



**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
(NDI)
Togo Political Assessment Mission
December 2-9, 2002**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From December 2-9, 2002, a three-person delegation representing the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducted a political assessment mission to Lomé, Togo. The main objective of the assessment was to collect information on the Togolese political context and to determine what role NDI could play to strengthen the capacity of political parties in advance of the 2003 presidential election. A secondary goal was to learn more about the state of political parties in Togo.

Members of the delegation included Momar Diop, a Senegalese political scientist, former senior party official, and NDI program director in Ethiopia, Benin and Guinea; Parfait Moukoko, president of the Congolese Observatory for Human Rights (Congo-Brazzaville) and NDI program director in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Ryan McCannell, NDI Senior Program Officer now based in Lomé. The delegation met with leaders of the main political parties, and representatives of Togolese civil society organizations, the media, and the international donor community.

The delegation's findings confirm that a legacy of mistrust among political leaders, and almost 40 years of uninterrupted political supremacy by head of state President Gnassingbé Eyadema, continue to constrain the political playing field in Togo. An attempt to introduce political reforms more than a decade ago created the formal prerequisites for multi-party democracy, but the violence that accompanied these changes halted further progress. Despite a lengthy national strike, punishing economic sanctions, and repeated international efforts to encourage a political breakthrough, Togo's democratization process has been in a state of suspended animation since 1991. The same personalities continue to dominate the political scene, most importantly President Eyadema, whose control of the government, the security forces, and the ruling party shows no signs of diminishing despite his repeated declarations that he intends to retire in 2003.

Eyadema's influence over the Togolese political system is so pervasive that both the ruling *Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais* (RPT) and the main opposition groups with whom NDI met defined their motivations, strategies, and actions almost entirely in terms of the head of state's personal political agenda. None of the political party representatives were willing to discuss specific goals or even define their party's needs without drawing their relationship to President Eyadema – positively or negatively – into the conversation. Fear dominated all of our political discussions and seems to influence actions on all sides, in the form of government officials' illusions to civil disorder and violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, for example, or the bitter statements of opposition leaders who believe that the political playing field is becoming increasingly tilted against them in advance of the 2003 elections.

In contrast, discussions with Togolese civil society groups, and with ordinary citizens on the streets of Lomé, indicated that many people are tired of the rhetoric from both the government/ruling party and the opposition. These citizens stated their willingness to support any leader from any political affiliation who is capable of developing a convincingly hopeful message, encouraging reconciliation, and introducing an agenda for reform. Significantly, recent changes to the constitution have largely gone forward without efforts being made to educate citizens, encourage their participation in the process, or ascertain their approval (or rejection) of the modifications to the country's basic law.

Given this environment, the NDI political assessment delegation recommends a project plan covering the period from February to June 2003, and which includes three elements. First, the Institute should organize political party capacity building workshops for all interested parties, including the ruling RPT, on topics such as political communication, encouraging greater democratic practices, strengthening the participation of women and youth party leaders, building linkages among party officials to encourage dialogue and coordination, and developing a long-term political vision. Regional and local experts would participate as resource persons and provide information and examples that would attempt to broaden discussions beyond the Togolese political context and encourage creative solutions and approaches to the country's ongoing challenges.

Second, as the election season approaches, NDI should explore the feasibility of providing training to political party monitors to encourage greater confidence and participation in the political process, as well as helping to ensure the credibility of voting, vote-counting, and the declaration of results. If possible, these activities should be linked with other domestic and international election observation efforts that credible, independent groups or agencies may choose to organize in the months leading up to the presidential election. NDI would seek to coordinate its training activities with relevant Togolese government bodies, such as the election commission and Ministry of the Interior, while serving as an independent and non-partisan training resource.

Third, NDI's program in Lomé should serve as a point of reference for all political parties interested in tapping into the Institute's worldwide expertise on political party capacity building. NDI's party training guides and other information should be reproduced and made available to party officials. The Institute's Lomé-based staff should also attempt to respond to specific requests for information or assistance that may develop during the life of the program.

II. BACKGROUND

Since the early 1990s, efforts to create a broadly inclusive, multiparty political system in Togo have largely failed. The reasons for this failure include a lack of confidence among political leaders, the continued dominance of head of state Eyadema, a series of elections marred by government interference and opposition boycotts, and persistent organizational and political weaknesses inherent to all the major parties.

