

**REPORT OF THE NDI
SURVEY MISSION TO HAITI:**

OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 5, 1994



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Fifth Floor, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 328-3136

■ FAX (202) 939-3166

■ E-Mail 5979039@MCIMAIL.COM

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This is a report of the survey mission of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) that visited Haiti from October 30 to November 5, 1994. The team conducted meetings in Port-au-Prince and visited the towns of Arcahaie and Saint Marc to survey local conditions outside of the capital city (attached map of Haiti). The visit was designed to assess the feasibility of conducting political development programs in Haiti under current circumstances and to propose specific program activities for NDI in Haiti. The six-member team included three international delegates from Niger, Paraguay and the United States and three NDI staff members (see attached list). The size and composition of the delegation allowed NDI to conduct an assessment of program possibilities in several areas, including political party development, civic organization, and election processes, as well as the longer-term area of civil-military relations. The delegation also was able to divide into smaller teams at various times during the mission in order to conduct more than one meeting concurrently and to travel outside the capital.

The survey team met with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and several of his aides, the presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, Port-au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul, leaders of Haiti's major political parties and NGOs, the mayor, deputy mayor and lower chamber deputy from Saint Marc, the visiting chief of the United



Nations Election Assistance Unit, and the Chief of the International Police Monitors (IPM), as well as with representatives of the Catholic Church, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Embassy, and U.S.-based NGOs, (attached detailed schedule). The mission spoke by phone with then Prime Minister-designate Smarck Michel, but agreed that discussions with him would be most appropriate following his confirmation by the parliament.

Before leaving for Haiti, NDI staff held meetings in Washington, D.C. with the Haitian Ambassador and other Haitian government officials, and representatives from international/Haitian NGOs, the interested academic community, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Department of State, AID and the Department of Defense. NDI also prepared a discussion paper on the upcoming legislative and local elections, which it shared with Haitian officials and international organizations involved in assisting Haitians to prepare for the upcoming elections (attached).

I. BACKGROUND

NDI has been active in Haiti since the fall of the Duvalier regime in 1986, when the Institute held the first of a series of technical assistance programs for Haitian political parties. NDI also conducted a series of programs in support of the electoral process in Haiti, including international monitoring and observation missions to the 1987 and 1990 presidential elections. The latter mission was led by former President Jimmy Carter and then Belize Prime Minister George Price (see attached executive

summary of observer mission report). President Carter and Prime Minister Price, between them, had also led four 1990 pre-election missions to Haiti organized by NDI.

In 1991, following the inauguration of President Aristide and the democratically elected parliament, NDI signed a cooperative agreement with USAID under AID's Democracy Enhancement Project to conduct programs in Haiti in two areas: political party-building in the legislative context and civil-military relations. The agreement was suspended following the September 1991 coup, which forced President Aristide into exile. NDI conducted a survey mission in late 1993 to study re-activating the program, but activities were again suspended in October when the Haitian military regime refused to abide by the Governors Island Accord. In April 1994, however, NDI selected and invited five Haitian political and civilian leaders to observe an NDI civil-military relations program in Nicaragua.

The October 1994 survey mission sought to assess whether the original program designed for Haiti in 1991, and revised in 1993, continued to have relevance in the current environment and to identify possible new activities related to the upcoming elections.

II. SETTING

NDI's mission to Haiti occurred just two weeks after President Aristide's October 15 return and the restoration of democratic government. It was expected by

that time that a new prime minister and cabinet would have been confirmed and that an electoral commission would have been established. Although these did not occur by the time the team departed from Haiti, the atmosphere was highly conducive to conducting a full range of meetings, and the team could observe efforts to resolve these issues. (The prime minister was approved on November 4 and his cabinet and program on November 8. The electoral commission's formation process was advancing as President Aristide met twice with the principal political players and attempted to reach a consensus. However, as of the publication of this report, efforts to form the commission and set a date for the elections appear to have slowed.)

