



CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: April – June 2005

**JORDAN: SUPPORTING POLITICAL PARTIES, PARLIAMENTARY BLOCS
AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (04862)
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

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I. SUMMARY

Political parties and parliamentary blocs in Jordan suffer from both internal and external challenges and pressures. They lack maturity and the ability to identify and present serious programs and platforms. They are dominated by individualistic agendas and operate under a restrictive political parties law and outdated bylaws. Their effectiveness is also further challenged by tribalism, where blood ties are often more important than political platforms. The Islamists represent the only strong, organized opposition force, best represented in the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party. They, too, fail to present national policy positions and programs, however. More importantly, the polarization of Jordanian politics, with the regime on one side and the Islamists on the other, has resulted in the lack of a democratic middle where reform-minded democratic activists are able to effectively engage in the political processes of the Kingdom.

Since the June 2003 parliamentary elections, there has been a renewed emphasis on political development and democratic reform in Jordan. There is a strong political will on the part of King Abdullah and a few key ministers to initiate and sustain Jordan's political development process. For the most part however, such will and enthusiasm do not permeate the Kingdom's social and political institutions. Political parties are not well developed or integrated into the political culture of the country and continue to face challenges to their ability to adequately reach out to citizens and present policy programs that respond to their needs. Most importantly, members of parliament are inexperienced and lack adequate staff and resources and parliamentary blocs lack cohesion and stability. Women in Jordan are also still struggling to overcome institutional and social barriers to their political participation and are especially affected by the parliamentary and party challenges mentioned above.

To promote a more representative multiparty political system and strengthen women's political participation in Jordan, NDI's current program seeks to support political parties and parliamentary blocs through a series of consultations and training workshops that address such topics as policy research and development with a focus on constituency outreach; articulation of policy positions and platforms; and media development and media relations. NDI is also working to organize a national

forum to debate the valuable role that women activists play within parties, and identify and develop a strategy by which parties can further encourage women's political participation.

During this quarter, NDI conducted the following program activities:

- Organized a field visit and presentation for 80 women in the village of Shunaq in the Irbid governorate to introduce them to the experiences of "Jordanian Women in Politics";
- Held a series of meetings with MPs to gauge their impressions on the newly formed cabinet and to assess the status of key reform initiatives within parliament;
- Conducted a field visit with Jerash MP Ali Qoqazeh to his constituency;
- Held consultations with five of Jordan's eight parliamentary blocs on how to build strong and cohesive blocs;
- Conducted separate two-day strategic planning workshops for members of the Al-Ahd and Al-Wasat political parties; and
- Held a training workshop for 50 members of the Al-Wasat Party on constituency outreach and communications.

In the next quarter, NDI will conduct additional training workshops for MPs, parliamentary blocs and political parties on such topics as the proper role of an MP, media relations, and internal party management and communication. The Institute will also organize a study mission for Jordanian MPs to Morocco in order to expose them to the interaction between parliamentary blocs and political parties, as well as to develop their skills in policy research and development. NDI will also seek to expose Jordanian MPs and political parties to the experiences of their counterparts in Yemen. Finally, the Institute will intensify its efforts to organize a national forum on the role of women within political parties and in advance of the 2007 elections.

II. BACKGROUND

After postponing the November 2001 parliamentary elections and dissolving parliament in June 2001, Jordan's King Abdullah appointed a committee to draft a new election law and passed the draft without vetting it through parliament. The new law disappointed many observers by maintaining a voting formula that many critics contest increases tribal domination of elections. The law increases the number of parliamentary seats and constituencies and allocates a few more seats to urban, Palestinian-dominated areas, although it does not adequately correct the imbalance in the number of voters in various constituencies that undermines the principle of equality of each person's vote. The law also does nothing to enhance the role of political parties, level the playing field for women, or downplay tribalism – all recurring hindrances to democracy in Jordan. With the new elections law in place, observers anticipated that the parliamentary elections may be held in summer or fall of 2002, but polls did not take place until June 17, 2003.

