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PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

FOR THE

SENEGAL ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE PROJECT
(685-0303)

Prepared by: RLA:D. Annette Adams

Clearance: DDIR:DLSheldon

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Senegal Elections Assistance Project (SEAP) (685-0303) was authorized and obligated in September, 1992 and implemented from September 1992 to September 1993. The Project Assistance Completion Date (PACD) was September 30, 1993. The SEAP provided $500,000 in grant funds from the Development Fund for Africa appropriation to the Government of Senegal to support the 1993 national and legislative elections in Senegal. Specifically, the Project provided assistance for: (1) a national voter education campaign that included the production and distribution of written, audio and audiovisual materials in 6 (six) local languages; and (2) the procurement of electoral materials such as ballot boxes, voting booths and indelible ink to institute secret balloting and facilitate administering the presidential and legislative elections.

Major Project Accomplishments

--- A major voter education campaign was conducted, which increased public knowledge of applicable voting requirements.

--- The Project produced voter education materials in 6 local languages and furnished to all 18 registered political parties for wide dissemination to constituents.

--- The voter education materials and television and radio spots increased transparency for public awareness of the right to vote nationwide.

--- The provision of election commodities, consisting of ballot boxes, voting booths, voting booth curtains and indelible ink helped to insure secret balloting at polling stations nationwide.

Audits/Evaluations, Etc.

The SEAP has not been evaluated or audited to date although Project funds were reserved for that purpose. This Project Assistance Completion Report (PACR) presents the status of the Senegal Elections Assistance Project as of the September 30, 1993 PACD.

II. PROJECT RATIONALE

Background

In the 1970s, Senegal recognized the importance of party competition in its electoral process. Since then, it has attempted to broaden and deepen the participation of its citizens. These efforts, however, have not always been successful. The 1988 elections were particularly troublesome. In the days after these elections, opposition parties alleged fraud in the balloting and counting processes, and organized street demonstrations. Civil unrest and riots led to a show of force; opposition political leaders and their leading supporters were arrested. Local elections in November, 1990, were characterized by an opposition boycott and charges of rigged elections.

To avoid similar problems with the 1993 elections, President Diouf agreed to review Senegal's electoral process with a view to adopting changes to improve it. A delegation from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) headed by former Ambassador Donald McHenry, came to Senegal to analyze its election laws and practices and to prepare a final report that would clarify the debate on revising the Electoral Code and those practices. NDI issued a comprehensive report in March, 1991. President Diouf then convened a multiparty, Electoral Reform Commission composed of jurists and representatives from 15 of the 17 political parties to make recommendations for changes in the Electoral Code. The Commission issued a series of recommendations that were based, in part, on the conclusions and recommendations of the NDI report, and formed the basis for the revised Electoral Code enacted into law in 1991. The new Electoral Code provided for several new features:

- the identification and registration of voters through the issuance of a national identity card;
- the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years;
- the involvement of political parties in all facets of the elections;
- the establishment of one polling station for each 600 voters;
- the use of indelible ink to prevent multiple voting;
- compulsory use of voting booths to assure secrecy of the ballot; and
- holding of presidential and legislative elections on different dates.

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In January 1992, the Government of Senegal (GOS) asked the United States for assistance in conducting the 1993 elections. In March, 1992, a team of analysts and political scientists from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) visited Senegal, analyzed its electoral system and issued a report entitled "Planning for the 1993 National Elections in Senegal". The IFES report suggested that what is needed "... is a systematic exposure of the electorate to the practical concepts of competitive elections .... [and that] such exposure can most readily be developed through a massive program of civic education."

As a result of the adoption of the electoral reforms, particularly the lowering of the voting age, there was a need to register approximately 2 million new voters and increase the number of polling stations from 2,000 to 8,000 to accommodate the elections. A voter education campaign was needed to inform new and old voters of the new voting procedures that are now in effect for the upcoming elections. Election administration commodities such as ballot boxes, voting booths with curtains and indelible ink were also needed to insure that the reforms instituted by the revised Electoral Code for the newly expanded electorate could be implemented.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Summary

The Senegal Elections Assistance Project (SEAP) was authorized on September 25, 1992 and obligated on September 28, 1992. It was a one year Project with a PACD of September 30, 1993 and a life of Project funding of $500,000 from the Development Fund for Africa appropriation. The Project consisted of assistance for: (1) a national voter education campaign that included the production and distribution of written, audio and audiovisual materials in six local languages; and (2) the procurement of essential electoral materials such as ballot boxes, voting booths and indelible ink to institute the secret ballot and facilitate administering the presidential and legislative elections.

