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# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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**AREAF Project Final Report  
DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGER, MALI AND BENIN  
THE ROLE OF AN EFFECTIVE LEGISLATURE**

**Grant No. AOT-0486-A-00-2134-00**

**Modification #10**

**January 1 to September 30, 1994**





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## I. INTRODUCTION

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) organized a legislative program in Niamey, Niger, for deputies from the national assemblies of Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The primary objective of the seminar was to increase the effectiveness of these nascent assemblies and to assist the process of consolidating democratic governance in these countries.

The program was planned in direct response to requests for assistance from newly elected representatives of three of the national assemblies. The program was designed in three parts: an advance visit by a small team of NDI staff and a parliamentary expert to plan for the seminar and develop a specific agenda; the seminar itself and a follow-up presence by an NDI field representative to assess the project and assist in initiatives that may have flown from the seminar.

The seminar provided an opportunity for the West African participants to address problems common to their fledgling legislatures. In addition, parliamentary experts from four established democracies representing a range of parliamentary models served as discussion facilitators thereby permitting an exchange of information and experiences between the West African parliaments and legislatures with long-term experience.

The seminar focused on institutional procedures that would be essential in making the national assemblies of participating countries effective and responsive national legislatures. Discussions were centered around the following topics that had been identified and developed in close consultation with three of the national assemblies: the role of political parties in a multiparty legislature; legislative oversight functions, access to information and analysis; the committee system; constituency servicing; the role of parliamentary opposition; and legislative relations with the executive branch, the media and the civil service.



## II. BACKGROUND

Over the past four years, Benin, Mali and Niger have taken similar paths in terms of political development underscored by the flurry of national conferences that took place in the region once Benin had established the precedent in 1990. These national conferences led to a negotiated transition in Benin, Mali and Niger under the guidance of caretaker governments. All three countries have since experienced meaningful elections, and are facing new challenges trying to consolidate democratic governance in the post-election period. Burkina Faso did not organize a national conference nor did it go through a transition as did the other three countries. The electoral process was highly contentious with some segments of political opposition boycotting the national elections of 1992. There is a scanty opposition represented in the Burkinabe parliament. Nevertheless there is some recognition that exposing deputies from Burkina Faso to democratic institutions in neighboring countries will enhance the prospects for further democratization in that country. Even though these parliaments operate in dissimilar political environment, NDI considered it useful to provide their representatives with a regional forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

During the election phase in these countries many parties functioned more like groupings around personalities, or electoral clubs, lacking any clear policy agenda. Problems of regionalism and tribalism also exacerbated the problem of parties identifying themselves with narrow regional interests. In the period following national elections, political parties in these countries have felt the need to adjust to new roles including developing effective and pro-active legislative strategies. One of the key issues that these national assemblies had to address, was how to reconcile party interests with parliamentary effectiveness.

Under the weight of the legacy of the former regimes and one party rule, even the fundamental principles of parliamentary rule were obscured. At this early stage of the political transition in most of these countries, the role of a parliamentary opposition for example, is often poorly understood on both sides of the aisle. One effect of this is that minority parties lose sight of the fact that they can play an important advocacy role despite their position in the opposition. Conversely, sitting governments tend to ignore every contribution that originates from political opposition irrespective of how constructive it looks.

### A. Benin

#### General Political Background

Known as Dahomey until 1975, Benin was a French colony until its official independence in 1960. The 12-year period subsequent to Dahomey's independence was characterized by extreme political unrest and numerous coups, one of which led to the emergence in 1972 of Major Mathieu Kerekou. Two years later, in December 1974, Kerekou declared Dahomey a Marxist-Leninist state. Over the course of the next 15 years, Kerekou attempted to restructure the government, the economy and civil society along Marxist-Leninist lines. Following two

unsuccessful coup attempts in 1975, a single party, the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin (PRPB), closely modeled after political parties in Communist countries was created. The party and its Central Committee would play a primary role in governmental decision-making throughout Kerekou's tenure. In December 1975, Dahomey was renamed the "People's Republic of Benin."

Benin, under Kerekou's leadership, suffered great economic hardships leading to accusations of corruption, nepotism, negligence and misappropriation of government funds. Finally, in 1989, as a result of escalating charges of widespread corruption within the country, the government yielded to domestic and international pressure and began enacting radical change.

From February 19 to 28, 1990, a national conference was convened in Cotonou. Some 490 delegates from more than 50 political organizations attended. The conference formed an interim Haut Conseil de la République (HCR), which counted among its 27 members three former presidents who had returned to Benin as leaders of opposition parties. Nicephore Soglo, a former World Bank official, was named interim prime minister.

