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REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS FOCUS ON YOUTH BUILDING A CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY AND PEACE IN AFRICA

Washington, D.C.—Young men and women from across Africa will discuss how to engage youth in democracy, elections and governance on the continent during two regional consultations in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Pretoria, South Africa, Aug. 26-27 and Aug. 29-30, respectively. The “Youth Building a Culture of Democracy and Peace in Africa” consultations, organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in partnership with the African Union’s Department of Political Affairs (AU’s DPA), will include nearly 25 organizations working on a wide range of youth issues such as education, elections, employment and gender equality in East and Southern Africa.

Youth leaders from diverse backgrounds representing seven to 10 countries in each region are expected to attend these closed session events, which will include equal numbers of men and women.

These consultations will gauge youth perspectives on how best to create a culture of peace and democracy in Africa. During the consultations, participants are expected to provide thoughts about strategies to engage young people in the political process and validate the African Governance Architecture’s Youth Engagement Strategy on Democracy, Elections, and Governance. The Honorable January Makamba, Tanzania’s deputy minister for science, technology and communications; Dr. Keith Jennings, NDI regional director for Southern and East Africa programs; Ibrahim Sanusi, youth lead for the AU African Governance Architecture; and Maricela Donahue, a seasoned leadership trainer, are scheduled to speak to participants on the role of youth in building democracy, good governance and accountability, and promoting peacebuilding and non-violent conflict resolution.

Following the regional consultations, AU’s DPA and NDI will organize a continental youth consultation in Nairobi, Kenya, Sept. 15-16. The outcomes of the regional and continental youth consultations will feed into a discussion at the AU’s 3rd Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance in Senegal Oct. 30-31, which will address “Silencing the Guns in Africa.” The proceedings of the consultations will be used to refine the AU’s 2015-2018 youth engagement strategy. NDI has been providing ongoing technical assistance to the AU’s DPA to execute the next phase of its youth participation program in 2014 and develop its long-term youth engagement strategy.

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The National Democratic Institute is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.