B. Detailed Project Description

Goal and Purpose: The goal of the Project was to improve the political and social climate to institutionalize a democratic electoral process in Senegal. The purpose of the Project was to promote transparency and broad public participation in Senegal's 1993 elections through voter education and the provision of electoral materials and commodities.

Project Components: The Project's goal and purpose was accomplished through two Project components: (1) the Voter Education Component and (2) the Election Materials Component.

Component No. 1: Voter Education: As a result in part of the lowering of the voting age from 21 years to 18 years, the number of eligible voters who may vote in the upcoming elections had escalated from approximately 1.9 million to 4.0 million. In addition to having many young, first-time voters, many new features and requirements governing the administration of the elections under the revised Electoral Code are unknown to both old and new voters alike. Consequently, there was a need to inform voters about a host of new voting procedures such as: registration requirements, secret balloting, newly established polling stations, etc. Under the Voter Education Component, technical assistance services was procured for the development, production and dissemination of information about Senegal's revised voting procedures and requirements. All of the written and audiovisual materials under this component were produced in French and in the following six local languages: Wolof, Pulaar, Mandinka, Sereer, Diola and Soninke. Such information consisted of:

1. Written Materials:

- An abbreviated version of Senegal's Electoral Code in French and six local languages: 30,000 copies.

- Large written posters describing voting procedures at the polls: 3,000 copies.

- Illustrated "how-to-vote" brochures: 600,000 copies.

2. Audiovisual Materials:

- six short "T.V. spots" will be produced and edited in six local languages (Wolof, Pulaar, Mandinka, Sereer, Diola and Soninke).

- six "radio spots" will be produced and edited in six local languages.

- 16,000 "how-to-vote" audiocassettes will be produced and edited in six local languages.

The Project used a Senegalese, nongovernmental organization (NGO), the Groupe Multimedia Sud-Communication (SUDCOM) to coordinate the overall

production of the written and audiovisual materials and provide the French translations.

Voter information produced under this component was targeted at the entire Senegalese electorate. Emphasis was placed on translating written materials and producing audiovisual materials into Senegal's six major local languages and on disseminating the information to the rural, illiterate population of Senegal. Urban dwellers, particularly 18, 19 and 20 year olds, who are now eligible to vote, were also be targeted as beneficiaries.

Component No. 2: Election Materials: With the addition of approximately 2.0 million new eligible voters, the establishment of the compulsory secret ballot and 6,000 new polling stations to be opened, the GOS was in dire need of an array of essential commodities to administer its 1993 elections. New polling stations had to be equipped with ballot boxes. Voting booths as well as voting booth curtains had to be acquired to assure secrecy in voting. Indelible ink which is required under the revised Electoral Code, had to be used in the elections to reduce the likelihood of multiple voting by one person. To assist the GOS to acquire the electoral materials it needs to properly administer the elections, the Project financed the procurement of the following commodities:

- ballot boxes (2,000)
- voting booths (4,000)
- cotton cloth curtains for voting booths (4,000)
- indelible ink (2,000 bottles)

USAID procured from a local supplier ballot boxes, voting booths and curtains in accordance with the GOS specifications. USAID/Senegal also procured indelible ink from a U.S. supplier and provided the ink to the GOS to distribute to the polling stations nationwide.

Written materials, specifically "how-to-vote" brochures and posters, copies of the revised Electoral Code and audio materials consisting of audiocassettes were distributed directly to the GOS and to representatives of each interested political party for further dissemination at the village level by such entities.

It was expected that the following could be achieved by the end of Project (EOP):

(a) Voter education campaign would inform at least 2 million Senegalese of the new Electoral Code requirements and revised voting procedures promulgated by the new Electoral Code.

(b) A 25% increase in the number of voters participating in the elections.

(c) Greater transparency in the elections through the provision of election commodities for secret balloting in at least 2,000 polling stations.

