



October 8, 1999

## *GAMBIAN PRESIDENT VISITS IFES*

On September 27, 1999, the President of Gambia, his Excellency Yahya A. J.J. Jammeh (Col. Rtd.), met with IFES President Richard Soudriette; Director of Information Resources J. Ray Kennedy; members of the Africa and Near East Program; and others at IFES. Accompanied by the Gambian Minister of Foreign Affairs and other Gambian government officials, President Jammeh and his delegation discussed the preparations for the upcoming presidential elections, scheduled for 2001, and the local government elections, tentatively scheduled for February 2000. IFES briefed the President on the organization's programs in Africa and on the activities of the Association of African Election Authorities, an organization of election officials and election-focused nongovernmental organizations to which the Gambian Electoral Commission belongs.



IFES President Richard Soudriette and his Excellency Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh (Col. Rtd.), President of The Gambia at IFES.

### **Also in this edition:**

AAEA	p. 1
Burundi	p. 2
DRC	p. 2
Ghana	p. 3
Liberia	p. 3
Nigeria	p. 4
South Africa	p. 5
Yemen	p. 5

### **AAEA**

The Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) has embarked on a membership drive to invite all election authorities in Africa that are not yet members of the AAEA to join. The AAEA is a membership organization dedicated to the professionalization of election administration, information exchange and capacity building. The AAEA currently has sixteen full members and six associate members. Full membership is open to African election authorities and grants full voting rights in General Assembly proceedings. Associate membership is extended to African election-related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) upon approval of the AAEA General Assembly.



## International Foundation for Election Systems

### Burundi

In early September 1999, the IFES/Law Group consortium submitted a joint \$1.4 million rule of law proposal for programming in Burundi. On September 30, funding was awarded. IFES' justice initiative program will encourage the establishment of the rule of law and the recognition of and respect for human rights in Burundi by enhancing civil society capacity to advance justice system reform; increasing access to information on perceptions of justice; and improving relationships between civil society, government and the public to facilitate change. IFES' program will focus on justice survey research and strengthening civil society through a mixture of sub-agreements and partnerships and a technical specialist program.

IFES will engage a rule of law officer who will manage IFES' justice program in Burundi. The program will be established in October/November 1999 and remain through May 2001.

### Democratic Republic of Congo

On September 15, 1999, President Kabila announced on national television that the DRC government would hold the Inter-Congolese dialogue – a condition of the Lusaka Accords – in Kinshasa in 30 days' time. President Kabila said holding the dialogue in Kinshasa was the only way to meet the deadline set in the accords and assured rebel groups of their safety in the city. He stated the government had already made a "pledge" by previously offering the rebels amnesty.

At the same time, President Kabila also announced the government's recommendations for debate facilitators: Pere Mateo of the St. Egidio Community; Emile Derlin Zinsou, former president of Benin and representative of *La Francophonie*; and Salim Ahmed Salim,

Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity. Reactions to Kabila's announcement were mixed. Some rebel groups indicated their refusal to meet in Kinshasa and others challenged the neutrality of the proposed facilitators.

Also in September, 31 Military Liaison Officers (MLOs) from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations arrived in Kinshasa following a three-day induction course in Nairobi. These officers will be deployed within DRC "as the situation permits" pursuant to the Lusaka Accords. Other MLOs were deployed to Windhoek, Kampala, Kigali and Harare.

In support of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, IFES/DRC is assisting civil society to conduct a preparatory meeting through a subagreement to CNONGD, (*Conseil National des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de Développement*), one of the main groups in charge of organizing the meeting. The "Rencontre Préparatoire de la Société Civile pour le Débat National" (Preparatory Meeting of Civil Society for the National Dialogue) originally scheduled for September 17 in Nairobi was re-scheduled for October 4 in Kinshasa. In addition to developing specific strategies for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, the 220 participants will debate the role of civil society in promoting community and national reconciliation. Sub-themes will focus on constitutional development, mechanisms of governance during the transition, the electoral process and border security.

The IFES/DRC Democracy and Elections Resource Center reached a new record average with 107 visitors per day during September 1999. IFES/DRC also distributed 60 copies of the Lusaka Accords and related documents, and provided logistical support for the Ligue des Electeurs-sponsored workshop on the legal effects, strengths and weaknesses of the accords. The workshop built upon a similar initiative by a smaller subset of human rights groups and was designed to help civil society maximize its



## International Foundation for Election Systems

effectiveness in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. Other workshops on the constitution, elections and the political party legal framework will take place prior to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

Finally, on September 24, IFES/DRC Project Manager Jeremy Heep received official authorization from the Minister of Interior to travel to Lubumbashi in the southeast region of DRC. This was Mr. Heep's first trip to DRC's southeastern region. While in Lubumbashi, Mr. Heep met with civil society representatives and assessed opportunities for future IFES activities in the region.

