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**UNDP AND NDI JOIN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND
DEMOCRACIES WORLDWIDE**

NEW YORK – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) today announced a new initiative to jointly promote good governance and strengthen democratic institutions around the world. The agreement was signed by NDI President Kenneth D. Wollack and UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown at UNDP Headquarters in New York.

As part of this new partnership, UNDP and NDI will join efforts to enable legislative bodies to engage in national policy-making and oversight as an independent branch of government and to become effective and accountable representatives of their constituents. The agencies will also enhance the ability of civil society organizations to promote good governance and help political parties build their organizational capabilities, act as voices of an informed citizenry, and expand public participation in the political process.

In addition, UNDP and NDI will strengthen electoral processes by working with civil society organizations, political parties and election officials to ensure open and democratic elections by helping to develop legal frameworks, organize international and domestic election observation projects and assist in voter education. The two agencies will also help decentralize decision-making to ensure that governments are responsive to their people's needs, and support civic organizations in educating citizens to become active players in the political life of their societies.

"Ineffective governance often short-circuits the connection between anti-poverty efforts and poverty reduction," said Mr. Malloch Brown. "That is why good governance built around strong, transparent, democratic institutions is so important in the fight against poverty."

The collaboration will largely take the form of technical assistance services to be provided by NDI in support of UNDP country, regional and global programmes. This assistance, to be requested by UNDP, will focus on the transfer of knowledge, skills and technology to strengthen the capacity of institutions in a manner that ensures the sustainability of reforms. The two agencies will also provide training for country officials and exchange information and data on governance.

“This new partnership builds on the relationship that UNDP and NDI have developed over the years,” Mr. Wollack said. “Our expanding cooperation reflects the growing recognition of the links between sustainable development, and accountable and transparent political systems.”

Each of the two agencies is firmly committed to the cause of good governance. UNDP believes that development assistance that emphasizes good governance – which could be ideally accomplished through multi-party elections, popular political participation, effective and responsive parliaments, independent judiciaries and accountable legal systems – is essential for poverty eradication. For more than 16 years, the non-profit, non-governmental NDI has been calling on a global network of experts to encourage and introduce participatory political processes and strengthen democracy in the developing world.

The new agreement formalizes the agencies’ long cooperation in the field of good governance worldwide. In Yemen, for instance, a UNDP grant allowed NDI to implement a good governance program focusing on parliamentary reform; in Pakistan, NDI and UNDP organized post-election roundtables on accountability and prepared a good governance strategy; in Niger, the agencies coordinated international election observer efforts; in Lesotho, they held a conference to examine a variety of electoral models for the next parliamentary elections; and in Mozambique, they cooperated in implementing a nationwide civic education program.

NDI and UNDP could also benefit from each other’s experiences by cooperating in post-conflict situations. NDI, for example, has initiated programmes to rebuild government institutions, promote elections and launch the process of reconstructing civil society in post conflict societies such as Bosnia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Haiti, Lesotho, Liberia and Mozambique.

NDI is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government.

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