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Final Report

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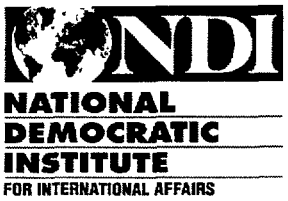

Latin American and Caribbean Regional Grant
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September 23, 1993, through September 30, 1996

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, with the exception of Cuba, every country in the Western Hemisphere has a government selected by popular will. Only 15 years ago, almost one-third of the Americas was under authoritarian rule. This is not the first time that democracy has been embraced in the hemisphere. During this century, many Latin American and Caribbean countries experimented with democracy only to see their efforts fail. It is impossible to predict with certainty whether current democratic trends will endure or suffer the same fate as previous attempts.

Despite the rebirth of formal democratic structures throughout the region, a history of undemocratic regimes left a legacy of weak political institutions and processes throughout the Americas. In particular, flawed electoral processes and a lack of citizen confidence and participation in elections have constituted critical challenges to democratic consolidation in a number of countries throughout the hemisphere. In light of these challenges, in 1992 NDI submitted a proposal to USAID to help bolster nascent democratic institutions and processes in the Americas through FY1996. In 1993, NDI was awarded a $1.2 million grant that has enabled the Institute to respond quickly to assist democratic development in the region during critical moments of transition and help lay the foundation for long-term institution building.[1]

While free and fair elections are becoming more common in the region, the quality and integrity of the electoral process continued to be primary challenge to democratic consolidation in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. A dearth of civic knowledge about elections, low voter confidence and turnout, high levels of nullified ballots and continuing electoral irregularities in several countries prompted NDI to focus attention on elections. Using regional grant funds, NDI implemented programs to strengthen and consolidate this pivotal democratic practice.

In the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, NDI strengthened the electoral process through assistance to civic groups involved in nonpartisan election monitoring and voter education. With support from NDI, the Alianza Cívica (Civic Alliance -- AC) in Mexico, Etica y Transparencia (Ethics and Transparency -- ET) in Nicaragua and Transparencia (Transparency)

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[1] Of the $1.2 million allocated in the regional grant, approximately $230,000 covered expenses related to an NDI international election observation of the 1993 elections in Paraguay. A final report for this program was submitted separately in 1996.

in Peru recruited and trained thousands of election observers, conducted independent vote counts, helped deter and detect electoral irregularities and increased confidence and participation in the political process.

In Mexico, civic organizations responded to the country's history of flawed elections and popular concerns about the integrity of the 1994 electoral process by organizing election monitoring efforts to increase citizen confidence and participation in elections. In April 1994, these groups formed a national coalition, the *Alianza Cívica/Observación* '94, to organize a comprehensive observation of the August 21, 1994, national elections. Within four months, the Alianza Cívica grew to more than 400 organizations in all 31 Mexican states and trained 12,000 volunteers to observe polling on election day.

Based on its successes in 1994, the AC decided to stay together and continue to monitor 15 state and local elections in 1995. USAID regional grant funds enabled NDI to bolster the AC's efforts in key elections in Michoacan, Chiapas, Puebla, Oaxaca and Tlaxcala. With NDI assistance, the AC trained 2,300 volunteers at 83 workshops in the five states. The AC was able to help local chapters detect and deter fraud through election day observation, civic education, and monitoring of the media and election authorities. The workshops also enabled the AC to evaluate its efforts and establish a consensus on strategies for monitoring elections in 1996 and 1997. In addition, the AC organized nonpartisan forums that allowed citizens from almost a dozen states to offer recommendations for electoral reform legislation. The forums provided a constructive avenue of citizen participation in the political process and helped maintain pressure for critical reforms that were eventually adopted by the Mexican congress in late 1996.

During this period, Alianza Cívica leaders also requested NDI's assistance in consolidating its organizational capacity and exploring activities to promote "good government." In response, NDI organized a joint program with the Advocacy Institute, a Washington, D.C., based organization that trains citizen groups to improve organizational capabilities and develop strategies to influence public policy. The NDI/AI program enabled AC leaders to: develop a consensus among the national and regional leaders on the AC's mission; explore methods to become financially self-sufficient; affirm its nonpartisanship; increase cooperation with U.S. policy-makers, the media and nongovernmental organizations; and improve its organizational effectiveness.

As Peruvians prepared for the 1995 national elections, NDI supported the process by helping citizens form the country's first nonpartisan national election observation initiative, Transparencia. Fujimori's quest for re-election in April 1995 represented an important juncture in Peruvian political history. Although Fujimori had improved life in general for Peruvians, many questioned the government's practices. After President Fujimori's April 1992 self-coup (*autogolpe*) suspended the Constitution and dissolved the Congress and the Judicial branch, many Peruvians and members of the international community expressed concern about the prospects for democracy in Peru.

With NDI assistance, Transparencia trained and mobilized more than 9,000 nonpartisan, volunteer observers who monitored the polling places throughout the country and conducted a quick count, or independent vote count, that came within hundredths of a percentage point of the official results. The group gained credibility in the eyes of many Peruvians, including President Fujimori and his main opponent, former U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Pérez de Cuéllar ultimately waited to concede the race until Transparencia released its results.

In November 1995, NDI again supported Transparencia to observe municipal elections and implement a quick count of the highly contested Lima mayoral race. This time, the group mobilized 10,000 observers. Transparencia's quick count results, released 10 days before the election commission announced its own results, fell within a percentage point of the official count. This election marked the second time in the world that a national election observation group was granted permission by electoral authorities to respond to election procedure-related questions at the polling sites. This demonstrated the high level of credibility that Transparencia has attained through rigorous training and professionalism.

In Nicaragua, NDI supported an open and transparent electoral process by helping Nicaraguan citizens and nongovernmental organizations from across the political spectrum form the country's first nonpartisan national election observation initiative, Etica y Transparencia. With NDI's assistance, ET organized a network of more than 4,200 nonpartisan domestic monitors who observed the electoral process and conducted a parallel vote tabulation (PVT), or independent vote count, of the October 1996 national elections. ET's national grassroots network of thousands of volunteers remains committed to Nicaragua's democratic process to this day. Most important, the group bolstered citizen confidence and overcame the pervasive mistrust and discord that has characterized the Nicaraguan political landscape for decades, becoming in the process a symbol of national pluralism and reconciliation.

In the Dominican Republic, NDI provided the civic group Participación Ciudadana with guidance during the early stages of the group's planning for a domestic election observation effort of the May 1996 elections. To support the development of PC's initiative, NDI sent a member of the group's executive board to observe the Peruvian monitoring group Transparencia's observation of the April 1995 national elections. Drawing on this and other lessons from domestic observation initiatives throughout the region, PC trained more than 4,000 Dominican elections monitors and helped the country overcome a legacy of troubled elections in 1990 and 1994.

The Institute's programs with the Alianza Cívica, Etica y Transparencia and Transparencia, as well as the study program with Dominican election monitors, demonstrated the importance of supporting local efforts to strengthen electoral processes. The programs also illustrated that the experiences shared by expert political practitioners and civic organizers from democracies around the world can help to strengthen emerging democratic institutions and encourage citizen participation in the democratic process. These nonpartisan domestic

monitoring groups now join a world-wide movement in promoting democracy and government accountability through civic action.

In addition to working with civic groups to train domestic monitors, NDI worked with nongovernmental organizations in Guatemala to promote public participation and confidence in the 1995 electoral process through grassroots voter education and pollwatcher training. NDI and its local partners -- the Institute for Democracy and Development (IDE) and the Institute for Political Research and Training (INIAP) -- produced thousands of training manuals, posters and pamphlets that were distributed throughout the country and used at IDE/NDI sponsored training seminars. NDI estimates that the program reached more than 10,000 pollwatchers and 40,000 voters directly, with an even larger indirect effect. Voter turnout for the November 12, 1995 national elections reached 47 percent from as low as 17 percent in past elections. Following the elections, NDI conducted a series of focus groups on popular political participation aimed at helping Guatemalan political and civic leaders increase citizen participation between elections.

In the Dominican Republic and Mexico, the participation of international election observers remained critical to strengthening electoral processes and building popular confidence. In the Dominican Republic, NDI's international observer delegation to the 1994 presidential election detected high levels of irregularities that prompted the Institute and other members of the international community to question the legitimacy of the elections. Sustained pressure from NDI and other international delegations helped spur the "Pact for Democracy," a negotiated agreement between the government and opposition parties that established political and electoral reforms and called for new elections in two years. Opposition party leaders told NDI that the delegation's support was instrumental in deterring possible violent protests after the elections and contributed to the peaceful resolution of the country's electoral crisis. NDI observers again bolstered the confidence of the Dominican people during the 1996 elections, when Leonel Fernandez was elected president in the country's first uncontested election result in history.

In Mexico, the presence of an international delegation co-organized by NDI and the International Republican Institute during the August 1994 elections provided the international community and Mexican citizens, many of whom had grown suspicious about government pronouncements on elections, with an independent assessment of the quality of the process. The delegation's statement on the elections, which said that, on balance, irregularities reported were not sufficient to affect the election results, was widely covered in the print and electronic media and helped counter suspicions about the validity of the election results. The participation of international observers was, in itself, a significant advance in a country that has traditionally rejected outside involvement in the electoral process. NDI's balanced commitment to the process and pre-election efforts to collaborate and build relationships with the government, opposition political parties, civic groups and the Federal Elections Institute helped pave the way for this important political opening, which reinforced local efforts by Mexicans to observe the process. NDI staff remained in Mexico months after the election, enabling the Institute to track the resolution of electoral complaints and demonstrate the international community's interest and support for all phases of the electoral process.

Finally, in Guyana, competitive national polls in 1992 and local elections in 1994 ushered in a new era of democratic development. But years of controversial elections and undemocratic rule left a legacy of weak political institutions and little tradition of citizen participation in the political process. Democratic local governance in particular was almost nonexistent before the local government elections in 1994, the first in almost 30 years. To help overcome the problem of centralized political power, NDI used funds from the regional grant to sponsor activities to strengthen local-level citizen participation and train local councilors.

In all, NDI programs conducted within the Latin American and Caribbean regional grant have helped these emerging democracies pass from a transitional stage of democratic development, which focused primarily on organizing elections, to a "consolidation" stage in which young democratic governments are attempting to build and deepen democratic institutions and develop a system of democratic rule of law. The work that was conducted under the regional grant to strengthen democratic institutions such as local governments, civic organizations and elections commissions has deepened citizen participation and broadened the foundations of these new democratic institutions.

II. BACKGROUND

In 1993, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded a $970,000 grant to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) enabling NDI to conduct political assistance programs in Latin America and the Caribbean through FY 1996. NDI proposed to use the resources for democratic development in the region and requested that the grant be flexible to allow NDI to respond quickly during critical moments of the democratic transition process. Since the early 1980s many countries in the region have begun the transition from militarily controlled regimes to democratically elected governments, and NDI's timely use of the grant in these countries was intended to help lay the foundation for long-term institution building.

Most of the peaceful democratic transitions in the region have been accompanied by the emergence of local civic groups as key players; these groups sponsored election monitoring and civic education campaigns that promoted public participation in the process and safeguarded the integrity of elections. In the 1990s international election monitoring, although important in some countries, will become less necessary because civic groups continue to grow in their ability to monitor elections. Thus, there is a compelling need to complement elections-related work with programs that will strengthen historically weak institutions such as legislatures, political parties and local governments and that will increase citizen participation in the democratic process.

Although many Latin American nations have successfully completed several democratic elections, citizens in some countries have exhibited a lack of understanding of the political process and of their rights and responsibilities as voters. This problem is evidenced by low voter turnout and a large proportion of nullified ballots. It is crucial that citizens become more

involved in the political process if the governments they elect are to be responsive, representative and accountable.

As well, citizens throughout Latin America have little confidence in their representative institutions or political parties. Legislatures in the region typically have been dominated by powerful executive branches and have not been forums for national debate or sources of policy. In many cases, legislators lack the training, informational resources and organizational experience to make these bodies effective and transparent. Citizens routinely view political parties as vehicles for personal ambition or elite interests, and few parties have acquired the modernized organizations and methods that would allow them to be responsive to the needs or expectations of civil society.

Local governments in many Latin American countries face similar challenges because constitutional reforms have increased their power and responsibilities. These reforms have been designed to promote citizen participation in government decision-making and make government more responsive to citizens' needs. But many Latin American countries have little experience with decentralization and meaningful local government. Local authorities, like national legislatures and political parties, must win and maintain public trust if democracy is to be sustained.

NDI programs developed within the regional grant have helped bolster Latin Americans' confidence in their political and governmental institutions. NDI's work with civic groups on voter education and domestic election monitoring programs has been instrumental in encouraging greater citizen participation in and understanding of the democratic process. At the same time, NDI international observations and electoral reform, municipal governance and civic organizing programs have helped local institutions understand better the machinery of democracy and how it must be attuned to citizens. The future of democracy in the region depends upon citizens and the institutions that serve them growing together in their understanding of democratic processes; NDI's programs in the region -- particularly the work done in concert with civic organizations -- have helped foster such growth.

III. OBJECTIVES

NDI's overall objectives for the regional grant were:

- to strengthen civil society by helping civic organizations develop the institutional capacity to monitor all phases of the electoral process and to verify official election results;

- to enhance transparency of and public confidence in elections by educating and motivating citizens to participate;

- to detect and deter fraud in elections;

- to increase the ability of civic groups to sponsor post-election programs that will strengthen democratic institutions;

- to enhance the ability of government leaders and government institutions to be responsive to citizens;

- to promote the participation of women, indigenous peoples and youths in the political process; and

- to provide an opportunity for citizens living under nondemocratic regimes or in nascent democracies to be exposed to successful democratic models in other regions.

IV. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Civic Organizations and Civic and Voter Education

NDI supports and advises nonpartisan groups engaged in civic and voter education programs because the Institute recognizes that civic organizations are an integral component of democratic development. Democratic political institutions will not long endure unless they are supported by a strong civic culture and a populace committed to ideals such as the rule of law, individual liberty, freedom of religion, free and fair debate, majority rule and the protection of minorities. Intermediary groups promote these democratic values and promote civic participation. Civic groups are particularly important in countries undergoing democratic transitions because often a large percentage of the population is unfamiliar with citizens' rights and responsibilities in a democratic community.

Civic education campaigns that NDI supports are designed: to inform citizens about their role in a democratic society; to teach citizens about the voting process; to motivate them to vote; to help them understand political issues; and to help citizens use the knowledge they gain to distinguish political competitors. These programs particularly attempt to encourage the participation of youths, women, indigenous peoples and other under-represented groups. NDI also concentrates on enhancing the organizational capabilities of civic groups that are engaged in developing education programs.

Objectives

The objectives of NDI's civic and voter education programs are:

- to increase citizen confidence and participation in the electoral process and increase confidence in democratic institutions;

- to increase citizen knowledge of political and electoral processes; and

- to help civic groups increase their civic education capacities and lay the foundation for further development of their organizational capabilities.

Guatemala: 1995 Elections Civic Education and Pollwatcher Training

Recent elections in Guatemala have been plagued by public apathy and low voter turnout. In July 1995, NDI initiated a program to increase citizen confidence and participation in the November 12 national elections. NDI worked with two Guatemalan civic groups -- the Institute for Democracy and Development (IDE) and the Institute for Investigation and Political Formation (INIAP) -- to coordinate a grassroots voter education and political party pollwatcher training program. In all, NDI and IDE trained more than 641 pollwatcher instructors and voter education "promoters" who subsequently trained several thousand additional pollwatchers and helped motivate citizens to vote across the country.

Background

With the adoption of a new constitution and the election of Vinicio Cerezo in 1985, Guatemala returned to democracy following more than 30 years of military rule and civil war that claimed an estimated 150,000 civilian and military victims. The past 10 years have seen continued problems of insurgency; a powerful, tutelary military; marginalization of the indigenous population; widespread human rights violations; a general increase of violence and crime; and a lack of popular confidence in the democratic system.

Recent democratically elected governments have failed to meet the population's high expectations. The Cerezo government was troubled by corruption and a lack of concrete achievements in the areas of human rights, conflict resolution and economic recovery. Jorge Serrano Elías, the dark-horse winner in 1990, stunned Guatemalans in 1993 by attempting a Fujimori-style "self-coup," which backfired and prompted his removal from office by the military. Only 16 percent of the electorate turned out for a subsequent constitutional plebiscite and legislative election in 1994. Congress installed President Ramiro de León Carpio, the former Human Rights Ombudsman, who took office with wide support. However, his government's inability to bring about a conclusion to the peace process and to end gross human rights abuses may have demonstrated the limits of transitional power without an electoral mandate. There were widely held hopes that new national elections in November 1995 would help to conclude the peace process and consolidate Guatemala's emerging democracy.

Program Activities

Based on concerns about the potential for a low level of voter participation for the November 12, 1995, national elections, in July 1995 NDI sent a four-member survey mission to Guatemala to assess the political situation and to determine how NDI could help to promote greater participation in and credibility of the electoral process.

NDI met with political party leaders, representatives of Guatemalan and international organizations, business and labor leaders, the president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral - TSE), the Human Rights Ombudsman, representatives of the United Nations, USAID, the U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala and President Ramiro de Leon Carpio. Most Guatemalans encouraged NDI to become engaged in the process, and many recalled the support provided by NDI's 1990 observer delegation led by former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt.

The survey mission found that the factors that could impede voter participation in the November 12 elections included a lack of public confidence in the electoral process and in national political parties and leaders in general, and a series of technical/logistical obstacles in the implementation of existing Guatemalan electoral laws that inhibit voter registration and balloting. The NDI mission also concluded that several new factors made participation in the November 12 elections critical for the Guatemalan electorate: first, the elections were intimately linked to the success of the peace process, and thus could help bring an end to decades of guerrilla insurgency and human rights abuses; second, new forces were emerging on the Guatemalan political scene, both locally and nationally, which offered new alternatives for Guatemalans to participate in the political process (see attached 1995 Guatemala Survey Mission Report).

The survey mission recommended that NDI could best assist Guatemala's democratic prospects by engaging in activities to educate voters and train political party pollwatchers. Based on these recommendations, NDI decided to work with two local civic groups, the Institute of Research and Political Formation (INIAP) and the Institute of Democracy and Development (IDE). The effort focused on civic education, emphasizing grassroots voter education, political party institution-building, and pollwatcher training.

Specifically, the objectives of NDI's electoral assistance program in Guatemala were:

- to increase citizen confidence and participation in the electoral process;
- to heighten citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities to vote, to teach them how to vote effectively, and otherwise participate in the political events of their country;
- to provide political parties with the capacity to organize and train their own party pollwatchers and build the base for further party building activities;
- to help Guatemalan civic groups increase their civic education capacities and lay the foundations for development of their organizational capabilities.

Civic Education

As one focus of its program, NDI chose to work with IDE and INIAP to promote civic and voter education. A grassroots approach was used to engage the population in participatory activities and demonstrate to voters the manner in which to properly and effectively cast their ballots. In all, NDI/IDE conducted 22 one-day seminars in 11 departmental capitals on voter education and political party pollwatcher training. Small civic education field teams were trained to conduct brief voter education workshops in towns and villages in 21 of Guatemala's 22 departments (it was decided not to seek to reach the distant, sparsely populated Peten department). The program targeted departments in the western and eastern regions because of the need to reach the populations least likely to participate in the elections.

INIAP and IDE also developed materials for use in the training workshops including a comprehensive outline of discussion topics and a series of motivational posters. The discussion topic outlines and the posters were complementary in their themes. The materials were produced in Spanish, but the trainers demonstrated an ease in translating them into local Mayan languages. IDE sought permission from the TSE to borrow an official voting booth and voided voting materials to conduct the mock balloting. This exercise proved to be a motivational device because it involved trainees in the simulated act of voting and detecting irregularities.

With NDI's assistance, IDE developed the curriculum for the program, which sought to target previously marginalized groups that were less likely to vote, such as women, youth, the illiterate and indigenous groups. Themes included:

- The elements of democracy and the reasons why democratic political systems are the most advantageous to the individual citizen.

- The importance of citizen participation in the political process, including elections.

- Informing voters that greater space has opened for them to express their political will and that during upcoming elections they have more choice at the local and national levels than ever before.

- Explaining the various elements in an election, such as registration, the role of political parties and candidates, as well as the mechanics of voting. Describing the electoral law in simple terms is another important aspect in this component of the program.

Originally, local NGOs with considerable grassroots support were invited to provide volunteers from each of the 21 departments to form civic education field teams. However, the bulk of the participants, most of whom had a demonstrated ability to conduct grassroots civic education, ultimately tended to come from the educational and social work sectors.

The voter education program used a "train-the-trainers" approach and was designed to have a multiplier effect (i.e. by training one trainer and providing a means to duplicate the training, the ultimate effect of the program can reach many more individuals than those directly trained by NDI and its partner NGOs). In order to bring about this multiplier effect, NDI and IDE trained promoters from a broad cross-section of civic groups, all of whom went on to train at least four groups of at least 20 individuals. In 11 departmental voter education seminars, IDE trained 413 promoters including social and literacy workers; university and secondary school teachers; students; members of cooperatives, of the archbishopric, of community self-help organizations, and of Mayan groups; as well as a number of USAID Peace Scholarship recipients. The enthusiasm of the promoters surpassed expectations, and most were able to contact almost twice the number of voters they had pledged to reach.