The June 2003 Parliamentary Elections

Jordan's weak civil society and the inability of its political parties to impress voters in a largely tribal society have long hampered the Kingdom's move toward democracy. While tribal affiliations remained a more decisive electoral factor than ideological or political considerations, the June 2003 elections did present an opportunity for Jordanian citizens to deepen their participation in the political process, and advance a sense of democratic entitlement, which is important both to the country and the region. The parliamentary elections witnessed the return of Islamic parties, as well as leftist and nationalist groups, after six years of political disengagement. Jordan's nascent civil society also had

an opportunity to mobilize and develop as it studied and analyzed the electoral process. Moreover, six new parliamentary seats were created and reserved for women, guaranteeing the election of six women deputies. These women MPs have a unique opportunity to advocate for democratic reform and for increased women's political participation in Jordan.

Post-Election Developments

Following the elections, the newly elected parliament saw the formation of loosely grouped ideological blocs. In addition to the Islamist and Democratic blocs, the National Parliamentary Action grouping came to encompass 30 deputies and Al-Watan included 23. The Reformist Bloc has five members. The remaining Independent MPs are often viewed as a 6th bloc. With the exception of the Islamist bloc, almost none emerged as a vigorous political lobby with a clearly defined agenda. Parliament held an extraordinary session in the summer of 2003 and began discussing some of the most controversial laws among the 230 temporary laws passed by government in the past two years. The Senate and the Lower House differed on three temporary laws debated during this session, in particular the Personal Status Law, dubbed the "khuloe law," which allows women to initiate divorce by paying their husbands financial compensation. Islamist, conservative and tribal MPs joined ranks and dashed the hopes of both women and human rights groups by rejecting the law - albeit by a narrow margin, with 44 deputies out of 83 voting against.

In November 2003, the King appointed 55 senators to the Upper House, including 7 women. The 14th parliament's first regular session began on December 1 and concluded at the end of March. In addition to parliamentary developments, a new government was sworn in on October 25, 2003 in Jordan. The 21-member cabinet was led by Prime Minister Faisal Fayez and brought together former ministers along with many new faces, mainly young technocrats, as well as three women. Some ministries were scrapped, others were merged, and a new portfolio, that of political development, was created to implement a comprehensive plan for reform.

Current Political Context

New and Newer Government

Adnan Badran, President of Philadelphia University in Jordan, was named as the new Prime Minister in April, replacing Faisal Fayez. The announcement of the government change was accompanied by a reorganization within the Royal Court. The court announced that Fayez will return to the familiar territory of the Royal Court, where he served as chief of protocol and Royal Court minister. Marwan Muasher, former deputy prime minister, has been appointed as Royal Court minister. Additionally, Rania Atallah, former director of Her Majesty Queen Rania's office, has been appointed as head of the court's media and information department.

Since the formation of the new cabinet on April 7, several meetings have been held with HM King Abdullah and the new cabinet to discuss the new government's mandate and top priorities. Based on these meetings, the cabinet was tasked with setting the guidelines, programs, strategies and policies for development and reform in Jordan. The 25-member Cabinet is regarded as a reformist team that will push forward with highly desired social and political reforms.

The new government was met with mixed reactions from the various political actors in the country. Professional Unions are optimistic and foresee a good outcome from the new cabinet, particularly with regard to the draft Professional Associations Law that was introduced by former

Interior Minister Samir Habashneh and rejected by the Professional Unions as being a setback for democracy and freedom. The new government has announced that the draft law might be withdrawn and that if new legislation is introduced, it would be after it is discussed and agreed upon by all concerned parties.

