distant future, the government and the National Assembly should ensure that the Commission has the financial and human resources necessary to begin functioning in a manner that inspires confidence among Ivorians in the impartial and effective administration and oversight of the electoral process. Steps should also be taken to delineate the lines of communication and collaboration among the electoral commission, the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization and the National Institute of Statistics in order to strengthen and guarantee the independence of the commission.

To guarantee regular communications between the Election Commission and political parties and NGOs, the delegation recommends the establishment of consultative committees to the Election Commission – one for political parties, and another for NGOs. These committees could meet regularly in an environment that allows for the exchange of information on voter registration and lists, and for interested parties to raise questions and concerns with the commission. These consultative committees would also serve to foster cross-party dialogue and stronger contribution by political parties and civic groups on issues of political participation.

### *Improving the Credibility of the Voter Lists*

Given the longstanding controversy surrounding voter lists that has arisen during all of the competitive elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the delegation recommends that the Election Commission undertake a thorough revision of the voter list outside an election period. This would allow more time for a comprehensive review and update of the list in a less politically sensitive environment. In order to enhance confidence in the voter register, the new independent Electoral Commission should provide competing political parties with computerized copies of voter lists as has been done in other transition environments at little cost. The lists should also be made available for public review and verification by interested parties and potential voters. Adequate time and opportunity should be given to registered

voters prevented from voting in prior elections to provide authentication of their citizenship and qualification as voters.

## **X. THE ROLE OF SECURITY FORCES**

### **A. FINDINGS**

The Ivorian security forces had no significant involvement in politics prior to the December 1999 coup d'état. Since December 1999 and in light of various alleged coup attempts and personal rivalries within the military, the Gbagbo government inherited security forces that seemed less unified than before. These divisions are further compounded by disciplinary problems as evidenced by the creation of various groups with divergent loyalties within the security forces especially while General Guéï was in power. From the December coup through the end of 2000, reports of human rights abuses by the security forces increased exponentially. Although public attention has recently focused on the events of October 24-26, human rights organizations report that many other violations occurred under military rule and continued into the early months of the Gbagbo government.

Ivorians expressed frustration with the apparent impunity of the security forces even in well-documented cases of violence, rape and extrajudicial killings. They also expressed concern that the Gbagbo government had not yet fully succeeded in restoring effective civilian control over the military, in which case renegade forces would continue to pose a potential threat to lasting stability. The most glaring example is General Guéï, whose whereabouts are known although no steps were taken to have him respond to subpoenas from the Ivorian military court during the trials of Generals Palenfo and Coulibaly. General Guéï is also cited in the charges of crimes against humanity brought before a Belgian court. General Guéï describes himself as living "outside the republic" in Western Côte d'Ivoire near the Liberian border. He is said to be protected by an unknown number of armed guards, half a dozen of whom are paid for by government resources in recognition of the General's status as a former head of state. Other key members of the former military junta and their accomplices remain at large and the current status of paramilitary groups close to the General such as PC Crise and Cosa Nostra are unknown. In addition, some weapons remain unaccounted for. Although these problems may involve several members of the military, no lasting solution can be found unless General Guéï's status is satisfactorily resolved.

The Minister of Defense and the Army Chief of Staff have both publicly stated their commitment to restructuring the military, improving its image, its professionalism and its relationship with citizens and the state. Prior to the delegation's visit, the army participated in a seminar during which they discussed the need for reform and the military's proper role in a democracy.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Ending Impunity*

Pending or current investigations into human rights abuses committed by security forces should identify and punish the specific perpetrators of the crimes. Unless such action is taken, accusations of impunity will continue to tarnish the image of the entire security service and strain the relationship between the Ivorian security services and ordinary citizens.

### *The Role of Security Forces in a Democracy*

Proper procedures and training should be instituted within the security forces to better define the responsibilities of various services and to clarify the interface that should exist between citizens and the police, the gendarmerie and the defense forces. Given the societal trauma which Ivorians have experienced in the last few years, security forces should receive intensive training on human rights principles and their new role in a democratic society. In addition, the legislature and other governance institutions should create and enhance mechanisms that foster civilian control over the military, starting with proper staffing and resources for the Defense Committee within the National Assembly.

### *Community Relations*

Given the security forces' role in human rights violations, community relations activities should be implemented and the military should consider increasing its contribution to social services in the public health and infrastructural development sectors as a means of confidence building between the public and the security forces. These activities should be complemented with civic education for Ivorian citizens on their rights and responsibilities vis a vis the security forces.