In consultations with the voter education promoters, the NDI/IDE team requested that all promoters submit plans of action for their future training seminars. Voter education promoters were provided a set of five instructional posters to use in presentations and numerous multi-color Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) posters, which they distributed throughout their communities. A reproduction of the poster appeared in the Sunday supplement of the daily *Prensa Libre* on election day, with circulation of 120,000. (See attached copies of NDI Voter Education Training Materials.)

At the end of this program, voters were expected to be:

- More encouraged to vote on election day.
- Better informed about the importance of voting and how to cast their ballot.
- More informed on ways to participate in the political and electoral process.

To provide additional expertise and support, NDI invited Fernando Romero Bolaños to serve as an international trainer at the first voter education seminar and to provide advice and guidance to IDE about its program. Romero is a rural civic education specialist from the Electoral Education Project in Rural Areas, CEAPAZ-SER, in Peru. Romero provided valuable insight by discussing examples from the Peruvian democratic experience. He also advised the IDE trainers on the best methods to carry out the training seminars and accompanied them on their first field visits. His visit was followed two weeks later by that of Ricardo Centurión of Decidamos, a Paraguayan civic group with considerable experience in civic education. Centurión counseled IDE trainers in the development of a follow-up segment to the initial training seminars.

Political Party Pollwatcher Training

NDI also worked with the partner NGOs to conduct a political party training program. INIAP, with assistance from IDE and advice from the TSE, was responsible for producing

materials for training political party pollwatchers (*fiscales*). The primary materials used for pollwatcher training were a training manual, a copy of the electoral law and a series of instructional posters. (See attached NDI Pollwatcher Training materials.)

NDI and its partner NGOs coordinated the training program with the TSE and the registered national-level *fiscales* who were accredited by TSE. National-level parties committed themselves to sending trainers from each department to attend the departmental training sessions. Before each departmental training, IDE conducted an advance visit to attend to logistical matters, such as identifying training locations, contacting local party representatives, and coordinating their efforts with departmental representatives of TSE.

At the seminars, IDE representatives reviewed the training material, the relevant clauses of the electoral and party law, the role of political party pollwatchers in the electoral process and the process of organizing pollwatcher training workshops. IDE used interactive techniques, such as question-and-answer sessions, role-playing, and participatory training to engage and motivate the participants.

It was the individual political party's responsibility to determine whether they would use people trained by NDI/IDE to educate their own *fiscales* directly on the role of a party pollwatcher or whether those trained by NDI would train additional trainers to educate their party's fiscales, thus generating a multiplier effect. Each party representative was provided with numerous copies of the NDI training manuals and instructional posters.

Evaluation

On November 12, 1995, Guatemala held general elections (for president and vice-president, an 80-seat unicameral legislature, representatives to the Central American Parliament and 300 mayors). NDI trained pollwatchers and voter education materials were present at thousands of polling places throughout the country.

In keeping with the objectives of civic and voter education and political party pollwatcher training programs detailed in the current work plan and in the project proposal, NDI achieved the following results and accomplishments through activities carried out during this program:

1) *NDI increased citizen knowledge of political and electoral processes; and*

2) *increased citizen confidence and participation in the electoral process and democratic institutions.*

3) *NDI helped parties mount major pollwatcher programs to add credibility to elections; and*

4) *developed party skills in the process of providing training.*

In all, voter education and political party pollwatcher training seminars were held in 11 departmental capitals, and covered all of Guatemala with the exception of the sparsely populated Peten region, for a total of 21 departments. Participants were invited from a neighboring department to each seminar to assure national coverage. Eleven pollwatcher seminars trained 228 trainers, representing 30 political parties and civic committees. Eleven voter education seminars trained 413 voter promotion workers. The schedule of the 22 seminars was as follows:

POLLWATCHER TRAINING	VOTER PARTICIPATION	DEPARTMENTS	TRAINING LOCATION
September 25	September 26	Huehuetenango-Tontonicapan	Huehuetenango
September 27	September 28	Quetzaltenango-San Martin	Xelaju (Quetzaltenango)
September 29	September 30	Solola-Quiche	Solola
October 2	October 3	Alta Aerapaz-Baja Verapaz	Coban
October 4	October 5	Izabel	Puerto Barrios
October 6	October 7	Chiqimula-Zacapa	Chiquimula
October 9	October 10	Jutiapa-Jalapa	Jutiapa
October 11	October 12	Escuintla-Santa Rosa	Escuintla
October 13	October 14	Retalhuleu-Suchitepequez	Retalhuleu
October 16	October 17	Sacatepequez-Chimaltenango	Antigua
October 18	October 19	Guatemala-El Progresso	Guatemala City

As a result of consultations with NDI Field Representative Darren Nance, NDI Program Officer Kate Kelsch and international trainer Ricardo Centurion of Paraguay, IDE decided to conduct a series of follow-up meetings in six of the 11 locations previously visited for training. IDE met with those already trained for both party pollwatcher training and voter promotion education to determine the results of their efforts and if any problems were encountered. Follow-up meetings took place in:

LOCATION	DATE	POLLWATCHER/ TRAINERS	VOTER PROMOTERS
Huehuetenango	October 26	4	10
Quetzaltenango	October 27	5	13
Quiche	October 28	2	7
Chiquimula	October 31	8	11
Escuintla	November 7	11	14
Antigua	November 8	4	12
TOTAL		**34**	**67**

To evaluate the impact of the program, two NDI staff members traveled to Guatemala several days before the November 12 election to assess the impact of NDI's programs. The NDI team also did "spot checks" of impact in several training locations on election day. During this assessment trip, the NDI representatives met with members of the Organization of American States (OAS) election observation mission and the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights (MINUGUA). They spoke briefly with President Ramiro de León Carpio, and met with US Embassy and USAID officials, including Ambassador Marilyn McAfee and AID Deputy Administrator for Latin America Mark Schneider. NDI staff members also attended the inauguration of IDE's Election Information Center (sponsored by the International Republican Institute), where they met several political party leaders, including some presidential candidates. NDI staff also toured TSE's Election Center, organized at the National Theater, where TSE officials explained that on election day, departmental results would be communicated to the Center by secure fax, tallied, reviewed, and announced to the public from the National Theater auditorium.

On election day, NDI staff joined members of IDE to form two observation teams to further evaluate the impact of NDI's pre-election training programs. Both teams began by witnessing the opening of the vote in Guatemala City, thus allowing IDE representatives to vote before beginning their observation duties. The teams then split up, one covering the capital city and the El Progreso department, and the other team traveling to the western region of the country and covering the department of Antigua. The observers witnessed many pollwatchers using the NDI manual and many polling stations posted with the NDI Get-Out-the-Vote posters. They also interviewed electoral officials, all of whom expressed strong support for the training seminars.

While observing the results of NDI's programs on election day, the Guatemala City evaluation team found that pollwatchers were present at each of the voting tables, and many of them had NDI-supplied pollwatcher training materials. The observer team found that those who possessed the NDI materials actually had an advantage over those with party supplied manuals

because the political party supplied manuals could not be displayed in presence of voters on election day because they contained party symbols, which are prohibited at voting tables.

The Guatemala City team spent the afternoon observing the vote in El Progreso, where voter turnout was much higher than in the capital. Eight to nine pollwatchers were present at every voting table, with some tables having up to 15. The team saw several pollwatchers with the NDI pollwatcher manual, and several others with photocopies of the manual. About 30 percent of voting sites displayed the NDI Get-Out-the-Vote poster, including the municipal building, where several were posted on the front pillars of the building.

The observer team covering the western region of the country visited Esquintla , where they saw many NDI Get-Out-the-Vote posters at voting centers, and interviewed several people who had participated in NDI/IDE voter education seminars. One of them had conducted eight voter promotion training seminars with about 40 individuals each. He informed the NDI team that his local civic organization had held a national conference in Guatemala City where members reported on the voter education workshops they had conducted using the NDI training materials.

On the way to Chimaltenango, the NDI/IDE observer team stopped in the municipality of El Tejar, where they saw several Get-Out-the-Vote posters around the town square, at city hall and in the marketplace.

In Chimaltenango, a densely populated municipality, there was a significant turnout of women and indigenous people, and pollwatchers explained that young people were voting in greater numbers than the older population. NDI Get-Out-the-Vote posters were posted throughout the town, and in one of the voting stations that the team visited, voter turnout had surpassed 50 percent by early afternoon. The observer team interviewed a young Mayan woman, who had been trained by NDI/IDE in Antigua, who informed them that she had trained 300 pollwatchers for her political party. They also interviewed a Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG) trainer, who had attended the NDI/IDE program, and reported having trained 250 pollwatchers. While in Chimaltenango, the NDI team visited the offices of the PAN and the FRG parties, as well as two civic committees representing indigenous groups that had received NDI/IDE training. NDI/IDE observers also visited the departmental and municipal election councils in Chimaltenango. The president of the municipal election council, a schoolteacher, informed the observation team that he had called together local election officials and party pollwatchers before election day. He told them that as long as the local election officials followed the TSE manual and the party pollwatchers followed the NDI pollwatcher manual, the elections would run smoothly. He also praised the voter promotion activities that the NDI/IDE team had undertaken.

The team reported that the impact of NDI training and materials in Chimaltenango was surprising, given that the training session had taken place in neighboring Antigua. Participants

from Chimaltenango had traveled an hour to attend the seminar in Antigua and shared their new knowledge when they returned to Chimaltenango.

By the end of the program, NDI had produced more than 5,500 training manuals, posters and pamphlets used for the training seminars. NDI's follow-up assessment visits and interviews with trainers and promoters indicate that the program reached more than 10,000 pollwatchers and 40,000 voters.

The program also had long term impacts. Through the civic education effort, both partner and recipient grassroots NGOs increased their organizational capacities by learning:

- How to develop and/or utilize materials for a grassroots voter education program.
- How to conduct training and organize a grassroots voter education/participation effort.

Based on post-election discussions with participants and national-level political party officials, NDI believes that through the pollwatcher training program, political parties gained:

- Specific knowledge of the electoral law and the role of a political party pollwatcher;
- Valuable, hands-on training on how to conduct pollwatcher training workshops and;
- Greater organizational capabilities at the departmental and national levels.

In all, voter turnout for the November 1995 elections reached 47 percent from as low as 16 and 20 percent in the past year's elections. President Ramiro de Leon Carpio told NDI in a meeting after the election that, due in part to the enthusiasm of the volunteer trainers and other civic organizations, these elections were considered to be a success on a national level and a positive step in strengthening citizen participation in Guatemala.

Guatemala: 1996 Focus Groups Project (1368)

More than 40 years of bitter civil war and exclusion of indigenous peoples from the political process have left Guatemala's political institutions closed and weak. Following NDI's voter education and pollwatcher training program for the 1995 national elections and a March 1996 assessment mission, the Institute worked from July to September 1996 with Römer and Associates, an Argentine public opinion firm, and the newly formed Guatemalan civic group Acción Ciudadana (Citizen Action -- AC) to conduct more than 40 survey interviews with political and civic leaders and public officials and 10 focus groups with citizens throughout the country. Through the focus groups and interviews, NDI gathered information about popular attitudes toward democratic institutions and political participation. The study enabled NDI to

provide Guatemalan political and civic leaders and members of the international community with concrete information about political participation at a time when the country is going through an important political transition from civil war to democratic consolidation. The report will also serve as a base for possible future NDI political party development and citizen participation programs in the country.

Background

In July 1995, NDI initiated a program under the Latin American Regional Grant to increase citizen confidence and participation in the November 12, 1995, national elections. NDI worked with two Guatemalan civic groups— the Institute for Democracy and Development (IDE) and the Institute for Political Research and Training (INIAP)— to coordinate a grassroots voter education and pollwatcher training program. NDI and INIAP produced more than 5,500 copies of training manuals, posters and pamphlets that were used at training seminars and distributed throughout the country. NDI estimates that the program reached more than 10,000 pollwatchers and 40,000 voters directly, with an even larger indirect effect. Voter turnout reached 47 percent from as low as 17 percent in past elections.

The week of March 25, 1996, NDI Senior Program Officer Dan Strasser and Program Officer Kirk Gregersen returned to Guatemala to evaluate the elections program, to distribute a draft report on NDI's activities and to explore possibilities for continuing to support Guatemala's democratic development. The NDI team met with leaders of seven of Guatemala's eight remaining political parties; NGOs, think tanks, the president of the leading private sector organization, CACIF; former President Ramiro de Leon Carpio; the mayors of Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango; the president of the Congress; and representatives of the United Nations, the OAS and the U.S. AID Mission. The meetings focused on learning about current issues of concern to Guatemalans and exploring how the various political institutions see their needs and the future of the country's political development. The NDI team also solicited each person's opinions about the Institute's elections program with IDE and INIAP.

Most of the Guatemalans interviewed by the NDI team emphasized that the country needs to build institutions that encourage citizen participation in the political process beyond the elections. Political parties and local government were identified as political institutions that should be key actors in this process. There is considerable interest in the surge in local power through Civic Committees and the increasing political role of the indigenous movement. Many Guatemalans emphasized the growing importance of local government and the need to focus attention on local level citizen participation in the political process.

Project Activities

Based on the assessment from the March survey mission and subsequent conversations with NDI regional and functional staff in Washington, NDI decided to use remaining regional grant funds for Guatemala to organize a program to gather and disseminate information and

opinions about political parties, civic committees and political participation at the local level. This information would be collected through focus groups and in-depth survey interviews in several locations in the country.

NDI worked throughout June, July and August with Römer and Associates, an Argentine public opinion firm, and local Guatemalan counterparts Manfredo Marroquin, formerly of the Myrna Mack Foundation, and Jorge Escota, who are both leaders of the newly formed civic group Acción Ciudadana, to identify possible survey participants in representative municipalities throughout the country, including local government and political party officials, civic leaders and a cross-section of average citizens. NDI also worked with its counterparts to develop the methodology and agenda for the program, as well as to identify Guatemalan interviewers who could participate in a two-day training session in August.

From August 23 to 30, Oscar Ramirez, a professional focus group facilitator from Römer and Associates, in collaboration with the Guatemalan counterparts, trained Guatemalan interviewers who carried out 40 in-depth interviews with local officials and civic leaders throughout the country. The Argentine analyst and the Guatemalan counterparts also conducted 10 focus groups in four locations representing a variety of demographic characteristics (see attached report for a detailed explanation of the study's methodology).

In October, Römer & Associates submitted to NDI a draft report of the study's findings (see attached report, *Perspectivas sobre el rol de los partidos políticos y los comites cívicos en Guatemala*). The report provides a window on political participation and popular perceptions about political parties and civic committees. It begins by explaining how the country's violent history has created a culture of weak political participation and lack of representation. With the evolution of the peace process, the expectations held by citizens have risen. The study had the following conclusions, among others:

- Participants associate democracy with social order. A democracy should include members of society who feel excluded by current practices. A democratic government should include free elections, citizen control of public affairs, tolerance as a predominating political value, and respect for individual liberties.

- Guatemalans are unhappy with the leadership of political parties. This has caused the image of political parties as an institution to deteriorate. Nonetheless, almost all participants believe that political parties are a necessary condition for democracy.

- Participants believe the political parties do not question their leadership as many citizens do. Most focus group participants called for substantial changes in and transformation of party structures.

Participants cited three reasons for Guatemala's low level of political and electoral participation: 1) popular perceptions about deception by political leaders; 2) social discredit

associated with political functions; and 3) fear of political participation because of the violent political history of the country. Corruption and impunity within the government were also cited as key factors responsible for the citizenry's lack of interest in and apathy about political participation.

Women interviewed generally expressed with more clarity their demands for change and their desire for greater participation in the political process. Their attitudes also showed more democratic values.

Indigenous rural groups consulted generally indicated that they are looking for channels through which to participate in political affairs and ways in which to eradicate discriminatory tendencies. Many believe civic committees rose to fill this void and now serve as alternative vehicles for local political action. The interviewers reported a strong desire by the rural and indigenous groups for practices of direct democracy, transparency, horizontal decision-making, local inclusion, and community-level control of political matters. Rural participants also expressed great interest in having face-to-face meetings between members of their communities and national political leaders.

Rural participants acknowledged that civic committees are useful instruments to achieve their objectives. Many believe that civic committees are the embryos for future political parties. Despite their established strength in the rural areas, however, civic committees are not perceived to be an alternative to political parties, nor as transitional organizations are they meant to occupy the political void left by traditional political parties. Many participants characterized civic committees as intermediary institutions of action and pressure on political parties and the state that can help communities to achieve cooperation between the two institutions.

When asked to identify the principal challenges for Guatemala, responses varied according to the organizational background of the interviewee: civic committees, public officials, NGO's and political parties. Civic committee representatives and public officials identified insecurity and violence as the most important problems for the state. NGO leaders identified the lack of education and illiteracy, social cleavages, the concentration of wealth, and corruption as Guatemala's primary problems. And political party representatives identified economic recession, unemployment and insecurity/political violence as the most serious problems. The public officials also mentioned the lack of public health services as a serious problem for local communities.

With the exception of political party leaders, those interviewed generally agreed that many of these problems were caused by the actions and programs of past governments. Political party leaders tended to blame these problems on economic conditions. Public officials also felt that economic conditions were relevant to the creation of problems for Guatemala. Civic committee leaders blamed the business sector and the moral deterioration of Guatemalan society for the country's situation. Political party leaders stressed the lack of civic education as a root cause of some of the problems. Public officials also blame international economic factors,

corruption and the business sector, while the NGO leaders tended to blame the history and structural problems of Guatemalan society.

Opinions also varied with respect to the interviewees outlook for the future. Political party leaders were the most pessimistic about Guatemala's immediate future and their vision of actual performance by the Guatemalan political system is only positive in terms of greater citizen participation. NGO leaders are more optimistic. Their vision for Guatemala is framed by the result of "peace agreements." Political party leaders also expressed interest in increasing internal democracy, training for political leaders and promoting ethical behavior among political leaders. Civic committee leaders agreed with the NGO's that Guatemala's foundation for future development must include honest public officials and decreased corruption in the political system. Public officials were the most reticent with respect to the country's future.

In January 1997, NDI mailed the report to more than 600 people, including Guatemalan political leaders, members of the international donor community, U.S. policymakers and Latin American experts. NDI also held a roundtable on the findings with Graciela Römer, president of Römer and Associates, to discuss the conclusions and inform the Washington, DC, community about the study. NDI expects to distribute the report again widely in Guatemala during a tentatively scheduled April 1997 program planning visit.

Evaluation

The report provided Guatemalans with concrete information about popular perceptions about democracy and citizen participation at the local level. This information will be especially important to political leaders and the international community as Guatemala enters a new stage of democratic development following the signing of the peace accords and the political integration of former combatants and displaced populations. Manfredo Marroquín, director of Acción Ciudadana, noted,

> It seems to me that the study includes many interesting things and above all is very useful in the current moment. I believe it could be very useful as a document of consultation for the various national actors (politicians, social leaders, educators, centers of investigation, universities, civic groups, etc.) . . . It would be worthwhile to do a national distribution.[2]

NDI hopes that the report will help to engage party leaders and spur interest in future local-level political party development and citizen participation programs. NDI remains optimistic that this will happen since many parties have expressed commitment to creating more internally democratic and long term party structures. Finally, the information in the report will help NDI to sharpen the focus of possible future long-term citizen participation programs.

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[2] Letter from Acción Ciudadana, January 30, 1997 (see attachments). Marroquín even offers to reproduce and distribute the report using the group's own funds.

B. Domestic Election Observation and Parallel Vote Tabulation

Election monitoring by civic organizations is not a new phenomenon. Since 1986, NDI has supported nonpartisan domestic election observation efforts carried out by civic groups in Albania, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Chile, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Venezuela, the West Bank/Gaza and Zambia, among others. Domestic monitoring initiatives increase citizen participation and confidence in the elections and reduce the possibility of fraud and irregularities on election day. Domestic election observation also creates a constructive, nonpartisan avenue for citizen participation in the political process, contributing to the development of civil society. The act of training local observers, as well as the observation process itself, constitute a valuable civic exercise.

During a domestic election observation program, NDI typically helps a civic group organize a network of monitors that can report on the quality and results of an election. The group then is able to comment publicly on the elections and provide citizens with an independent assessment of the electoral process. NDI helps civic groups develop strategies for recruiting and training volunteers, establish local chapters, draft training guidelines and materials, form a communications network and develop media strategy. Civic leaders from other nations who have conducted similar activities are brought in by NDI to share their experiences. Throughout the program, NDI underscores the importance of conducting monitoring activities in a professional, nonpartisan manner.

To provide an independent, impartial verification of the election returns, NDI also helps civic groups design and implement parallel vote tabulations (PVT), or independent vote counts. A PVT is a tool used to verify the results of an election count. In practice, election monitors record results obtained from individual voting stations and compare these findings to the official results. The purpose of a PVT is to verify the accuracy of results reported by the electoral authorities as these results are transmitted from local to central levels of the election administration. The monitoring effort and PVT results can reduce the potential for electoral irregularities, help confirm the accuracy of vote tallies, and increase voter confidence, thus enhancing willingness to participate in the process.

Using funds from the regional grant, NDI supported domestic observers as they participated in the electoral process for the first time in Nicaragua and Peru. NDI also continued to help domestic monitors safeguard the Mexican electoral process. With assistance from NDI, the Alianza Cívica (AC) in Mexico, Etica y Transparencia (ET) in Nicaragua and Transparencia in Peru recruited and trained thousands of elections observers, conducted independent vote counts, helped deter and detect electoral irregularities and increased confidence and participation in the political process. And in the Dominican Republic, NDI provided the civic group *Participación Ciudadana* (Citizen Participation -- PC) with guidance during the early stages of the group's planning for a domestic election observation effort of the May 1996 elections.