A multi-party system was introduced in 1991 after more than 20 years of one-party rule by the RPT. Emulating pro-democracy movements elsewhere in the sub-region, these newly legalized opposition parties briefly challenged President Eyadema's supremacy. In June 1991, a reformist government installed Joseph Kokou Koffigoh as Prime Minister and relegated Eyadema to a ceremonial role as head of state. However, in December 1991, elements of the Togolese Armed Forces attacked Koffigoh's official residence in response to efforts by the reformist government to enforce limits on the army and the RPT. Eyadema's intervention ended the bloodshed and allowed him gradually to regain control of the political process.

In 1992, a new constitution was signed into law and duly approved in a nationwide referendum by 84 percent of Togolese voters. The constitution reaffirmed the multiparty system and created a system of checks and balances among the various branches of government. It also limited the presidential mandate to two five-year terms. Since that time, President Eyadema has been returned to power twice, in 1993 and 1998, following controversial elections in which international observer groups cited numerous irregularities and evidence of manipulation.

During this period, opposition parties continued to challenge the status quo, and were successful in winning a majority of seats in the 1994 legislative elections. However, a combination of factors continues to prevent the traditional opposition parties from presenting a united front or offering a clear alternative to an RPT-dominated political system. These obstacles include limited organizational capacity among opposition parties; formal and informal efforts by the government, security forces, and ruling party to limit or manipulate opposition participation in the political process; and political rivalries among the opposition leadership that overshadowed their common interests.

The last election in which traditional opposition parties chose to participate was the presidential contest in 1998. With EU observers deployed throughout the country, the voting itself appeared to have taken place according to international norms, under the

oversight of an independent electoral commission. However, before the final results could be independently confirmed, the government halted the counting process, dismissed the election commission, and declared Eyadema the winner with 52 percent of the vote. In response, the EU suspended much of its aid to Togo, while the U.S. issued critical statements and scaled back its presence and its assistance. This situation of diplomatic and economic isolation persists to the present day.

Accord Cadre de Lomé (ACL) – The Lomé Framework Agreement

A combination of domestic and international pressure led Togolese political leaders to undertake an internationally facilitated series of negotiations aimed at normalizing the country's political climate after the 1998 election. In July 1999, Eyadema and six opposition leaders signed the Accord Cadre de Lomé (ACL) – The Lomé Framework Agreement, which created structures and processes for resolving the country's political disputes and eventually lifting international sanctions. The Accord called for a consensus-based electoral code and the creation of a new independent national election commission, with equal representation between opposition and pro-government forces, and set a timetable for fresh legislative elections to replace the RPT-dominated National Assembly.¹ Togolese political leaders also agreed to establish a high-level multiparty commission to oversee the implementation of the agreement, with representatives from the EU, the Francophonie, France and Germany serving as facilitators.

In what was then viewed as a positive sign, Eyadema, in the presence of French President Chirac, publicly declared in 1999 his intention to retire in 2003. In addition to giving his “word as a soldier” (*parole de militaire*) that he would stand by his decision, the head of state has since repeated his vow numerous times, including during an interview with Agence France-Presse in July 2001.

While the mechanisms and institutions created by the Accord Cadre opened up new opportunities for dialogue between the government and opposition, they were unsuccessful arenas for decision-making. To protect themselves against RPT stonewalling as well as their own internal divisions, opposition leaders had insisted during the ACL negotiations that all decisions related to the election process be subject to a four-fifths majority vote. This unwieldy procedural imperative, combined with technical deficiencies and a legacy of mistrust, led to significant delays and mounting frustrations. Legislative elections originally scheduled for March 2000 had still not taken place by the end of the following year.

The Government Takes Over

In February 2002, party negotiators once again announced that conditions were not yet in place to hold legislative elections in a manner that would inspire confidence on all sides. Following this declaration, the RPT-led government unilaterally modified the electoral code, and the party withdrew its representatives from the bodies created by the

¹ The opposition had boycotted the previous legislative elections.

Accord Cadre. International facilitators left the country. In the months that followed, the Togolese Constitutional Court established a Committee of Magistrates to replace the multi-partisan election commission. Koffi Sama replaced Agbéyomé Kodjo as prime minister and declared that holding legislative elections before the end of 2002 would be the principal goal of his administration.