Members of Parliament, on the other hand, are greatly dissatisfied with the new government. Forty-eight MPs have signed a statement to withhold confidence upon the resumption of the ordinary session or if an extraordinary session is called for. Their disappointment stems from the fact that Parliament was not consulted by Prime Minister Adnan Badran when he formed his government. Certain MPs are also outraged because the new cabinet failed to include any figures from the South of the Kingdom. Others disagree with the appointment of certain ministers that heavily clashed with Parliament while serving in the previous cabinet, mainly Minister of Finance Bassem Awadallah.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF) Bloc, for its part, said that its confidence vote would be based on the government's policy statement and agenda, rather than its formation. IAF deputies met with PM Badran upon his appointment and declared that they felt the government was "serious" about its desire to tackle issues of concern to citizens. IAF's 17-deputy bloc had called for a meeting with the premier to better acquaint themselves with the government's policy and its agenda. In their meeting, deputies presented Badran with a seven-point memo detailing the issues that the government needs to address. The memo called for ensuring greater public freedoms and raising the ceiling of freedom of expression by revising controversial laws including the public gatherings and the press and publications laws. It also called for a halt to the hike in prices and taxes and for improving the living standards of citizens as well as effectively fighting financial and administrative corruption. The deputies called on the government to turn into reality plans for political reform, saying it should start with amendments to the country's "delinquent" electoral law as well as the recently introduced political parties' draft law and the professional associations' bill which received widespread public criticism.

In a surprising development, Minister of Finance Bassem Awadallah submitted his resignation to King Abdullah on June 16, reflecting a new reality for the political scene. The petition that 48 MPs signed openly voiced objections to the cabinet's economic team, which Awadallah leads. MPs saw Awadallah's resignation as a "positive step" towards reform. For his part, King Abdullah termed Awadallah's resignation as a "great sacrifice" for the country, a message that was widely disseminated by the major daily newspapers, as well as Jordan Radio and Television. Awadallah had resigned as Minister of Planning and International Cooperation in February, only to come back as Minister of Finance in the new government.

Prime Minister Adnan Badran has begun consultations for a cabinet reshuffle to include ministers representing the southern provinces, and to reorganize the economic team in the cabinet following Awadallah's resignation. The anticipated reshuffle will be wide-ranging and changes are expected in key ministerial portfolios. New changes will likely include the exit of foreign minister Farouk al-Kasrawi, who might be replaced by Marwan Muasher, a former foreign minister and current director of the royal Hashemite court. Resigned Finance Minister Bassem Awadallah will replace Muasher in the royal court, which is under the direct jurisdiction of the King, Abdullah II. Several ministers are expected to leave the cabinet, notably Minister of Government Performance Salah al-Basheer and Telecommunications Minister Nadia al-Saeed.