In April 1990, a preliminary constitution allowing for a multiparty system, was submitted to the HCR. The new constitution counter-balanced the executive with several institutions, including a multiparty legislature, an independent judiciary and an economic and social council. By December, the draft constitution received 80 percent approval in a nation-wide referendum. Two months later, the people of Benin elected representatives to the legislature. Then with 67 percent in the second round of voting, Nicephore Soglo won the presidential elections.

### **Benin National Assembly**

Twenty-four political parties, many of whom had entered into electoral alliances, ran in the February 1991 elections. None of the two dozen parties received a majority of the seats. The largest plurality, 12 of 64 seats, were initially held by an alliance of three parties that were supportive of the policies of President Soglo. In total, 21 political parties secured seats in the legislature.

Throughout 1992 and 1993, the Republic of Benin consolidated the democratic institutions of the new government chosen in multiparty elections. The executive and legislative branches engaged in public debate over matters of national interest such as the privatization of state-owned enterprises. By August 1992, however, a presidential majority had been formed within the national assembly, easing the way for President Soglo to move ahead with his legislative program. The lack of stable alliances resulted in the October 1993 dissolution of the presidential majority due to a lack of ministerial appointments for members of the coalition in a recent cabinet reshuffle, and a new majority has yet to coalesce.

## **NDI Activities in Benin**

NDI first worked with Beninese democrats when it organized a three-day election observer training seminar in Cotonou, Benin in November 1991. The conference was held in cooperation with the Benin-based chapter of the Study and Research Group on Democracy and Economic and Social Development (GERDDES). The program provided practical information to fledgling organizations interested in promoting fair elections, but unfamiliar with the basic techniques used to enhance confidence and participation in the electoral process. Workshop sessions focusing on such issues as poll watching, independent vote count systems and voter education programs were interspersed throughout the conference.

Following a survey mission in early 1993, NDI and GERDDES-Benin co-sponsored a seminar entitled "Political Parties: the Building Blocks of Democracy," which took place from March 26 to 28. The seminar was attended by 60 participants drawn from the national assembly, party activists and officials, civic organizers and the press. The seminar focused on developing a party structure to accommodate electoral and parliamentary functions, and management of the resources that sustain this structure. Communication strategies that promote accountability, participation and an efficient flow of information within the party were also addressed. Other issues during seminar workshops included constituency building, regionalism, policy development and media relations. The conference concluded with a presentation and discussion on the role of a loyal opposition and strategies for cultivating party discipline and managing inter-party relations in a parliamentary context.

## **B. Burkina Faso**

### **General Political Background**

Since gaining its independence in 1960, Burkina Faso (formally known as Upper Volta), has weathered four *coups d'états*. The first President, Maurice Yaméogo was overthrown in January 1966 by a military coup led by General Sangoulé Lamizana. Under Lamizana's leadership, the government alternated between civil and military control. After prolonged internal political fighting and industrial unrest, President Lamizana was overthrown by Colonel Saye Zerbo in a bloodless coup in November 1980. Then in August 1983, Captain Thomas Sankara seized power in a violent coup. In his efforts to improve the economy, Sankara tried to introduce austerity measures in 1985 amidst opposition mainly from the trade union movement which has also been a constant force in the politics of the country.

In October 1987, another violent coup took place under the leadership of Captain Blaise Compaoré, in which Sankara and his close associates were killed. Compaoré assumed power as Chairman of the *Front Populaire* (FP) and has been president ever since then. The current Constitution which introduced a more open political process was adopted in June 1991. In

December 1, 1991, Compaoré was elected President, having received 90.4 percent of the votes in an election boycotted by close to 75 percent of the electorate responding to an appeal by an umbrella group of opposition parties called the *Coordination des Forces Démocratiques* (CFD).

### **Burkino Faso National Assembly**

The most recent legislative elections took place in May 1992. The May elections marked the first time in over a decade, that Burkinabe citizens had the opportunity to participate in multiparty elections. About 28 political parties participated in those elections and according to official results, the coalition of the *Organisation pour la Démocratie Populaire/Movement du Travail* (ODP/MT) won 78 of the 107 seats in the assembly (*Assemblée des Députés Populaire*). Among the nine other parties that secured representation, the most successful was Pierre Tapsoba's *Convention Nationale des Patriotes Progressistes / Parti Social-Démocrate* (CNPP-PSD), which took 12 seats. Herman Yameogo's *Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération* (AFD) won four seats. The rate of participation by voters was reported to have been little more than 35 percent. Compaore's opponents alleged widespread electoral malpractice, although international observers found that the poll had been conducted in a satisfactory manner.