While the Sama government moved quickly to lay the groundwork for new elections according to its unilateral framework, opposition leaders struggled in vain to force a return to the ACL institutions. In June, several of the smaller groups united to form a Front to plan a common election strategy. However, the government's announcement in late September that legislative elections would be held the following month caught the traditional opposition leaders off-guard. One after another, the opposition parties that participated in the ACL declared their intention to boycott, eventually uniting into a *Coalition des Forces Démocratiques* (CFD) on the eve of the election. They were joined by former National Assembly President Dahuku Peré, whose efforts to provoke a dialogue about reform within the RPT led to his ouster from the party. Peré has since formed a group of RPT "Rénovateurs" who aim to continue pressing for reforms within the ruling party.

In place of the opposition, a handful of new, government-sanctioned opposition parties were formed during the final weeks of the pre-election period. On October 27, these new parties participated in the election alongside the RPT, eventually winning eight of the 81 seats in the National Assembly, along with one independent candidate. The RPT won all the rest. Government sources claim that 67 percent of Togo's voting-age population cast ballots in the election, a figure vigorously denied by the traditional opposition.

Following the legislative elections, government leaders continued to ignore calls for a return to a consensus-based election framework to prepare for the 2003 presidential election. A protest march in Lomé on November 9, 2002, attracted large crowds but failed to generate enough sustained popular support to influence the government's actions. On the contrary, with a new RPT-dominated legislature in place, efforts got underway almost immediately to revise the country's constitution. NDI's political assessment mission coincided with the formation of a new government under Koffi Sama in early December. During this period, both Sama and National Assembly President Fambaré Natchaba openly declared that the constitution needed to be changed, since it no longer represented the will of the people.

Changes to the Constitution

Political events in Togo have continued to move quickly since the end of the assessment mission. On December 30, the RPT-dominated National Assembly voted unanimously to revise the 1991 constitution, after less than a month of private deliberations. Among other modifications, the two-term limit rule on the presidency was eliminated, allowing Eyadema to run again in 2003 if he so chooses. In addition, the electoral framework was changed to replace the two-round election process with a single-

round contest. A one-year residency requirement for presidential candidates was also added, with the practical effect of barring opposition leader Gilchrist Olympio from running. However, the presidential term of office was not increased in length from five to seven years, as was rumored to be in the works.

It is unclear whether President Eyadema intends to refute his declarations about retiring from politics and run for president again in 2003. In light of the continued failure to resolve longstanding political issues that have paralyzed the country for more than a decade, many in Togo and in the international community fear that the upcoming elections in 2003 could further damage the country's political, economic and social fabric unless some sort of breakthrough occurs.

NDI's History in Togo

NDI has actively monitored Togolese politics and provided training to Togolese political leaders intermittently over the last decade. However, Eyadema's continued dominance and manipulation of the political process have limited the Institute's potential to assist Togolese democrats. In 1993, a joint NDI-Carter Center team led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter sponsored an international election monitoring delegation to Togo. The team noted severe irregularities during the pre-election period, including evidence of intimidation and violence against opposition candidates and supporters, and recommended that the election be postponed to allow for various shortcomings to be addressed. When Eyadema refused, NDI and the Carter Center felt compelled to leave the country as conditions did not exist for free and fair elections.

In August 1997, NDI organized a training seminar for the Togolese National Assembly on media relations. The program involved a pre-conference roundtable discussion followed by a two-day seminar highlighting steps that can be taken by legislative bodies to nurture the media in emerging democracies. The roundtable brought together opposition and ruling party members of parliament with representatives of local NGOs and journalists from state and private media, and served as a forum to foster more constructive relationships between these groups.

In 1998, a four-member NDI team traveled to Togo to evaluate preparations for the presidential election that June. Following meetings with a wide range of Togolese government, political party, and civic leaders, as well as representatives of the Togolese press and the international donor community, the NDI delegation made recommendations on steps that needed to be taken to ensure a credible electoral process, failing which, conditions did not exist to ensure a transparent and fair election. Most recently, in October 2001, NDI co-sponsored with the Lomé-based U.N. Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa a seminar on civil-military relations in Africa. The conference brought high-level policy makers and military officials from across the continent to Lomé to develop and approve a draft code of conduct on civil military relations.

III. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The speed with which the National Assembly developed, debated, and approved the recent constitutional changes caught the opposition – and many other Togolese and international observers – by surprise. The CFD coalition partners issued several statements condemning the decision, but it is unclear what further actions are being planned. The findings of this report will need to be considered in the context of a complex and potentially volatile political environment in Togo that is likely to continue to evolve rapidly in coming months.

