



Quarterly Report
BANGLADESH: STRENGTHENING COOPERATION
AMONG POLITICAL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT
USAID Grant No. 388-A-00-99-00027-00
April 1 to June 30, 2000

I. SUMMARY

Following a November 1998 assessment mission to Bangladesh and in response to various requests by Bangladeshi political leaders, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), initiated a nine-month program in June 1999 to strengthen cooperation among Bangladeshi political parties in parliament. NDI has attempted to achieve this goal by: consulting directly with political party members to help them find ways to work together and improve parliamentary functioning; encouraging civil society to become more involved in the political process; and assisting parliamentary staff improve the public image of parliament. Without a guarantee of future funding and upon the conclusion of the field representative's contract, in February 2000 NDI temporarily closed the Institute's office in Bangladesh. As a result of the many activities NDI has conducted during previous quarters, the Institute was able to successfully lay the groundwork that could lead to political reform in Bangladesh. ¹

II. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Institute is currently preparing to resume activities in the country. NDI would likely send two parliamentary and civic experts to the country to consult with civic leaders in an effort to help them assess their current needs related to political advocacy and make recommendations on ways to enhance their advocacy efforts. The experts would also meet with political leaders from the various parties in parliament to renew the Institute's personal relationships with the party members, assist the leaders assess their progress in working to reform the political institutions and make recommendations on continued reform efforts. While in country, the experts would also likely distribute a compilation of recommendations, developed jointly by Bangladesh civic and political leaders and NDI trainers and staff over the course of the program, on ways to improve the political system.

¹ Reported expenditures during this quarter reflect costs accrued during previous quarters that were recently posted to this account as well as minor costs in salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment, communications and postage and contractual services.