NDI has conducted no previous activities in Burkina Faso.

## **C. Mali**

### **General Political Background**

Mali was formerly known as French Sudan, a part of French West Africa. In April 1959 it merged with Senegal to form the Federation of Mali, which became independent on June 20, 1960. Senegal seceded two months later, and the remnant of the Federation was proclaimed the Republic of Mali on September 20, 1960. Under Mali's first president, Modibo Keita, Mali withdrew from the Franc Zone in 1962 and developed close economic links with the USSR and other communist states.

Keita was overthrown in 1968 by a military coup, as a result of which the national assembly was also dissolved. General Moussa Traore became head of state and presided over a military regime until the establishment of a one-party state in 1979. Traore, the sole candidate of the Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien (UDPM), was elected for a five-year term, while the single list of UDPM candidates for the national assembly was elected to a four-year term. Traore was re-elected in 1985, but by 1989 was facing calls for a national conference to determine a program for a transition to multiparty politics. In the midst of general protests led by students and Malian youth, Traore was overthrown in March 1991. Following his overthrow, provision was made for the registration of political parties during a transition that lasted 14 months. By the time of the National Conference which was convened in July 1991, a Transitional Committee for the People's Salvation (CTSP), led by Lieutenant Colonel Amadou Toumani Toure and consisting of representatives of pro-democracy groups and military officers,

adhered to its pledge to organize multiparty elections and to turn power over to an elected civilian government. Thirty-six organizations were accorded official status to organize politically.

Mali became one of Africa's newest democracies in 1992. In a series of six direct elections between January and April 1992, Malians ratified a new Constitution and then elected municipal councilors, national assembly deputies and a president. The voting was conducted under an electoral code drawn up by the August 1991 National Conference, which also drafted the new Constitution. Twenty-one political parties participated in elections that resulted in the election of a 116-member national assembly. On June 8, 1992, Amadou Toumani Toure turned power over to Alpha Oumar Konare, who won 60 percent of the vote in the second round of presidential balloting in April.

Throughout the transition, the country continued to be affected by insurgency in the north, which varied from politically motivated rebels seeking an autonomous Tuareg state to simple banditry. Rebel activity which started in mid-1990 continued throughout early 1992, despite negotiations between the Government and rebel movements. The government's efforts to resolve the problems politically by implementing the National Pact led to a reduction of hostilities by the end of July 1992; even then, the peace remains an uneasy one.

#### Mali National Assembly

The new multiparty National Assembly opened its first session in July 1992. Konare's party, the Association for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA-PASJ), also won the majority of seats in the National Assembly. Ten other parties aggregated into four parliamentary groups, are also represented. During its first session, the Assembly approved legislation proposed by the government after considerable debate on all key issues. There were however opposition complaints that the government had not given the opposition fair warning of the legislative calendar, leaving them at a disadvantage to propose amendments or alternative legislation.

#### NDI Activities in Mali

NDI has conducted no active programs in Mali, but it has established relationships with Malians involved in key positions in the transition process. Ibrahima Niang, the Chairman of Mali's National Election Commission, participated in NDI's post-election round table in Senegal in July 1993. Niang clearly indicated that Mali could benefit from NDI programs in consolidating its democracy and urged NDI to involve more Malians in NDI programs. This message was reiterated recently by three members of Mali's National Assembly who visited the NDI office.

The former president of Mali, Amadou Toumani Toure, along with the former Malian minister of justice, accepted NDI's invitation to participate in the observer delegation to Togo's presidential elections, which unfortunately had to be canceled due to a deterioration of the situation in Togo. Toure joined the NDI delegation in Togo and served as co-leader with

President Jimmy Carter until cancellation of the mission. In addition, a member of Mali's National Assembly, Victorine Dakouo, joined an NDI post-election parliamentary assessment to Burundi.

## **D. Niger**

### **General Political Background**

Niger, a geographically vast country, lies in the heart of Sahelian Africa on the southern edge of the Sahara desert. More than two-thirds of the country is desert. Since independence, Niger's growing population of eight million has been governed by three regimes. The first, headed by Hamani Diori, lasted from 1960 until 1974 when a group of military officers staged a coup and toppled the regime. The Conseil Militaire Supreme (CMS), an arrangement created following the coup, administered the second government. The 12-officer council was headed by Lt. Colonel Seyni Kountche, chief of staff of the Armed Forces. After a long period of ill-health, Kountche died in a hospital in France in November 1987. The CMS immediately designated Colonel Ali Saibou, army chief of staff, as head of state and chairman of the CMS.