Since the rejection of the Accord Cadre structures for inter-party discussions, Togolese political leaders lack formalized channels of direct communication with their adversaries. As in other countries, this lack of communication exacerbates an already tense standoff and contributes to the atmosphere of mistrust. Discussions of alternatives and creative solutions seem irrelevant to most of the major political parties with whom we met. There are no serious discussions underway about how to reconcile the deep political and societal cleavage that divides Togo's population.

Togolese political parties seem to have tightly centralized leadership structures, heavily dominated by the presidents/secretaries-general and their immediate coterie of vice presidents and aides. Many of the opposition parties (and other informed observers) noted a need for better communication structures and intra-party training mechanisms.

IV. POLITICAL ACTORS

A. Ruling Party (RPT)

The ruling *Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais* (RPT) was created in 1969 as the sole political party in Togo's one-party system. Together with the security forces and the government bureaucracy, the RPT has served as one of the principal institutions by which President Eyadema dominates the political scene in Togo. Many of the Togolese with whom we met asserted that as a result of this legacy, and despite the more than 30 years since its founding, the RPT has yet to adapt to the pluralist political system that has nominally existed in Togo since 1991.

NDI held two meetings with RPT party officials. The first took place at the party's headquarters and involved several mid-level party leaders. The second involved the so-called "Rénovateurs," or reformers, led by former National Assembly President Dahuku Peré, who was expelled from the party in September 2001. In addition, NDI met with several opposition leaders with past experience working with and for RPT-dominated governments. When considered objectively, their comments also helped to shed some light on the ruling party's internal dynamics and possible training needs.

Bases of Support

The RPT's most natural geographical base of support is in the north among Eyadema's own Kabyè ethnic group. However, we learned that party membership is traditionally, albeit unofficially, a pre-requisite for most positions in the government

bureaucracy, the army, and the gendarmerie. As a result, the party has a broad, if nominal, base of support across the country, especially among the security forces.

Internal Party Dynamics

The RPT maintains an impressive administrative structure and universal footprint in every town, village and barracks in Togo. However, President Eyadema is assumed to be the party's sole decision maker. With power flowing from the top down, lieutenants are often unwilling to take action on policy issues until they consult with the head of state or receive some other form of guidance from him. The RPT's outlook and orientation are therefore centered around the agenda of its supreme leader.

It is unclear whether formal discussions about the party's long-term future, or current-day policy alternatives, are welcome within the RPT. Recent high-level, high-profile expulsions and defections, including Peré and former Prime Minister Kodjo, point to an unwillingness among party leaders to address the RPT's vulnerabilities in a political environment that has changed drastically since the days of one-party rule. Our team believes that this reticence bodes ill for the RPT in the long run, especially if the fates of almost every other former single party in Africa are taken into account.

NDI Meetings with RPT Mainstream and Reformers

The NDI team met with RPT Assistant Secretary General Comlan Paka and two other party leaders. The Institute's history in Togo is well known within the ruling party elite, and several questions were raised about NDI's participation in the 1993 Carter pre-election delegation and subsequent activities. The officials we met with stated that NDI was welcome in Togo so long as it remained politically neutral. They criticized other unnamed international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as being biased against the government, and therefore counterproductive. The team did not receive a detailed response to questions about the party's training needs, although the officials did agree that encouraging dialogue among political leaders was a worthy goal. They suggested that NDI's program would be beneficial if it encouraged opposition leaders to moderate their discourse and actions, in order to lower the tensions going into the 2003 elections.

The meeting with Peré took place during the two-week rotation period in which he was serving as CFD president. Peré still considers himself as a full member of the RPT despite his affiliation with the opposition. In fact, he and his supporters cited two main goals of their movement: encouraging reform within the ruling party, and assisting the traditional opposition to move beyond its narrow, zero-sum outlook on the political scene to build constructive linkages across party lines. Within this framework the RPT-Rénovateurs would serve as the go-between for the RPT mainstream and opposition.

B. Participating Opposition

As described above, several newly created, government-sanctioned opposition parties appeared on the Togolese political scene in the weeks leading up to the 2002

election. The NDI team met with Harry Olympio, president of one such opposition party, *Rassemblement pour le Soutien de la Démocratie et du Développement* (RSDD). The RSDD has three seats in the new National Assembly, making it the largest opposition party in the legislature. In addition to being head of the legislative opposition, Olympio was named Minister in Charge of Relations with the Parliament and Regional Authorities on the day before we met with him.