The general atmosphere in Haiti was one of great relief at the return of President Aristide and presence of the U.S.-led Multi-National Force (MNF) and the International Police Monitors (IPM). As one woman in Saint Marc whose family had been persecuted by the military declared, "Now I can sleep at night." This sense of increased security was palpable. Port-au-Prince had been thoroughly cleaned up and was fast coming back to life with affordable gasoline, traffic jams, crowded street markets and a busy commerce. There was no night curfew, nor seemingly a need for one. This is not to say that there was no concern over security: some abuses by the notorious "section chiefs" continued to be reported in outlying areas beyond the reach of the MNF or IPM. There was also uneasiness that former pro-military "attachés" had not been completely disarmed and constituted a potential threat. However, the IPM was continuing to deploy its teams, and at least as far as Saint Marc, where the

survey team visited, its patrols were frequent and ostensive. Political leaders expressed some concern, however, over the security situation at the time of future parliamentary and local elections.

Despite the hustle and bustle of Port-au-Prince, it was also obvious that large numbers of people, particularly young men, were simply loitering on the streets. In Arcahaie, the big complaint was a lack of "*mouvement*," (*i.e.*, economic activity.) Despite the present euphoria over Aristide's return and the international presence, a failure to address pervasive unemployment and misery could have serious consequences for social and political stability.

There was also some concern over the slow pace of decision-making. Some interlocutors believed that President Aristide seemed isolated behind a security screen in the National Palace. Although he has begun to make trips outside the Palace, the complaint has persisted. There was also a widespread feeling that the parliament was slow in approving the new prime minister and passing essential laws (*i.e.*, territorial units, police), and that little had been decided or done regarding imminent parliamentary and local elections.

III. FINDINGS

A. Elections

The survey team found widespread agreement that the elections slated to occur in early 1995 are very important for the consolidation of democracy in Haiti. Some

people with whom the team met went as far as to say that Haiti's democratic future lies in the success or failure of the Constitutionally-mandated national legislative and local elections. Constitutionally, a new Haitian Parliament is scheduled to be seated by the second Monday in January 1995. As important, or perhaps more so, are the municipal and communal elections to be scheduled concurrently that will elect 133 municipal councils and 564 communal section councils (CASECs)¹.

At the end of the survey mission's week in Haiti, however, it was already clear that Haiti would be hard pressed to hold the elections by mid-January. Given a required 40-day election campaign period, the likely need for run-off elections for senators and deputies, and the overriding importance of holding secure and credible elections, seating a new parliament by mid-January would be next to impossible at this point. While some interpret the Constitution as allowing for seating a new parliament by February 7, even that deadline will be difficult at best to meet.

While some Haitian decision makers, including President Aristide, made clear to the delegation their desire for elections sooner rather than later, political, organizational and logistical realities probably point towards elections in March at the earliest. Those familiar with the technical aspects of elections -- including the consultant to the Haitian government currently charged with electoral matters, Marc-Antoine Noel, who was the director of the 1990 Provisional Electoral Commission

¹Michèl Oriol, Les Collectivités territoriales entre 1991 et 1993: Essai d'analyse institutionnelle et de prospective, with the collaboration of Pierre-André Guerrier and Danielle Saint-Lot (Port-au-Prince: Bibliothèque National d'Haïti, 1994), p.3.

(CEP), as well as the UN and IFES technical election advisors -- understand that it will take time to set up reliable methods for determining voter eligibility (perhaps re-registration), procedures to prevent multiple voting, selection and training of polling site officials, preparation of voting materials and other matters.

During the survey mission's visit, there appeared to have been some progress in establishing election machinery: President Aristide met on two occasions with leaders of the 17 most significant parties (there are over 50) and a consensus was worked out to establish a "transitional" electoral commission (rather than "permanent" or "provisional" councils as found in the Constitution). However, the proposal appears to have bogged down over the question of composition and which bodies shall choose the commissioners. A proposal by the parties that they provide lists of suggested candidates, three of whom would then be selected by each branch of the Haitian government, has not been formally given to the president or acted upon. On November 29, Prime Minister Michel announced that elections would not take place before March due to administrative confusion inherited by the new government and the difficulties in naming an electoral Commission.

