



**STATEMENT OF THE NDI TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT MISSION
TO GUINEA-CONAKRY, MARCH 9-15, 2022
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I. Introduction

From March 9-15, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted a technical assessment mission to Conakry, Guinea. The purpose of the mission was to gauge citizens' priorities during Guinea's transition process following the coup d'etat of September 5, 2021, and to explore possibilities for technical assistance to civilian-led institutions and civil society organizations working to ensure an inclusive, transparent and credible transition.

The delegation was composed of Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, NDI senior associate and regional director for Central and West Africa; Mr. Alioune Tine, director of Afrikajom Center (Senegal); Ms. Ulrike Rodgers, NDI program director for Francophone West Africa; Mr. Kevin Adomayakpor, NDI resident director in Burkina Faso; and Mr. Paul Komivi Sémeke Amegakpo, NDI resident director in Guinea.

The delegation met with: Transition President, Col. Mamadi Doumbouya; Prime Minister Mohamed Béavogui; National Transition Council (CNT) president, Dr. Dansa Kourouma, and members of the CNT executive bureau; Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD), Mr. Mory Condé; Minister, general secretary in charge of religious affairs, El Hadj Karamo Diawara; leaders of four political party coalitions representing all registered parties in the country; leaders of a cross section of civil society organizations, including media associations; traditional leaders from the four geo-political regions of the country; and representatives of the diplomatic community. The delegation expresses its thanks to all with whom it met for welcoming the mission and sharing their views.

The delegation's visit coincided with a number of actions taken by Guinean stakeholders that could enhance the Transition's credibility. These include: a declaration signed by 58 political parties and associations demanding greater transparency and inclusiveness in the transition process; national outreach by the CNT across all regions of the country to gather citizen opinions on the constitutional review process; and an announcement by the Transition government of plans to launch national consultations by March 22, to harness citizen input into critical aspects of the Transition.

II. Summary of key findings

- The delegation noted the Guinean people's unanimous expectation that the country will return to constitutional order and democratic rule in a timely manner, after constitutional and electoral reforms, and inclusive and transparent polls.
- The delegation also observed most Guineans' strong desire for meaningful dialogue with their compatriots, as they continue to share views openly and demonstrate heightened awareness of their expected roles and responsibilities during the transition process and beyond.
- There is strong recognition that the transition process must include sustained, deliberate and earnest measures towards national reconciliation to overcome Guinea's deep political and ethnic divides, and heal wounds from recurrent violent crack-downs on peaceful political participation that has occurred in past decades. Guineans across the board expressed hope that the ongoing transition to civilian, democratic rule would be successful, and thus the country's last.

Despite these notes of optimism, the delegation identified potential flashpoints that could revive political tensions and perhaps violence, if not speedily addressed. These include:

- A lack of clarity on the transition timeline, and order of priorities during the transition period. Many Guineans complained about recent actions by transition authorities that contradict earlier declarations in fall 2021.
- While members of other transition bodies are known, including Cabinet ministers and CNT Councilors, membership of the military's central decision-making organ, the National Committee of the Rally for Development (CNRD), remains unknown. Many Guineans stated that it is unreasonable to expect citizen buy-in for decisions made by a body whose membership is unknown. Such opacity is generating growing mistrust and potential lack of accountability that could weaken national and international confidence in the transition process.
- The delegation also noted a very low level of women's representation and inclusiveness within Guinea's transition institutions. The CNT has 24 women (out of 81 members); however, only one of eight governors is female, and out of 33 senior divisional officers (prefects) and 304 sub-divisional officers (sub-prefects), none is a woman. Also, the participation of women in the transitional government is low.
- Six months into the transition, a number of important political and civic actors noted for their advocacy of democracy in the country feel they have no avenue for meaningful input into the transition process. Some of them question whether the CNT is representative enough to make decisions on behalf of Guinean society, including the timeline of the transition.

III. Recommendations

The delegation makes the following recommendations:

To Guinea's Transition authorities:

- Use this historic opportunity to lead by example by organizing constitutional and electoral reforms, and conducting democratic elections in a timely and transparent manner.
- Release a transition timeline to provide more clarity and focus to actions by government entities, political parties, civil society and other stakeholders that will enhance confidence and citizen participation, and hence guarantee the success of the transition.
- Safeguard citizens' rights and liberties, including freedom of speech and pluralism of opinions.
- Initiate and maintain a robust, nimble and inclusive consultation process among the major stakeholders without duplicating transitional institutions and/or their competencies, in order to foster better and stronger lines of communication with political and civic stakeholders.
- Take deliberate steps to include women in transitional institutions and develop gender-sensitive policies, including in constitutional and electoral reforms.
- Prioritize reforms that would demonstrate the military's public commitment to return the country to civilian, democratic rule, and establish consensus around significant issues that will be better dealt with long-term by elected executive and legislative branches of government.
- Publish the list of members of the CNRD in order to enhance transparency and confidence building among Guineans.

To Political Parties:

- Engage vigorously in the transition and conduct a critical assessment of the roles and responsibilities of political parties in building and safeguarding democracy, and educate members and supporters about their constitutional rights and responsibilities.
- Use the transition period to revive internal democracy within parties, including by prioritizing the inclusion of women and young people and providing them with leadership opportunities.
- Engage the authorities in discussions on reforms to Guinea's political party system to leverage the country's ethnic diversity and professionalize political parties in order to de-emphasize identity politics.

To Civil Society:

- Intensify efforts at civic education and citizen engagement so as to raise the level of citizen input in various consultative platforms during the transition.
- Continue to monitor and track the performance of all actors directly involved in the transition, including civilian and military government entities, as well as political parties and the media.
- Participate in and provide expertise on democratic reforms and public policies, including the development of a new constitution and the creation of strong and independent democratic institutions aiming to establish transparent and inclusive electoral processes.
- Implement innovative programming such as public opinion polling that captures and reports on the perspectives of citizens, and initiatives to counter mis- and disinformation and hate speech.

To the Media:

- Contribute to awareness raising, civic and voter education, and encourage citizen engagement during the transition.
- Avoid exacerbating existing political and ethnic polarization, and spread of misinformation, and promote respect for professional standards and ethics.
- Seek entry points to help develop, update, and promote legislation protecting the freedom of expression and the media, and the right to information.

IV. Conclusion

Guinea has a long history of defending its rights and freedoms. Guineans have always opted for a democratic path when offered alternatives. The NDI delegation hopes that the voices of the proud people of Guinea will be respected so the ongoing transition is peaceful, transparent, and inclusive and facilitates the timely emergence of a legitimate, representative and democratically elected government.

NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all.