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**NDI DELEGATION URGES UKRAINE'S LEADERS TO MOVE BEYOND
POLITICS OF CONFRONTATION**

Kyiv, Ukraine - An NDI-sponsored international election observer delegation released a preliminary statement today on its observations and offered recommendations for the immediate post election-day period to strengthen the potential for electoral integrity and more democratic governance.

The September 30, 2007, pre-term parliamentary election is a direct consequence of the political turmoil that has gripped the country in recent years. "Ukraine's parliamentary election has been both competitive and problematic. Through there were significant shortcomings, the election in many ways met international principles for democratic elections," said delegation co-leader Abner Mikva. "The political crisis that has gripped the country since at least 2004 precipitated this early election, and the crisis may be extended if the political competitors try inappropriately to make the courts an extension of their political battlefield" said Abner.

The observer delegation recognized a number of factors that indicate progress in Ukraine's electoral environment, including: a reduced level of intimidation from the 2004 and earlier elections; robust campaigning by political parties and blocs; and a lack of censorship for journalists and media publishers.

Despite these improvements, the delegation noted several aspects of the electoral process that were problematic. The polarization of the Central Election Commission which has hindered its work, modifications to the election law, including elimination of provisions for absentee voting and problems concerning voting for those who recently were outside of the country, and widespread inaccuracies in the voter registration list represent setbacks for electoral integrity. In addition, because the vote tabulation is still underway and electoral appeals that may be lodged cannot yet be addressed, concerted steps to ensure the credibility of this election process and longer-term efforts to ensure the integrity of the political process are essential to further democratic progress.

Delegation co-leader Alexander Longolius said: "The challenge for Ukraine's leaders is to move beyond winner-take-all politics of confrontation and engage constructively to address people's aspirations for democracy and better lives. Popular frustrations have grown as the expectations set by the promises of 2004 remain largely unmet, and this frustration could become a positive force for renewed progress, if those in the governing majority and opposition engage constructively."

The delegation, made up of representatives from Canada, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Turkey, United Kingdom & United States, visited Ukraine from September 25 to October 2, 2007. It included present and former parliamentarians, former ambassadors, country specialists, civic leaders and human rights and election experts. Delegation co-leader Mikva is a former White House counsel, member of the U.S. Congress and federal judge. Co-leader Longolius is a former president pro tem of the Berlin Parliament.

For a copy of the delegation's full statement please see the NDI website at www.ndi.org.