As one party leader stated, the coming elections -- particularly as they are legislative (based on district voting) and local, and not presidential -- provide an opportunity to establish political parties in Haiti by requiring them to work at the most local level. While it may be difficult for political parties to get very far in terms of long-term development in the short time left before the elections, the electoral process

provides a vehicle for the parties to begin to organize themselves institutionally.

B. Status of Political Parties

Three years of repressive military rule following the September 1991 coup, coupled with a debilitating 16-month international embargo, have done great damage to what has never been a well-developed institution in Haiti to begin with -- that of political parties. Following the December 1990 elections that saw Fr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide elected Haiti's president, NDI and the Council of Freely-Elected Heads of Government wrote in the report of their international delegation's observation of the elections: "Haiti's political parties are in their early stages of development and are, in large measure, personality based. In preparing for the 1990 campaign, the parties were hard pressed to define and articulate comprehensive programs of government."

As Haiti's political parties prepare for the coming elections, the situation is much the same and, in some respects, has only worsened. NDI's survey mission found that parties are still largely personality based -- many Haitians use the name of the party's leader rather than the party name, when referring to a particular party. Also, parties are just now picking up the pieces from the long period of military rule and international embargo that forced some parties to go underground, most to be cut off from international contact and assistance, and all to be desperate for financial and material resources, as well as technical assistance.

Another difficulty facing the institutional development of political parties could be the huge disparities between the smaller, but somewhat experienced parties of the center-right, and the developing parties -- if they can even be called parties yet -- of the large *Lavalas* movement that swept Aristide into power in 1990. The smaller parties, including Marc Bazin's MIDH, Serge Gilles' PANPRA, Louis Dejoie's PAIN and others, have some electoral and organizational experience, but little base of popular support. In contrast, the political parties or movements of *Lavalas* have much broader support, but are currently divided into three to five fractions and have little or no electoral experience. Moreover, there is little mutual trust and respect between the two sides. (Attached is a current listing of Haiti's major political parties and blocs.)

In its discussions with many of these parties, the survey mission noted the interest of the parties in the upcoming elections and sought to offer assistance which would be useful to both the parties' long-term development and short-term needs. All parties expressed an interest in receiving institutional development assistance, and welcomed political party pollwatcher training as a first step in a longer NDI commitment. Parties generally did not express significant concern over the credibility or fairness of the electoral process. They were more concerned about their own limited organizational abilities and resources. For instance, one party developed a budget for the campaign, which it shared with the mission, but admitted it had no notion of where the funds would come from. Another noted the need to set up local party headquarters throughout the country. Almost all said they have a great

challenge in selecting candidates from among numerous contenders and were planning procedures ranging from sending out mobile teams from Port-au-Prince to the holding of some kind of local "primaries". Parties are certain to mount some kind of pollwatching effort, as this is called for in the 1990 election law, and the long-term quality of their organizational effort could be enhanced by such activities.

C. Civic Organizations and Civil Society

NDI's survey mission examined the status of civil society in Haiti and the potential role of civic organizations in the development of Haiti's fledgling democracy. NDI's discussion paper of October 21 entitled "The Upcoming Haitian Elections - Preliminary Considerations," focused heavily on the need to involve civil society in the electoral process in order to build public confidence in the elections. The mission concentrated inquiries on the potential role of civic organizations in the elections, especially whether they might usefully serve as domestic election monitors or facilitators of public forum discussions on election issues.

