

## Constituency Outreach: Providing Avenues for Citizen Access to Elected Representatives

September, 2014 - November, 2014

Issue 4

### MPs respond to devastating floods

In late November, Morocco experienced unprecedented floodings that devastated several communities and led to 47 deaths. Southern regions were hit especially hard, including the cities of Tiznit and Guelmim which alone accounted for more than half of all fatalities. Immediately after the flooding, Member of Parliament (MP) Lahcen Benouari toured the area to assess damage and help coordinate local emergency relief operations. He also supported initial plans to begin reconstructing the damaged infrastructure and homes. During a visit by a



*MP Benouari hearing citizens about the flood damages at Tiznit*



*MP Mina Bouhdoud coordinating with local authorities and emergency services to deal with the floodings*

delegation of ministers that was ordered by the king specifically to deal with this disaster urgently and ensure that all the proper steps were taken, Benouari shared his recommendations for repairing the damage and rebuilding the affected communities.

Flooding dramatically impacted the Taroudant region as well, with many villages in the area completely cut off because of damage to local infrastructure. MP Mina Bouhdoud, who represents this constituency, immediately began coordinating with authorities to offer helicopter lifts for citizens trapped by the flooding and begin reopening roads with minimal delays. Bouhdoud also visited citizens affected by the flooding to hear their complaints about the government response firsthand.

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### Coaching and Professional Development for Constituency Office Assistants

On October 22 and 23, NDI held a two-day coaching session in Rabat for the 14 assistants helping to manage the new constituency offices for members of parliament (MPs) across the country. In the session, the assistants exchanged tips for organizing local outreach events, promoting the office and member of parliament (MP) in the community, dealing with difficult constituents, efficiently logging and resolving cases, and connecting constituents with local government programs and services.



*MP assistants during a teamwork exercise during the workshop*

The session was facilitated by NDI Senior Program Manager Siham Bojji and Samira Raissouni, an experienced professional development and team building coach. The assistants were divided into groups of four and led through role play exercises, where they took turns simulating interactions between

constituents, MPs and the assistants. This exercise allowed the assistants to practice active listening skills, which will help them better understand and respond to the expectations of both citizens and MPs.



*Group picture with MP assistants, NDI staff and trainer Samira Raissouni*

The session also encouraged the assistants to reflect on how they could leverage their experience in the program for a future career, whether in politics, civil society or the private sector. To that end, Raissouni led the assistants through different exercises to help them identify which skills they developed from this program would be transferable to another career, such as their extensive knowledge of the local community, interpersonal and communication skills, and experience organizing large events. The assistants were also asked to find creative ways to continue constituency outreach efforts with their MP beyond the current program.

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### Coaching and Professional Development for Constituency Office Assistants

Importantly, the session also allowed the assistants to provide each other with encouragement, best practices and tips for the remaining months of the program. Mark Bell, Head of Projects at the UK Embassy in Rabat, also encouraged the assistants in his opening remarks. Zineb Elbettach, the assistant to MP Fouzia Labyad in Casablanca Ain-Chok, remarked that “this was the best workshop I have ever attended; it gave me the chance to develop my skills and know my real capacity

and what I’m capable of doing.” At the end of the two-day session, Jamal Laktib, the assistant for MP Kamal Abdelfattah in Benguerir, shared that “this initiative has contributed to changing the political landscape in my constituency. Now, other MPs are trying to copy us and want to be more present in the constituency. Thanks to this project, citizens better understand the role of their MP and their work in the parliament besides the oral sessions they see on TV.”

### Berrechid: Ministry of solidarity and women responds positively to MP request concerning her constituents

In response to a constituent concern, MP Oum El Banine Lahlou submitted a written inquiry to the Minister of Solidarity and Women, Bassima Hakkaoui, as to why her constituency of Berrechid was not covered by a recent national campaign led by the Ministry on the Prevention of Violence against Women. Within one week of MP Lahlou’s request, the ministry responded by giving a speech on violence against women during a conference in Had Soualem, a town in Berrechid where there was recently a widely known domestic violence incident.