The Institute's programs with the Alianza Cívica, Etica y Transparencia and Transparencia, as well as the study program with Dominican election monitors, demonstrated the importance of supporting local efforts to strengthen electoral processes. The programs also illustrate that the experiences shared by expert political practitioners and civic organizers from democracies around the world can help to strengthen emerging democratic institutions and encourage citizen participation in the democratic process. These nonpartisan domestic monitoring groups now join a world-wide movement in promoting democracy and government accountability through civic action.

Objectives

NDI seeks:

- to raise citizen confidence in the election process;
- to deter and detect fraud and expose it if it occurs;
- to provide an avenue for citizens to participate in electoral processes in a nonpartisan manner; and
- to provide domestic and international communities with important information concerning the integrity of elections.

Peru: 1994 Survey Mission (1369), 1995 Domestic Monitoring Supplement (1562), 1995 Municipal Election Monitoring (1563)

The 1990 national elections changed the face of politics in Peru. Voters turned away from the traditional political parties that had been unable to combat terrorism and improve the economic crisis and elected an unknown university rector of Japanese ancestry who headed an independent political movement, Change 90/New Majority (*Cambio 90/Nueva Mayoría*). In his first term, President Alberto Fujimori revived Peru's faltering economy and crippled the terrorist organization Shining Path by capturing its leader, who had eluded authorities for 15 years.

Fujimori's quest for re-election in April 1995 represented an important juncture in Peruvian political history. Although Fujimori had improved life in general for Peruvians, many questioned the government's practices. Ever since President Fujimori's April 1992 self-coup (*autogolpe*) suspended the Constitution and dissolved the Congress and the Judicial branch, many Peruvians and members of the international community expressed concern about the prospects for democracy in Peru.

As Peruvians prepared for the 1995 national elections, NDI supported the process by helping Peruvian citizens form the country's first nonpartisan national election observation initiative, Transparencia (Transparency). With NDI assistance, Transparencia trained and

mobilized more than 9,000 nonpartisan, volunteer observers who monitored the polling places throughout the country and conducted a quick count, or independent vote count, that came within hundredths of a percentage point of the official results. Transparencia gained credibility in the eyes of many Peruvians, including President Fujimori and his main opponent, former U.N Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who waited to concede the race until Transparencia released its results.

In November 1995, NDI again supported Transparencia to observe municipal elections and implement a quick count of the highly contested Lima mayoral race. This time, Transparencia mobilized 10,000 observers. Transparencia's quick count results, released 10 days before the election commission announced its own results, fell within a percentage point of the official count. In addition, this election marked the second time in the world that a national election observation group was granted permission by electoral authorities to respond to election procedure-related questions at the polling sites. This demonstrated the high level of credibility that Transparencia has attained through rigorous training and professionalism.

Program Activities

1994 Survey Mission (1369)

In May 1994, NDI requested a reprogramming of $25,749, previously earmarked for election-related projects in Guatemala, to conduct a survey mission to Peru to assess that country's technical and financial needs for April 1995 national elections. NDI decided to undertake the survey mission at a critical juncture in Peruvian politics. The 1995 elections were an opportunity for Peruvians to endorse or reject the controversial policies of President Alberto Fujimori. Fujimori, an agronomist and university rector unconnected to the political sphere, was elected in 1990 after Peruvian citizens had become disenchanted with traditional political party leadership in the 1980s. Before Fujimori took office yearly inflation had climbed to 7,650 percent, more than 80 percent of the population lived in poverty and corruption was rampant. Peruvians lack of confidence in their leaders was compounded by the government's inadequate response to a dramatic increase in terrorist acts perpetrated by the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru--MRTA).

Without a national political organization Fujimori was unable to control Congress, but at the outset of his administration he joined with conservative parties to enact free market reforms espoused by his campaign opponent, novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. However, within months the coalition deteriorated amid charges of congressional corruption and ineffectiveness and presidential authoritarianism. Frustrated with the pace of his reform program, Fujimori in April 1992 dissolved Congress and suspended the 1979 constitution in an *autogolpe* or self-administered coup. Fujimori was able to check inflation and the economy rebounded; he also achieved some success against terrorists. In particular, the spectacular 1992 capture of Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán fueled Fujimori's popularity.

But abroad the *autogolpe* was criticized, and the Peruvian military's anti-terrorism tactics triggered charges of human rights abuses. The notorious murder of 10 students by Peruvian soldiers and a critical human rights report by an American academic exacerbated Fujimori's strained relations with the United States and other members of the international community. Still, most Peruvians were weary of years of violence, economic crisis and ineffective government and supported the *autogolpe*. This support was reaffirmed in the results of elections Fujimori, under international pressure, agreed to hold. These 1993 elections -- for municipal offices and a new, unicameral Congress and including a constitutional referendum -- were determined to have been conducted fairly by the Organization of American States (OAS) observers and, despite close margins, favored Fujimori.

Against this background an NDI team visited Peru between June 4 and 12, 1994, to survey the political environment, determine what programs could ensure the integrity of the April 1995 presidential and congressional elections and identify local partner organizations. NDI's assessment team included: Curtis Cutter, a senior NDI consultant; Irene Perurena, executive director of the Justice and Peace Commission of Panama; Santiago Canton, NDI director for programs in Latin America and the Caribbean; and Matt Dippell, NDI program officer. In the course of the trip NDI team members held more than 25 meetings with political party leaders; representatives of think-tanks, human rights groups and other nongovernmental organizations. The team also met with government and National Election Board (JNE) officials; members of the media and of the business and academic communities; and USAID and U.S. Embassy officials (see attachment, NDI 1994 assessment trip report).

The team learned that Fujimori had eased greatly the economic and security concerns of most Peruvians and thus won the support of the middle class, the military and the business community. As well, there was little worry about large-scale electoral fraud, which had never been a problem in Peruvian elections. Many of the meeting participants did cite relatively minor irregularities: political party monitors were said to have tampered with tally sheets, and suspiciously one-sided results from individual polling places were mentioned.

Public confidence in the electoral process had been eroded in the two years since the *autogolpe*, Peruvians said, and there was widespread concern about the military's role in the electoral process. Formerly the armed forces, which are charged by the constitution with ferrying tally sheets to the JNE, had been viewed as impartial. But in meetings with the NDI team Peruvians expressed fear that the military had become entrenched in Fujimori's camp and would be compromised in a presidential race with a margin of just a few percentage points. Perhaps of equal or larger concern was many Peruvians belief that, in light of the *autogolpe*, Fujimori was unpredictable and potentially could flaunt the rules during the campaign period.

Peruvians also seemed to be ill-informed about their electoral process, and the NDI team could find little information about the extant electoral law and scant data on recent elections. Notably, many Peruvians expressed a desire to build nonpartisan institutions that would

transcend changes in adminstrations; traditionally, there had been much waste of resources and experience because of wholesale dismantling of policies between presidents.

NDI submitted a proposal to the USAID mission in Lima based on the survey team's findings and consultations in Washington. By the time of NDI's FY 1994 fourth quarter report to USAID the scope and specifics of the project were still being negotiated, but NDI expected to work with one of several local civic groups to organize a parallel vote count, train domestic observers and help prepare studies on media impartiality. Among the groups with which NDI considered working were: the Peruvian Center for International Studies (CEPEI); the Institute for Dialogue and Proposals (IDP); the Institute for Defense and Development Studies (INIDEN); the Institute for Investigation, Promotion and Support for Development (IPADE); Transparencia; and the Center for Study and Action for Peace (CEAPAZ). Each of these organizations were sophisticated sources of social and economic analysis but lacked broad, grass-roots organizing experience.

NDI eventually initiated a program in October 1994 with funds provided by the USAID Mission in Peru. During a November assessment mission to Peru, NDI met with leaders of the civic group Transparencia and determined that the group offered the greatest potential to carry out a domestic election monitoring and quick count program for the 1995 elections. The NDI delegation also saw that Transparencia had the potential to develop into a permanent, nonpartisan organization that could conduct future democracy strengthening projects.

After the assessment mission NDI sent NDI Program Officer Catherine Kelsch to Lima as a field representative; Kelsch immediately began working with Transparencia to plan and implement national seminars and provincial workshops and to develop educational materials. NDI's intent was to help Transparencia increase citizen understanding, participation and confidence in the electoral process and concomitantly help the group with the technical aspects of building an organization capable of conducting a nationwide PVT.

Transparencia held conferences in Lima in November and December at which the group's regional coordinators discussed electoral procedures and election monitoring activities. These national seminars, which were funded by the German Embassy with technical assistance from NDI, included international participants from Bulgaria, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and the Philippines. Each of the international experts had organized and conducted domestic election observations and PVTs in their respective countries; their specific experience helped motivate and train provincial coordinators in preparation for the domestic observation.

NDI also helped Transparencia organize a national conference in January 1995 for electoral province coordinators that was intended to prepare them to manage the election observation and quick count at the local level.

During the first months of the program, NDI determined that these coordinators and their local chapters would benefit greatly from individual consultations and training with a skilled civic organizer. At NDI's request USAID authorized in early February a transfer of $23,663 from regional grant funds allocated for Guatemala so that a second field representative could be dispatched to Peru. NDI hired Melissa Estok, who had worked on similar NDI programs in Yemen and Mexico, to be its principal contact with the regional Transparencia chapters and to be a key facilitator of February 1995 training programs in the interior.

From Lima, Kelsch and Estok advised Transparencia on the content of observer training materials that were used in all of the provincial training programs and distributed nationwide (see attachment, sample evaluation questionnaire and summary of selected responses). These materials included: rules for volunteer organizing; distinct manuals for provincial committees, district and zonal supervisors, election observers, and quick count observers; observation, presidential result and congressional result forms for election observers; observation, presidential result and congressional result forms for quick count observers; and a compendium of tips for trainers for use in the final provincial training programs (see attachment, total educational materials distributed during training programs).

Kelsch and Estok worked with Transparencia staff members to plan the provincial seminars, recruit participants, train the trainers and conduct the programs. The agendas for the programs included: review of the electoral law; potential election day case scenarios; the role and legal rights of election observers; review of materials to be used on election day; and election day roles of election officials, table officials, and party pollwatchers (see attachment, training agenda for election and quick count observers). Both field representatives traveled in February and March with other NDI staff members to Cuzco, Huacho, La Oroya, Tarma, Huancayo, Piura, Morropon, Sullana, Tarapoto, Moyabamba, Huaraz, Huánuco, Tingo María and Tumbes to work with local Transparencia chapters (see attachment, participants list in Transparencia's national and regional volunteer training).

In the provinces NDI representatives helped local chapters: evaluate their ability to collect and communicate election results from polling sites; recruit and train volunteers; promote Transparencia in the local press; establish and strengthen their chapters; train coordinators in basic organizational and volunteer recruitment skills; develop constructive relationships with Provincial Election Boards (JPE), the local media, the OAS and the Peruvian military; outline a final organization plan; publicize activities; and train election and quick count observers. (See attachment, breakdown of Transparencia's volunteers by province)

While Kelsch worked primarily with Transparencia in Lima, Estok traveled more frequently to the provinces to assist local chapter development. Specifically, Estok helped Transparencia: organize local chapters; monitor and evaluate the progress of local committees; designate more Lima-based staff members to work on provincial issues; develop an information

system to provide local chapters with adequate materials; coordinate training activities in the interior; and create a team of trainers to travel throughout the country. Estok also traveled throughout Peru to develop and maintain contacts with local civic leaders, who were instrumental in mobilizing volunteers for the observation.

The April 9, 1995, elections resulted in the re-election of President Fujimori with a resounding 64.5 percent of the vote; and the president's political alliance, Change 90/New Majority, won 67 of 120 congressional seats. Transparencia trained and mobilized more than 9,000 volunteers to monitor polling places throughout the country and conducted a PVT that came within hundredths of a percentage point of official results. The success of the PVT, one of the most accurate independent vote counts ever conducted, and of Transparencia's qualitative evaluation of the electoral process, led many Peruvians -- chief among them President Fujimori and his principal challenger, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar -- to view Transparencia as a credible, nonpartisan watchdog organization.

1995 Municipal Election Monitoring (1563)

Despite the success of the April elections, the process was not without problems. The JNE provided insufficient training and information to polling place officials, party pollwatchers and voters, many of whom, Transparencia observers noted, were unfamiliar with electoral procedures and unsure of how to use elections materials. After the April elections the Peruvian Congress created a new electoral body, the National Office of Electoral Processes (ONPE), that would share responsibility with the JNE for administering the November 1995 municipal elections. The municipal elections were the first to be governed by the 1993 Constitution. Because of 1) Transparencia's observations during the April elections that pollwatcher, citizens and officials were uninformed about electoral procedures and; 2) the changes in electoral administration planned for the November municipal elections, Transparencia decided to prepare its observers to play a more active role. In addition to observing and reporting on the process, the group's monitors would respond to questions about election procedures at the polling stations.

The November municipal elections were important for four reasons: 1) the elections would provide Transparencia with the opportunity to reinforce their newly acquired observation and quick count skills and strengthen the group's network throughout the country; 2) the highly anticipated mayoral race in Lima was crucial to the country because of its status as capital; 3) the high probability that the election could be manipulated due to the intense rivalry that existed between the main candidates Alberto Andrade, the popular mayor of the district of Miraflores and Jaime Yoshiyama, President Fujimori's candidate and former president of the Congress; and 4) these would be the last elections in Peru until 1998. Transparencia and NDI hoped this opportunity would encourage citizen understanding and participation in the electoral process and set a precedent of participation in civic activities and democratic processes (see attachment, election-day clippings).

In late August 1995 NDI requested that USAID transfer $80,198 of the regional grant funds remaining for local governance in Guatemala and $16,556 of the regional grant monies allocated for election observation in Panama so that it could enter into a cooperative agreement with Transparencia. Transparencia had expressed a strong interest in continuing to develop democratic initiatives with NDI; and the Institute, cognizant that the November elections were important to the continued promotion of citizen participation and awareness, proposed providing Transparencia with technical and financial assistance for election observation, educational seminars for provincial coordinators and three PVTs.

NDI supported three training seminars for Transparencia regional coordinators in September and October to familiarize them with the civic group's plans for November and with new election-observer training materials. Each of the 47 regional coordinators participated in at least one of the seminars. In September NDI organized a day of consultations between Transparencia elections observation staff members and an NDI team (see attachment, September 1995 trip reports). The NDI team included: Ricardo Centurión, former civic education coordinator and materials development director for the Paraguayan civic group We Decide (Decidamos); Rosangela Nuñez, national training coordinator for the civic group School of Neighbors of Venezuela (Escuela de Vecinos de Venezuela); and Catherine Kelsch, NDI program officer and former field representative in Peru.

Centurión and Nuñez advised Transparencia staff members on training methods, training materials and mechanisms for strengthening regional chapters. They also discussed style and content of observer manuals, reviewed public relations guidelines and offered fund-raising tips. In addition, NDI participated in Transparencia's National Observers Conference to train the observers (see attachment, first national observers conference agenda).

To support Transparencia's PVT of the Lima mayoral race NDI sent Kelsch and Neil Nevitte, professor of statistics at the University of Calgary, to Peru in October to help finalize the PVT system and evaluate the program's progress. Kelsch and Nevitte, who provided NED-funded technical assistance for Transparencia's April observation, helped the civic group's technical staff develop the PVT sample and reporting process. Nevitte specifically reviewed how the sample was developed and evaluated the information flow from polling places to the Transparencia analysis center. The NDI team also helped Transparencia develop strategies to strengthen media coverage and bolster the Lima volunteer base. During the week of consultations Kelsch and Nevitte also met with: political party representatives; the chief ONPE official; representatives of OAS and IFES; a representative of a rural civic education project; the principal opposition candidate in the Lima mayoral contest; and USAID officials (see attachment, memo, October consultation with Transparencia).

Transparencia conducted a simulation in Lima on October 29. The group carried out the simulation to prepare for potential problems that could occur on the November 12 election day. The group mobilized 652 volunteers that served as district coordinators, PVT count collectors, telephone operators, and those in charge of inputting the data being called in. By 8 a.m. the

PVT count relators began requesting from the various polling stations the fictitious results and by 10 a.m. began calling in these results to the Transparencia computation center. The results showed that by close of the simulation, Transparencia had collected information from 86 percent of the polling stations (see attachment, simulation evaluation).

A few days before the November 12 elections NDI Director for Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago Canton, joined Kelsch, and they helped Transparencia with final observation and PVT preparations (see attachment, Memorandum to PVT coordinators). Canton and Kelsch also participated in Transparencia's post-election evaluation.

On election day, Transparencia mobilized 10,000 volunteer election observers in 105 of 194 provinces; 95 percent of the Peruvian population resides in the provinces covered by Transparencia observers. According to Transparencia tally sheets, observers answered more than 200,000 election-related questions posed by election officials, party pollwatchers and voters. At 1:30 p.m. Transparencia released a statement on the quality of the process that included observations about the times that the polls opened, the presence of voting materials and the presence of polling place officials and party pollwatchers. Within four hours after the polls closed the group released PVT results giving the Lima mayoral race to Alberto Andrade, with 52.7 percent of the votes, over government-supported candidate Jaime Yoshiyama's 47.3 percent. Transparencia's results were within a percentage point of the official results released 10 days after the elections (see attachments, election-day statements and Transparencia final report).

Evaluation

The lack of confidence in political and governmental leaders exhibited by Peruvian citizens during the 1980s was partially reversed with the 1990 election that installed Alberto Fujimori as president. But Fujimori administered the country with an authoritarian style and was widely chastised for human rights abuses and disregard for Peru's democratic processes. The 1995 national elections gave Peru an opportunity to return to a democratic course after Fujimori's 1992 self-coup. Confidence and citizen participation in the elections would be paramount to this return to a legitimate democracy. With this in mind, NDI's 1994 assessment mission helped determine how NDI could assist civic leaders in their pursuit to strengthen Peruvian democracy. NDI's work with Peru's nonpartisan election observation organization, Transparencia, provided an opportunity for Peruvian civil society to become reengaged in the democratic process.

Transparencia is well respected by election officials, political party leaders, members of the media and civil society. It garnered support from these various sectors of society in fewer than two years of existence through its professionalism, impartiality and concrete contributions to the democratic process. The Transparencia national network remains as a voice for civil society and a force for further strengthening of Peruvian democracy.

Through the programs carried out under the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Grant, Transparencia has found a niche in Peruvian society enabling it to continue working toward strengthening democratic institutions in Peru and in other parts of the region. In the aftermath of the municipal elections, Transparencia and NDI mounted civic education seminars on citizen participation in local government and the role and responsibility of the newly elected local government officials. In addition, Transparencia has conducted electoral reform seminars, created an Election Processes Documentation Center, fostered a weekly radio program on citizen participation and a comic strip contest on solving community problems published in a popular Peruvian newspaper. Also, members of the technical team have served as advisers to national election observation groups in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, respectively.

The USAID Regional Grant funds enabled NDI to conduct its first assessment mission to Peru and to sponsor a second field representative during part of the Institute's program with Transparencia. This work complimented a USAID Mission grant that covered the majority of Transparencia's costs for the April 1995 elections. The grant also funded NDI's 1995 municipal election monitoring program with the group. These programs helped NDI accomplish four main objectives:

- *to raise citizen confidence in the election process;*
- *to deter and detect fraud and expose it if it occurs;*
- *to provide an avenue for citizens to participate in electoral processes in a nonpartisan manner; and*
- *to provide domestic and international communities with important information concerning the integrity of elections.*

The following four sections describe how NDI's Peru programs met these objectives.

1) *to raise citizen confidence in the election process*

NDI held pre-election and post-election interviews with members of political parties, nongovernmental organizations, think-tanks, international organizations and the diplomatic community to discuss and evaluate Transparencia's role during April 1995 elections. During these interviews, numerous individuals commented that Transparencia's presence and participation in the election had increased confidence in the electoral process.

During meetings held before the April 1995 elections, almost half of the individuals interviewed expressed doubt about the prospects of Transparencia's program having a positive impact on the elections. People were not familiar with Transparencia's program nor with the type of impact such programs have had in other countries. Furthermore, the group had not proven itself as a nonpartisan, professional organization and many people doubted its motives

and capabilities. Interviewees believed that "the role of an observer is quite limited" and "potential fraud will occur in far away areas where Transparencia will not have observers." Others commented on the fact that they did not anticipate electoral fraud and, therefore, the potential impact of Transparencia was relatively minimal.

In pre-election meetings, several people interviewed mentioned the important contribution of domestic election observers in reinforcing the process. "Transparencia could play an important role in the elections. Many unsubstantiated allegations could surface and the participation of Transparencia [in the election process] could help in this respect." Some people outside of the interview contact group also made positive comments about Transparencia's potential contribution. One person said, "the observers will be present to testify that the process is transparent, this is beneficial to everyone and everyone should support this."

Transparencia's growth and impact was evident in post-election interviews. Interviewees said that the presence of a credible, professional civic group that was outside of the partisan electoral dispute had been important. Approximately half of those interviewed felt that Transparencia helped to increase confidence in the electoral process and the acceptance of the presidential results. "The observation and quick count increased confidence in the process, above all with the opposition. Transparencia reinforced the acceptance of the results." Another person said, "The impact [of their work] was that it confirmed the transparency of the elections." One individual outside of the contact group said, "Transparencia played an important role in the sense that varying and off-the-wall comments were made [regarding irregularities in the electoral process] and Transparencia was in a position to neutralize these unsubstantiated allegations." People also noted the important contribution that Transparencia had made teaching Peruvians about the electoral process and opening the door for Peruvian citizens to participate as election observers. These contributions were seen as having a long term impact in Peru.