Olympio asked for NDI's help in organizing a conference on national reconciliation to open a discussion about the root causes behind Togo's current political problems. Among these, he listed differential socio-economic development between north and south, the role of the army, ethnic differences, the legacies of colonialism and the country's turbulent political history. Otherwise, he said, Togo faced the same fate as Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, or Burundi.

Significantly, Harry Olympio was the only political leader with whom the NDI team met who had a clear strategy and vision for the future, however bleakly the alternatives were portrayed. He was also the only person in any of our discussions with political leaders who mentioned the need for unity and reconciliation in Togo, rather than the short-term conquest of political power.

C. Traditional Opposition

NDI met separately with five of the traditional opposition political parties: *Comité d'Action pour le Renouveau* (CAR), led by Me. Yaovi Agboyibo; *Union des Forces de Changement* (UFC), led by Gilchrist Olympio but represented in our meeting by First Vice-President Emmanuel Akitani-Bob and other leaders; *Parti Démocratique du Renouveau* (PDR), led by Zarifou Ayeva; *Convention Démocratique des Peuples Africains* (CDPA), led by Professor Léopold Gnininvi; and the *Convergence Patriotique Panafricaine* (CPP), led by Edem Kodjo. All five of these parties are members of the CFD, formed on October 26, 2002, one day before the most recent legislative elections (which these traditional opposition parties boycotted). Other members of the CFD include the RPT-Rénovateurs, led by Dahuku Peré, and several other smaller parties with whom we did not meet.

In general, the opposition leaders related to the NDI team many different versions of the same story, recounting the ups and downs of their difficult experiences with the RPT-led government, and each other, since 1991. They called on the international community to assist them in their struggle for a change in the status quo, which they view as having created Togo's current state of quasi-isolation and limited economic and social development.

Strategically, the party leaders NDI spoke to were reactive in their outlook, waiting for Eyadema to make the next move. The team noted their refusal to look too far into the future or develop a fixed strategy beyond the need to defeat Eyadema. None of the opposition leaders cited the need to reconcile the deep political and societal cleavages that divide Togo's population.

NDI's meetings took place at each party's headquarters and involved between one and seven other leaders in addition to the party president. In some cases, none of the other party representatives spoke during the entire meeting, except to introduce themselves. The team's requests for copies of party platforms and other such basic information went unfulfilled, although a few of the opposition leaders referred to speeches they had made at the 1991 national conference as good summaries of their parties' overall strategy and outlook.

Bases of Support

Most of the parties claimed to have a national coverage but admitted that the maritime region (which includes Lomé) is their most natural and predictable geographic base. Some complained that harassment by security forces in the northern half of the country limited their parties' ability to organize and attract supporters.

More importantly than geography is the party leaders' personal appeal to various sectors of the population. Each of the leaders comes from a different background that represents a separate slice of the Togolese electorate. Gilchrist Olympio is the slain president's son, and thus has a political legacy linked to the ethnic and regional tensions between the north and south. Agboyibo is a lawyer and human rights advocate. Gnininvi is a soft-spoken academic; Ayeva is a businessman. Kodjo is a diplomat, former Secretary General of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and former high-level government official. The NDI team noted with fascination how these different outlooks influenced the way that each delegation recounted the same events, and how these different interpretations and histories would naturally appeal to different sectors of the Togolese population. However, these affinities are not ironclad, and even within the limited playing field within which the opposition is allowed to operate, plenty of room exists for rivalries to have developed over time.

Internal Party Dynamics

We asked each party delegation to describe its internal management structure, and received detailed explanations of the various committees that comprise the parties' standing leadership. However, no documents were provided in response to our requests for written information about party structure. Given the dynamics of the meetings, and other comments made by informed outsiders, the NDI team concluded that party leaders are the pre-eminent decision makers and the driving force within their parties, both strategically and financially. The disadvantage is that lower-level party officials have few opportunities to develop, and rank and file party members have little opportunity to influence policy making at the top level.

Training Needs

Taken as a whole, traditional opposition leaders agreed with the need for leadership training for party officials, developing more effective communications

structures, and creating opportunities for dialogue among the various opposition parties beyond the leadership level. In addition, most of the parties NDI spoke with mentioned fundraising as a key challenge, which is typical of many non-governing parties in developing democracies worldwide. Several leaders asked for NDI training for party-sponsored election monitors as a means of building confidence in the electoral process and ensuring a fair outcome.