*MP Lahlou advocating for her constituency with the support of pictures at the parliament*



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### Khenifra Town Hall Meeting, Fouad Hajir, Khenifra Constituency Office

On November 14, MP Fouad Hajir held a town hall meeting in his local constituency outreach office in Khenifra. Nearly 50 constituents of diverse backgrounds attended the town hall, which featured an extensive discussion between Hajir and the constituents. Hajir summarized his achievements in parliament on their behalf and addressed questions from constituents about local challenges, such as poor infrastructure and employment opportunities.



*MP Fouad Hajir discussing with a widow during the town hall meeting*

Hajir also discussed the positive role of NGOs in the community and specifically encouraged women and youth to become more involved in them.



*MP Fouad Hajir interacting with constituents and representatives from the civil society during the public dialogue.*

Responding to constituents' concerns about local unemployment, Hajir emphasized the importance of strengthening the private sector to create jobs for the community, citing ecotourism as a promising area for growth. "We must open up Khenifra and build safe roads to attract tourists to this beautiful region," he said. "Ecotourism, for instance, can save this beautiful region from poverty."

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### Parlement: 2015 Finance Bill

On December 16th, the Moroccan parliament passed the 2015 Finance Bill with a vote of 174 in favor and 87 against. The bill outlines a plan for the improvement of national economic competition, promotion of private investment, and support for private enterprise, among other ventures. Several MPs in the constituency outreach program, including Fouad Hajir, Arafat Atmoun, and Adil Tchikitou, took part in the discussions about the bill, raising concerns expressed by constituents regarding citizens' purchasing power. Prominent Moroccan media outlets covered the contributions made to the finance bill by Oum El banine Lahlou and Fouad Hajir, both of whom participate in the constituency outreach program.



*MP Milouda Hazez discussing with MP Adil Tchikitou the 2015 finance bill*



After the vote on the Finance bill, the Speaker of the parliament Talbi Alami (RNI) surprised the MPs, as well as ordinary citizens, by listing the names of the 109 MPs who were absent during the vote, and noting which ones had valid excuses. This was the first time the Speaker had formally listed absences from a parliamentary session.

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### Berrechid: MP Lahlou meets with the head of a local company to promote youth employment

In response to constituents' concerns about youth unemployment in Berrechid, MP Lahlou Oum El Banine met with local businesses in the industrial and technology sectors to encourage them to employ more young people. Lahlou shared the CVs of several local youth who were interested in learning more about these firms and receiving any necessary training to become more competitive job applicants.



*Head of HR at Leoni meeting with one of the constituents benefitting from the MP Lahlou's advocacy*

### Berrechid: Conference on diabetes



*MP Lahlou and her assistant distributing leaflets and collecting contact information from constituents at the conference*

On November 8, MP Oum El Banine Lahlou organized a small conference to raise awareness about the health risks of diabetes. Drawing on her own experience as a doctor, Lahlou shared tips for preventing and treating the disease, and addressed questions from constituents. MP Lahlou and her assistant distributed informational leaflets about diabetes to all the attendees, and gave free medical exams to approximately 100 citizens.



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### Berrechid: Discussing violence in society with constituents

Earlier this year, MP Oum El Banine Lahlou met with a citizen's association in Berrechid that had recently completed a report on preventing violence in Moroccan society. Recognizing the importance of their work for the broader community, Lahlou organized a public event to promote their work. The event was held on October 1 in front of the office of the governor of Berrechid and attracted a large crowd. The event demonstrated considerable public interest in this important but little discussed topic, while also showcasing how MPs and civil society organizations can collaborate to promote common priorities. Lahlou also used the event to promote the association itself, which offers legal support and counseling to victims of violence.



*MP Lahlou addresses a crowd about the importance of preventing violence in the Moroccan society*

### Temara: Tournament for local soccer teams



*MP Adil Tchikitto collaborated with professional soccer players to organize a tournament for local youth.*

In an effort to promote the health of local youth, MP Adil Tchikitto collaborated with professional Moroccan soccer players and the Moroccan Soccer Federation to hold a tournament in Temara under the slogan, "A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body". Eight teams of local youth played in the tournament, which was held on November 18.