The NDI mission found an abundance of Haitian NGOs organized at the local level despite a small number at the national level; in fact, despite the difficulties of operating under a repressive military regime and the embargo, a profusion of hundreds of organizations had developed in recent years. There are three broad categories of NGOs in Haiti: a) humanitarian and relief-oriented private voluntary organizations, both religious and non-religious, involved in either food distribution or public health,

usually receiving support from USAID or other elements of the international donor community; b) human rights or development-oriented NGOs that also engage in civic education, and often are linked to some political party or tendency in Haiti, implicitly if not publicly; c) popular or local community organizations, often aligned with the pro-Aristide *Lavalas* movement. However, it would be inaccurate to draw rigid lines between various groups, as in Haiti these lines are sometimes blurred.

After extensive discussions with the political parties, NGOs and government officials, it became apparent that the focus of attention on the elections was not on the possibility of fraud *per se*, but on the formation of the Electoral Commission and on the problems of organizing for the elections. Fraud has not been an issue in past elections in Haiti. Survey team member Esteban Caballero, with extensive experience in organizing civic group election monitoring, recommended convincingly that NDI not seek to work with civic groups in this area in Haiti. Not only did there not appear to be a need, but also the NGOs which we identified and which might be mobilized for observing the upcoming elections appeared to be highly politicized and -- even more important -- polarized between pro- and anti-Aristide groups. Conditions do not exist prior to elections for creating new election monitoring organizations or helping existing groups to merge into a civic group alliance around the activity of election monitoring. No group expressed an interest in election monitoring as an activity. It was believed by most that an effective political party pollwatching effort

and expected international election observation would be sufficient to help assure a credible election.

However, all groups and individuals with whom we spoke gave priority to civic education activity both for the elections and more generally. There was a concern that the Haitian people have only the most general notions of the meaning of democracy and the importance of elections within a democracy. The survey team found some concern that Haiti runs the risk of going from a corrupt military-run authoritarian regime (often referred to as a "kleptocracy") to a regime where democratic processes and human rights could not be protected. As one NGO leader commented, "Haiti has found itself caught between the rule of the military and the rule of the mob."

NDI is only one of several organizations working in the area of democratic development in Haiti, and others, such as UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), have plans to do election-related civic education and candidate training. There are more than enough civic education needs, however, than there are time and resources available -- even combining all the international NGO assistance -- in the short time before the elections. The survey team saw a great need to assist efforts by Haitian NGOs in support of the election process. These efforts include: building bridges between the citizenry and the political parties; assisting the parties and candidates in orienting the campaign more toward substantive issues; and promoting greater political tolerance. One activity that addresses all these needs is the sponsorship of candidate

forums. When the survey team suggested this activity, there was universal interest and support. (NDI has recently sponsored successful candidate and issue forums in Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. NDI has also conducted voter education and other election-related civic education programs recently in South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Ethiopia, Malawi, Burundi, Russia, Ukraine and several other countries.)

Several of the NGOs the delegation met had some experience or plans in the area of political discussion forums. For example, the *Centre Pétion-Bolivar* receives assistance from the social democratic Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany) has sponsored a "Thursday Open Forum" program each month for the past two years. The Open Forum is an issues-oriented program which has debated problems ranging from the role of parliament in a democracy to the problem of AIDS in the Caribbean. Another NGO, The Haitian Resource Development Foundation (HRDF), is a U.S.-based non-profit organization, mostly of Haitian professionals--especially medical doctors--in the Diaspora with offices in Haiti. It works in the areas of economic and cultural resources development and health-related projects drawing on the background of a number of U.S.-resident members. It has also focused on local governance issues, especially in Southeast Haiti. HRDF has developed a proposal for promoting media debates for the upcoming elections. Both these organizations expressed an interest in working with NDI in organizing electoral forums. Several Church-based organizations with which the survey team met also indicated an interest in helping

organize public forums. The above-mentioned groups expressed a willingness to help devise an appropriate format for the forums, assist with civic education to prepare the population to attend the events and provide some field support for this activity.