## **XI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The delegation greatly appreciates the hospitality extended to it by Ivorian political party leaders and their representatives, government officials, members of the judiciary and the legal profession, members of NGOs, civic and religious leaders and other Ivorians. The delegation could not have accomplished its tasks without the cooperation and openness of those with whom it met.

## **XI. POSTSCRIPT**

In the immediate aftermath of the assessment mission and in response to Ivorian political parties' request, NDI organized a study mission of Ivorian political party leaders to Cape Town to examine the achievements made by South African leaders and institutions in promoting reconciliation and consolidating democracy. Additional information on the study mission is in Attachments 3 and 4.

## **ATTACHMENT 1: LIST OF ASSESSMENT MISSION MEETINGS**

### **Government Officials**

Mr. Affi N'Guessan, *Prime Minister*

Mr. Mamadou Koulibaly, *President of the National Assembly and his office*

Mr. Lida Moïse Kouassi, *Minister of Defense*

Mr. Siene Oulaï, *Minister of Justice*

Ms. Juliette Assouma, *Chief of Staff for the Minister in Charge of Relations with Parliament and Other Institutions*

Mr. Sanogo Al-Hassana, *Secretary General of the Prefecture of Bouaké*

Mr. Gnagne Adou, *Secretary General of the National Assembly*

Mr. Honore Guié, *President of the Commission Nationale Electorale*

Mr. Raphaël Ouattara, *Election Commissioner*

Mr. Lancina Konaté, *Vice-President, Comité de Médiation pour la Réconciliation Nationale (CMRN)*

Professeur Ouraga Obou, *Secretary General of the CMRN and Dean, Faculté de Droit, Université de Cocody*

Mme Hortense Aka Angui, *Mayor of Port Bouet*

Mr. Adama Toungara, *Mayor of Abobo and President of the Association of Liberal Mayors*

Mr. Mamadou Touré, *1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Mayor of Bouaké*

### **Political Party Representatives**

Dr. Richard Kojo, *Front Populaire Ivoirien*

Mr. Kirioua Bosson, *Front Populaire Ivoirien*

Mr. Bernard Ehui, *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire*

Mr. Laurent Dona-Fologo, *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire*

M. Lazar Yéboué, *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire*

Dr. Mamadou Cissé, *Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs*

Ms. Henriette Dagri Diabaté, *Rassemblement des Républicains*

Ms. Danièle Boni-Claverie, *Union pour la Democratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire*

Mr. Coulibaly Climanzo Jerome, *Union des Sociaux Démocrates*

### **Civil Society Representatives**

Mr. Kouassi N'Guessan, *Amnesty – Côte d'Ivoire*

Ms. Françoise Kaudjhis-Offoumou, *Association Internationale pour la Democratie - Afrique*

Ms. Marie-Joelle Kei, *Association Internationale pour la Démocratie – Côte d’Ivoire*  
Ms. Marie-Anne Doussou Traoré – *Association Ivoirienne pour la Défense des Droits des Femmes*  
Mr. Kouassi, *Centre Afrika Obota – Côte d’Ivoire*  
Mr. Wodjo Traore, *Club Organisation de l’Unité Africaine*  
Ms. Roselyn Konan-Metthy, *Femme Force de Vie*  
Ms. Bernadette Kapet, *Groupe d’Etude et de Recherche sur la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social – Côte d’Ivoire*  
Mr. Marthin Bleou, *Ligue Ivoirienne des Droits de l’Homme (LIDHO)*  
Mr. Boga, *LIDHO-Bouaké*  
Mr Ibrahim Doubmia, *Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits Humains*  
Ms. Elizabeth Kapet, *Mouvement International des Femmes Démocrates - Côte d’Ivoire*  
Mme Kabbah, *SOS-Exclusion*

### **Religious Leaders**

Monsignor Bernard Agré, *Cardinal of Abidjan*  
Imam Idriss Koudouss, *President of the Conseil National Islamique*

### **Media**

Mr. Alfred Dan Moussa, *Fraternité Matin and Observatoire de la Liberté de la Presse et de la Déontologie*  
Mr. Abdoulaye Sangare, *Le Jour*  
Mr. Sidick A. Diabate, *Notre Voie*  
Mr. Sindou Meite, *Le Patriote*  
Mr. Honorat Deyedagne, *Union des Journalistes de Côte d’Ivoire*  
Mr. Olvis Diabley, *Tàche d’Encre*