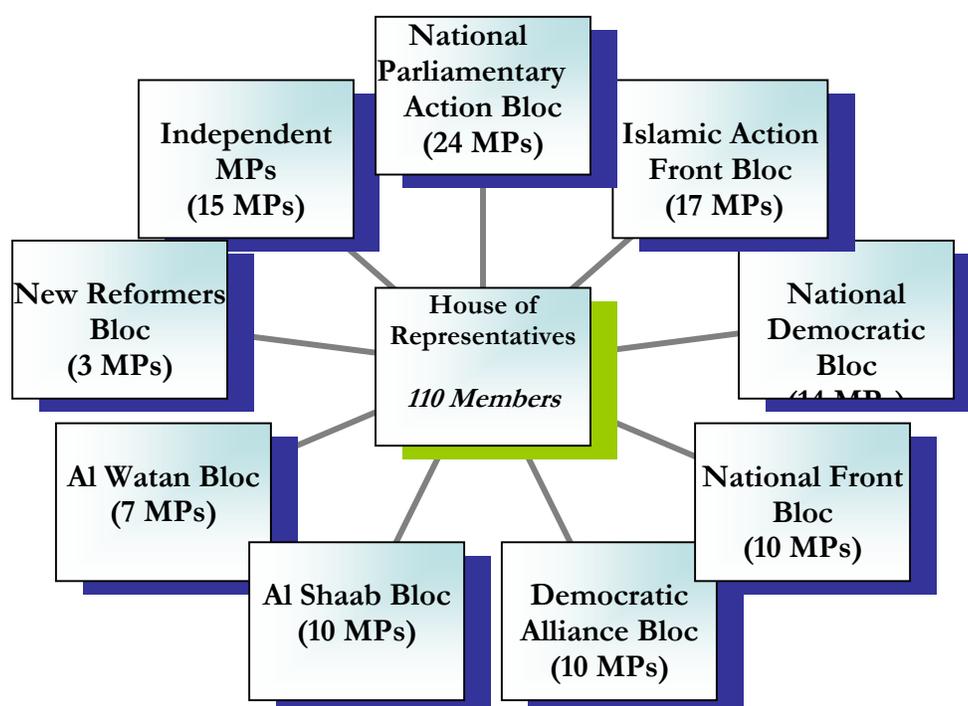
Parliament

The 14th Parliament's second ordinary session was recessed on April 1, and the next ordinary session is slated for November. According to the Constitution, the King may summon the National Assembly whenever necessary, to meet in an extraordinary session for an unspecified period at the request of an absolute majority of the deputies. In May, the Lower House presented a petition requesting an extraordinary session to the government within a week. The petition placed the new government's policy statement on top of a list of 83 temporary and draft laws, 10 of which were recently presented by the government, on the agenda. The government initially rejected the notion of holding the session in May and announced that it would take place in September instead. On June 6, however, the King declared that the extraordinary session for parliament will take place at the end of the same month. Current predictions foresee the session taking place in mid-July.

According to senior government officials, the upcoming cabinet reshuffle will depend on the outcomes of meetings between King Abdullah and the parliamentary blocs. During the week of June 19th, the King met with members of the eight parliamentary blocs (National Parliamentary Action Front, New Reformists, National Democratic Coalition, Shaab, Watan, Islamic Action Front, Democratic Alliance, and National Front) as well as independent MPs to discuss both political and socio-economical issues and the formation of the new cabinet.

In these meetings, King Abdullah urged a "new chapter" between deputies and the government, which, he said, should work as "one team" to meet challenges facing Jordan. The King reiterated that the government will closely coordinate with parliament while designing its program so that both branches are working for a common interest. He also emphasized that open dialogue and communication form the basis of the democratic process and that the success of Jordan's development plan is related to the cooperation between the government and parliament.

Blocs in Jordan's House of Representatives



Political Parties

On March 22, then Minister of Political Development Munther Shara presented a new draft law amending the existing Political Parties Law passed in 1992. Shara said the formulation of the draft was based on in-depth dialogue and meetings with the Kingdom's political parties and civil society institutions, in addition to youth, women's and human rights organizations. While the draft law would provide for public funding for the parties, it prohibits the use of mosques, clubs, professional associations, or sports clubs for political party activities, bans recruiting and campaigning at educational institutions, and bars activities that could harm Jordan's relations with other countries. Most political parties strongly rejected the draft law and called for better political parties and elections legislation based on proportional representation to further promote the development of a competitive multiparty political system.

In early May, Prime Minister Adnan Badran announced that the government was determined to reconsider the political parties draft law, stressing that the bill would be drafted after national consensus with the participation of the Kingdom's political parties.

In June, Jordan's opposition political parties unveiled their formula or “vision” for political reform and called for amendments to several laws perceived as the reason why freedoms and democracy have regressed. In remarks to the press, the Secretary Generals of the 15 parties that are members of the Opposition Parties Higher Coordination Committee said the country's democratic move towards greater public freedoms started to backslide in 1993 with the introduction of the one-person, one-vote electoral system. In their recommendations for political reform, the parties called for amending numerous laws deemed “restrictive” to public freedoms. The list includes the controversial one-person, one vote system, and the public assembly, political parties, municipalities, associations, youth and labor laws as well as legislation pertaining to women's rights, judicial independence and a free media. The parties also called for changing the mechanism for forming governments saying the current mode does not provide Parliament with a real chance to practice its role as monitor and only results in changing figures rather than programs or policies.