The survey mission believes that further efforts would be needed to identify local groups where forums are held to assist in organizing and sponsoring the debates. Working in cooperation with Haitian and other non-Haitian groups, contacts would be made by an NDI field staff. The idea of election-related forums was discussed in St. Marc with local officials; they believed such forums, if properly structured and explained in advance, would be a constructive experience for the local population. The NDI team promised that if the idea were approved, we would be sure to convene one of the first forums in St. Marc. Municipal officials were delighted at the prospect.

D. Civil-Military Relations

The survey team explored the potential for retaining the civil-military program included in the 1991 agreement with AID and revised in 1993. This issue is a delicate one as the question of the future of Haiti's security forces remains one of debate among Haitians. Many Haitians identify the military as the agent if not the root cause of the coups leading the authoritarian governments which have plagued Haiti's history and retarded its democratization. Though at times in the past -- such as during the 1990 election campaign -- the military helped play a tutelary role in favor of

democratic elections, the institution quickly reverted to a retrograde position of defending its parochial and personal interests and those of Haiti's elite. Some in Haiti see the need for drastic downsizing and reform of the Haitian military; others would simply prefer to eliminate the military altogether.

President Aristide has announced his intention of retaining a 1,500-man military force, based principally outside the capital and focused on coastal patrol, search and rescue, border control and civic action activities. Legislation is now before the parliament as well to bring about the separation of the police from the armed forces, totally under the control of the Minister of Justice. Meanwhile an "interim police force" has been established, made up of former Haitian military who have been vetted to eliminate past human rights abusers. These "interim police" are receiving just one week of training, principally in human rights observance and the avoidance of use of excessive violence, and are being put back into duty under the strict oversight of the International Police Monitors (IPM). However, a permanent police force is being trained in a four month course at the *Camp d'Application* in Port-au-Prince. As recruits graduate, they will replace the interim police. Ultimately, Haiti will have a force of 4,000 permanent police.

The survey team went to Haiti prepared to discuss this issue, but cognizant of the limitations of carrying such a program forward at any early date. In the past, NDI has conducted a series of civil-military programs (Argentina, Uruguay, and Nicaragua) and a police-related program (Panama). Such activities seek to promote mutual

understanding, respect and dialogue between civilian leaders and security forces, to open and institutionalize channels of communication, to assist civilians in acquiring expertise in security matters in order to exercise effective oversight and to promote military/police professionalism.

Lacking appointment of a new cabinet, it was not possible to discuss the future of an NDI civil/military or police program with appropriate governmental officials. When it was raised with President Aristide's aides at the Palace, they expressed some interest and even encouragement, but the issue was not within their areas of responsibility. One political party leader, who had travelled under NDI sponsorship as one of five Haitian civilians to observe the NDI civil-military program in Nicaragua last April, was knowledgeable and supportive of continued work in this area.

However, the question of the future of the Haitian security forces is still very much at issue, and there are strong sentiments on the issue. For example, a director of a human rights NGO linked to a pro-Aristide political party expressed strong reservations over conducting a civil-military program, largely because he believes that the military should be abolished in Haiti. The survey team assured him that NDI did not have a position over whether Haiti should have a military: that was for Haitians to decide. However, NDI was prepared to conduct training to reinforce civilian oversight of and expertise in security matters whatever arrangements the Haitian government and people come to. This was the case in Panama where NDI worked with the National Assembly and Justice Ministry, headed by then-Vice President

Ricardo Arias Calderon, to assist the conversion of the Panama Defense Forces into a civilian-led police force.

NDI civil-military programs often focus on the leadership levels. However, the 1993 Haiti work plan envisioned several regional conferences in order to deepen the impact of civil control over the military. In discussions with the Chief of the International Police Monitors, Raymond Kelly, the survey team explored the question of developing a community-based policing concept for Haiti, with simple mechanisms for civilian review in order to assure dialogue and a complaint mechanism. Mr. Kelly was enthusiastic about this concept. Local law enforcement in Haiti in the form of the infamous "section chiefs," "*attachés*," and local military commanders, has traditionally meant repression and extortion for Haiti's rural population. A community-based policing concept in Haiti could help avoid such abuses and encourage newly elected community leaders and police to maintain a constructive dialogue.