Following President Saibou's agreement to liberalize the political system, Niger took its first steps to re-establish multiparty democracy by convening a National Conference on Political Reform in July 1991 in Niamey. The Conference declared itself sovereign, suspended the Constitution and dissolved the legislature. The Conference designated Amadou Cheifou, formerly a regional official of the International Civil Aviation Organization, to head a transitional administration that would turn over the reins of government in early 1993 to democratically elected officials. Andre Salifou, who had presided over the Conference since August, was named as chair of the interim legislative body, the Haut Conseil de la République (HCR). The HCR was made responsible for implementing resolutions adopted by the Conference, supervising the head of state and drafting a new constitution. After passing a charter governing the activities of the newly formed political parties, the Conference disbanded in November 1991.

By the end of September 1992, the HCR completed work on the draft Constitution. A referendum was held on December 26, as a result of which the constitution was approved by 89 percent of the vote. Despite some problems with the administration of the referendum, the results were viewed as legitimate. On February 14, 1992, following the referendum, the people of Niger elected representatives to the legislature. Then in two rounds of voting on February 27 and March 27, they selected Mahamane Ousmane, leader of an alliance of parties opposed to the candidate of the former ruling party, as the new president.

These elections, the first since the country's independence, were the culmination of Niger's transition to a multiparty system. The process of conducting and competing in the elections was generally professional, transparent and without fraud; the results were accepted by all the parties.

### Niger National Assembly

The Constitution provides for an 83-member national assembly, elected on the basis of a multi-member constituency proportional representation system. Twelve of Niger's 18 registered parties competed in the elections, putting forward a total candidate lists of 569 accredited candidates. The constituencies were drawn along administrative lines (the seven departments and the commune of the capital city, Niamey), with eight "special constituencies" (single seat) added to improve the chances of securing ethnically localized representation. The range of seats in the regular constituencies was determined by the relative size of the population and the number of administrative units in each.

There are nine political parties represented in the present National Assembly. With the exception of the eight special constituencies, representation in the assembly is proportional to the votes polled in the February 1993 elections. Although the MNSD-Nassara, the former ruling party, obtained more seats in the National Assembly than any other single party, the party finds itself in parliamentary opposition. Before the second round of the presidential elections, Mahamane Ousmane's CDS-Rahama party formed a majority coalition with eight other parties including two of the larger parties, ANDP-Zaman Lahiya and PNDS-Tarraya.

### NDI Activities in Niger and the Region

Since November 1991, NDI has played an active role in assisting Niger's transition process. In November 1991 and March 1992, NDI conducted a series of seminars on election monitoring in four African countries, including Niger. These programs trained leaders of civic organizations and political parties on the mechanics of observing elections and played an important role in enhancing the capabilities of domestic monitors during recent elections in the region. In addition, NDI organized two three-day seminars in Niamey and Zinder in October 1992. They were designed to train political parties in grassroots organizing, candidate selection and constituency mobilization. Also, Adamou Kombo, the president of COSUPEL, the Nigerien election supervisory commission, joined NDI's international observer delegation to the September 1992 national elections in Romania, where he had an opportunity to learn first-hand how international observers operate.

In 1992, NDI received a request from the government of Niger to observe the legislative and presidential elections. Given the demands that had been placed upon NDI to conduct observation-related programming, NDI used Niger as a model for an innovative approach to ensuring the quality of international observation efforts for all three national elections. NDI provided staff expertise in collaboration with the U.N., prepared briefing materials, drew up a common deployment plan for all international observers, and organized a joint de-briefing. The purpose of this program, in addition to the broad objectives of encouraging transparency and adherence to the electoral laws and assessing the credibility of the process, were: 1) to limit the

prospect of widely inconsistent assessments based on a lack of information by observer groups; 2) to avoid duplication of efforts; and 3) to use limited resources effectively.

### **III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

From January 19 to 21, 1994, NDI conducted a three-day legislative training seminar in Niamey, Niger, on Parliaments in Multiparty Democracies. The seminar was an inter-regional gathering designed to bring together parliamentarians from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Niger was chosen as the site for the seminar because it is the youngest of the four legislatures, recently having conducted legislative elections in March 1992. NDI, also had been actively involved in the democratic transition process in Niger in 1993 through various election related activities.