Some individuals interviewed thought that Transparencia should have had a more visible role in the election process and that they should have been more pro-active in raising and investigating alleged irregularities. Although many of these individuals initially had low expectations of Transparencia and its work prior to the elections, their expectations grew as the group's credibility increased and as election day grew closer.

Individuals directly involved in the electoral process were very aware of Transparencia's presence. Groups and individuals that had doubted Transparencia's impartiality and credibility in the beginning sought out Transparencia on election day and thereafter to reconfirm the official election results and the clarity of the process. Individuals and groups that had questioned the official electoral institutions or specific authorities charged to carry out the electoral process also looked to Transparencia to clarify discrepancies and irregularities in the process. Transparencia therefore was able to improve public confidence in the April electoral process.

By creating greater understanding of and participation in the electoral process, Transparencia was able to promote public confidence in the process. The approval of

nonpartisan domestic observers to be present at the voting tables served as a boost of confidence to the process. In preparation to take on this role, Peruvian citizens were trained on the electoral law and encouraged to observe and report on the proceedings in a nonpartisan fashion. This opening in the process and the presence of Transparencia observers at the voting tables on election day helped Peruvians to feel that their electoral process was guarded against irregularities and that, if irregularities were to occur, Transparencia observers would be present to monitor and report such incidents.

Transparencia also boosted public confidence in the elections by investigating a controversy over missing tally sheets (*actas*). The National Election Commission (JNE) acknowledged that 37,000 blank *actas* had disappeared from the JNE's storage facility. The disappearance of these *actas* had cast doubt on the transparency of the electoral process and raised the possibility of manipulation. Encouraged by Transparencia, the JNE undertook a process of comparing *actas* received through different channels to verify that none of the 37,000 *actas* had entered in the official tabulating system. Transparencia participated in the JNE's entire verification process which took place from May 6 to 10, 1995. Transparencia declared that none of the 37,000 *actas* had been entered into the computing process, and, therefore, overall election results had not been affected.

Transparencia was also well prepared and organized for the November 1995 municipal elections. NDI found that the group had made significant advances in its organization and decision-making structure since the April elections. Furthermore, in meeting with outside observers, NDI found that the civic group was very highly regarded by the political, electoral and international actors involved in the electoral process. Transparencia developed an excellent relationship with both the National Office of Electoral Processes (ONPE) and the National Election Commission (JNE). The civic organization was perceived as a credible organization capable of making a significant contribution to the electoral process.

In a historic and unprecedented move, the electoral body charged with administering the November elections granted Transparencia observers the right to respond to questions about the election procedure at the polling stations. Transparencia "observer-orienteers" answered more than 200,000 questions on election day. The percentage of questions asked at the polling stations was broken down in Transparencia's final report into the installation of the tables, voting and vote count processes.[3] The group reported that 61 percent of the queries were made by voters during the installation phase of the electoral process. Fifteen percent of the questions were posed by political party pollwatchers and 24 percent by table officials. During the voting process, most of the questions (46 percent) were asked by table officials, followed by 35 percent of the voters and 19 percent of the pollwatchers. The final vote count prompted questions by 65 percent of the table officials and 35 percent by the party pollwatchers. This total exemplifies how

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[3] *Elecciones Municipales 1995: Información y Observación Electoral, Transparencia.* p. 50, 51 and 53.

Transparencia met the need for trained, nonpartisan "orienteers" at polling stations throughout the country.

The presence of Transparencia observers, as well as the reassurances provided by the quick count results, promoted confidence in the electoral process. The ONPE's granting of the right to respond to election-related questions at the polling places demonstrates the prestige and credibility that the Peruvian civic group has gained in less than two years since its founding. Transparencia's participation in the November elections also helped strengthen the group's national network and its ability to support democratic development in Peru on a long term basis.

2) *to deter and detect fraud and expose it if it occurs*

NDI assisted Transparencia in conducting accurate quick counts of the presidential and Lima mayoral elections. Quick count methodology requires compilation of information from a statistically random sample of polling stations. Information about the quality of the process is collected in the morning and afternoon. Election results are collected following the count. Transparencia carefully selected the sample for its quick count, trained and deployed its observers, conducted a simulation to test its capacities and carefully analyzed and released its data to the public on election day. Publicity generated by preparations for the quick count help deter and discourage fraud. The systematic, objective information provided on election day exposes fraud if it occurs.

In addition to verifying official election results, Transparencia was the only nonpartisan group in Peru that was able to comment on the quality of the process. The systematic manner in which this information was collected and the speed with which it was reported was seen as a ground breaking approach to the way in which PVT programs have been conducted around the world. Transparencia was well-prepared for potential problems on election day because it had conducted simulations previous to the elections (see attachment, memo, Transparencia parallel vote count simulation).

NDI's second field representative and PVT advisers provided Transparencia with assistance in designing the size and stratification of the quick count sample; outlining a public information campaign to build interest and credibility in the quick count; designing and implementing observer training throughout the country and structuring the communications and data collection system. NDI-sponsored international experts also advised Transparencia on the design and reporting system for the qualitative information concerning the voting and counting processes.

3) *to provide an avenue for citizens to participate in electoral processes in a nonpartisan manner*

The NDI survey mission delegation conducted 25 meetings with representatives of political parties, think-tanks, human rights groups, the government, NGO's, universities, the

media, the business sector, the National Election Commission, USAID and the U.S. Embassy to determine what concerned most Peruvians about the pending national elections and, if NDI were to proceed with plans to support a national election observation program, which local group was most qualified to implement that activity.

The assessment mission established NDI's rationale for working with nonpartisan election monitors. NDI determined that public confidence in the electoral process was lacking and there was widespread concern about the military's role and its connection to the Fujimori government, especially if it was a close race. In the past, the military had been viewed as impartial and was given the responsibility of transporting the tally sheets from the polling sites to the election commission's headquarters. The delegates also found that most Peruvians seemed to be ill-informed about their electoral process.

In its quest to find a suitable group to observe the elections, NDI met with a variety of Peruvian NGO's that planned to observe the elections. Transparencia was one of the Peruvian civic organizations that had requested NDI assistance to organize a domestic election monitoring and quick count program for the national elections. The NDI delegation met with members of the technical team during its visit and determined that the group had the greatest potential to carry out such a program for the elections and, more importantly, to develop into a permanent, nonpartisan organization that would conduct democratic strengthening projects in the future.

With NDI assistance, Transparencia grew from a small staff in Lima to a nationwide network of 47 regional committees and 10,000 volunteer activists. The second field representative's presence was crucial to building the group's network. Suggestions made by the second field representative helped create the organizational structure of local chapters and committees, which allowed Transparencia to conduct activities on a national level. These local chapters and committees took on the responsibility of recruitment, training and execution of the observation and quick count program on election day. This network was important to the success of the April and November programs and will be critical in helping the group to maintain activities nationwide in the future.

To increase the management, leadership and organizational capabilities of Transparencia at the national and local level -- resulting in a strong and sustained nationwide nonpartisan advocacy organization -- NDI advised and assisted the Peruvian civic group to:

- expand its team and decentralize responsibilities and decision-making within the organization. These actions enabled the group to work quickly and simultaneously on all of the components of the project; and

- create a volunteer-based organization. The establishment of a volunteer-based organization added credibility to the Transparencia effort and put into practice true democratic principles. The over 9,000 volunteers were part of the Transparencia program and their involvement on a nationwide level demonstrated interest and motivation on

behalf of the Peruvian citizens to exercise their right of participation in a democratic system.

In order to create a volunteer organization, NDI field staff worked with Transparencia on the following:

- -- Understanding the utility of volunteer involvement;
- -- Incorporating volunteers in Transparencia;
- -- Familiarizing themselves with techniques to recruit volunteers;
- -- Developing tactics to motivate volunteer involvement;
- -- Creating an infrastructure where volunteers could be incorporated;
- -- Establishing volunteer training techniques; and
- -- Learning tactics for working with volunteers and to make them feel part of the Transparencia network.

- Establish a weekly staff meeting which served as a point of coordination between the departments and prioritization of weekly events.

- Establish mechanisms to ensure the uniformity and quality of the training. A great part of the success of the electoral observation and quick count program hinged on the execution of proper election observer training. Due to a delay in the production of the training materials, NDI's field representatives helped Transparencia institute an emergency plan to ensure adequate and uniform training on a national level. This involved:

  - -- Creating a team of trainers;
  - -- Designing a schedule of provincial training programs and ensuring that a Lima-based trainer would be present to assist with the programs; and
  - -- Training the trainers through a training workshop, direct assistance at the provincial workshops and the development of a "Tips for Trainers" sheet, as well as other materials to assist with the training.

In addition to assisting Transparencia to develop organizationally, NDI aided the group to establish itself as a legitimate, nonpartisan organization committed to strengthening democratic processes. Transparencia developed a reputation of credibility and carved out a role for itself as an important intermediary organization that promotes citizen participation and facilitates communication between the citizenry, political parties, the JNE and the ONPE. NDI field staff and NDI-sponsored experts aided Transparencia to attain this high standing of impartiality and professionalism.

Complimentary training seminars enabled Transparencia to train observers on the November election-day procedures, electoral law and their newly granted task of helping to orient voters, table officials, and political party pollwatchers. Transparencia, with technical support from NDI, created guides for distribution at these seminars. Three guides were for all

observer/orienteers and another instructed those who would participate in the Lima quick count (see attachment, training manuals, etc.).

Reports from the Transparencia chapters around the country following the November elections indicated that Transparencia observers had often been consulted by table officials, political party pollwatchers and voters regarding the electoral law. This demonstrated that Transparencia was seen not only as observers of the process but also as neutral figures who could be consulted with questions and doubts about its proceedings. Transparencia's high visibility and successful program activities helped to encourage participation in the process and ensure that election results were accepted by the political parties, independent movements and the general citizenry.

4) *to provide domestic and international communities with important information concerning the integrity of the elections*

Transparencia provided the national and international communities with information on both the national and municipal elections in 1995 through periodic statements and reports. The group issued four pre-election, three election day and one post-election statement, along with a final report on the April national elections. The group also issued three election-day reports about the November municipal elections. These documents provided an impartial evaluation of the election process; all statements and reports described the objective and systematic methodology used to collect information.

Transparencia's April pre-election statements focused on positive advances in the process. The group also expressed concern over specific irregularities or incidents that had occurred. Statements were released during the first weeks of January, February, March and April 1995. Following are summaries of those statements.

- The January statement raised four issues: the valuable initiatives that the JNE had developed to ensure a transparent electoral process; Congress' positive actions and questionable changes in the electoral system; concern over reported illegal campaigning by state officials; abuses committed by police officials that resulted in the death of some political leaders and the attempted shooting of other officials.

- In February, Peru and Ecuador were in a military conflict. Transparencia's statement noted that the conflict with Ecuador nearly brought the electoral campaign to a stand still and the attention of the Peruvians was focussed on resolving the conflict in a peaceful manner.

- In March, Transparencia expressed its opinion that election day should not be changed as some of the political candidates had suggested. They commented on the public's confidence in the autonomy and integrity of the JNE. Transparencia also emphasized the release of the legal statute recognizing the role of domestic election observers in the

electoral process as strengthening the role of civil society in the process. Transparencia commented that its relationship with the OAS and the provincial election commission allowed them to further contribute to the electoral process.

- Transparencia's April statement denounced the situation in Huánuco, where just three days before the elections officials found 3,000 completed *actas*. Transparencia urged Peruvians to be attentive to other possible attempts at altering the electoral process and expressed its commitment to ensuring a transparent process.

Transparencia issued three statements in April. The first statement, issued in the early afternoon, covered qualitative aspects of the process. With the systematic data that Transparencia had collected, the group was able to share key information with the public including approximate time polls opened, the make up of the table officials and the frequency of problems with voting materials. By holding an early press conference to report these findings, Transparencia was able to gain visibility and distinguish itself from the exit poll companies.

The second report released at approximately 9:00 p.m. on election night announced Transparencia's quick count result of the presidential race. Also, in this report, Transparencia again covered qualitative factors, such as observations about the time polls opened, the presence of voting materials and the percentage of irregularities observed at the tables. The report, drafted within hours after the polls closed, was accurate and timely. Transparencia's third statement, released the day after the election, reported the civic group's quick count results of the congressional race. The JNE released the official results six days after the elections.

At the end of April, Transparencia issued a post-election statement. The statement mentioned the complexity of the balloting and tally process and noted that these factors could have resulted in a distortion of the congressional results. However, due to technical reasons, Transparencia had not calculated the result of the preferential votes and therefore, they could not elaborate on the possibility of irregularities affecting the results.

Transparencia's April post-election statement addressed the 37,000 lost *actas*. The group offered to help clarify the situation by comparing *actas* obtained by the political groups with the *actas* utilized by the JNE to tabulate the official results. Transparencia would undertake this duty as long as all of the political groups and the JNE agreed to such a process.

Transparencia's statement helped stimulate action on behalf of the JNE. A few days after the release of Transparencia's statement, the JNE undertook a process to compare the hard copy of the *actas* received from the provincial election commissions with the *actas* transported directly to the JNE and which had been scanned into the JNE system for the official count. The purpose of this exercise was to verify that none of the 37,000 missing *actas* had entered the tabulating process. Transparencia was asked by the JNE to have technical observers present during this exercise.

In early June, Transparencia presented its final report on the quick count and election observation of the April 9, 1995 national elections. The 80-page report was well prepared and comprehensive. It provided a thorough review of the Transparencia program and detailed results of the PVT and observation of the April elections.

NDI's program with the group in November 1995 was also crucial in providing information to the international community and Peruvians. Transparencia released three reports during the November 12 election day. The first report given at 11:30 a.m. included the following information:

- 9,276 Transparencia volunteers were present in 105 of the 194 provinces;
- 65 percent of the polls opened at 9:05 a.m.; and
- 37 percent of the tables opened with all the table officials present;
- percentages varied on the absence of individual electoral material; and
- the number of political party pollwatchers from Change 90/New Majority (Jaime Yoshiyama) was 33 percent, We are Lima (*Somos Lima*--Alberto Andrade) was 42 percent (see attachment, election-day statements).

Similar quantitative and qualitative information was provided at 1:30 and 6:30 p.m. Tally sheets collected from Transparencia observers indicated that the civic group's volunteer monitors answered more than 200,000 election-related questions from table officials, political party pollwatchers and voters. By helping resolve problems as they arose, Transparencia observers were able to improve the quality of the electoral process and promote confidence in the elections.

Transparencia's statements gave the national and international communities a nonpartisan appraisal of national and municipal elections as they were being conducted throughout the country. In addition, Transparencia was able to use its experience from the April elections to help the ONPE in the realization of its first national election, an initiative that was welcomed by ONPE officials and the National Election Commission.

Mexico: 1994 Domestic Election Monitoring (1366/67), 1995 Domestic Election Monitoring (1662), 1996 Civic Group Organizational Strengthening (1662)

1994 Domestic Election Monitoring (1366/67)

Overview

Mexican elections have been traditionally plagued by allegations of fraud that have undermined citizen confidence in democratic institutions. Opposition parties routinely have

cited the presidential elections of 1988 as an example of the ruling party tampering with results to ensure its candidate's triumph. They also point out irregularities that took place in the early 1990s in state elections in Oaxaca, Michoacan, and the Yucatan. To help overcome this legacy and promote citizen confidence and participation in elections, NDI worked with civic organizations to train Mexicans to monitor their own elections. NDI technical experts provided statistical and organizational tools to enable these civic organizations to mobilize hundreds of volunteers and conduct independent vote counts of election results. In anticipation of the 1994 presidential elections, NDI counseled these civic groups to join forces and organize a national monitoring effort. This advice was well-received and a coalition of 400 civic organizations, the Alianza Cívica (Civic Alliance -- AC) was formed. This coalition mobilized more than 12,000 volunteers for the August 1994 elections and conducted an independent count of election results accurate to within three percentage points. These activities provided a critical avenue for constructive citizen involvement in the political process and enhanced confidence in the elections.

Background

Elections in Mexico have often been mired in controversy. For years, the National Action Party (PAN) alleged electoral fraud in the northern states. These allegations led the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to warn the Mexican government that it must guarantee the free and full exercise of political rights. On the national level in 1988, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, then presidential candidate of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), claimed the presidential election was stolen from him when official results gave the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) 50.7 percent of the vote to the PRD's 31.1 percent. Allegations of fraud have persisted in state and municipal elections for many years.

In the gubernatorial elections of August 1991, the PRI won all of the six contested seats. However, in response to massive protests from the opposition over alleged voting irregularities in the states of Guanajuato and San Luis Potosi, then President Carlos Salinas de Gortari intervened and replaced the newly-elected PRI governors with interim governors, pending new elections. After the July 1992 municipal elections in Oaxaca and Michoacan, the opposition and independent civic groups charged that the PRI committed fraud. Tensions rising from the disputed outcome of the elections erupted into violence in January 1993 when disgruntled PRD supporters clashed with security forces in an attempt to occupy municipal buildings.

Frustrated by the continuing irregularities, opposition parties and independent civic groups became increasingly involved in election monitoring and parallel vote tabulation for municipal and gubernatorial elections throughout Mexico. A parallel vote tabulation is a method of independently verifying the accuracy of the official vote count. The PVT does not employ exit polling. Rather, it relies on the actual election results reported at polling places by official election authorities. These results are then independently recorded and tabulated. PVT results may be used for comparison with the official vote count, identification of statistical anomalies, or projection of final results. The PVT is not intended to displace the authority of the official vote counting process but has been used in many countries to help instill confidence and participation in the electoral process.

Since 1991, civic groups in various states throughout Mexico involved hundreds of people in the electoral process as election-day observers. In addition to a short-term goal of assuring free and fair elections, the groups' long-term objective was to produce qualified individuals and institutions equipped to organize a nationwide monitoring effort for the August 1994 presidential election.

Mexican civic organizations faced important challenges in executing a nationwide vote tabulation for the August elections. While the civic groups had successfully conducted election monitoring activities on the state and municipal levels, they had no experience in implementing a national effort. Given the 100,000 polling stations needed for the 1994 elections, it was estimated that the PVT would require at least 5,000 volunteers to collect results at approximately 2,500 polling stations. Broad grassroots support among the local civic groups to recruit volunteers for the PVT would be essential to the success of the project.

NDI had participated in election-related activities in Mexico for several years. In August 1991, NDI provided technical and financial support to the Consejo por la Democracia (Council for Democracy --Consejo) in conducting a PVT for Mexico City's municipal elections. The PVT, which was the first ever conducted in Mexico, matched the official election results and helped convince the PAN and PRD to accept the election results. NDI again provided financial assistance to the Consejo in April 1992 to organize a conference on electoral reform. The PRI, PAN, and PRD also contributed financial support to the event. More than 200 people participated in the conference which included electoral officials, political party leaders and representatives of civic organizations. The conference addressed the compilation of registration lists, the distribution of identification cards, the composition of election boards, and campaign finance laws.

Also in 1992, NDI collaborated on separate occasions with the Consejo and Convergencia (Convergence of Civic Organizations for Democracy) to launch a number of election-related activities in various states. In Chihuahua, NDI worked with the Consejo to conduct an election observation seminar and a PVT for the state election. NDI gave technical and financial assistance to the Consejo for an independent vote count in Sinaloa. In Tamaulipas, NDI worked with Convergencia to conduct a study on media coverage, observer training and electoral processes. While the studies on media coverage and registration lists were well done, the sections of the election report prepared by Convergencia were somewhat biased. This prompted NDI to suspend its work with Convergencia, pending a commitment to nonpartisan work.

NDI provided financial assistance for the Consejo to participate in the domestic observation and PVT during the gubernatorial and municipal elections in Yucatan on November 28, 1993. The Consejo and several other civic groups collaborated with the Frente Civico Familiar (Family Civic Front of the Yucatan -- FCF) on the project.

Project Activities

Yucatan Elections

On November 28-29, 1993, two NDI staff members traveled to Merida to assess a PVT in the state elections in Yucatan. The Yucatan gubernatorial and municipal elections were the last opportunity before the 1994 Presidential elections for Mexican civic organizations to test their abilities to observe elections and conduct a PVT. NDI sponsored the travel and per diem expenses for Enrique Calderon, a computer expert from the Fundacion Rosenblueth (Rosenblueth Foundation), and for Julio Faesler and Ignacio Muriel, members of the Consejo from Mexico City and Merida, Yucatan. Calderon provided computer expertise in conducting the PVT. Faesler and Muriel contributed expertise in organizing and administering the observation gained during previous state elections. The FCF, a nongovernmental organization from Yucatan, served as the local umbrella organization, organizing the volunteer observers needed to conduct the PVT and observation. More than 600 Mexican volunteers monitored electoral processes at 246 of the 1,421 polling stations throughout Yucatan.

The results of the FCF's PVT matched the official returns released by state election officials. In the gubernatorial race, the PRI obtained 57 percent of the vote, and PAN won 39 percent of the vote. The official results of the mayoral race in Merida differed from those of the PVT. Officially, the PRI had a slight lead over the PAN, but the PVT reflected the opposite result. Turn-out was 74 percent of eligible voters.

