



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Kathy Gest, [kgest@ndi.org](mailto:kgest@ndi.org)  
Abuja, +234 (0) 803 098 9653  
Rob Runyan, Washington  
[rrunyan@ndi.org](mailto:rrunyan@ndi.org); 202-728-5541

**NDI INTERNATIONAL ELECTION MISSION  
TO OBSERVE APRIL 9 NIGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY POLLS**

ABUJA, NIGERIA – The National Democratic Institute’s (NDI) international election mission announced today that it will observe the country’s National Assembly elections now scheduled for April 9.

The assembly elections, always an important poll for Nigerians, have now taken on added significance as election officials work to overcome problems that led to the postponement of those elections by one week, NDI said. The NDI delegation had planned to observe Nigeria’s presidential poll, which was originally scheduled for the 9th.

“The postponement has created a substantial challenge for the country, which is working hard to overcome a history of flawed elections,” said Joe Clark, former prime minister of Canada and one of the co-leaders of NDI’s delegation. “At stake could be the credibility of Nigeria’s election system, as well as the government that will result from it.”

Clark said he was encouraged by the fact that the election commission and political parties met and reached a consensus on how to proceed after the commission decided to stop the National Assembly voting April 2, the election’s original date, after problems were discovered with missing voting materials.

Clark is one of seven co-leaders of the delegation, which includes 50 accredited observers from 23 countries who will be deployed throughout the country later in the week. The others are Mahamane Ousmane, former president of Niger; Antonio Manuel Mascarenhas Monteiro, former president of Cape Verde; Jon S. Corzine, a former U.S. senator and governor of New Jersey; Marietje Schaake, member of the European Parliament from The Netherlands; Natasha Stott Despoja, former senator from Australia; and Kenneth Wollack, president of NDI.

The delegation includes 12 long-term observers who have been in the country since January monitoring election preparations, including the campaign period. The goal of the mission is to

observe every aspect of the election process, including the campaign, registration of voters, balloting on election day, the counting of ballots and post-election developments. The delegation will issue a preliminary statement after the poll.

During the mission, delegation members will meet with senior government and election officials, political party representatives, candidates, citizen election monitors, civil society leaders and media representatives.

Through this observation mission, NDI seeks to demonstrate the interest of the international community in the development of the democratic political process and governance in Nigeria, and to present an accurate and impartial assessment of the political environment and activities surrounding and including the April 9 polls.

The mission builds on a [pre-election assessment](#) that NDI conducted in October, during which the Institute noted the heightened interest and determination among Nigerians to overcome a history of past flawed elections. At the time, NDI identified a number of issues that should be addressed to ensure a credible election process.

The Institute's election observation will be carried out in accordance with the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#), which is endorsed by 36 intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and was launched at the United Nations in 2005. The mission builds upon NDI's 25 years of experience observing more than 200 elections around the world.

The Institute's election observation mission in Nigeria is funded through a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

NDI has been working in Nigeria since 1999 and has fielded international observation missions to previous elections there in 1999, 2003 and 2007. The Institute also is conducting other election support activities with the support of USAID and the United Kingdom Department for International Development. These include a program to assist the efforts of Nigerian civic groups to train and deploy about 15,000 domestic election observers. This effort includes [Project 2011 Swift Count](#), an initiative in which observers will conduct a parallel vote tabulation (PVT).

*The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).*