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NDI ELECTION REFORM MISSION ARRIVES IN COTE D'IVOIRE

ABIDJAN – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is fielding an international delegation at the invitation of the Ivorian government to assess preparations for Cote d'Ivoire's 2015 presidential election. The group, which will arrive Dec. 8 and is being welcomed by all Ivorian political parties, includes political and civic leaders, and election and regional experts from North America, Europe and Africa.

Heading the eight-person delegation are former Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark and Brian Atwood, former administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development and a member of NDI's Board of Directors.

The delegation's purpose is to support Ivorian electoral reform efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful and credible election in 2015. For more than a decade, NDI has been supporting the development of democratic processes in Cote d'Ivoire. It established an office in Abidjan in 2005.

"The delegation looks forward to open discussions that would foster consensus building around reforms as the country prepares for the next presidential poll," Clark said.

During its stay in Cote d'Ivoire, the delegation will meet with representatives of the major political parties from ruling and opposition coalitions, leaders of civic organizations, election authorities, religious leaders and academics to elicit their views on the electoral framework and political process.

The delegation will conduct its activities in conformity with Ivorian law and international standards and best practices in the conduct of elections. Shortly after the mission, NDI will issue a report with the delegation's findings and recommendations. The report will build on the expertise and extensive experience of members of the delegation, and research by Institute staff into electoral frameworks in other countries.

"NDI is proud to assist Ivorians' efforts to advance their democratic institutions and electoral systems," said NDI President Kenneth Wollack. "A peaceful and credible election in 2015 would also have a positive impact throughout the region."

The mission is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy.

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