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PRESS RELEASE

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NDI LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN NIGER

Washington, DC – With support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United States and Belgian governments, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has renewed its collaboration with the National Assembly of the Republic of Niger to implement a program to strengthen the legislative process in Niger.

NDI has entered into an agreement with the Government of the Republic of Niger, the UNDP office in Niamey, Niger, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in cooperation with the United States Department of State, and the UNDP Management, Development and Governance Division (UNDP/MDGD) in New York, to provide legislative assistance to the National Assembly of Niger.

The purpose of the legislative assistance program is to strengthen the legislative process in Niger by rendering the National Assembly more effective in its three constitutional responsibilities: 1) legislating; 2) exercising oversight of the executive branch of government; and 3) incorporating citizen input and interests into the governance process. The program will include activities such as seminars on legislative review and analysis and public outreach techniques and strategies. The workshops and training sessions will be complemented by the initiation of public outreach activities such as town hall meetings and radio programs in Niamey and other parts of the country, the development of civic education materials and extensive one-on-one consultations with the legislative leadership, individual deputies and staff.

By providing relevant training and assistance to deputies and staff, this newly-formed donor partnership will allow the Nigerien National Assembly to maximize the financial resources available from the international community to strengthen its capacity to contribute positively to the country's governance process. It also allows UNDP/Niger, USAID and UNDP/MDDG to ensure a holistic, coherent approach to legislative development in Niger and the consolidation and maximization of resources.

NDI is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. 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.

NDI has actively supported democratization efforts in Niger since 1991. The Institute's programs have included voter education and election monitoring, training for Nigerien civic organizers and political party leaders, and legislative training and assistance. In order to implement this program with the National Assembly of Niger, NDI has re-established an office in Niamey.

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