The observers reported that the elections were marred by irregularities. The day after the elections, the FCF held a news conference to present a report on the elections. These irregularities included a lack of ballots at polling stations, robbing and stuffing of ballot boxes, violation of ballot secrecy, voting without proof of registration, absence of registered voters from lists and intimidation of voters.

In its report, the FCF stated it was impossible to predict how profoundly the irregularities may have affected the results of the Yucatan elections. However, the observers said that these elections represented a step backward from recent elections in Mexico. After the elections, the widespread allegations of fraud led Yucatan's Governor Dulce Maria Saury Riancho to resign. Despite the FCF's well organized election observation effort, electoral irregularities were numerous. This situation led to concern among citizens that similar problems would occur in the in the 1994 elections.

During this Yucatan trip, NDI staff members consulted with Faesler, Sergio Aguayo of Convergencia and Luz Rosales of Movimiento Ciudadano para la Democracia (Citizen Movement for Democracy -- MCD) regarding preliminary plans to conduct a national observation and PVT for the 1994 presidential elections. These meetings helped set the stage for the formation of a national coalition of election monitoring groups in 1994.

To help these civic groups prepare monitor the 1994 elections, NDI opened a field office in Mexico City in March 1994. NDI sent an experienced civic organizer, Jorge Rivera, to serve as field representative. Rivera began discussing the observation program immediately with the civic groups that NDI had been working with over the preceding years. He also began meeting with political parties, labor leaders, election authorities embassy officials and the Mexican government to discuss concerns about upcoming elections.

Alianza Cívica and 1994 Election Monitoring Activities

In April 1994, many of the civic groups with which NDI had collaborated, decided to join forces for the August national elections. The groups formally united under the title of *Alianza Cívica/Observation '94* (Civic Alliance/Observation 1994 -AC) and began to organize a national network to observe the elections. Stimulated in part by recommendations from NDI, the AC was created to implement an election observation that included: monitoring the media, electoral officials, voter registration and the balloting process; and conducting a nationwide parallel vote tabulation (PVT) on election day.

The seven groups that comprised the new umbrella organization were: ACUDE, the Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos (Mexican Academy of Human Rights), the Consejo, the Fundacion Rosenblueth, the Instituto Superior de Cultura Democratica (Superior Institute of Democratic Culture), the MCD.

To facilitate the AC's efforts, NDI sponsored a national training seminar in Mexico City from April 28 to 29, 1994. Approximately 120 community and civic leaders representing almost all 31 Mexican states attended seminar. The program helped the AC to build support among local civic organizations. The participants became a catalyst for local AC chapters in their respective states by later preparing local trainers and volunteer election observers.

In early June 1994, NDI president Ken Wollack and program officer Kate Kelsch, traveled to Mexico to meet with AC coordinators regarding program strategies for the PVT and additional observer training seminars. In addition, Wollack and Kelsch met with Nguyen Huu Dong, the UN electoral assistance representative in Mexico, and with U.S. Embassy representatives. During these meetings, NDI discussed the progress of the Institute's activities in Mexico and coordination of activities with the AC, the UN, and NDI.

In late June 1994, Glenn Cowan, NDI senior advisor for electoral systems, traveled to Mexico City to consult with Enrique Calderon, executive director of the Rosenblueth Foundation and the AC coordinator directing the PVT system design. Cowan assessed the status of the PVT framework and offered recommendations to the group.

Between July 12 to 13, Cowan returned to Mexico with Neil Nevitte, professor of public policy and statistical research at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada. Nevitte and

Cowan worked with Calderon and members of the Rosenblueth staff to refine the statistical foundations of the PVT design.

Between July 26 to 28, Cowan, Nevitte, and NDI staff members returned to Mexico for further consultations on the PVT system. They evaluated the system and made final recommendations. On July 27, the AC sponsored a public forum to present its PVT effort to the Mexican academic community and the media. Nevitte participated as a panelist and assessed the PVT design. Other panelists included Jorge Carpizo, minister of the interior and president of Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), and Santiago Creel, one of six citizen counselors on IFE's General Council. The event received significant coverage in the Mexican media, helping to increase the credibility of the PVT concept and public awareness of the observation program.

During each visit, Cowan and Nevitte briefed UN representatives, and U.S. Embassy officials, including Ambassador Jim Jones, on their consultations at Rosenblueth Foundation and the AC's PVT system design and the status of the comprehensive observation effort.

In August 1994, Nevitte and Cowan returned to Mexico for the elections to provide advice on conducting the PVT and to assess its effectiveness. Based on recommendations from Nevitte and Cowan, the AC made significant adjustments to the PVT that maximized its accuracy and effectiveness. The AC successfully carried out the PVT and projected results within three percentage points of the official results.

During this period, NDI Field Representative Rivera monitored the changing political environment and reported these developments to the Washington office. His recommendations enabled NDI to respond to evolving needs of the Mexican civic organizations. He also served as a key liaison with political party leaders and election authorities. He remained in Mexico City through October 1994 to monitor the post-election political situation.

Evaluation

The objectives and achievements of the programs are described below:

- *to inform citizens of their rights and responsibilities as voters and their potential role in encouraging accountability in the Mexican electoral process;*

- *to assist the Council for Democracy[4] in training and mobilizing the volunteers needed to conduct the nationwide PVT during the August 1994 presidential election in Mexico;*

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[4] The Consejo Por La Democracia, a member of the Alianza Cívica, conducted the PVT on behalf of the coalition.

- *to assist the Council in building its organizational capacity and improving its methodology to conduct the PVT; and*

- *to help deter incidents of fraud and improve voter confidence in election results.*

Through its activities, NDI continued to help organize effective observation efforts by Mexican civic groups. In the Yucatan, NDI support and technical advice helped stimulate the participation of more than 600 volunteers in constructive, nonpartisan activities that provided greater confidence in the election process. These activities affirmed the utility of the PVT as a tool to involve citizens in the political process and collect systematic data on the quality of the election process.

The program also helped the FYF to systematically document electoral irregularities. With this information the Frente was able to more effectively allocate its human and financial resources in the 1994 elections. NDI also supported the training of numerous volunteers in election observation techniques, laying the groundwork for the 1994 election observation program.

Though PVT consultations with the Consejo, NDI transferred important techniques to Mexico that were used in subsequent elections. By participating in media events in Mexico, NDI advisors Nevitte helped establish the credibility of the PVT. This was a critical contribution since at the time the concept was relatively new and regarded with suspicion by Mexican political parties and the government. The concept was later embraced in Mexico by more than a dozen groups on election day in 1994, including the Federal Electoral Institute.

During the many consultations that took place in 1994, NDI counseled the civic groups with which the Institute had worked since 1991 to unite their efforts for the 1994 elections. NDI urged these groups to form a single national network to multiply the impact of their activities. This advice influenced the groups' decision to form the AC. Through support for the "train-the-trainer" workshops, NDI enabled the AC to prepare hundreds of volunteers to monitor elections. These participants in turn trained thousands volunteers in their home states, multiplying the impact of the events many times.

At the request of AC leaders, NDI's field representative maintained a limited role in the implementation of training programs. It was the AC's belief that the presence of representative of a U.S. organization would cause tensions among nationalistic members of the AC coalition and undermine the unity of the organization. NDI respected this request. The field representative concentrated his efforts on assessing the political environment affecting the election and serving as a liaison with the AC, political party leaders, international observer groups and the government. This role was particularly important in explaining the work of the AC to other potentially critical political sectors and building rapport with political party leaders that helped to diffuse post-election tensions.

NDI assistance helped launch what would become the largest independent civic association in Mexico. Within four months of its formation, the AC grew to more than 400 organizations in all 31 Mexican states and trained 12,000 volunteers to observe on election day. With NDI advice, the group was able to conduct an effective PVT and predicted the election results to within a three percent margin of error. The AC provided a constructive channel for citizens to take part in the election process and strengthen democratic institutions.

Domestic Election Monitoring and Civic Group Organizational Strengthening (1662)

Overview

Mexican electoral history has been marked by allegations of fraud and irregularities. Despite electoral reforms in 1990 and 1994, incidents of irregularities in many state level elections reaffirmed that much more needed to be done to guarantee open and honest elections and give Mexicans faith in the political process. Mexican civic organizations responded to this challenge by organizing election monitoring efforts to increase citizen confidence and participation in elections. In April 1994, many of these groups formed a national coalition, the *Alianza Cívica/Observación '94* (AC), to organize a comprehensive observation of the August 21, 1994, national elections. Within four months, the Alianza Cívica grew to more than 400 organizations in all 31 Mexican states and trained 12,000 volunteers to observe polling on election day.

Based its successes in 1994, the AC decided to stay together and monitor 15 state and local elections in 1995. USAID funds enabled NDI to bolster the AC's efforts in key elections in Michoacan, Chiapas, Puebla, Oaxaca and Tlaxcala. With NDI assistance, the AC trained 2,300 volunteers at 83 workshops in the five states. The AC was able to help local chapters detect and deter fraud through election day observation, civic education, and monitoring of the media and election authorities. The workshops also enabled the AC to evaluate its efforts and establish a consensus on strategies for monitoring elections in 1996 and 1997. In addition, the AC organized nonpartisan forums allowing citizens from almost a dozen states to offer recommendations for electoral reform legislation. The forums provided a constructive avenue of citizen participation in the political process and helped maintain pressure for critical reforms that were eventually adopted in late 1996 by the Mexican congress.

During this period, AC leaders also requested NDI's assistance in consolidating its organizational capacity and exploring activities to promote "good government." Originally envisioned as an ad hoc coalition, the Ac learned during the 1994 elections that it could play an important long-term role in strengthening democracy. As the largest independent Mexican civic organization, the decision to stay together meant that the AC had to learn to manage a diverse coalition of hundreds of groups with distinct goals and levels of resources.

In response, NDI organized a joint program with the Advocacy Institute, a Washington, D.C. based organization that trains citizen groups to improve organizational capabilities and develop strategies to influence public policy. The NDI/AI program enabled AC leaders to:

develop a consensus among the national and regional leaders on the AC's mission; explore methods to become financially self-sufficient; affirm its nonpartisanship; increase cooperation with U.S. policy-makers, the media and nongovernmental organizations; and improve its organizational effectiveness.

Background

Mexican electoral history has been marked by allegations of fraud and irregularities. Most of the blame for these incidents has been directed at the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has dominated Mexican politics for almost 70 years. The PRI has won the presidency in every election and garnered most regional and local elected positions. Most of these elections have never been accepted by Mexican opposition parties. The 1988 elections, for example, were considered suspect by most opposition supporters. During the counting process, the electoral commission's computer system broke down three times, leading to allegations that the presidential results had been manipulated in favor of the PRI. Official results gave the PRI candidate 50.7 percent of the vote to the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) candidate's 31.1 percent. Citing fraud, the PRD rejected the election results and staged violent protests around the country.

Responding to these events and international pressure, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari proposed electoral reforms. In 1990, the Mexican Congress approved a new federal electoral code (COFIPE) that established the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), an institution charged with overseeing the electoral process. The COFIPE also recognized the right of nonpartisan Mexican election observers to monitor their election processes. A number of civic groups took advantage of this change and organized election observation activities at the local level.

Despite the electoral reforms, allegations of fraud continued to surface in municipal and state elections. Opposition supporters often responded to election results with violent protests. In some cases the PRI diffused popular anger by ignoring the official results and allowing the opposition candidate to take office. Before the August 1994 elections, two additional events contributed to the instability of Mexican democracy. On January 1, 1994, fighting broke out between rebels and the Mexican army in the state of Chiapas. In March, Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI's presidential candidate, was assassinated.

Mexican civic groups responded to the growing popular dissatisfaction by providing opportunities for citizens to participate peacefully in the political process. Based on their previous experience, many groups found election monitoring and civic education to be effective channels for citizen participation. In April 1994 seven civic coalitions encompassing more than 400 grassroots organizations formed the Alianza Cívica (AC). This umbrella organization involved thousands of volunteers in a comprehensive national election observation effort for the 1994 elections.

With NDI assistance, AC was able to provide a channel for citizen participation, help reduce tensions and promote confidence in the electoral process. National and state coordinators from AC recruited and trained more than 12,000 volunteers to observe the elections and collect the data for an independent verification of the official vote count (parallel vote tabulation -- PVT). The civic coalition also conducted an extensive voter education campaign. The AC was instrumental during the pre-election period in bringing about important electoral reforms such as ensuring fair access by political parties to the media and increasing scrutiny of the voter registry and election authorities.

National and international observers recognized the August 1994 elections as the cleanest in Mexican history. Despite this praise, significant irregularities did occur during the polling that continued to frustrate opposition supporters into the post-election period. The most serious concerns were voiced in Chiapas. Opposition supporters protested and demanded new elections. The Chiapas rebels, upset over the inauguration of the PRI governor-elect, held an inauguration for their candidate and vowed not to pay taxes to the PRI governor. In November 1994, serious irregularities were reported in the Tabasco elections. PRI and opposition supporters clashed in the streets, forcing public offices and schools to close. Evidence also indicated that massive violations of campaign finance regulations took place during the election.

Controversial gubernatorial elections later took place in the Yucatan in May 1995. Although official results declared the PRI candidate the victor, the PAN protested the results citing incidents of fraud. The PAN lodged a complaint with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission over the elections.

In addition to elections, other events have highlighted the vulnerability of Mexican democracy. In September 1994, the Secretary General of the PRI, José Ruiz Massieu, was assassinated. In December of that year, Mexican leaders drastically devalued the peso. Citizens responded by protesting against the government. The four leading political parties reacted by signing the National Political Accord, an agreement that called for further political reform. The Accord specifically underscored the importance of the participation of civic groups in this process.

Because the AC had the largest grassroots base of any independent civic organization in Mexico, it was able to play a key role in encouraging further democratic reforms, conducting civic education campaigns and promoting citizen participation in the democratic process. The AC proved its ability to motivate thousands of volunteers and to channel popular frustration into productive activities. This role was demonstrated again by election observation activities that the AC organized for state elections in mid-1995, which included election observation, media monitoring, civic education and other programs. Thousands of volunteers participated in these efforts.

Despite these successes, the AC's rapid formation five months before the August 1994 elections prevented its leadership from making long-term plans regarding its organizational structure. The AC needed to improve coordination between national and local chapters and to adapt to reduced funding. AC was also interested in exploring new ways to involve citizens in democratic reform.

NDI has years of experience working with many of the civic groups that formed the AC. Between 1991 and 1994, NDI helped these groups train election monitors, conduct PVTs and build their grassroots bases. Before the 1994 elections, NDI helped the groups recognize the importance of coming together under the umbrella of AC, and to conduct their activities in a nonpartisan manner. With NDI assistance, AC organized the first of several national conferences that brought together more than 100 national and state coordinators. NDI has also helped other organizations, such as the Bulgarian Association for Free Elections (BAFECR) and the Chilean civic group PARTICIPA, when they expanded their focus beyond elections.

Project Activities

AC Monitoring of 1995 State Elections

With AID support, NDI was able to help the AC bolster election-related activities in the states of Michoacán, Chiapas, Puebla, Oaxaca and Tlaxcala. The AC tailored its activities to the political environment and electoral history of each state. The AC selection criteria for activities included the following variables: degree of competitiveness of the election, type of election, history of conflict in the area, and need for observing the campaign period and election day. These activities included civic education programs to reinforce the importance of voting and deter possible incidents of voter intimidation. AC state chapters also observed elections, analyzed the objectivity of the media and conducted PVTs. In addition, some chapters reported on campaign expenditures, election authorities, electoral registries, voting and counting procedures and the settlement of electoral complaints.

Prior to the elections, AC state representatives attended an NDI-sponsored workshop in Mexico City where they designed flyers, manuals, posters and radio and video spots for civic education programs for state elections. (See attached "The AVC of Elections" and "Your dignity is worth more.") The meeting enabled the AC to develop a strategy for distributing the materials and assess the human and financial capability of the AC chapters to implement the programs. Based on this assessment, the AC leadership was able to determine which chapters would need additional assistance from the national office.

NDI also supported civic education training workshops on the state and municipal level to prepare trainers and volunteer observers. The participants in turn returned to their states and trained others. Based on this initial training session more than 80 workshops were held in the five states: Tlaxcala (5), Oaxaca (19), Chiapas (31), Michoacan (20), Puebla (8).

In addition, NDI support enabled members of the AC to organize teams of expert trainers to follow up on the workshops and help state chapters develop in-house expertise in electoral law, election observation and civic education. Members of the executive secretariat and national coordination council complemented these efforts by traveling to states to help AC leaders refine observation methodologies and analyze the findings of the studies conducted by the chapters. NDI funding permitted the national AC staff to send funds to the state chapters to purchase air time and hold press conferences and run newspaper inserts for their civic education efforts. Following the elections, the AC also formed working groups from the national staff and representatives of the state chapters to develop ideas for programs for 1996 and 1997.

Many of the chapters also collected information for a comparative study on state election laws. (See attached State Electoral Law in Mexico.) This report analyzed existing laws and made recommendations for reforms. The conclusions of the report were echoed in the agendas of regional forums conducted in early 1996. The issues included recommendations for enabling citizens who do not appear on registration lists to vote, campaign finance limits, equal access of political parties to the media, greater citizen control of election administration, and the right of citizens to monitor elections. A copy of the study is contained in the appendix of this report.

Chiapas

On October 15, 1995, elections were held in the state of Chiapas for city councils and state legislature. The state included 24 electoral districts encompassing 3,126 polling sites. More than 1.7 million citizens were listed in the voter registry and seven political parties registered candidates for the elections. Based on its analysis of the electoral environment in the state, the AC organized four types of activities.

The AC chapter launched a civic education program focused on detecting and deterring vote-buying and voter coercion in June 1995. Support from NDI enabled the group to expand this effort. The chapter prepared trainers at 31 workshops using the "Manual for Citizen Training -- the Road to Elections." These trainers later prepared local volunteers using another AC-designed manual the "Guide for Complaints and Testimony," which helped citizens identify and quantify incidents of vote-buying and coercion. (See attached Complaint Forms.) The manual addressed such illicit practices as linking public works projects, gifts of money and threats of violence to support a particular political party.

The Chiapas civic education campaign was waged on various fronts, including radio spots which ran in the three days preceding the elections and invited voters to denounce irregularities. AC volunteers also visited communities with a history of vote-buying and interviewed key members of the community, such as priests, civic groups leaders, municipal officials to assess if illicit activities were taking place. In response to its campaign, the AC chapter received 32 complaints representing 18 municipalities. Given the history of vote buying and coercion, this small number of reports was disappointing. The AC found that the long

history of political repression and economic marginalization made many citizens reluctant to make formal complaints.

On election day, the AC chapter mobilized more than 407 local observers and 71 observers from other states. These observers covered 35 of 111 municipalities. The chapter also organized 'brigades," which traveled to various municipalities where the AC did not have observers stationed. The AC's national coordination council also brought 42 experienced election observers to join the observation effort.

The observers evaluated the polling using a standardized observation form with three basic focuses: the opening of the polling sites, the voting process and the counting of the results. The observers concluded that:

- secrecy of the vote was violated at 15 percent of the polling sites;
- voters with the proper credential did not appear on the voter registry at 42 percent of the sites;
- polling sites closed early at 21 percent of sites preventing many voters from casting ballots.

The chapter also conducted a study on the electoral law of Chiapas and drafted profiles of the members of the electoral officials on the state, district and municipal level. The study was designed to determine if any current political activities of the individuals would undermine their impartiality as election officials.

In October 1995, NDI Program Officer Matthew Dippell traveled to Chiapas to evaluate AC activities. He met with the leaders of the Chiapas chapter to discuss their monitoring effort, civic education campaign and strategy for coordinating with the national AC staff. Dippell joined members of the AC national office in meetings with the state governor, political party leaders and president of the state election commission. On election day, he next traveled to the rural town of Ocosingo -- an area where the Zapatista rebels were said to have a strong support -- to observe the voting process.

Given a history of political conflict, concern existed that violence might erupt in Ocosingo during the elections. Problems did emerge as citizens complained about what appeared to be systematic efforts to discourage voting by placing polling sites in inaccessible areas, providing inaccurate voter registration lists and exploiting internal divisions within local indigenous communities. These combined tensions grew to a point that local election officials postponed voting in several municipalities.

Michoacan

On November 12, 1995, elections were held in Michoacan to select the governor, state representatives and municipal presidents. The state's 113 municipalities were divided into 18

districts encompassing 1.8 million voters. The AC chapter organized a civic education campaign to teach voters their rights and responsibilities in a democracy. This effort included radio spots run on six stations, beginning with five daily spots and doubling in the last three days before the elections. The chapter also distributed posters and flyers on the freedom of the vote to the 45 most populous districts. More than 20 civic education workshops were also held with 30 attendees each. These events culminated in a forum in the capital city, Morelia, entitled "The Road to Democracy."

With regard to vote-buying and voter-coercion, the Michoacan chapter looked at the use of social welfare programs and public works projects as a means to get support for a particular candidate. The AC concluded that although the number of incidents of this type had fallen in comparison with past elections, numerous incidents occurred where benefits provided by the social programs *Procampo* and *Pronasol* were used to sway voters in favor of the ruling party. Opposition parties reportedly complained about this practice repeatedly to the electoral authorities without success.