Seventy-six delegates participated in the three day seminar. Sixty-six of this number were parliamentarians, while six were senior staff of the national assembly of Niger. Four representatives of civic organizations (GERDDES-Afrique and the Association of Women Jurists of Niger) were invited to attend the seminar as observers. A concerted effort was made to insure that the various country delegations included both male and female deputies from all political groups represented in each of the parliaments.

The international team of NDI experts assembled for the seminar included: James Coyne, former US congressman; Claude des Rosiers, clerk of the assembly of Ottawa, Canada; Magda Aelvoet, member of the Belgian parliament; Ginjo Ganev, member of the Bulgarian parliament; and Alan Ganoo member of the Mauritian Parliament and a veteran of NDI programs in Angola, Namibia, Benin and Burundi.

Through a series of workshops and plenary sessions participants were given the opportunity to exchange experiences and develop legislative skills. International experts made comparative presentations on the functioning of their parliaments and their responsibilities as members and how that relates to parliamentary activity in emerging democracies. This allowed the delegates, eager to gather information on the functioning of other parliaments, to raise issues of concern in the open discussions that followed presentations by the international experts. The international experts also met with parliamentarians in informal settings and oftentimes initiated useful and enriching discussions.

The program had been designed to encourage active interaction by the participants. Each day began with presentations in plenary session. The panels were set up so that along with the international experts, one deputy from each of the participating assemblies was allowed to present a paper on the specific case study of the country concerned with respect to the designated topic. These presentations focused on the following topics:

## ● POLITICAL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT

The presentation on this topic were led by a panel made up of Magda Aelvoet, Ginjo Ganev and Mohamed Bazoum (Nigerien Parliamentarian). The discussions that followed were moderated by Chris Fomunyoh. During the plenary session, the panelists explored the processes and structures needed to cultivate party discipline while simultaneously managing inter-party relations in parliament. The panelists also examined in detail how parties relate to each other, define and develop an agenda in the context of the parliament, the role of the opposition party, and the relationship between the parliamentary majority and the parliamentary opposition.

## ● LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS WITH THE EXECUTIVE AND THE JUDICIARY

The panel for this session was comprised of Alan Ganoo, James Coyne, Claude Des Rosiers, Ginjo Ganev and Sidibe Boua (Malian Parliamentarian) who gave presentations on their respective experiences. The allocation of constitutional power in modern democracies, the balance of power between the executive government, the legislature, and the judiciary and the relationship of checks and balances between these branches of government were explored in great detail by the panelists.

## ● LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The panel for this session was comprised of Claude Des Rosiers, Magda Aelvoet and Antoine Detchenou (Beninese Parliamentarian). Presentations in plenary session and the discussions that followed centered on the legislative process, including timely access to government briefings and independent sources of information, and the obligation of the executive branch to share information with the parliament. It also examined under what circumstances parliament may have access to classified information, how parliamentarians could verify the reliability and accuracy of such information, and the access deputies need to have to other independent and reliable sources of information.

## ● PUBLIC REPRESENTATION AND CONSTITUENCY SERVICING

The final panel for presentations in plenary session was comprised of James Coyne, Alan Ganoo and Mouhoussine Nacro (Burkinabe Parliamentarian). They each discussed various ways in which elected officials should endeavor to respond to constituents' concerns, resolve citizen complaints and obtain policy responses to constituent needs. This panel also explored how constituents should be encouraged to communicate and interact with their parliamentary representatives, how parliament should communicate the results of its legislative work agenda and accomplishments to the public, and how it is within the rights of constituents to be informed about the parliamentary activities of their respective deputies.



## ● WORKSHOPS AND SIMULATION

After the plenary sessions, participants were divided into three workshops. In these smaller groups of 25, members discussed in further detail issues raised during the plenary sessions. They also took part in a simulation exercise designed to provide a more pragmatic approach to the training program. Discussions in the three workshops were moderated by the international experts.

The main thrust of the simulation exercise was on the formulation of a national budget and how legislators could approach and influence the process in a constructive manner. Groups were set up to represent the parliamentary majority, the parliamentary opposition and in one of the workshops, a multitude of small moderate parties. Participants were then assigned specific roles and presented with different fact patterns and thought provoking scenarios designed to stimulate debate.