(d) Establishment of a role for nongovernmental organizations in Senegal's electoral process.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

A. Voter Education Component

1. Written materials

--- 5,000 large illustrated posters encouraging voter registration and depicting voting at polling stations were produced and disseminated by the registered political parties and the GOS.

--- 200,000 how-to-vote brochures with illustrations were produced by SUDCOM in 6 local languages and distributed by the registered political parties and the GOS.

2. Audio materials

--- 16,000 how-to-vote audiocassettes in 6 local languages were produced and divided up between the registered political parties and the GOS.

--- 6 radio spots in the 6 local languages were developed by SUDCOM for broadcast on the radio.

3. Audiovisual materials

--- 6 T.V. spots in the local languages that depicted how-to-vote on election day were produced by SUDCOM.

B. Election Materials

The Project financed the production of the following commodities:

-- 2,000 ballot boxes

-- 4,000 voting booths

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-- 4,000 opaque voting booth curtains
-- 2,000 bottles of indelible ink

V. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS

Although USAID/Senegal signed a bilateral agreement with the GOS to implement the Project, USAID carried out all of the Project procurements for technical assistance and for commodities. The GOS wanted to contract directly for the commodities and the technical assistance. Its rationale was that it wanted to exercise "quality control" over the contents of the T.V. and radio broadcasts and insure accuracy in the how-to-vote booklets, since such materials would be viewed, aired or read by the public. To insure, however, that the production of audio and audiovisual materials would not be unduly biased in favor of the GOS's political party, USAID contracted with SUDCOM, a private NGO, to produce the T.V. and radio spots. Although the GOS approved the content of the 6 T.V. and 6 radio spots, before they were edited and produced, the GOS only actually broadcasted the six T.V. spots approximately 15 or 20 times (out of a possible 300 broadcasts that were scheduled). The T.A. contractor also monitored the broadcasts of the radio spots and noted that they were only aired a few times (less than 25), and then, only in Woloff and Pulaar. (The broadcasts in the other four languages were never aired.) Nonetheless, the audiovisual materials represent an important resource for future voter education efforts.

Similarly although the Project-financed ballot boxes and voting booths were delivered to the GOS before the Presidential elections, the GOS did not use them for the February 1993 Presidential elections. These commodities were used, however, for the legislative elections held in May 1993.

The "indelible ink" purchased under the Project was rumored to have been tampered with. However, laboratory tests did not indicate any evidence of tampering and, ultimately, USAID concludes that there was no substance to the rumor. Numerous voters verified, (many of whom are USAID FSN employees) that the "indelible ink" washed or rubbed off easily. It appears that this was attributable to improper application of the ink at many polling stations. Instead of dipping the voter's finger in the ink, numerous voters received a stamp on their wrist or finger from a non-Project financed inkpad onto which the Project-financed "indelible ink" was poured. Instructions on how to use the indelible ink were included in each bottle of ink but were not read or were ignored by the GOS.

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VI. LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the various implementation problems discussed above, one of the most important "lessons learned" is that assistance for such politically charged, and ultra-sensitive projects such as the SEAP involving voter education and legislative elections, is better implemented to the extent feasible through recognized non-partisan, non-governmental organizations or PVOs.

Two distinct advantages to this approach are: first, the "appearance of partiality" problem is avoided when USAID assistance to support public participation and transparency in such elections is channeled through non-partisan, non-governmental institutions. The beneficiaries in this case, the voters, tend to more readily accept the assistance, whether how-to-vote audiocassettes or radio spots, as "unbiased" because it was not produced or "fed to the voters" by the host government. Second, the problem of actual partisanship is avoided. Use of private radio and T.V. stations would also have increased listener/viewer acceptability of the materials broadcasted. Unfortunately, there were no private radio or T.V. stations in Senegal at the time of Project implementation. (There is now one private radio station, SUD-FM which just began broadcasting in April, 1994.)

From the inception of the Project, the GOS's commitment to the SEAP was tenuous at best. When implementation decisions were made by USAID that "disappointed" the GOS, such as the loss of the ability to control the procurement of commodities and technical services, the GOS began to lose interest in the Project. Thus, some of the Project-funded voter education campaign materials and election commodities were under-utilized. A clearer agreement with the GOS at an early stage on Project implementation could have mitigated some of the misunderstandings.