On election day, the chapter conducted an observation program and PVT with the assistance of the Arturo Rosenblueth Foundation. The AC selected 100 polling sites at random to serve as a sample for the PVT. Of the 113 municipalities in the state, 57 were included in the sample. The group mobilized 180 observers supplemented by 22 individuals from the national AC office including specialists in human rights. The observation was also coordinated with 12 international observers from Global Exchange, a U.S. civic organization, and the Embassy of Canada. Based on observation reports, the chapter concluded that the elections took place peacefully with the exception of the municipality of Buenavista Tomatlan, where supporters of the Democratic Revolution Party burned ballot boxes. The PRD members alleged that the number of ballots received did not coincide with the voter registry, implying that fraud may have occurred.

In collaboration with the Mexican Academy of Human Rights, the chapter also monitored media coverage of the candidates with the goal of promoting balanced coverage. The study focused on the time and tone of coverage of candidates for the period of September 21 to October 31. The chapter analyzed the major newspapers including: *La Voz de Michoacan*, *El Sol de Morelia*, *Cambio de Michoacan*, *Buen Dia*, *Nuevo Michoacan*, and *Revista Poder*. The group also monitored the local television channel *Sistema Informativo Michoacano*.

The chapter also conducted a study of campaign spending by the political parties. The study was motivated by previous elections in which the funds spent by some parties appeared to exceed official limits. The chapter concluded that great disparities in funding continued to be a problem and had a significant impact on the campaign.

Finally, the Michoacan chapter monitored the citizen counselors who administer the elections. The chapter found that the counselors selected lacked relevant experience in this area,

effectively weakening citizen control of the election process. Many of the counselors were also believed to support the ruling PRI party, and to be biased against opposition party candidates.

Oaxaca

On November 12, 1995, elections were held for municipal presidents for 110 of Oaxaca's 570 municipalities. Given limited resources, the AC chapter concentrated its efforts in four municipalities with a history of irregularities: Oaxaca, Pinotepa Nacional, Putla, Santo Domingo and Zanatepec. The chapter conducted 30 workshops on basic issues such as the right to a free and secret vote; the selection of electoral authorities, and denouncing vote-buying and voter coercion.

With the assistance of the Mexican Academy of Human Rights, the chapter monitored media coverage of the campaign. The program tracked the newspapers *El Imparcial*, *Noticias* and *El Sur* between October 10 to 19 and concluded with a press conference on the results. The group also studied 36 hours of broadcasting on television channels nine and three during November 1 to 4.

On election day, the chapter monitored the polling in the four municipalities using the standardized "Guide to the Quality of Elections." Based on the observation, the chapter concluded that:

- a significant number of election officials lacked training,
- many polling sites opened late;
- indelible ink often was not applied properly,
- citizens were bussed to the polls to vote for a particular candidate;
- food was distributed in exchange for votes.

Puebla

On November 12, 1995, elections for municipal presidents were held in the state of Puebla. The AC chapter concentrated its activities in regions with a history of electoral problems, competitive elections, active civic organizations and political importance. These areas included there major zones: the Sierra Negra, the Centro, and metropolitan Puebla. These areas comprised the following municipalities: Amixtlan, Olintla, Cihuateco, Ayotoxco, Zaragaoza, Ahuacatlan, Altepexi, Ajalpan, Coxaatlan, Tehuacan, Coronago, San Andres Cholula, San Pedro Cholula, Atlixco, Tepeaca, and Santa Clara Ocoyuca.

In the area of civic education, the AC chapter distributed posters, flyers and the manual "The AVC's of elections." Radio spots were also broadcast in the greater Puebla city area for 12 days. The chapter also monitored media coverage of the election with the help of the Mexican Academy of Human Rights. The daily newspapers with the greatest circulation in the city of Puebla were selected for analysis including: *El Sol de Puebla*, *Sintesis* and *Pagina Regional*.

The study was publicized and reportedly helped improve coverage of citizen views and decrease biased coverage of candidates. The group also organized a booth in each of the municipalities where information on vote-buying and coercion was distributed and irregularities documented.

On election day, observers reported the following irregularities:

- members of political parties attempting to buy voters with offers of money (50 to 100 *pesos*), food and alcohol;
- offers to facilitate dealings with the local government bureaucracy;
- placement of polling sites in distant locations in the city of Puebla which discouraged voting;
- a lack of understanding of basic principles of democracy among voters.

Tlaxcala

Elections for state legislatures were held in Tlaxcala on November 12, 1995. The AC local chapter conducted observation programs in 15 of 19 electoral districts. To promote civic education, members of the chapter distributed AC materials and sponsored radio spots. The group also conducted a poll on electoral issues in ten cities. The survey topics included: public understanding of the electoral process, transparency of the election process, establishing a level playing for political parties in the campaign, and identification of vote-buying and voter intimidation. The chapter interviewed a minimum of 30 people in each city for a total of 374 surveys.

Based on its analysis of the state electoral law, the chapter concluded that one of the greatest problems at the state level is the lack of regulations defining electoral crimes. Beginning in May 1995, the Tlaxcala chapter unsuccessfully petitioned the state legislature, governor and Federal Electoral Institute to implement laws similar to federal provisions regarding electoral crimes.

The chapter's study of electoral officials concluded that the methods for selecting polling site officials was in violation of the existing law. The study noted that officials were selected personally by the president of the state election authority instead of the mandated double lottery system. In other cases, the study found that local election officials did not exercise the autonomy granted by law and consulted almost uniformly with the director of the electoral authority on all matters.

According to the findings of the AC's 68 observers who monitored polling at 200 sites, the election day was relatively calm. In its report, the chapter noted the following:

- In relation to past elections there was an increased number of incidents of voter intimidation by the political parties, especially the PRI;

- According to the local election authority, voter turnout was less than 50 percent, which paralleled the results of the AC chapter's poll which states that 48 percent of citizens were undecided about voting;

- Voters, election officials and political parties must show a greater commitment to elections if democracy in Mexico is to progress.

National Evaluation Meeting

Based on activities conducted in five states, the AC concluded that elections in Mexico are not yet clean and fair. The AC noted that it was important to adopt electoral reforms that guarantee a level playing field among the political parties, end vote-buying and voter coercion and provide equal access to the media by all candidates. The group also observed that electoral authorities lack independence from the government and have failed to involve citizens in decision-making.

With regard to the specific state elections, the AC noted that the quality of elections varied in each state. Elections in Chiapas, Michoacan, Puebla and Oaxaca were marked by high levels of irregularities, including many incidents that occurred during the pre-election period. Oaxaca and Puebla were notable for low voter turnout. Elections in Tlaxcala were relatively free from irregularities.

In December 1995, AC leaders from the states of Chiapas, Michoacan, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Tlaxcala met in Mexico City to evaluate the election observation program and to determine which training techniques were most effective and should be used in activities in 1996 and 1997. Based on this NDI-supported meeting, the AC developed the following priorities for upcoming elections:

- Continue to focus AC efforts on the pre-election period, particularly in the area of civic education and development of democratic culture;

- Develop a proposal for electoral reform in Mexico: that establishes an autonomous electoral authority independent of the government and the political parties; sets campaign spending limits; grants equal access to the media; and creates a special tribunal to adjudicate electoral crimes;

- Develop strategies to help voters become better aware of the importance of honest and open elections;

- Strengthen AC state chapters to ensure professionalism and more effective use of observation methodologies;

- Conduct studies to develop new activities, observation strategies and an organizational structure for future elections; and

- Develop a plan for observing elections in July 1997.

Regional Electoral Reform Forums

NDI supported the AC's efforts to bring a citizen perspective to ongoing electoral reform discussions that were conducted by the four major political parties. These reforms were critical to guaranteeing confidence in municipal elections in 1996 and federal elections in 1997. These forums had three objectives: increase citizen participation in electoral reform debate, develop an AC proposal for electoral reform, and maintain pressure from civil society for electoral reforms.

The AC emphasized three reform issues at these events, including autonomy for electoral authorities from political parties and the government; equality among the political parties in campaign finance and access to the media; and legal sanctions and civic education campaigns against vote-buying and voter coercion. The forums were held in the north, center, and south of the country to enable all members of the AC to attend. Of these events, the northern forum held from January 19 to 20, 1996 in Saltillo, Coahuila, was supported with NDI/AID funding.

More than a hundred participants attended the forum, including federal and state election officials, state and national AC leaders, journalists, academics and representatives from all major political parties. AC chapter members from Baja California, Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas attended the event. The main topic discussed was the need for autonomy and impartiality of the electoral authorities.

Santiago Creel, then citizen counselor of the IFE, and a central figure in discussions on electoral reform, made the keynote address. He recounted the development of the multipartisan reform proposal, the Chapultepec Accord, and underscored that electoral reform was crucial to maintaining political stability. Other speakers discussed the need for complete independence of electoral authorities from the government and political parties. The importance of establishing a fair campaign environment -- including equal access to the media and realistic campaign finance limits -- was also mentioned.

The seminar helped develop a consensus on the importance of establishing uniform state electoral laws in concert with federal reforms. The AC presented a comparative study of state electoral laws to facilitate the discussion. (See attached State Electoral Laws in Mexico.) Based on the forum and similar events in Guanajuato and Yucatan, the AC worked with a coalition of nongovernmental organizations and representatives of civil society to publicly pressure the Mexican Congress to make timely and meaningful progress on reform legislation.

Civic Group Organizational Strengthening

In May 1996, NDI worked with the Advocacy Institute (AI) to conduct a strategic planning workshop for the state and national AC coordinators. Originally envisioned as an ad

hoc coalition, the AC learned during the 1994 elections that it could play an important long-term role in strengthening democracy. As the largest independent Mexican civic organization, the decision to stay together meant that the AC had to learn to manage a diverse coalition of hundreds of groups with distinct goals and levels of resources. (See attached AI Workshop Terms of Reference.)

The Advocacy Institute (AI) is a center for study, teaching and counseling on effective advocacy tools and strategies. AI has worked with more than 2,000 citizen groups within the United States and throughout the world. In strengthening the community of citizen activists, the Institute enhances democratic processes and renews the confidence of active citizens to participate in the process of public policy making. The Institute provides training in planning and organizational skills such as: long range strategy, alliance and coalition building, media advocacy, accessing and persuading decision-makers.

Having assisted other groups facing similar challenges around the world, NDI and AI were able to help the AC overcome organizational weaknesses and explore new program ideas. Jim Schultz, director of AI West and former director of legislative relations for Common Cause of California, and Renee Saucedo, AI board member and acting director of La Raza Legal Center in San Francisco, helped organize the workshop. AI's Washington, D.C., office also contributed to the design and implementation of the program.

Throughout late 1995 and early 1996, NDI staff briefed Shultz and Saucedo on the AC's history, leadership structure and organizational challenges. In April, Shultz and Saucedo traveled to Mexico City to meet with AC national and state coordinators. During these meetings, Shultz and Saucedo assessed the AC's mission and overall strengths and weaknesses. Based on its findings and consultations with NDI and the AC leadership, the AI team developed an agenda for a strategic planning workshop. NDI staff members traveled to Mexico and made logistical arrangements for the event, which took place on May 20 in Cuernavaca, Morelos. AI also prepared two papers for the workshop to help focus discussion: *Ways that US nongovernmental organizations raise funds*, and *Ways that US NGOs raise issues during election campaigns*. (See attached AI papers.)

During the workshop, the AI team facilitated a discussion of the agenda in which all AC coordinators actively participated. At AI's request, NDI did not attend the workshops to ensure that discussions would not be influenced by the presence of a funding organization. However, NDI did provide extensive recommendations to AI in shaping the working agenda.

The NDI/AI program helped the AC leadership develop a consensus on the group's objectives and role in Mexican society including:

- The AC seeks to provide a channel for citizen participation and to promote democracy through open and honest elections;

- At present, the AC is an organizational "tool" for citizens to participate in democracy building activities. Except in the case of electoral issues, the AC is not a national leader among Mexican NGOs on specific issues;

- The AC is committed to improving the political process and will not serve as a vehicle for a particular party or platform. The AC seeks to open a new space for citizens dissatisfied with the traditional political environment and hopes that new avenues of participation will encourage citizen participation and help democracy take root;

- AC members plan to move beyond election monitoring to address other national issues such as economic policy;

- The AC wants to explore partnerships with other NGOs that have developed expertise in particular public policy issues. Instead of attempting to become a leader on an issue, the AC would collaborate with already established organizations and use its unique national structure for citizen participation to foster a public agenda.

Based on the strategic objectives discussed at the planning workshop, the AC developed several short-term goals:

- The AC affirmed that the 1997 federal elections will play a key role in democratic development in Mexico and merit a full-scale observation effort. AC election activities in 1997 will be modeled on the successful 1994 election program but with greater focus on the entire electoral process particularly the campaign period. Along with election day proceedings, the AC will scrutinize election laws, the selection of election officials, media coverage and adherence to campaign spending laws. Unlike the 1994 programs, AC observers will be trained in strategies to respond actively to election fraud in addition to monitoring the voting and counting process. The AC will also conduct civic education and monitoring programs to deter voter intimidation and vote buying.

- The AC also needs to develop additional, long-term funding sources for its activities. Many AC chapters lack basic resources such as an office or paid coordinator. The AC is interested in exploring fundraising opportunities in the US to support its current activities and learn fundraising techniques that may be used in Mexico in the future.

- AC coordinators proposed sending a delegation to the U.S. before the 1997 Mexican elections. The delegation would focus on strengthening ties with U.S. by:

  - exploring fundraising opportunities;
  - increasing media exposure and contacts;
  - encouraging visits to Mexico by US delegations;
  - securing US participation in the 1997 elections;
  - developing contacts with US NGOs and the religious community; and
  - improving coordination with US organizations already working with the AC.

Following the workshop, the AI team met with AC Executive Director Martha Perez to evaluate the event and discuss the short-term objectives that were developed. The team also met with representatives of the USAID Mission to discuss the results of the project. AI staff drafted a report for the AC and NDI that included organizational observations and recommendations for implementing the objectives developed at the workshop. (See attached AI Final Report on Organizational Strengthening Workshop.)

The AI team was impressed with the competence and commitment of the AC coordinators and noted that they appeared to be motivated by a "deep and sincere vision for democracy in Mexico." AI urged that NDI and other international donors continue to support the AC, especially as the group prepares for the 1997 elections. The AI team also recommended that the AC organize a formal delegation to the US to explore fundraising possibilities and strengthen its relations with the U.S. During the trip, the AC would meet with nongovernmental organizations dedicated to public interest advocacy, Latin American policy issues and Mexican - American issues. The delegation will also meet with U.S. media and policy makers to increase the group's profile in the US. These contacts will enable the AC to share its views on democratic development in Mexico and establish itself as a source of analysis and information.

Evaluation

Based on the objectives of the election monitoring and organizational strengthening program, NDI was able to make a significant contribution to the development of democratic processes and institutions in Mexico. It is important to note that AID/NDI funding enabled the AC to bolster its election observation activities though the production of training materials and support for workshops. Funding for implementing the AC observation activities was provided by additional grants from NDI and the National Endowment for Democracy. In addition, the original AID grant for organizational strengthening was increased significantly by transferring funding from within NDI's Latin American regional grant. The objectives and overall achievements of the observation organizational strengthening are defined below:

Election Observation

- increase transparency and citizen confidence in Mexican elections; and
- increase citizen participation in the electoral process.

The AC's electoral programs have given the coalition a high degree of credibility among the political sectors and the general public. AC statements on elections carry significant political weight and are reported widely by the national and international media. The AC's wide range of activities helped focus public scrutiny of all phases of the electoral process including the campaign period, media coverage and election day. AC volunteers actively detected and deterred fraud throughout this period.

Workshops on civic education and election observation helped the AC to involve more than 2,300 volunteers at 83 sessions in five states. These events fostered a useful exchange of programmatic expertise between its chapters and helped establish a consensus among the national leadership and the chapters on programs for elections in 1996 and 1997. From an organizational perspective, the AC was able to improve coordination among the state and national office and expand its network of volunteers.

The electoral reform in Saltillo provided hundreds of citizens from a dozen states with the opportunity to participate in the national debate on electoral reform. The AC forum was attended by all major political parties and election authorities underscoring that the AC has developed a reputation for conducting influential, nonpartisan events. The forum also enabled the AC to develop grassroots recommendations to help shape election reform legislation that was being being considered by the Mexican Congress. The event was also widely reported by the local media thus reaching hundreds of household and maintaining public pressure for reforms.

Strategic Planning Workshop

Objectives

- *Strengthen AC's organizational structure to help the coalition expand its activities in the post-election environment;*
- *Strengthen coordination between national and state chapters;*
- *Help AC identify strategies for developing future activities to support;*
- *Reinforce the importance of nonpartisanship in all AC activities.*

The NDI/AI program provided an important opportunity for AC leaders to go beyond day-to-day decision-making and develop long-term organizational strategies that were not envisioned when the organization was formed *ad hoc* in 1994. As a result of the program, the AC:

- developed consensus among the national and regional leaders on the AC's mission and programs;
- developed short- and long- term plans for becoming financially self-sufficient;
- developed plans for increasing cooperation with U.S. policy-makers, media and nongovernmental organizations;
- developed plans for improving its organizational effectiveness.

With NDI's assistance, AI was able to provide an independent assessment of the AC's objectives and organizational structure. The AI team concluded that the AC's ability and professionalism ranked high when measured by international standards. AI facilitators stated that the consultations and workshops clearly demonstrated the AC's commitment to supporting the democratic process rather than specific political policies. AI concluded that the AC's dedication to democracy and nonpartisanship indicates the group has the "soul of Mexican Common Cause."

Nicaragua: 1996 Domestic Election Observation (1595)

In a country where political adversaries settled disagreements through civil war less than a decade ago, the October 20, 1996, national elections in Nicaragua represented an important juncture in the country's history and an opportunity to consolidate democratic advances made since historic transition polls in 1990. NDI supported an open and transparent electoral process in Nicaragua in 1996 by helping Nicaraguan citizens and nongovernmental organizations from across the political spectrum form the country's first nonpartisan national election observation initiative, Etica y Transparencia (Ethics and Transparency -- ET). With NDI's assistance, ET organized a network of more than 4,200 nonpartisan domestic monitors who observed the electoral process and conducted a parallel vote tabulation (PVT), or independent vote count, on election day. The group's national grassroots network of thousands of volunteers remains committed to Nicaragua's democratic process to this day. Most important, ET boosted public confidence and overcame the pervasive mistrust and discord that has characterized the Nicaraguan political landscape for decades, becoming in the process a symbol of national pluralism and reconciliation.

Background

In June 1995, NDI began receiving requests for information about domestic election observation from a variety of Nicaraguan civic groups and individuals, many of whom had heard about the positive impact of nonpartisan domestic election monitoring initiatives in Panama, Mexico and Peru. In response to the high level of interest from civic leaders and others, in October 1995 NDI dedicated $149,800 within the Latin America Regional Grant to support the development of a nonpartisan domestic election observation effort in Nicaragua. Regional grant funds were primarily dedicated to pre-election (November 1995 to July 1996) costs of developing the monitoring effort, while a grant from the USAID mission in Nicaragua covered a majority of the domestic observation program's operational costs between July 1996 and February 1997.

The pre-election phase of the program covered by the regional grant included the following activities: conducting an assessment mission and periodic consultations; sponsoring a study mission for organizers of the Nicaraguan election observation effort to learn from the work

of the domestic monitoring organization Transparencia in Peru; establishing contacts with local civic groups and networks in the interior, as well as establishing new local networks where none had previously existed; developing training materials; conducting a national observation planning and training seminar; training provincial coordinators on electoral procedures, quick counts and election observation; providing organizational development assistance; consulting with international experts to develop the quick count sample and methodology; establishing an NDI field presence; and providing a $32,000 cooperative agreement to ET to observe voter registration and conduct initial organizational development and training activities.

Project Activities

Peru Election Observation Study Delegation

During October and November, NDI staff members spoke and met frequently with interested Nicaraguans to share the Institute's experiences about domestic election observation in other countries and to discuss possible monitoring efforts for the October 20, 1996, national elections. In early November, NDI decided to begin helping Nicaraguans start a domestic election observation by sending several Nicaraguan civic leaders who had shown special interest in domestic election observation to observe Transparencia, a Peruvian domestic monitoring civic group, as it observed the November 12, 1995, municipal elections.

NDI initially invited three Nicaraguan civic leaders to participate in the study mission: Violeta Sandino, executive director of FUNDEMOS, a civic group that works to strengthen the democratic process in Nicaragua; Salvador Talavera, executive director of the Centro de Estudios Estratégicos de Nicaragua (Nicaraguan Center for Strategic Studies -- CEEN), a nongovernmental organization that promotes dialogue between civilian and military leaders; and Carlos Fernando Chamorro, director of the public opinion research firm CINCO and former editor of the newspaper *Barricada*. Chamorro was ultimately unable to participate. The Nicaraguans were joined in Peru by Kate Kelsch, NDI's former field representative in Peru, and Program Assistant Sandra Zacarias.

The delegates met with an array of Peruvians to discuss the fundamentals of nonpartisan election monitoring: Transparencia staff and board members, leaders of the government electoral institutions; members of the local and international press and representatives of political parties and representatives from international nongovernmental organizations that observed Transparencia's work during the April 1995 presidential elections. In addition to participating in meetings, Sandino and Talavera attended a training workshop for observers; Transparencia press conferences; and a Transparencia staff evaluation meeting. The delegation also visited the Electoral Institute's (ONPE) election day media center. In addition, NDI arranged visits to Barranca and Huacho -- provinces outside of Lima -- to give the delegation an idea of how local Transparencia chapters are organized and to meet with local electoral institute officials.