The Haitian constitution calls for a "municipal police," but legislation has yet to be developed to create this entity. We asked the mayor of St. Marc about this, and he said that until national legislation is developed, he would be in no position to comment on the matter. We suspect the idea has been given little or no thought by officials in Haiti.

Given Haiti's history of disruptive, anti-democratic coups, civil-military and police programming could well be the most important medium to long-term program

NDI can conduct in Haiti. However, there must be a decision by the Haitians on the future of their military; the security forces need to have consolidated their structure, their commanders need to have been selected, and civilian officials responsible for oversight must be identified. The survey team recommends that NDI continue to develop the concepts and needs for such a program, engage the emerging Haitian leadership through the field staff, and bring in U.S.-based or third-country experts to deepen understanding of such a program. The team does not see much activity developing on this program until after the upcoming legislative and local elections. Following the elections, the program should be explored in earnest. If there is Haitian support for going forward, programming could begin by mid-1995. A fully revised work plan for this activity would be developed.

E. Plans of Other International Organizations and NGOs

The survey team or NDI staff met with representatives of the United Nations (UN), the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Congressional Human Rights Foundation (CHRF) and the *Projet Intégré pour le Renforcement de la Démocratie en Haïti* (PIRÈD) of the Americas Development Foundation to discern what roles these organizations plan for democratic development programs in Haiti. The UN Election Assistance Bureau has been designated to provide technical assistance to the election

process and been awarded \$2.7 million in USAID funding to carry out this mandate. The UN will work directly with the prospective electoral commission to support all technical aspects of the election's organization, from printing ballots to providing logistical support for the elections. IFES has been asked to assist the electoral commission to conduct training of polling officials and the official civic education campaign. The OAS is proposing to engage in an international election verification and monitoring role, probably through the joint UN/OAS International Civilian Mission which recently returned to Haiti; the OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy will also oversee this activity.

The IOM is operating in Haiti under a \$5.5 million agreement with USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives to engage in programs related to local governance and demobilization of Haitian military released from military or police duty. IOM has established field representatives in a number of departmental capitals, and will ultimately be present in 15 locations. Besides helping local communal and section councils to resume activities, IOM will fund small development projects in support of local governance. IRI completed a survey mission to Haiti in late November. No specifics are yet decided re IRI's plans. CHRF is planning to initiate work to train officials of the parliament and to work with future elected parliamentarians in developing their own professionalism. CHRF is exploring the use of certain computer technologies for use by the Haitian parliament.

PIRÈD has maintained its grass-roots support activities continually in recent years despite the existence of the military regime in Haiti. Though supporting popular movements and community organizations, it was able to treat these as development rather than political programs and was successful in assisting a number of groups and recently published a study of local governance in Haiti. PIRÈD has no directly election-related programs planned.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

- An important new opportunity has opened for Haitian democracy. The international community must make a long-term commitment to help Haiti rebuild its democratic institutions as well as its economy. It must work to assure that once the international presence is reduced or withdrawn, Haiti will have begun to build the institutions that can help prevent a lapse into familiar patterns of violence and authoritarianism. NDI should be prepared to remain engaged through and beyond the December 1995 presidential elections.
- Many Haitians with whom the delegation met asserted that restoring democracy must mean more than restoring President Aristide to power. There is now a broad understanding of the need for serious democratic institution-building and a desire to receive assistance of almost any kind -- material, technical or organizational.