### **Trade Unionists**

Ms. Fiankan, *Confédération des Syndicat Libres de Côte d’Ivoire, DIGNITE*

### **The Diplomatic Community**

Mr. Aurelien Agbenonci, *Deputy Resident Representative, United Nations Development Program*  
Mr. George Mu, *US Ambassador to Côte d’Ivoire*  
Mr. Donald McMasker, *Canadian Ambassador to Côte d’Ivoire*  
Ms. Florence Thibaut, *European Commission’s Delegation to Côte d’Ivoire*  
Mr. Arnauld Vegnal, *French Ambassador to Côte d’Ivoire*



## **ATTACHMENT 2: DELEGATION BIOS**

### **Guy Bethell**

Guy Bethell is the Executive Director of the Ontario Liberal Party (OLP) in Toronto, Canada. As a senior staff member for the OLP, Mr. Bethell has many years of experience in all aspects of political party organization, including working on numerous election campaigns where his particular expertise is election day organization. Mr. Bethell has also participated in campaign training seminars and election observation delegations for NDI in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

### **General Lamine Cissé**

General Cissé's political and military career in Senegal and West Africa is particularly impressive. From 1998 to 2000, having retired from the army and as the Minister of the Interior of Senegal, he organized the legislative, senatorial and presidential elections and took part in the signature of the Abuja and Lomé Accords. He was also appointed President of the National Committee on Peace Negotiations with the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance. As Army Chief of Staff of Senegal in 1996 and 1997, he initiated the gathering of country leaders from the sub-region of West Africa and participated in joint military operations with Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, France, the United States and other African countries. Today, General Cissé is the president and founder of the *Observatoire Internationale de la Démocratie et de la Gestion des Crises et Conflits*, an NGO that assists countries with elections, as well as the management and resolution of conflicts.

### **Lisa Ferrell**

Lisa Ferrell is a lawyer specialized in corporate and international law. From 1994 to 2000, she was a member of the Arkansas State House of Representatives and Vice-Chair of the Joint Budget Committee. During this time, she served on the Judiciary, Insurance and Commerce, and the Agricultural and Economic Development Committees and was elected three times as the Chair of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District Caucus and Co-chair of the Women Legislators Caucus. In 1999 and 2000, while participating in three NDI programs in Nigeria, South Africa and Georgia, she advised deputies on legislative oversight of government policy and the budget. She is currently an adjunct professor of law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law. Mrs. Ferrell has a Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School and a Bachelor's Degree from Smith College in Massachusetts, as well as a diploma from the Institut Universitaire des Hautes Etudes Internationales in Geneva.

### **Chris Fomunyoh**

Dr. Fomunyoh joined NDI in 1990 and currently serves as the Institute's Senior Associate for Africa. He has organized and advised international election observation missions to national elections in Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, and Nigeria, and has also directed NDI's regional training programs for legislators. In addition, Dr. Fomunyoh is an adjunct professor in African Politics and Government at Georgetown University, and has also been a visiting lecturer in Contemporary African Politics at Trinity College and in African Politics at Tufts University. Dr. Fomunyoh holds a *Licence en Droit* from Yaoundé University in Cameroon, a Master's degree (LL.M.)

in International Law from Harvard University Law School and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Boston University.

**Audrey McLaughlin**

Honorable McLaughlin is the former president of the New Democratic Party of Canada. Honorable McLaughlin is the first woman to have led a major federal party in North America. From 1987 to 1997, she represented the Yukon Territory in Canada's House of Commons of Canada. Hon. McLaughlin is also a vice-president of International Socialist. She co-led NDI's delegation of international observers to Ghana's December 1996 national elections and has participated in NDI missions in Guinée and Niger in 1998, as well as Burkina Faso in 2001. Hon. McLaughlin has also been a trainer for NDI programs in other parts of Africa and the former Soviet Union.

**Hervé Razafimbahiny**

Dr Razafimbahiny is the new NDI representative in Côte d'Ivoire. He brings with him experience in civil society development and humanitarian aid. Prior to joining NDI, Dr. Razafimbahiny led an evaluation mission of three rehabilitation centers for victims of torture in South Africa, Uganda and Ethiopia for the Center for Victims of Torture. From 1997 to 2000, he directed a USAID project, with the aim of improving relations between civil society and the police in Haiti. Dr. Razafimbahiny also served as a Medical Officer of Human Rights in two missions organized by the United Nations and the Organization of American States in Haiti from 1993 to 1996. He has a medical degree from the University of Medicine of Lille in France and a certificate in Health and Human Rights from Harvard University.

**Alioune Tine**

M. Tine is the founder and Secretary General of the *Rencontre Africaine*