On election day, the delegation visited polling sites around Lima to observe the voting and counting process. The delegation also toured Transparencia's communication center where data from the PVT conducted in Lima's mayoral race and election observation materials were received. At Transparencia's post-election press conference, the delegation witnessed techniques

for presenting to the media politically sensitive reports on the outcome and quality of the elections.

Sandino and Talavera left Peru with a basic grounding in areas crucial to a successful domestic monitoring effort: projecting a credible image; cultivating positive media relations and using the media to reach more people; creating a structure for effective and efficient communication; organizing regional chapters; recruiting and training techniques; organizing civic education workshops; managing a computer and communications system; and administering an independent vote count.

Upon returning to Nicaragua, both delegates met informally with NGO leaders, church officials, members of the media and leading intellectuals to discuss their experience in Peru and to spur interest in a Nicaraguan domestic observation effort. (See attached trip reports from Talavera and Sandino for their impressions of the visit.)

The Formation of "Etica y Transparencia"

In January 1996, NDI Program Officer Kirk Gregersen and Zacarias traveled to Nicaragua to meet with Nicaraguans about NDI's plans for the elections and to assess the current status of Nicaraguan domestic monitoring initiatives. The NDI team first met with a group of Nicaraguan citizens with whom the Institute had been discussing domestic observation during previous months. These citizens would eventually form the board of directors of Etica y Transparencia (Ethics and Transparency -- ET): Pablo Antonio Cuadra, poet laureate and publisher of the daily newspaper *La Prensa*; Emilio Alvarez Montalvan, political analyst and member of the editorial board of *La Prensa*; Carlos Tunnerman, former Ambassador to the United States and constitutional lawyer; Roberto Calderon, a physician and president of the civic group FUNDEMOS; and Carlos Fernando Chamorro, former editor of the daily newspaper *La Barricada* and director of the nongovernmental media group, Grupo Cinco. At the time of the NDI visit, the group was in the process of searching for other Nicaraguan citizens who could also participate in the board and broaden its base. The group had also tentatively decided on a name for the initiative -- Transparencia y Democracia. (See attachments for a copy of the minutes from one of the group's initial organizational meetings.)

The NDI team also met with Violeta Sandino and Salvador Talavera, the civic leaders who had visited Peru in November 1995 to study the election-related activities of the Peruvian civic group Transparencia. Talavera and Sandino had continued to meet with other Nicaraguans about their experience following the Peru trip. As a result, a small group of civic organizations had also come together to begin a domestic monitoring initiative. These groups included: FUNDEMOS; the CEEN; the Centro de Educación para la Democracia (Center of Education for Democracy -- CED); Hagamos Democracia; the Universidad para la Paz (University for Peace -- UPAZ); and the human rights group Asociación Nicaragüense Pro-Derechos Humanos (ANPDH). Two other nongovernmental organizations -- the human rights groups CPDH and CEPAD -- were at the time considering participating. Both later joined the effort. During the

visit, the group of NGOs decided to consider joining forces with the members of Transparencia y Democracia's nascent executive council.

NDI also met with members of the Organization of American States CIAV-OEA mission, as well as local leaders in Matagalpa, to gauge the level of interest in the interior in domestic observation. The CIAV team leant its full support to the idea of domestic observers. Local leaders and civic organizers were also enthusiastic about the prospects for domestic election monitoring. NDI also visited Tipitapa and received a similar reaction from members of the Verification Commission of Cardinal Obando, a nongovernmental organization that works closely with the Catholic Church, and local residents who participated in a human rights seminar organized by the Commission in that town.

During the visit, two members of the informal "board of directors" of the domestic observation initiative, Cuadra and Montalvan, invited the NDI team to make a short presentation about domestic election monitoring to the editorial board of *La Prensa*. Following a discussion of the objectives of domestic monitoring initiatives, and a short statement of support from Sergio Caramagna, director of the CIAV-OEA mission, who also attended the meeting, the members of the editorial board endorsed the project and said that they would support the observer network.

Between January and March 30, NDI and other U.S. NGOs supporting the domestic election observation effort held periodic coordination meetings in Washington to discuss their activities, to share information about the political and electoral situation and to explore how the international community could best support the Nicaraguan initiative. Other international groups considering supporting the Nicaraguan initiative -- which decided to change its name from Transparencia y Democracia to Etica y Transparencia (Ethics and Transparency -- ET) soon after the January visit by NDI -- at the time included: The Center for Democracy; the International Foundation for Election Systems; and the International Republican Institute. It was agreed that, because of its experience with national election observation, NDI would take the lead in shaping the domestic monitoring effort and providing technical advice to the group. The OAS and the United Nations also participated in several meetings and agreed to support NDI's efforts in the area.

In February, Gregersen returned to Nicaragua to answer questions about domestic observation from the organizers of the monitoring effort and to begin preparations for the arrival of NDI's field staff. He also met with the political parties -- including the front-running FSLN and Liberal Alliance parties -- and Supreme Electoral Commission (CSE) President Rosa Marina Zelaya about the program. The political parties and Zelaya indicated tentative support of the initiative, as long as it was conducted in a nonpartisan and professional manner (the FSLN had some concerns regarding the ability of Nicaraguans to monitor their own elections impartially). By this date, the executive council of ET had expanded its membership to include representatives from other political and social sectors: Mons. Juan Abelardo Mata, Bishop of Esteli; Dr. Sergio Denis Garcia, Dean of the Politechnic University (UPOLI); and Doris Merlin Forbes Harvey, Vice Director of the Morave primary school in Bluefields.

To gather more information about the situation in the interior, Gregersen traveled with the OAS to El Ayote in Chontales and spoke with the Bishop of that region and other local leaders about the observation. All involved showed enthusiasm at the prospect of Nicaraguans observing their own elections and commented that the training would be an important civic education tool. Several people expressed interest in being involved with the initiative.

In March, responding to requests from ET's board, NDI's Director of Latin America Programs Santiago Canton traveled to Managua to meet with both the board of directors of the observation initiative and the newly formed advisory board of NGOs. Canton explained how domestic election observation and quick count programs have functioned in other countries. He stressed the importance of nonpartisanship and answered questions from the Nicaraguans. Canton also recommended that the group:

1) involve contacts from the interior as soon as possible;
2) think about the citizenry's "perceptions" about credibility. Even if the best people in Nicaragua are involved with the best intentions, the observer group will be nothing more than another political party if the public doesn't *perceive* it to be credible and balanced.
3) define its primary focus carefully and not try to do too many activities;
4) explore how to maximize current resources (existing volunteer networks, press contacts; training expertise; in kind contributions from local businesses, etc.).

Canton also provided the Nicaraguans with draft copies of the Spanish version of NDI's election observation manual and demonstrated the Institute's parallel vote tabulation computer software.

NDI Establishes Field Office to Support ET

In March, NDI hired two field representatives/trainers to work with ET -- Melissa Estok, an experienced trainer who helped NDI to organize similar programs in Peru, Mexico, Yemen and Bangladesh, and Peter Redmond, a skilled organizer who has worked on NDI's domestic observation program in Bangladesh. In addition to working with NDI, Estok spent four years with the Peace Corps in Honduras, organizing a national grassroots literacy program and serving as a national trainer for the program. Redmond, who also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras, had worked as a professional trainer for the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture.

In April, Estok, Redmond and Gregersen traveled to Managua to meet with members of ET, representatives of the political parties and others about the monitoring program. The NDI team also equipped the NDI office and began to contract local staff members. During the next six months, Estok and Redmond would advise the group on its administrative structure, volunteer recruitment and training materials. Estok and Redmond also traveled frequently to the interior to assess the political situation, to speak with local leaders about domestic election observation and to identify possible networks for ET. Drawing on their experience working with

civic groups to organize domestic monitoring initiatives in other countries, Estok and Redmond worked directly with ET to:

- develop and articulate concrete objectives for the group;
- develop a workplan and time line;
- develop a budget for the initiative;
- identify staffing needs for the group and write position descriptions;
- design a brochure and public relations strategy;
- develop training materials and methodology;
- identify the group's weaknesses and strengths and target assistance to specific areas in need of attention;
- design an election-day communications system;
- design a plan to train a team of computer experts to implement a PVT;
- organize a simulation of the election day PVT;
- develop a fundraising plan for the group and identify possible donors; and
- develop an accounting system.

Once the NDI office in Managua was fully operational, the field team immediately went to work with ET as the group identified an executive director and consolidated its advisory board of civic groups. In April, ET chose as its director Marvin Saballos, former director the United Nations University for Peace program. The group also added several new members to its executive council, including Guillermo Rothschuh Villanueva, dean of journalism of the Catholic University, and Nicaraguan intellectual Edgardo Buitrago. Beginning in May, NDI provided the group with a cooperative agreement for $32,000 that enabled ET to move into a permanent office and hire Saballos, who had been temporarily based in NDI's office working for the group on a voluntary basis as ET looked for its own office. These funds covered almost all of ET's expenses through June 30.

On May 14, the United Nations sponsored a coordination meeting for all Nicaraguan NGOs interested in implementing election-related programs. Representatives from the UN donor countries, including Sweden, Spain, Canada and the Netherlands, joined the Nicaraguan NGO leaders to address the issue of potential United Nations support of domestic election observation initiatives in Nicaragua. The meeting was attended by civic groups from across the political spectrum, including Nicaragua's four main human rights organizations (ANPDH, CEPAD, CENIDH and CPDH). The groups agreed to sign a letter of intent to the UN stating that they would like to coordinate one observer program under the ET umbrella. This represented a significant strengthening of ET's network as well as an important ideological expansion.

Dominican Republic Election Observation Study Missions

To give ET's new director and president firsthand experience with election observation, NDI sponsored the visits of Saballos and Montalvan to monitor the May 16 and June 30 elections in the Dominican Republic and to observe the program of the Dominican domestic monitoring

group Participación Ciudadana (Citizen Participation -- PC). Alvarez participated in NDI's delegation to the May 16 first round election, and Saballos joined NDI's delegation to observe the second round. Both Saballos and Montalvan were able to meet with key members of PC's technical team, as well as with Canadian PVT expert Neil Nevitte. The visits also gave the members of ET the opportunity to meet again with Canton, as well as with NDI's Senior Associate for Electoral Processes, Pat Merloe, both of whom have worked on domestic election observation programs in numerous other countries. In addition, Saballos spent a day with Rudy Vega, a member of the technical team of the Peruvian domestic monitoring group Transparencia, who was in the Dominican Republic advising PC.

NDI Advises ET during Preparation for Voter Registration Observation

Throughout May and June ET continued to hold consultations with presidential candidates, political party leaders, members of the election commission and nongovernmental organizations. The meetings allowed ET to explain its objectives and create confidence in its activities. NDI's field representatives also continued to hold frequent meetings with representatives of the political parties, civic organizations, the church, the government, the CSE and the international community to inform them about the Institute's work with ET.

In its first official workshop on May 25, ET trained more than 100 volunteers to observe voter registration in the 26 northern municipalities during the first three weekends of June.[5] These observers, in turn, trained an additional 75 volunteers at the local level. The NDI team worked closely with trainers from the civic group and ET member Centro de Educación para la Democracia (CED) to develop the one-day training program. Estok and Redmond also helped ET develop a training schedule, observer checklists and guides and the group's first brochure.

NDI sponsored the participation of Francisco Fong, former associate director of Panama's domestic monitoring group Justicia y Paz and the present administrative director of the Panamanian Electoral Tribunal, in the registration observation training workshop. Fong spoke about his experience with domestic election observation and quick counts, and noted the important role that civic groups play in the electoral process. In addition, Fong advised members of ET's technical team and board of directors about organizing the observation effort, managing relations with electoral officials and training observers. Fong also met with representatives of political parties and the Elections Commission to discuss the benefits of domestic election monitoring. Fong's visit received positive press coverage in a wide spectrum of Nicaragua periodicals and television programs.

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[5] For the 1996 elections, the Nicaraguan elections commission used two parallel voter registration systems -- an *ad hoc* voter registration, which covered only 26 municipalities in the former conflict zones, and a process called "cedulization," which covered the highly populated Managua and Pacific Coast regions, as well as the more isolated Atlantic Coast.

Fong's visit also kicked off ET's public relations and press campaign. ET Director Marvin Saballos conducted several press interviews before the start of voter registration to relay the group's objectives and to inform the public about domestic monitoring and ET. On May 28, ET board members Montalvan and Chamorro appeared on the popular morning news program *Buenos Días* to talk about ET and discuss the role of domestic observers. Their appearance resulted in a number of people calling the group's office to volunteer and prompted the show's host to endorse the initiative on air.

ET Observes Voter Registration

As the June voter registration period approached, NDI's field staff worked with the group to develop its objectives for the observation of the registration process. ET defined several goals for the observation. First, coverage of the registration tables, or JRVs, should be great enough so as to allow the group to make more than anecdotal observations about the process. Second, the observation should offer a constructive evaluation of the process, highlighting positive as well as negative aspects and identifying areas in need of improvement. Third, ET considered that the observation -- being the group's first activity -- should serve as a learning experience for the larger election-day monitoring effort.

ET Executive Director Marvin Saballos addresses journalists during a press conference in Managua

By the opening of the *ad hoc* voter registration period in June, ET's NGO membership had grown to include a diverse group of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and universities: the CED; the CEEN; Consejo de Iglesias Evangelicas Pro-Alianza Denominacional (CEPAD); Coalición de Mujeres; Comisión de Verificación Cardenal Obando; Consejo Nacional de Universidades; Grupo FUNDEMOS; Hagamos Democracia; Instituto de Investigación y Asistencia Legislativa (IIAL); Instituto Martin Luther King; Mujeres Nicaragüenses Conciencia;

UPAZ; and Nicaragua's three leading Human Right's Organizations -- Asociación Nicaragüense Pro-Derechos Humanos (ANPDH), Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH) and Comisión Permanente de Derechos Humanos (CPDH). Many of these groups provided volunteers for ET's observation of the voter registration process.

During the first two weekends of voter registration, 145 ET volunteers observed the process in the 26 northern municipalities. ET observers covered 589 registration sites, or approximately 60 percent of the 972 registration tables in the region. Members of the civic group in Managua processed the volunteer monitors' observations in a database created for the group by computer science students from a local university. ET submitted preliminary observations to the CSE after the first weekend of registration. The group released a public statement about the observation after the second weekend.[6] (See attached statement on the *ad hoc* voter registration process.)

Preliminary conclusions from ET's observations coincided with information gathered by NDI and other international observers (see attached voter registration update report from NDI). Preliminary findings included: 1) Security in and around the registration places was satisfactory, although some citizens expressed concern about the security situation in the region; 2) Citizens learned about the registration process through a variety of sources, including the CSE civic education campaign and local NGOs; and 3) Most citizens who came to register did so successfully.

ET also observed a number of problems with the process, most of which were addressed subsequent weekends: 1) Some registration stations opened late, had to close, or failed to open because of general logistical problems and a lack of materials; 2) some political parties campaigned near the registration places; and 3) some people had to walk great distances to register. The group also observed that some JRVs lacked sufficient materials to handle the large number of registrants relying on witnesses.

On June 21, ET held the first meeting of its General Assembly to recognize those who worked on the registration observation. Volunteers were presented with a certificate of merit for their work. Many of the volunteers who participated in the registration observation exercise served as the future local coordinators for the larger election day observation and parallel vote tabulation (PVT).

As an indication of ET's growing credibility following its observation of voter registration, in July the group was asked by the CSE to develop recommendations on a code of conduct for Nicaraguan political parties. ET was the only Nicaraguan civic organization asked to submit recommendations for the proposed code. The group convened a broad-based committee

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[6] Financial constraints prevented the group from deploying observers for the third weekend. Some of ET's civic group members, however, deployed individually to monitor the process.

of several of its members -- including the leaders of the three major human rights groups in Nicaragua, the ANPDH, CENIDH and CPDH -- to offer recommendations for the code (see attachments). Given the history of ideological conflict between these three leading human rights groups, the formation of the committee alone was a significant accomplishment and a positive sign regarding the will of ET's members to move beyond Nicaragua's polarized past.

With the close of voter registration observation and the consolidation of the group's structure, in July NDI began to phase out the portion of the program covered by the regional grant and transferred activities to USAID mission funds.

CPDH Director Lino Hernandez, CENIDH Director Vilma Nuñez and ANPDH Director Julio Saborio outside of ET's quick count center at the *Universidad Autonoma.*

Evaluation

The pre-election work with ET carried out under the regional grant bore fruit not only during the beginning stages of the electoral process, but had an impressive impact in subsequent months. Between October 1995 and the close of the regional grant in September 1996, NDI made a significant contribution to the activities carried out by ET. NDI worked closely with ET founders to consolidate a board of directors that would be viewed within Nicaragua's highly polarized society as an ideologically-balanced and credible group of individuals. With NDI's guidance, ET was able to consolidate its organizational structure and initiate the steps to carry out a successful election observation. NDI also worked closely with ET on staff development, volunteer recruitment and training materials. NDI drew on its network of election specialists from Bulgaria, Mexico, Panama and Peru to discuss their own domestic election observation efforts at training seminars throughout the country. In addition, NDI sponsored the president of the Panamanian electoral tribunal to advise ET leaders during the accreditation process and a Canadian parallel vote count expert to design and implement a "quick count" of the presidential race.

With regional grant funds, NDI helped ET to prepare proposals and budgets for international donors that enabled the group to diversify its funding base for the program; set up

its office; organize press conferences; obtain legal status; broaden its NGO-member base; develop a working relationship with the CSE and political parties; observe the ad-hoc registration; establish local chapters in all of Nicaragua's 47 departments; and begin the process to recruit and train the more than 4,200 volunteer observers who eventually observed polling and conducted a parallel vote tabulation (PVT), or independent vote count, of the presidential race.

CSE President Rosa Marina Zelaya with ET board members Gabriel Solorzano, Roberto Calderón, Sergio Denis García and Alejandro Bendaña at a post-election forum with ET.

The importance of having a non-partisan domestic monitoring group observe elections was best summed up by CSE President Rosa Marina Zelaya at ET's post-election closing ceremony. Zelaya congratulated ET, saying that national observation is a positive development for Nicaragua and represents Nicaragua's political maturity. She acknowledged that the pre-election suspicions of ET were proven false and most every political player now recognizes the valuable role that ET played on October 20. The information that ET observers collected on the electoral process provided invaluable insights into the development of the voting process and will help Nicaraguan electoral officials to improve future election results. The group's quick count also served to bolster citizen acceptance of and confidence in the elections.

In post-election interviews conducted by NDI, Nicaraguans from across the political spectrum agreed that ET has become the symbol of reconciliation that Nicaragua has so sorely lacked over the past six years. Both pre-election doubters and supporters of national observation are equally astonished by ET's accomplishments. The group overcame significant technical, logistical and political obstacles to establish pluralistic participation at both the local and national level, to field 4,200 observers nationwide, and to produce objective, informative reports about the October 20 elections. Most importantly, ET overcame the pervasive and persistent mistrust and polarization that has characterized the Nicaraguan political landscape for decades to become a symbol of national pluralism and reconciliation. International observers, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, and the *New York Times*, among others, have all called ET's creation as one of the more inspiring -- and potentially longest lasting -- results of the electoral process.

NDI's activities and advice led to definite impacts in each of the proposal's five objectives:

1) *To increase citizen participation and confidence in the electoral process.*

ET's observation boosted confidence in the election results and empowered thousands of Nicaraguans to play a constructive, nonpartisan role in the elections. The group's balanced assessment of the process and precise estimate of the outcome of the presidential race decreased post-election tension and confirmed the official results. Observers who participated in ET's effort received valuable civic education that complemented more traditional forms of electoral participation such as voting and serving as a party pollwatcher or table official. ET initiated the idea of mobilizing Nicaraguan citizens without political affiliation to monitor the electoral process and worked with the CSE to institutionalize this avenue for participation.

With NDI's technical and financial assistance, ET involved Nicaraguan citizens in -- and educated them about -- the electoral process in the following ways:

- More than 140 ET-trained observers monitored the voter registration process in June in northern and central Nicaragua.

- In July, 115 local coordinators participated in a two-day national training seminar on election observation with NDI international experts from Bulgaria, Canada, Mexico and Panama.

- In September, ET conducted a quick count simulation that involved almost 800 Nicaraguan citizens throughout the country. In addition, more than 30 university students administered the group's computer operations in Managua.

- On election day, more than 4,200 ET volunteers monitored nearly 90 percent of Nicaragua's 9,005 polling sites. Dozens of citizens volunteered in a variety of capacities in the group's Managua headquarters operation. All of these volunteers had participated in at least one intensive training session before the elections. Many volunteers spent more than 20 hours observing the polling process, and more than a few traveled late at night by horse, boat or foot to the nearest radio or telephone to report their observations to the capital city.