- Democratic institutions such as legislatures and political parties already exist in Haiti, but they are fragile and ill-rooted and have also been seriously weakened by three years of brutal military rule and the 16 month international embargo. As one political party leader said of all parties, "we are on our knees." Moreover, there is an understanding that many parties and the parliament have often performed less than democratically as they adapted to pressure from the military or were subject to corrupt influences.
- It is important to help develop democratic civic culture as well as governmental or political institutions. The survey team was often reminded that the Haitian people do not understand or appreciate the role of mediating institutions. Many Haitians seemed to equate democracy with Aristide. Some Haitians with whom the NDI group met expressed concern about the lack of issues and the predominance of personalities and symbolism in Haitian politics. President Aristide himself warned that while political parties are essential for democracy, democratic development must also focus on the larger civic society: "You must look at quantity as well as quality" of democracy. The point is that NDI should work to help build bridges to these political institutions so that they do not remain distant from the citizenry.

- A number of Haitians leaders noted the lack of a nationwide radio or communications network through which important messages can be shared with the population. In particular, there was concern that President Aristide's message of reconciliation may not be reaching all parts of Haiti and that improved communication was critical for the upcoming elections. It is important to foster reconciliation, as Haiti's politics has been one of polarization. One person stated: "Politics in Haiti is not a question of left or right but rather the ethical question of have you betrayed 'the cause of bread?'...have you betrayed the people?" Such strong attitudes will be difficult to overcome.
- The other side of reconciliation, however, is the need for justice. Institutionalization of the Haitian justice system is viewed by many as essential to the success of democracy. Some thought that an improved police force is important but could only be effective if developed simultaneously with a democratic and capable judicial system, a point with which it seems difficult to take issue.

V. PROGRAM PLANS

Based on the survey team's findings, many common themes emerged that steered the team toward certain programming recommendations. It was clear that the

upcoming parliamentary and local elections are considered essential for consolidating the democratic electoral process. The survey mission strongly recommends that NDI conduct an election-related program focusing on political parties as its first activity in Haiti.

1. Political Party Poll-watcher Training and Follow-on

NDI recognizes that stable democracy requires the development of strong, broadly based and well-organized political parties. If democratic parties fail to fulfill their special role in society, citizens will quickly lose faith in the governing process itself. Preparing for a pollwatching effort can be a strong organizational tool for political parties. Furthermore, all parties have an interest in ensuring credible elections. It is much more likely that parties will accept the results of elections -- including defeat -- if party members have determined for themselves that the elections were held according to the Constitution and electoral laws of the country, as well as to internationally accepted standards. Additionally, parties and citizens will consider that the newly-elected reflect the legitimate choice of the people. The goal of working within a country's electoral process, including the effective use of grievance procedures, is nonpartisan and can be a basis for cooperation among parties.

NDI's work with political parties will be an important component of NDI's long-term plans for work in Haiti. A pollwatcher training program is a first step in new efforts to develop a professional, nonpartisan relationship with Haiti's democratic

political parties. Future NDI programs to strengthen political parties in Haiti will be built on these relationships and assessments of need.

Because this program is designed to be a part of longer-term political development for Haiti, the NDI field team would work with party organizers and trainers following the initial seminar and meetings in Port-au-Prince to conduct pollwatcher training workshops using a "train-the-trainers" approach. These workshops would prepare Haitian political party trainers to hold skill-building sessions for potential pollwatchers throughout the country. NDI believes that this methodology will leave behind a structure for future training by political parties and will lay a foundation for expanded organizational development. Training party pollwatchers is important because pollwatching is an essential activity for the parties in the election and requires a high level of organization before and during the election. Aside from candidate selection and the conduct of the campaign itself -- areas where NDI cannot interfere -- party pollwatching will be a major activity of the parties. NDI's future efforts at helping the parties to develop institutionally will benefit from the groundwork laid during pollwatcher training. It will also allow NDI to demonstrate to the parties immediately the benefits of its party development programs and NDI's interest in assisting them now rather than only after the upcoming elections.