### Ghana

In early September, building on IFES subgrant projects in South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, IFES launched its subgrant program to civil society organizations in Ghana. These grants are intended to promote activities undertaken collaboratively by District Assemblies and civil society organizations (CSOs); increase civic advocacy; and support CSOs in their activities. Joint boards, composed of District Assembly representatives and representatives from civil society organizations, will review the grant applications and make funding recommendations to IFES. It is anticipated that grant-making will begin in November 1999 in the 20 districts in Ghana where IFES, through Project ECSELL, is working. The grant-making project follows a two-year series of workshops for civic leaders and local government officials on conflict resolution, planning and project management in each of the 20 districts.

To facilitate the grant application and approval process, IFES/Ghana conducted its second in-service training of the 20 participant observers--IFES local staff monitoring the impact of Project ECSELL in each district. The September in-service training was facilitated by an experienced Ghanaian facilitator and was designed to equip

the participant observers with the tools needed to provide assistance to the joint boards and CSOs on the grant application and approval process.

Following the completion of the in-service training program, IFES/Ghana conducted visits to the 20 districts. In each district, IFES led focus groups with civic leaders and local government officials to generate qualitative information on the impact of Project ECSELL training. IFES team members also provided an orientation and training for members of the joint boards on the grant application and recommendation processes. Grant applications have been distributed to civic groups in each district and are due to the participant observers in mid-October. From mid-October to mid-December, the joint boards will review the applications and make recommendations for funding to IFES/Ghana.

### Liberia

During the month of September, IFES/Liberia continued to renovate the last three Elections Commission (ECOM) magistrate offices in Zwedru, Harper and Kaweaken. Due to the rural location and the challenge of transporting all building materials to the office sites, IFES/Liberia does not expect the offices to be completed until the beginning of November. Since the initiation of the office renovation and buildup, IFES has managed to renovate, and in some case build from scratch, 12 rural ECOM magistrate offices throughout Liberia. These offices are being used to conduct continuous voter registration, by-elections and local government elections.

From September 29 through October 1, the IFES/Liberia Washington team hosted President Jean-Marie Etter and Director Jean-Pierre Husi of Fondation Hirondelle. Fondation Hirondelle is the Swiss based NGO working with Liberian journalists to operate Star Radio in Monrovia. Fondation Hirondelle met with representatives of IFES, the U.S. government and other



## International Foundation for Election Systems

Washington-based organizations to discuss future activities in Liberia and elsewhere in Africa.

### Nigeria

With funding from the British Department for International Development (DFID), IFES is providing technical assistance to Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to facilitate the development of the INEC's voter registration plan. For six weeks, beginning in late September, IFES Senior Advisor for Election Administration, Joe Baxter, and IFES consultant, Enrique Saltos, will work with the INEC's Research and Statistics Department in reviewing the INEC's computerization of the voter registration and the development of a framework for the registration of eligible voters in Nigeria. Additionally, the INEC and IFES voter registration team will travel to Ghana for several days in October to review that country's voter registration system and to hold consultations with the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

### Yemen

IFES opened its Sanaa, Yemen field office in mid-September. From the field office, Project Manager Dennis Cozens and the IFES/Yemen staff will manage a program of technical assistance to the Supreme Elections Committee (SEC).

Mr. Cozens has more than thirty years of experience in election organization and local government administration in both his native England and in Africa; he also visited Yemen last November on an assessment mission of the SEC. Senior Program Officer Amy Hawthorne and Program Assistant Dalia Mroue traveled to Sanaa from September 15-October 4 to assist Mr. Cozens and the IFES/Yemen staff open the office and to introduce Mr. Cozens to key IFES counterparts in Yemen.

Under Mr. Cozen's leadership, IFES activities will focus on helping the SEC improve its organizational structure and develop staff capacity through a series of training programs over the coming months. IFES anticipates that many activities will grow out of the recommendations of the IFES management study of the SEC, conducted in August 1999. The management study report was recently completed. It is being translated into Arabic for presentation to the SEC in October. The English version will be released in the coming weeks. IFES program activities will also draw upon the recommendations of the March 1999 SEC/IFES Colloquium on the Development of Election Administration.

As an initial activity, IFES/Yemen will assist the SEC in organizing a post-mortem on the administration of Yemen's recent presidential elections. Additional upcoming activities include an evaluation of areas for improvement in future elections, as well as a seminar on the management of local government elections. Parliament is anticipated to pass a new law of local administration in the coming months. This legislation will pave the way for the conduct of unified Yemen's first local government elections.



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