National Agenda

Last February, King Abdullah formed a Steering Committee of 26 members and tasked it with developing a 10-year National Agenda for the country. The Agenda will set the guidelines for the development process during the coming decade and will draw up programs, strategies and policies to which successive governments will also be committed. The Steering Committee is expected to draft the agenda by September.

One of the key themes that the committee is currently focusing on is a new elections law for the country. The new law may eliminate all forms of quotas for the 2007 polls, which would weaken the chances for Circassians/Chechens, Christians and women to be elected to public office.

III. OBJECTIVES

NDI's strategy in Jordan involves strengthening the capacity of political parties, parliamentary blocs and politically marginalized groups, such as women, to improve their abilities to promote democratic practices at all levels of Jordanian society. With the overall goal of encouraging a more

representative multiparty political system and expanding women's political participation, the specific objectives of NDI's program in Jordan are the following:

- To provide political parties and parliamentary blocs with the technical skills and resources necessary to develop coherent national platforms and effectively present them to constituents;
- To assist political parties and parliamentary blocs to expand their support bases and become better representatives of the Jordanian electorate; and
- To promote increased support for women activists in political parties and encourage the adoption of effective measures to strengthen their roles.

IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

During this reporting period, NDI:

- Organized a field visit and presentation for 80 women in the village of Shunaq in Irbid to introduce them to the experiences of "Jordanian Women in Politics";
- Held a series of meetings with MPs to gauge their impressions on the newly formed cabinet and to assess the status of key reform initiatives within parliament;
- Conducted a field visit with Jerash MP Ali Qoqazeh to his constituency;
- Held consultations with five of Jordan's eight parliamentary blocs on how to build strong and cohesive blocs;
- Conducted separate two-day strategic planning workshops for members of the Al-Ahd and Al-Wasat political parties; and
- Held a training workshop for 50 members of the Al-Wasat Party on constituency outreach and communications.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Women's Political Participation Initiatives

Ten women representing four political parties in Jordan, as well as four independent activists, participated in the *Win with Women-Partners in Participation* Regional Campaign School held in Amman, Jordan March 28-April 1. Women were chosen by the party leadership of Al-Ahd, Al-Wasat, the National Constitutional Party and the Democratic Party of the Left to participate in the campaign school. In response to an invitation by a member of Al-Ahd party and a participant at the Regional Campaign School, NDI organized a field visit and a presentation on May 7 for 80 women in the village of Shunaq in the Irbid governorate to introduce them to the experiences of "Jordanian Women in Politics." During the event, women in attendance had the opportunity to hear from a former woman candidate in Irbid who ran for office in the parliamentary elections in 2003, Ms. Faizah El-Zu'bi. Faizah provided the women with real life stories of her political activism and her campaign for elected office.

B. Meetings and Consultations with MPs and Parliamentary Blocs

Post-Cabinet Meetings

From April 11-14, NDI held a series of meetings with members of the House of Representatives to gauge their impressions on the newly formed cabinet and to assess the status of key reform initiatives within parliament, including proposed amendments to parliamentary bylaws. NDI found a high level of disappointment on the part of MPs with the process by which the new government was formed, as well as disagreement over the selection of certain controversial figures to lead key ministries.

Field Visit to Jerash

On April 30, NDI staff accompanied Jerash MP Ali Qoqazeh on a tour and visit of his constituency. MP Qoqazeh and NDI staff toured Jerash's historical sites and visited with local shop owners, tour guides, and restaurant waiters, all of whom constitute significant voting blocs in Jerash. MP Qoqazeh had served on the Jerash local council for eight years prior to being elected to Parliament and it was clear that his work at the local level had provided him with the citizens' trust, admiration and respect. At nearly every step of the way, the MP was approached by local citizens who would ask for a variety of services that ranged from the waiver of a traffic ticket to the resolution of a tribal feud to jobs for their children or the construction and dedication of a covered rest area for local tour guides to protect them from the sun. NDI staff was able to see firsthand the "patronage MP" reality in Jordan and to get an idea of how MPs view their role vs. what citizens understand their role to be.