NDI's work with the parties for the election should be the beginning of a long-term program of political party development. Following the elections, NDI would resume its work on political party development in the context of legislative bodies, the

major vehicle through which parties debate public policy issues. Programs would link party development to the role of blocs, parties and individual members of the legislature, seeking to encourage parties and legislatures to communicate more frequently with citizens and operate in a manner that is seen as more professional and accountable to the electorate. Parties are seeking organizational and technical assistance in better structuring their activities. They need help in developing capabilities in the following areas: grassroots and headquarters organizing, message development and communications, fundraising and financing, party structures/by-laws, and development of codes of conduct and ethics. Training should also involve coalition-building, conflict-resolution, and leadership development.

2. Civic Education - Candidate Forums

In order to contribute to an idea-oriented campaign that assures that parties seek to engage civil society in the election, NDI should assist Haitian NGOs to sponsor candidate forums in a number of major cities and towns. Three or four such forums should be scheduled. Haitian NGOs would be encouraged to schedule additional forums and provide a handbook to be used in these. These forums would be co-sponsored by several Haitian NGOs, including some of those with which the mission met, as well as from the individual locale. The debates would be broadcast primarily through radio.

Goals of such activities are to provide forums for candidates and parties to debate public policy issues and to promote the concepts of dialogue and tolerance. In the context of past political competition in Haiti, the latter objective is, perhaps, more important.

Local NGOs -- those with which the survey team met in Port-au-Prince and those in the locations where debates would be held -- would co-sponsor and contribute human and material resources for the forums and other civic education activities. NDI field staff would quickly identify a core of three or four NGOs which would assist in developing a forum format appropriate for Haiti and a limited number of civic education materials in Creole, including a forum handbook. The NGOs would assist in preparing local populations in advance for the forums, both in understanding the nature of these events and providing basic civic education for evaluating statements made by candidates. This will require providing some personnel to help with advance work and carrying out the forums. NGOs will play a leading role in media-related activities, encouraging local radio and -- where available -- TV stations to cover the events and preparing cassette recordings of the events. As appropriate, NDI will enter into cooperative agreements for small amounts of funding to help local NGOs defer some costs associated with the forums.

3. Assistance to the Electoral Process

NDI has extensive international experience in assisting local electoral councils in developing procedures to reinforce the credibility of the electoral process. NDI's discussion paper of October 21 provided some preliminary thoughts on these matters. NDI should be prepared to be of further assistance to the Haitian electoral commission should it be requested. Recognizing that the UN Elections Assistance Bureau will play the leading role in assisting the commission, NDI may play a supplementary role in helping the commission by providing mediating or consulting assistance in areas of consensus-building and promotion of confidence in the election. This may not prove necessary. However, the survey team noted that the formation of the electoral commission during its visit remained unresolved and this impasse continued through the drafting of this report. Should difficulties over the selection of the commission or its functioning continue, NDI would be ready to respond to requests for assistance. The attached memorandum on the election process highlights areas where NDI could offer assistance to enhance confidence in the process.

4. Civil-Military/Police Program

The mission believes that NDI should plan to modify its formerly proposed civil-military program in the form of a civil-security forces relations program. This program, which would promote civilian expertise in and control of security matters, can only begin once the Haitian government and people define the nature and scope of

the country's security forces. Given the changes now taking place to transform the Haitian military into predominantly a police force with largely a new corps of personnel, NDI should wait to implement the program, but use the current period for planning purposes. It is extremely important to develop the details of such a program carefully and thoughtfully. The program could work together or separately on the residual military and the newly created permanent police, the latter program modelled to some extent on NDI's 1989 activities in Panama. Community-based policing at the local level would be an underlying concept.

5. NDI Field Team

Given the short time frame available for an election campaign, it is important for NDI to field an election field team immediately. In order to conduct effectively both of the above election-related programs -- pollwatcher training and candidate forums -- four experienced field staff, plus local hires, should be utilized. NDI's field operation should begin operating by mid-December.

12/5/94