In preparing for the simulation, a deliberate effort was made early on to interchange roles so that participants who were members of the parliamentary majority in their various assemblies played the role of opposition party leaders and vice versa. Fact sheets were given to participants at the end of each day in preparation for the next day's discussions. The facts were different in many respects depending on the role assigned to each group of participants. During the last plenary session at the end of the seminar, a representative from each of the three workshops submitted the observations and conclusions of that workshop to the rest of the assembly. An overwhelming majority of participants found the simulation exercise to be both instructive and useful in improving negotiation skills, promoting mutual understanding and the tolerance of opposing view points

## IV. PROGRAM RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NDI monitored and evaluated the program according to established NDI self-evaluation procedures. Staff members met periodically to review the program as it progressed, collected comments and critiques from participants and presenters, and sought feedback from other relevant individuals in the countries concerned. Questionnaires were also distributed to participants at the beginning of the seminar as part of the briefing material. In response, an overwhelming majority of the participants were pleased with the overall effectiveness of the conference and felt that the plenary and workshop sessions were interesting and beneficial.

Fifty-six evaluation forms were returned by participants. The respondents described the program as positive, enriching and useful but charged. The group felt that the seminar was too short and should have been extended over a longer period of time. The workshops and the simulations/practice cases, as well as the selected articles that were distributed at the seminar, were all considered by the participants to be innovative and valuable.



The presentation on public representation and constituency servicing was considered to be the most informative. This is particularly significant because the requirement that these deputies serve a "national" mandate as stipulated in their various constitutions makes it difficult for some of them to perceive how they could then be expected to best serve or relate to the constituency which put them in office. This issue seemed to be even more complicated in the case of deputies elected into office by proportional representation with large electoral districts.

The participants made suggestions as to what they would like to see in future seminars. Suggestions included a conference focusing on the problematic of democracy and development, in-depth analysis of the financial and socio-political implications of the devaluation of the CFA franc and discussions on the role of the supreme court in newly established democracies. An overwhelming majority of participants found the comparative presentations and the opportunity of meeting with international experts and other African deputies very useful. Most of the respondents indicated a desire to be included in future training seminars.

## **V. FOLLOW-UP PRESENCE**

NDI had also planned to send a parliamentary expert on a follow-up trip to observe the parliaments of at least one of the participating countries when it next reconvened. He/she was to serve as an NDI resource person to the participating national legislature for a total period of about six weeks, depending on the legislative calendar, to offer follow-up assistance evaluating the project's effectiveness. He/ she was also to identify those aspects of the training program that might have been incorporated into legislative reform in the host country. NDI determined that Niger would be the appropriate site for the follow-up assistance because of NDI's previous experience in the country and the fact that the highest number of deputies who participated in the program were from the Nigerien national assembly.

Evaluation responsibilities of this NDI field representative were to include:

- Evaluate the extent to which the seminar succeeded in facilitating an ongoing dialogue regarding the effectiveness of these legislatures, and identify which post-seminar initiatives or reforms were derived directly from the seminar.
- Assess specific recommendations that emerged from the seminar regarding the functioning of an effective legislature, particularly with regard to the reconciliation of party interests and legislative effectiveness. Also to be assessed were the practice and utility of skills presented at the seminar on how to avoid legislative deadlock and strengthen legislative legitimacy.
- Evaluate how the seminar's focus on institutional accountability within the parliament -- including the roles of both the parliamentary majority and opposition -- influenced these legislatures. Particular issues to be reviewed and evaluated after the

seminar were to include methods of consultation between the majority and minority parties, access to information, the committee systems, floor debate and voting procedures.

- Assess the utilization of the communication skills discussed during the seminar concerning relations with the media, the civil service and civic organizations. Also, assess from a comparative approach, which constituency-servicing skills from the seminar were being adapted by this legislature to its country-specific, socio-political environment.

- Determine the amount of interest among the participating legislatures in establishing regional support systems and communication networks.

The interference of a series of unforeseen events has prevented NDI from executing this phase of its program. Just as NDI was about to send a field representative to Niger during the Summer session of parliament, the national assembly became entangled in a long drawn out partisan quarrel which led to a boycott of the proceedings by the entire opposition. Shortly thereafter, the Agency for International Development (AID) sent out a team of consultants to evaluate AREAF funded activities in Africa, including NDI activities in Niger. The timing of the team's visit to Niger rendered redundant the need for a separate NDI evaluator at that same time. NDI then planned the follow-up evaluation for October 1994 but has just learned that because of a constitutional crisis between the Executive and the Legislative branches of Government, the Nigerien parliament has been dissolved with new legislative elections scheduled to take place within 90 days.