Parliamentary Consultations

From June 12-20, 2005, NDI conducted separate consultation sessions for parliamentary blocs as well as independent MPs in Jordan on "How to Build a Strong and Cohesive Parliamentary Bloc." The session was made available to all interested bloc members and independent MPs and occurred on a bloc-by-bloc basis. About 40 MPs attended the sessions. Out of the eight blocs in Parliament, NDI met with five, each one separately: National Parliamentary Action Bloc, Democratic Alliance Bloc, Al-Watan Bloc, New Reformers Bloc, and National Front Bloc. NDI also met with a number of Independent deputies.

Mr. Gerard Latulippe conducted the consultations. Mr. Latulippe is NDI's Resident Director in Morocco where he currently manages a capacity building program for Moroccan MPs and parliamentary staff. Mr. Latulippe has over 20 years of experience in political affairs at the local, provincial and federal levels, having served as special adviser of a former Québec Premier and as Minister of Public Security and Member of Parliament. He also has significant experience in Québec public service, having held two diplomatic posts as Québec General Delegate in Mexico and Brussels and as Deputy Under Secretary of the Ministry of International Affairs. Mr. Latulippe is a lawyer holding a Master's Degree in International Politics from the Université Libre de Bruxelles as well as a License in Law, and a Post Graduate in Business Administration (DSA) from Montréal University.

During the consultative sessions, Mr. Latulippe had an opportunity to hear from each bloc on the state of blocs in Parliament, as well as the challenges that are facing blocs. He then proceeded to do a presentation on the organization and function of blocs in Parliament, sharing examples from both Canada and Morocco, among others. There was a clear exchange of experiences and ideas at these sessions. Discussions focused on the tribal nature of Jordanian society, the one-person one-vote

electoral system that results in a tribally-dominated Parliament, the weak state of political parties, the King's vision for political development, among others. The most important topic of debate, however, was the current rules of procedures/bylaws in Parliament, which do not recognize blocs and do not extend them any resources or privileges. Mr. Latulippe focused on the need to advocate for amendments to the bylaws that would institutionalize blocs by setting a minimum number of members for each bloc, and establishing strict rules for movement from one bloc to another. Moreover, bylaws should provide for certain privileges to bloc members, such as a meeting/office space, staff and researchers, representation in the Permanent Bureau, speaking time, etc. NDI provided MPs with three Arabic language examples of rules of procedure that recognize blocs from the following countries: Czech Republic, France and Morocco.

In addition to meeting with the blocs, Mr. Laulippe held a consultative session with members of the Legal Committee of the Lower House, including the Chair of the Committee. The committee is currently reviewing possible amendments to the bylaws that would help strengthen blocs, namely the setting of 10 members as the minimum number of MPs needed to form a bloc. These amendments are likely to be brought to the floor of the House for discussion during the upcoming extraordinary session. NDI is currently putting together a detailed comparative chart of rules of procedure from a variety of countries that will be translated into Arabic and distributed to Jordanian MPs to assist them in their efforts to reform the Parliament's internal bylaws.



NDI Consultation Session with Members of the National Front Bloc

C. Political Party Training Workshops

Strategic Planning

From April 25-30, NDI conducted separate two-day strategic planning workshops for Al-Ahd and Al-Wasat political parties. NDI political party expert and trainer David Rose traveled to Amman from Jerusalem to serve as a trainer for the workshops, which served to assist party members to hone their goals and objectives, and begin to develop action plans for their work. Sessions focused on “Tools for Building your Party”, “Understanding Message”, and “Your Vision for Ten Years from

Now.” All participants received powerpoint handouts of the material as well as copies of NDI’s manual “Political Parties and the Transition to Democracy” in Arabic.