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### Benguerir: Citizen orientation and assistance for access to medical treatment



*MP assistant meeting with a citizen on the follow up of his case*

The MP outreach office could orient successfully a citizen with failing kidneys to receive treatment. The MP's assistant could first receive the newly diagnosed citizen and inform him about the local initiatives for people suffering from the same condition. With the leadership of the MP, the assistant could orient the citizen to a dedicated association and help her with the application files to receive free treatment and free medicalised transportation.

### Benguerir: MP supports local horse Fantasia Festival

Fantasia is a longstanding tradition in Morocco where local horsemen charge full speed alongside one another and, in a dazzling display of precision and skill, simultaneously fire antique rifles in the air. The tradition is especially popular in Benguerir and is organized each year by a local association. This year, the association contacted MP Kamal Abdelfattah asking for assistance in navigating the administrative requirements and providing the necessary equipment for the festival. In response, Abdelfattah coordinated closely with the National Initiative for Human Development, the government body that supervises cultural events like fantasia, to help secure all of the necessary permits and equipment. The event was a smashing success and showcased how MPs can help communities better honor their proud traditions.



*Local riders put on a dazzling display for a festival in Benguerir*



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### Ribat Al Khair : MP's assistant working on solving a case

On October 20th, 2014, a distressed woman walked into MP Driss Chtibi's local office desperate for assistance. Her husband, who worked as a high school teacher, was suffering from a psychiatric illness and had been absent for an extended period to recover. The school responded by firing him and withholding compensation. Defending her constituent, Chtibi raised a complaint with the Ministry of Education and National Retirement Fund. Her intervention was successful, and the teacher received full compensation under the law for his termination.



*MP Driss Chtibi's assistant meets with constituents to resolve their cases in their local office in Ribat Al Khair*

### Ribat Al Khair: MP Driss Chtibi promotes public health through circumcision campaign



*MP Chtibi addressing over 400 constituents during the launch of a circumcision campaign*

Circumcision is an important medical practice and lack of access to appropriate medical facilities in less affluent areas can endanger young boys' lives. To help address this, MP Abdelhak Chtibi partnered with local NGOs to organize a circumcision campaign in partnership with the Ministry of Health. The campaign was launched on November 4 with a large public event attended by more than 400 constituents. Local NGOs presented Mr Chtibi with an award at the event for supporting his efforts to improve public health in the community.

## Constituency Outreach: Providing Avenues for Citizen Access to Elected Representatives

June, 2014 - August, 2014

Issue 3

### Constituency Offices Number of Visits

Office	September	October	November
Benguerir	52	42	53
Berrechid	179	267	227
Casa Ain Chock	20	45	21
Casa Lisasfa	107	45	6
Khenifra	140	534	180
Khouribga	57	95	56
Marrakech	356	23	177
Rabat	56	73	59
Sefrou	45	42	39
Sidi Bennour	31	39	31
Sidi Slimane	30	64	64
Taroudant	105	138	145
Temara	411	234	132
Tiznit	30	30	20
Totals	1619	1671	1210
Grand Total	4500		

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### Casework Statistics for September, October and November

Office	Total			Rejected			Solved			Opened		
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Sep	Oct	Nov	Sep	Oct	Nov	Sep	Oct	Nov
Benguerir	35	32	19	6	3	1	15	13	9	14	7	9
Berrechid	16	9	13	0	1	2	10	5	4	6	3	7
Casa Ain	9	10	4	2	5	1	1	1	0	6	4	0
Casa Hara-	7	6	6	0	2	2	1	0	0	6	4	4
Khenifra	12	14	12	0	1	0	5	4	4	7	9	8
Khouribga	14	14	8	2	1	0	1	3	0	11	10	8
Marrakech	356	6	139	1	3	2	171	0	2	142	3	135
Rabat	46	53	34	6	5	3	21	19	22	19	24	10
Sefrou	14	21	22	2	1	0	10	6	12	6	14	10
Sidi Bennour	9	12	9	2	3	2	4	3	3	3	6	4
Sidi Slimane	14	10	14	2	1	2	1	4	4	6	5	8
Taroudant	105	115	119	0	2	0	2	4	2	103	109	117
Temara	8	6	3	0	1	0	4	1	0	4	0	3
Tiznit	11	6	6	2	0	0	3	1	0	6	5	6

Total	656	314	408	25	29	15	249	64	62	339	203	329
G. Total	1378			69			375			871		





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