D. The Press

Togo has a vigorous community of independent print journalists in addition to the state-run media. The independent press provides valuable information on domestic political events, particularly opposition leaders' statements and activities. Based on our review of the written press available in Lomé, virtually all of the independent papers appears pro-opposition in orientation, although the journalists we met with denied that formal links existed between themselves and the main opposition parties. While independent journalists tend to be critical of government and openly provocative in their coverage of national events, they acknowledge that a certain degree of press freedom exists in Togo. However, recent changes in the country's press code, and several high-profile arrests and incarcerations, have underscored the fragility of the independent media's role and ability to operate.

In contrast to the independent newspapers, the country's state-run media outlets are openly pro-government in their orientation. Editorially, the national press organs we reviewed tended to praise the head of state and his government and ignore or attack the opposition. For example, the national television and radio network news focused almost exclusively on the day-to-day activities of the head of state. The daily state newspaper, *Togo-Presse*, invariably featured at least one photo on the front page showing Eyadema meeting with various domestic and international visitors at the presidential residence, known as Lomé II. While the NDI delegation was in town, Eyadema's efforts at mediating the Côte d'Ivoire crisis dominated the state-run media. Important domestic events, such as the formation of a new government under Prime Minister Koffi Sama and the decision to change the constitution in the National Assembly, were covered sporadically and usually buried in the middle of each day's news.

Given these dynamics, the NDI assessment team believes that many of the media in Togo are poorly equipped to provide balanced, nonpartisan view on political events.² As in many other developing democracies, the only way to learn what is really happening is to read or tune into several media outlets and attempt to make an informed judgment for oneself. Complicating matters, several international news sources are inaccessible from within the country, such as Radio France Internationale and several of the principal internet websites covering news on Togo and the subregion. The NDI team believes that Togo's press corps deserves training and assistance from appropriate international organizations to assist in the development of a more professional and unbiased coverage

² The one possible exception are the religiously oriented radio stations, which the NDI team did not monitor closely.

of current events. This assistance would in turn have a positive impact on the tone and content of political dialogue in Togo.

E. Religious Community

Approximately 30% of Togo's population is Christian, encompassing a wide variety of Protestant denominations as well as Roman Catholicism; 10-20% are Muslim, and the remainder follow animist traditions. As in Benin, Togo's religious leaders were involved in the events leading up to and including the 1991 national conference, although they have played a low-key role more recently. Based on our interviews and conversations, the Christian church leaders continue to press for political reforms and are thus distrusted by those who benefit from the current power structure. In contrast, the country's Muslim religious leaders are considered by many Togolese to be pro-government and conservative in their political orientation. From our perspective, religious leaders appear to be moderating influences on the political process, as well as having deep and abiding relationships with citizens at the grassroots level.

The NDI team met with a representative of a major Protestant denomination but was unable to meet with other Christian or Muslim leaders. Two weeks prior to the NDI assessment, an international ecumenical delegation sponsored jointly by the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches arrived in Lomé to assess the political situation and determine what role, if any, the religious community could play in mitigating the country's political situation. The delegation met with political party leaders, including Eyadema, as well as local church leaders and members of the diplomatic community, and issued a statement to express their concern about the current situation. The NDI team received a copy of the delegation's report and were struck by the similarities between our findings and theirs.

F. Trade Unions

Togolese labor and professional unions also divide along political lines. The NDI team was told that during the 1970s and 1980s, when the RPT was the sole party in Togo, the various unions that existed at the time were required to dissolve and form a single union. In 1991, some of the more radical elements of the trade union movement split off and formed their own groups, allowing the more mainstream groups to resume their own identity.

The NDI team met with a delegation of leaders from the *Confédération Syndicaliste des Travailleurs Togolais* (CSTT – Togolese Workers' Union Confederation), considered to be the most moderate of the various trade groups. The leaders shared their views about the current political situation and expressed an interest in playing a constructive role. However, their own institutional history has taught them that in a polarized political environment, remaining as neutral as possible is the best way to protect their own institutional integrity. Personally, several of the labor leaders said they felt uninspired by the current options, and that many of their members, families and friends felt the same. However, they were interested in civic education and training on democratic principles and practices.

G. Non-Governmental Organizations

Togo lacks the rich and vigorous community of domestic NGOs that have mushroomed in virtually every other country in the subregion during the past decade. These groups play an increasingly important role throughout Africa in moderating political discourse and helping to educate citizens about policy issues. Our team was struck by the limited number and muted character of such organizations in Togo. One needs only to spend a few days observing the multitude of groups at work in Cotonou, Accra or Ouagadougou to understand how barren the NGO landscape is in Lomé.