The training for Al-Ahd attracted 26 participants. Al-Ahd party had been active in the early 1990s but re-established itself with 50 out of the original 74 founding members in August 3002. It is a political, national reform party aiming to advocate for change and democracy, participate in the political life and to have the right to deliberate legislatives. Women and youth form over 32 percent of its 210 members. Al-Ahd has no elected members in Parliament but one member in the Senate. The main funding source for the party is its members.

Al-Wasat party workshop brought together 30 party leaders and members. Founded in 2001, the Al Wasat Islamic party has 400 active members with offices in Amman, Salt and Deir Allah. Many of the party’s members are women. The party's committees are: legal, financial and economical, party coordination, Islamic guidance, political, party awareness, parliamentary, organizational and membership committee. In addition there are two sectorial committees: the women’s committee and university work committee.

Participants from both parties expressed a high level of satisfaction with the workshops’ content and organization. Party leaders also requested additional workshops on such topics as campaign design and implementation, training of trainers, as well as constituency outreach, among others.

Constituency Outreach and Communications

In response to requests from Al-Wasat Party leadership, NDI conducted a one-day training workshop on June 19 for over 50 members of Al-Wasat (including 15 women) on Constituency Outreach and Communications. Participants represented all 12 governorates in the Kingdom and most held leadership positions within the party's bureaus and local branches. The Constituency Outreach and Communications workshop was designed to be a follow-up to NDI's Strategic Planning training in April. Mr. Gerard Latulippe served as trainer for the highly-interactive workshop. Participants received copies of a powerpoint presentation on the topic as well as Arabic language copies of an NDI-Morocco guide on Gaining Voters' Support: Political Party Work In-Between Elections.

After being introduced to participants, Mr. Latulippe presented various ways to target potential supporters and emphasized the need for continuous involvement with the community and for finding solutions to issues that directly affect citizens. Another technique for identifying potential supporters is the use of previous elections data or polling systems to help the party hone its targeting and outreach efforts. Participants confirmed that the party does have access to data from previous elections and that they plan to rely on this information to identify communities that the party could effectively target for support.

The next session focused on the importance of message, which was defined as "the synthesis and simplification of the party's values and the priorities of its political agenda." Mr. Latulippe explained that a good message is short, easy for you audience to understand, unique and different from your competitors, positive and credible, persuasive and important to your audience, and repeated again and again.

When choosing an issue to speak about and work on, the party should make sure that it will result in a real improvement in people’s lives, that it give people a sense of their own power, and that it

alter the relations of power. The issue should also be worthwhile, winnable, widely felt, and easy to understand.

Mr. Latulippe gave an example of such an issue, based on his experience in Canada, where in one community there, toxic waste was being dumped by industrial factories and was affecting the residents' quality of life. One political party took up the cause enlisting local groups and community leaders join forces to put pressure on officials to remove the toxic waste. The party gained the trust of the community and could then count on the citizens' votes in the future.

Using the above criteria, participants were divided into small groups and were tasked with selecting an issue that is important to their community and then developing a party message on the issue. Groups chose a variety of topics, ranging from education, environment, health, and economic issues.

Mr. Latulippe then went on to discuss ways by which a party can effectively deliver its message to constituents. These include the party newspaper, brochures, door to door handouts, public place handouts, mailings, and a website. NDI shared with participants examples of newspapers and websites designed by political parties in Morocco.

The final session of the workshop focused on membership. NDI provided Al-Wasat members with specific tips on how to raise the party's membership. These included:

- Having a party constitution with limited conditions for accepting new members;
- Using the party's activities and sponsored social events to set up a network of potential supporters and organize follow up visits for membership recruitment;
- Organizing a door to door recruitment campaign; and
- Training volunteer recruiters.