In Togo, groups that specialize in promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance are particularly rare. During the limited time available for our assessment, the NDI team failed to identify local NGOs that were perceived by all sides as being politically neutral and having the capacity to serve as local partners. It should be noted, however, that NDI's resident representative has since been introduced to a few groups that meet these criteria.

H. The International Community

The NDI team had a debriefing meeting with the U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, William Fitzgerald, to discuss our initial findings. Both the EU and UNDP representatives were in the process of taking up their positions in Lomé and were therefore unavailable for meetings. The team agreed that the senior program officer remaining in Lomé should set up follow-up meetings after the holidays. At this time, it is unclear what role the international community is willing to play to support or observe the 2003 elections, or the political process in general.

There were no other major international organizations dedicated to promoting democracy and governance operating in Togo at the time of the NDI assessment. However, La Francophonie, an intergovernmental organization, has a sub-regional office in Lomé, and it could be a valuable collaborator for NDI training activities. We learned that a few international NGOs with democracy or civic education programs, including the German party foundations and CARE, had offices in Cotonou and/or Accra that also assumed responsibility for Togo.

Similarly, USAID and many other bilateral donor agencies channel their limited assistance to Togo through their offices in Accra or Cotonou. These arrangements demonstrate the extent to which Togo remains isolated from international development aid, in which international NGOs such as NDI play a principal role in providing technical assistance and enhancing local capacity. Compared with the increasingly open and pluralist societies emerging across Africa, fewer and fewer international donors and NGOs are willing to invest the time and effort in a place like Togo. Unlike many of its nearest neighbors, direct involvement with ordinary citizens in Togo is difficult to establish and maintain without the intimate involvement of government officials. These bureaucratic and political realities are further complicated by enduring questions about

the legitimacy of the current regime. NDI had to overcome many of these same obstacles during the process of establishing its program in Lomé.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NDI INVOLVEMENT

Since the political assessment took place in early December 2002, the Institute has begun to lay the groundwork for a program that seeks to improve the skills of Togolese political party leaders and activists to enable parties to play a more meaningful and responsible role in Togo's transition to democracy. The assessment mission was tasked with determining specific training topics and methodologies that could contribute to preparing all interested parties – including the ruling RPT – for a genuine transition from Eyadema to his elected successor. This support would possibly include training for Togolese political party representatives on how to monitor the upcoming presidential elections.

Since that time, a string of events culminating with the recent constitutional changes require a strategy that respects the right of all parties to participate in the system, so long as they remain peaceful. NDI's support would be offered on an equitable and non-partisan basis, in the hopes of providing new avenues for reform and dialogue. The following recommendations are offered in this new context.

A. Political Party Capacity Building Workshops

NDI should organize workshops open to all interested parties on key party-development topics, such as political communication, encouraging greater democratic practices, women and youth participation, and developing a longer-term political vision. These workshops could be organized as one-session events in an informal setting or more formal, multiple-day events. Examples of workshop ideas include:

- Formal and informal ways to communicate your party's point of view;
- Establishing more effective communications structures – lessons learned from Africa and beyond;
- Effective party fundraising techniques in the developing world;
- How to attract and train grassroots party activists;
- Youth leadership: How to develop a new generation of leaders for your party;
- The hidden roles of women in Togolese politics; and
- Creating a vision of your party's future (in light of the upcoming presidential elections).

The local NDI team can organize these activities and invite regional and local experts, including NDI staff and trainers, to participate as resource persons. NDI should also consider co-organizing activities with groups that are perceived as neutral or slightly pro-government to discourage lingering perceptions that NDI or its training is skewed toward opposition parties. In any case, NDI has publicly stated its willingness to work with any and all political parties that wish to play a peaceful role in the country's political life. If necessary, the Institute would make efforts to offer more than one session of the

same training so as not to discourage interested party representatives from attending for narrow political reasons.

B. Political Party Monitoring

NDI should continue to explore the possibility of organizing training workshops for political party monitors. This program would also be made available for all interested parties. NDI does not currently have funding to support deployment of party monitors, but the Institute should make every effort to encourage other donors to do so.

C. Other Recommendations

NDI has several excellent resources available on election-related activities for political parties and domestic NGOs, including civic education, voter education, and election monitoring. These documents should be photocopied and shared with all interested parties.