Scenes from NDI's Training Workshop for Al-Wasat Political Party

V. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective # 1: *To provide political parties and parliamentary blocs with the technical skills and resources necessary to develop coherent national platforms and effectively present them to constituents.*

- Through consultative sessions conducted by NDI, members of five or Jordan's eight parliamentary blocs were provided with the skills necessary to propose amendments to the rules and bylaws governing blocs; These amendments are likely to be brought to the floor during the next parliamentary session.
- Through strategic planning workshops, 26 members of the Al-Ahd Party and 30 members of the Al-Wasat Party were provided with the skills necessary to strengthen their party's internal structure, begin long-term planning and develop and present their party's message to the public.
- Using materials distributed at NDI's strategic planning workshop, Al-Wasat party began conducting Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops on strategic planning for their membership chapters in key governorates.

"We listened and we will review the examples given and integrate them into our efforts to amend the Parliament's internal bylaws."

- *MP Hashem Qaissi*
Member, Legal Committee of the House of Representatives

Objective # 2: *To assist political parties and parliamentary blocs to expand their support bases and become better representatives of the Jordanian electorate.*

- Through a training workshop organized by NDI, 50 members of the Al-Wasat Party were provided with the skills necessary to conduct more effective constituency outreach and communications.

Objective # 3: *To promote increased support for women activists in political parties and encourage the adoption of effective measures to strengthen their roles.*

- NDI's political party training workshops in recent months have included over 25 women party members. These women are increasingly gaining new skills to serve their parties and to strengthen their own political leadership and participation.
- With NDI's assistance, a former woman candidate was able to share her campaign and political experience with over 80 women from the village of Shunaq in the Irbid governorate.

VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

During NDI's consultative sessions with parliamentary, MPs commented on the main challenges they are presented with. Among the main challenges are:

- The absence of parliamentary governance system weakens the legislative branch. Even though Jordan’s constitution encourages such a system, the Prime Minister and the cabinet are not selected from within Parliament and hence can not effectively influence the political process or key decisions that impact citizens’ lives;
- Blocs in Parliament do not have access to staff or research services, which hamper their ability to analyze legislation and provide for sound amendments;
- Blocs do not receive any funding to support their work;
- Blocs are formed around personalities and individuals, not around plans of action; and
- There are no regulations that govern the movement of an MP from one bloc to another. Blocs are commonly compared to “moving sand dunes” within Parliament because they shift so often and so much.

"If I want to move to another bloc, I just say 'bye' and I leave. It's easy."

- *MP Raji Haddad*
Member, National Parliamentary Action Front Bloc

Despite these challenges, however, MPs unanimously agree that blocs are important and that they performance within Parliament must be strengthened. Deputies realize that blocs are not nearly as effective as they should be and are willing to work to change that.

Participants from both the Al-Ahd and Al-Wasat Parties expressed a high level of satisfaction with the content and organization of the strategic planning sessions conducted by NDI. Party leaders also requested additional workshops on such topics as campaign design and implementation, training of trainers, as well as constituency outreach, among others. In response, NDI organized a workshop for members of the Al-Wasat Party on conducting effective constituency outreach and communication. The Institute received positive feedback from participants and the party leadership on the training, as well as numerous requests for additional workshops.

VII. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In the next quarter, NDI will conduct the following program activities:

- Conduct training sessions for parliamentary blocs on the role of an MP, legislative oversight, policy research, constituency outreach, and media relations;
- Organize a study mission of ten Jordanian MPs to Morocco in order to see the interaction between parliamentary blocs and political parties, as well as develop skills in policy research and development;
- Hold roundtable discussions for Jordanian MPs and political parties with their counterparts from Yemen that would focus on “Democratic Politics in a Tribal Society”;
- Conduct training workshops for political parties on public speaking, internal party management and communication, and advanced strategic planning; and
- Consult and coordinate efforts with the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) to organize a national forum on the role of women in political parties and in advance of the 2007 elections.