The NDI office in Lomé should remain willing to responding to requests from parties and other political actors that seek specialized training or information on a topic related to the Institute's five core areas of expertise: strengthening political parties, enhancing the role of civil society in politics, ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections, promoting good governance, and security sector reform. In cases where NDI is unable to provide direct assistance, the Institute should serve as a resource for linking Togolese civic leaders and elected officials with their counterparts in other countries, as well as with other potential collaborators in the international community.

If additional funding becomes available, the team recommends a multiparty study mission to another African country as a means of encouraging dialogue and introducing creative options for resolving Togo's political impasse. This activity could take place either before or after the presidential election, if political circumstances and funding permit.

Appendix: Public Information Sheet on Assessment Mission



National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
2030 M Street, N.W., Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Mission d'Evaluation Politique au Togo du 2 au 8 décembre 2002

Le *National Democratic Institute for International Affairs* (NDI) organisera une mission d'évaluation des partis politiques et du contexte politique au Togo du 2 au 8 décembre 2002 à Lomé. Le but de la mission est de développer une meilleure appréciation des besoins et des points de vue des principaux acteurs politiques togolais afin de conceptualiser un programme d'appui technique aux partis dans la période avant les élections présidentielles prévues en juin 2003.

Lors de cette mission, une équipe de trois évaluateurs vise à rencontrer les dirigeants des principaux partis politiques et des organisations de la société civile, des représentants du gouvernement y compris l'Assemblée Nationale, des journalistes, et d'autres acteurs politiques togolais. Les objectifs de cette mission sont de recueillir des informations sur le contexte politique en général et sur les besoins spécifiques de chaque parti; et de proposer des sujets de discussion qui pourraient faciliter le dialogue entre le parti au pouvoir et les partis d'opposition dans le contexte du programme qui suivra. A la fin de la mission, la délégation soumettra un rapport sur ses observations et recommandations pour encadrer le programme d'appui technique à suivre et pour offrir quelques observations sur des points communs afin d'encourager le dialogue politique.

Le NDI est une organisation qui a pour but de promouvoir et de renforcer la démocratie à travers le monde. L'Institut a travaillé dans plus de 80 pays, y compris dans plus de 30 pays africains. Il a mis en oeuvre plusieurs programmes de soutien aux partis politiques dans la sous-région, y compris en Guinée, au Bénin, au Mali, au Sierra Léone et au Burkina Faso. Dans toutes ces activités, l'Institut offre son assistance dans un cadre multipartite, selon les intérêts et les besoins de chaque groupement qui s'y intéresse. Ce programme est financé par l'Agence pour le Développement International des Etats-Unis d'Amérique (USAID), avec la coopération de l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis à Lomé.

Point de contact: M. Ryan McCANNELL, tel. 916 91 95

La délégation de la mission d'évaluation du NDI comprendra trois individus qui possèdent une expérience considérable en Afrique, y compris le Togo:

Dr. Momar Diop est un politologue sénégalais, ancien cadre d'un des plus influents partis politiques au Sénégal et ancien conseiller régional à Dakar. En 1994-95, le Dr. Diop a été le directeur résident du programme NDI en Ethiopie et a participé dans plusieurs missions du NDI en Namibie et en Zambie. Plus récemment, sous l'égide de International IDEA, il a mis en oeuvre un programme de soutien à la société civile au Burkina Faso, et en novembre 2002, il a dirigé le programme NDI de formation des candidats aux élections municipales du Bénin. En décembre, il deviendra le co-directeur du programme NDI en Guinée, ainsi que conseiller régional pour les programmes de l'Institut dans la sous-région.

Parfait Moukoko est le directeur du programme NDI en République Démocratique du Congo qui a pour mission de soutenir les partis politiques non-armés pendant la transition. En outre, M. Moukoko est Président de l'Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH) en République du Congo. Il a également dirigé un programme de formation à l'intention des militants des partis béninois pour l'observation des élections présidentielles de 2001.

Ryan McCannell est chargé de programmes principal pour l'Afrique Centrale et de l'Ouest au siège de l'Institut à Washington. Employé au NDI depuis 1996, il a contribué à la gestion et à la mise en oeuvre des programmes de renforcement démocratique dans une dizaine de pays africains, y compris le Nigéria, le Bénin, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Burkina Faso, le Centrafrique, le Sierra Léone, l'Afrique du Sud, et l'Angola. Géographe de formation, M. McCannell a passé une année scolaire (1991-92) à l'Université du Bénin à Lomé. Après cette mission d'évaluation, il demeurera à Lomé pour gérer le programme d'appui technique aux partis politiques en 2003.