ET's growth as a civic organization and the group's participation in the electoral process had impressive results. The following series of excerpts from articles by the international news media illustrate ET's impact on citizen participation and confidence in the electoral process (see attachments for full articles):

> The evident winner, by 10 points, in Nicaragua's presidential election is Arnoldo Alemán . . . But the real winner may turn out to be ET, or Ethics and Transparency, the name given to the big, nonpartisan election-monitoring organization that brought together 4,200 Nicaraguans of all stripes together to make sure the proceedings were reasonably fair and to provide a rare Nicaraguan model of civil society at work . . . Nicaragua, for its inheritance of authoritarianism on the left and on the right, has long been seen as a crucial testing ground for democratic ways. The particular danger is the absence of institutions and habits of a grass-roots civil society able to stir cooperation in public enterprises from below. This is what ET provided. Its success gives Nicaragua a useful foundation on which greater civic participation can now be built. (*The Washington Post*)
>
> Also inspiring has been the rise of *Etica y Transparencia*, a coalition of citizen groups which overcame obstacles from the government and political parties to field 4,000 young election monitors. (*The Economist)*
>
> In yet another indication of the civic spirit and seriousness with which Nicaraguans approached today's vote, a newly organized non-partisan group called Ethics and Transparency was able to mobilize more than 4,000 people to serve as election monitors. (*The New York Times)*
>
> 'I don't belong to any political party, but I view this as a patriotic duty,' said Mercedes Morales, the leader of an Ethics and Transparency observation team at a polling place in La Paz Centro, 'We all want peace, and we all want these elections to be honest and just.' *(New York Times)*

Nicaraguans acknowledged ET's accomplishments in building confidence and credibility in an August 1996 pre-election poll by the research group Center for Investigations of Communication (CINCO). When asked, "What will make the elections clean?," 12.7 percent responded "national observers." These numbers provide evidence of public confidence in national observers that nearly equals its confidence in party pollwatchers and international observers. This response is truly impressive when one considers that only several months before, national observation was an unknown phenomenon in Nicaragua.

In post-election evaluation seminars with volunteers, ET determined that many observers joined the group because they wanted to participate in the political process but did not want to participate as political party pollwatchers. The group also found that many volunteers appreciated the "nationalistic" nature of being able to observe their own elections. Without the ET initiative, these Nicaraguans would not have had this nonpartisan channel for participation.

2) *To develop the capacity of Nicaraguan civic groups to monitor the election process and verify the official election results; and*

3) *To develop the capacity of Nicaraguan civic groups to monitor and report on pre-election events and developments.*

If an election observation program lacks credibility, the entire effort will fail. The public, political parties, the government and others will heed a group that is considered partisan, or to a group that lacks professional credibility. Overcoming the legacy of a divided society, maintaining political balance and neutrality, building credibility and creating an effective public outreach strategy are challenges most new domestic observation initiatives have difficulty facing without assistance, advice and, in many cases, persuasion from outside. It is crucial that a domestic monitoring group consult frequently with all political sectors (political parties, the Elections Commission, the government and other civic organizations) and respond quickly to any concerns raised by representatives of those sectors. A lack of communication generates animosity and misunderstandings that can easily ruin the monitoring effort. A monitoring group should also have a clear plan for communicating its objectives and describing its plan to the public.

Technical skills are equally important to the observation effort. Experience with observation methodologies, intimate knowledge of quick counts and a plan about how to recruit and train volunteers nationwide are all important components of a successful and credible monitoring effort. Finally, a monitoring effort must incorporate effective and efficient organizational and decision making structures, both at the national and local levels. Organizations that can make decisions quickly, and that have assigned specific responsibilities to their members and staff, will stand a much better chance of organizing a successful domestic monitoring effort.

NDI helped ET develop its capacity in all of these critical areas throughout the program. From the beginning of the program, NDI emphasized to ET's founders and members the importance of credibility, neutrality and political balance. In Nicaragua's case in particular, a credible, multipartisan leadership was critical to the success of the observation initiative. Without this credibility, ET would have become -- in the eyes of the Nicaraguan population and the international community -- just another political party.

With NDI's guidance and encouragement ET grew to become one of the only civic organizations in Nicaragua with a truly politically representative board of directors and membership. ET's organizational composition, which ranges the entire political spectrum, is unique in Nicaraguan history. The group managed to maintain an extremely diverse membership of organizations ranging from CENIDH to ANPDH and a board that included noted Nicaraguans of distinct political persuasions such as Carlos Fernando Chamorro, Alejandro Bendaña, Roberto Calderon and Mons. Aberlardo Mata. NDI also increased ET's credibility by supporting the group publicly and by meeting with Nicaraguan political leaders about the initiative. Credibility and political balance proved to be key factors in the group's success, both in terms of garnering the respect of the public and in attracting volunteers. News articles published about the group throughout the electoral process demonstrate the former (see attachments). With regard to the latter, in post-election evaluation forums with volunteers, ET learned that many of its observers were motivated to join ET because of the credibility that the board and NGO members.

In addition to receiving advice from NDI about issues of credibility, ET also received continuous technical training from NDI. The effectiveness of this assistance was demonstrated by ET's successful execution of the election observation and quick count. NDI technical assistance included:

- Between October 1995 and April 1996, NDI staff members made monthly visits to Managua to provide advice and guidance to ET's organizers as they developed the initial framework and plan for the observation effort. NDI advised the group about its political balance, organizational structure, personnel needs and time-line of activities.

- The November 1995 visit to Peru by two of ET's founding members gave the group an initial grounding in the technical areas crucial to a successful domestic monitoring effort. In subsequent comments and trip reports to the Institute, both delegates relayed how their trip helped them focus on the elements needed to create the monitoring group. The delegates informed NDI that, upon returning to Nicaragua, they shared their experiences with other civic leaders, many of whom eventually joined the effort. To this day, both civic leaders refer to the Peru trip as a key impulse for the creation of and their involvement in ET.

- Beginning in April 1996, NDI's field representatives provided ET with daily organizational and technical assistance, expert advice and comparative materials from other countries and much of the group's core funding. The field team, with periodic assistance from NDI's Washington program team, provided advice and suggestions about almost all aspects of the group's program, including development of materials, workplans, budgets and training methodology. They also advised the group about its organizational structure and helped it develop volunteer recruitment and training strategies.

- NDI facilitated communication and visits between ET members and election monitoring experts and civic leaders from countries including the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Bulgaria. This included critical assistance from Neil Nevitte, NDI quick count expert and a professor at the University of Toronto, who worked closely with ET's technical team between April and October in designing and implementing the quick count; and Guillermo Márquez, president of the Panamanian Electoral Tribunal, who advised ET leaders by telephone, e-mail and, at times, in person throughout the politically charged accreditation process. Latin American civic groups such as Transparencia in Peru and the Civic Alliance in Mexico continued to provide information and advice to ET as the Nicaraguan initiative developed.

With NDI's technical and financial assistance between October 1995 and July 1996, ET was able to observe the controversial voter registration process in June, to help the elections commission develop a code of ethics for political parties and to provide recommendations about the process to the CSE. NDI was the only international organization to provide ET with financial

and technical assistance during the voter registration process, as well as the only organization to provide ET with dedicated technical assistance during the process as a whole.[7]

4) *To prepare observers to help detect and deter irregularities on election day.*

With NDI's assistance, ET developed the capability to observe polling and the counting process systematically, as well as to conduct a quick count, or independent vote count, of the presidential race using a statistical sample to verify official results. When executed correctly, the quick count is one of the most accurate predictors of an election outcome available to observers. Throughout the process, NDI quick count experts, including Estok, Nevitte and Canton, provided detailed advice and training to the group's technical team on:

- the quick count sample and methodology;
- computer software to facilitate data processing and analysis;
- quick count observer and data processing forms;
- the central computer operations center;
- a public relations strategy for the quick count; and
- ET's preliminary statement on the elections.

Prior to election day, the NDI quick count team conducted numerous training sessions with ET technical staff members and a pre-election simulation at the Autonomous University. NDI experts also participated in public briefings about the quick count for the press and the political parties. The forum and press conference about quick counts helped ET both to garner credibility with the political parties and the media and to communicate its efforts to promote a clean, transparent and fair election to the public. During the elections, the NDI team helped ET process and analyze incoming data and assisted the group in determining when results had reached a level of accuracy that would allow the group to make a statement about the process.

As a result of having the ability to conduct the quick count and observation, ET was able to provide precise data about the electoral process. The group's 4,200 observers monitored the electoral process in nearly 90 percent of the polling sites throughout Nicaragua from 6:00 a.m., when the table officials arrived to open the polling stations, until early into the next morning when the vote count was concluded. ET's preliminary statement indicated that initial turnout for the elections was high throughout the country; political party pollwatchers were present at 98 percent of the polling sites; and that the vote was secret in the vast majority of open polling sites. ET observers witnessed widespread administrative and logistical difficulties, including the late arrival or lack of complete election materials at almost 30 percent of the polling stations.

[7] IFES provided ET with a grant for $10,500 to cover some of the costs associated with training during the voter registration program.

The group reported that many voting tables opened late due to problems associated with the voting materials and that some local CSE and polling officials impeded the national observers' presence in the polling sites.

The group's qualitative observations and quick count data enabled ET to conclude that irregularities observed, including logistical and administrative problems, did not appear to be of sufficient magnitude to invalidate the polling process or the integrity of the presidential elections. Referring to the quick count, ET President Roberto Calderón said, "the results of our quick count demonstrate a similar tendency to those preliminary results given by the CSE (in the presidential race)." Although CSE regulations prohibited ET from announcing publicly specific quantitative results of the quick count, the group was allowed to submit the results to the CSE in a sealed envelope. The CSE gave ET permission to release publicly the results one week after the elections.

ET's presence also helped to provide the international community with more comprehensive information concerning the integrity of the elections. Without the presence of ET, international observers would not have been able to make as definitive statements about the quality of the process since there were relatively fewer international monitors. ET fielded approximately four times the total number of international observers. In addition, the group continued to monitor the process after most of the international observers had left the country.

5) *To develop the organizational capacity of civic groups to sponsor post-election programs to strengthen democratic institutions.*

ET did not disappear after the elections. The group has continued to promote citizen participation and support the Nicaraguan electoral process following the elections. ET's credibility, proven capabilities and solid grassroots network have given the group a solid foundation from which to conduct future activities.

ET continued to follow the post-election process through January 1997. The group also conducted a series of post-election evaluation workshops with its volunteers and coordinators in all 17 departments; drafted a detailed report evaluating the electoral process; and produced an evaluation of the group's program for the elections based on interviews and evaluations with the coordinators and volunteers. The group has provided electoral officials with recommendations based on the information collected from its thousands of volunteer observers during this process.

ET also provided a lasting example of cooperation among civic organizations and the viability of multipartisan efforts to strengthen democracy in the country. Given Nicaragua's divisive political tradition and legacy of suspicion, it has been no small accomplishment for ET to bring citizens from opposing sides of the political debate together to support the political process. The initiative will continue to provide an example of cooperation after the elections.

With the elections over, ET is determining what future role it can play in Nicaraguan society. The group has secured funding from the Swedish government to observe the Atlantic Coast elections in 1997 and continues to receive organizational development assistance from NDI and USAID. Arguably, ET has the largest politically representative NGO network in Nicaragua. The group now joins other domestic monitoring organizations around the world in exploring ways to maintain their unique national volunteer networks and to conduct programs to support democracy between elections.

C. International Election Observation

Since 1983, NDI has organized more than 30 international observer delegations that have attested to the honesty of electoral procedures, helped deter misconduct and helped expose fraud when it has occurred. NDI observer delegations have enhanced participation in elections and confidence in results. And they have promoted understanding of international standards for democratic elections.

NDI international election observation programs generally begin several months before the elections with an assessment mission. Through meetings with election officials, political party leaders and others connected with the election process, these missions assess the political environment in the country. The pre-election missions identify potential problems, encourage citizen participation in the process and, when necessary, urge the government to change electoral procedures. These missions assess the feasibility of an observer mission and the approach necessary for a credible observation (i.e., size of delegation, cities to visit, etc.)

Members of the observer delegation are briefed on the pre-election environment, guidelines for the observation, applicable election laws and the country's constitution. NDI staff members organize in-country meetings between the delegates and government officials, political party leaders, election tribunal members and civic organization representatives. Before election day, delegates are divided into teams and deployed to various regions of the country. The teams meet with local officials, political party representatives and others involved in the electoral process to identify problems in the pre-election phase; recognition of problems at this stage is a critical component of a comprehensive evaluation of the process.

On election day, the teams observe the opening of the polls and travel to polling sites in their assigned regions. The teams interview party pollwatchers, election officials and voters to determine if any problems have occurred. To deter fraud in the counting process, the teams remain in their assigned regions until a significant portion of the counting process is concluded.

Shortly after the election, the delegation reconvenes for a debriefing session. Using its observations and credible information received from other sources, the delegation prepares a statement expressing the consensus of its members. The delegation leaders then hold a news conference to release the statement.

NDI used Latin American and Caribbean regional grant funds to organize international delegations to the Dominican Republic and Mexico, countries where the participation of international election observers remained critical to strengthening electoral processes and building popular confidence. The presence at hundreds of polling sites of an international delegation co-organized by NDI and the International Republican Institute during the August 1994 elections in Mexico helped deter fraud and increase the confidence of Mexican voters in the process. The delegation's statement on the elections, which said that, on balance, the irregularities reported were not sufficient to affect the election results, was widely reported in the print and electronic media and helped counter suspicions about the validity of the election results. NDI staff remained in Mexico months after the election, enabling the institute to track the resolution of electoral complaints and demonstrate the international community's interest and support for all phases of the electoral process.

In the Dominican Republic, NDI's international observer delegation to the 1994 presidential election detected high levels of irregularities that prompted the Institute and other members of the international community to question the legitimacy of the elections. Sustained pressure from NDI and other international delegations helped to spur the "Pact for Democracy," a negotiated agreement between the government and opposition parties that established democratic political and electoral reforms and called for new elections in two years. Opposition party leaders told NDI that the delegation's support was instrumental in deterring possible violent protests after the elections and contributed to the peaceful resolution of the country's electoral crisis. NDI observers again bolstered the confidence of the Dominican people during the 1996 elections, when Leonel Fernandez was elected president in the country's first uncontested election result in history.

Objectives

NDI seeks to:

- bolster voter confidence and turnout by increasing confidence in the election process;
- increase the integrity of elections by deterring or detecting fraud; and
- provide an independent assessment of official election results.

Dominican Republic: 1994 Election Observation (1365), 1996 Election Survey Mission (1674/1685)

NDI has sponsored international election monitoring delegations to the 1990 and 1994 elections to demonstrate the international community's continued support for the democratic process and to provide the international community with an objective assessment of the elections. In 1994, NDI's international observer delegation played a central role in exposing irregularities and promoting the Pact for Democracy, a political compromise to remedy the

contentious political environment following the elections. The Pact, which was signed by all of the major political parties, called for early elections in 1996.

Background

From 1930 to 1961, the Dominican Republic was ruled by Rafael Trujillo, one of the cruelest dictators in Latin American history. In every election since Trujillo's assassination, the Dominican Republic has been plagued with fraudulent elections that have led to attempted coup d'etats, a United States military intervention and political violence.

To help to guarantee a transparent and peaceful electoral process, NDI has organized international observer delegations to every Dominican election since 1990. Following the 1990 presidential election, which incumbent Joaquín Balaguer narrowly won, the NDI delegation, led by former President Jimmy Carter, concluded that there was no doubt that aspects of the elections were flawed. However, the delegation was not presented with evidence that indicated the irregularities favored one candidate or another. This declaration, along with the delegation's efforts to help the parties verify the election results, helped reduce tensions during a highly contentious post-election environment.

In 1994, the NDI observer delegation came to a different conclusion, pointing to serious and widespread irregularities that could have affected the results of the presidential election. NDI's conclusion led to international pressure for the Dominican government to peacefully resolve the post-election crisis. This pressure eventually caused a series of negotiations between the government and opposition that resulted in electoral reform and early elections in 1996.

The reforms that were enacted following the controversial 1994 elections resulted in the 1996 elections taking place under different circumstances than the country's two previous presidential contests. For the first time in Dominican history, the election commission garnered the respect of all political parties and gained public confidence in the process and its results. A domestic civic organization, Participación Ciudadana, whose organizers have participated in various NDI programs in Latin America, engaged more than 3,000 Dominicans in the political process by carrying out a nationwide observation of the election. Despite accusations of some irregularities, all political parties accepted the final results of the election. Within hours after the Election Commission issued the official results of the second round June 30, 1996 presidential election, Dominican Revolutionary Party candidate José Francisco Peña Gómez publicly acknowledged the victory of Dominican Liberation Party candidate Leonel Fernández. Peña Gómez' concession speech represented a turning point in a country where election results have spawned political controversy and violence. This recent Dominican election represents a change from the past and demonstrates the varying roles that international election observer delegations can play in a country.

The presence of an NDI observer delegation to both the 1996 May first-round election and June second-round election promoted confidence in the elections as well as demonstrated

international support for a transparent electoral process. "The election process, while not without problems, represents an important step forward for the democratic process in the Dominican Republic," reported the NDI delegation. "The sense of public service and guardianship of the democratic process that was demonstrated in this election...mark an important juncture in the development of Dominican democracy."

Project Activities

1994 Election Observation (1365)

In February 1994, NDI informed USAID of its intentions to mount an international observation of the May 16, 1994, national elections in the Dominican Republic. Concerns about the current electoral situation and a recent history of elections marred by irregularities and allegations of fraud spurred the decision. Notably, the closely contested May 16, 1990, presidential election was conducted amid widely recognized irregularities in the electoral process. Among other problems, delays in the official count caused opposition parties to suspect fraud; and the Central Electoral Board (JCE) did not certify the slim victory of incumbent President Joaquin Balaguer for two months.

It was NDI's experience with the flawed 1990 election that led the Institute to consider sending an international observation to the 1994 elections. After reprogramming LARG funds in January 1994, an NDI survey team traveled to the Dominican Republic from April 19 to April 23, 1994, to assess the electoral environment. The delegation comprised: Curtis Cutter, an NDI senior consultant and a member of NDI's delegation to the 1990 elections; Marta María Villaveces, a Colombian attorney and an electoral systems analyst; Patrick Merloe, NDI senior associate for elections processes; Santiago Canton, NDI senior program officer; and Catherine Kelsch, NDI program officer. The delegation met with political party representatives, members of the Central Electoral Board and representatives of domestic and international nongovernmental organizations.

The NDI pre-election delegation noted a large measure of goodwill during the campaign. The contesting political parties communicated freely with voters through the news media and at rallies, and most of the presidential candidates were party to the Civility Pact, which formally bound them to respect official results and refrain from declaring victory prematurely. Delegates also remarked favorably upon changes in electoral administration instituted by the JCE since the contentious 1990 elections: the expansion of the electoral board from three to five members, including members nominated by each of the three principal congressional parties; the increase in the number of polling places from 6,663 to 9,528; and the streamlining of the formerly distinct voter and national identification registries into a consolidated voter/identification system in which individual citizens held a single card (*cedula*) containing detailed identification information and a photograph of the registered voter. Political parties received copies of the new registry on magnetic tape in April 1994; in 1990 parties received the voter registry copies a week before the election, an insufficient amount of time to verify names. The JCE also had replaced a

multiple-use ballot with a three-ballot system and modified the counting and tabulation so that 1994 results would be processed by computer at each of the 107 Municipal Electoral Tribunals (JMEs) instead of all results being processed at the JCE.

The survey team also found that, despite these advances in the process and the technical assistance of Organization of American States (OAS) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) during the year preceding the elections, the Dominican news media and several political parties were concerned about the JCE's ability to fully implement the reforms. The pre-election team noted specific concerns regarding: campaign-related violence, including 32 deaths; allegations that the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC), the governing party, was using state funds for campaign activities; illegal police and military involvement in the campaign, including alleged intimidation of opposition party members; and allegedly biased electoral tribunals. The NDI team noted its concerns about voters having difficulty acquiring new voter cards, voter card-buying, multiple voter cards, and ineligible voters obtaining voter cards; The delegation concluded that an international observer mission to the May 1994 elections would express the international community's support for strengthening democratic institutions in the Dominican Republic and could provide the international community with an objective assessment of the electoral process.

Based on recommendations of the survey team, NDI organized a 26-member international delegation led by Stephen Solarz, a former U.S. congressman, that included members from Europe, the Middle East and throughout the western hemisphere. Virgilio Godoy, vice president of the Republic of Nicaragua, and Fidel Chavez Mena, president of the Christian Democratic Party and a former foreign minister of El Salvador were among the delegation's members. The delegation arrived in the Dominican Republic on May 12. (See attached 1994 Arrival Statement.) On May 13 and 14, the delegation met with government and election officials, leaders of the major political parties, representatives of the Catholic Church, academics, journalists and others involved in the electoral process.

The delegation divided into nine groups and, in coordination with the OAS and IFES, assigned geographic regions and observation routes to each group. The targeted regions were: Barahona, Comendador, Puerto Plata, La Romana, San Francisco de Macoris, San Juan de la Maguana, San Pedro de Macoris, Santiago, La Vega and Santo Domingo. Each team arrived in its respective region May 15, the day before the elections, and met with political party leaders, national and local candidates and elections officials. Local officials briefed the delegation teams about the campaign period and expressed concern about anticipated irregularities, specifically: police and military involvement in the campaign, voter intimidation, voter card buying; security of 200,000 unclaimed voter cards; multiple voter cards and voter list manipulation.

On election day, May 16, NDI delegates recorded their observations; the observations of voters; and the observations of polling place, party and military officials. Each NDI team balanced its reporting by targeting polling places in both urban and rural areas and polling places that attracted voters from specific socioeconomic strata. The teams periodically relayed their

notes to NDI's Santo Domingo office. NDI observers noted a great number of irregularities throughout the country, the most egregious and most frequent of which resulted in the disenfranchisement of a significant number of voters.

The NDI delegation observed that the JCE had issued two different voter lists: the official list supplied to the election officials at the polling sites and the political parties lists which were distributed by the JCE to the political parties at an earlier date. Many of the names that were present on the political parties lists did not appear on the official lists used at the voting tables, although no legal way exists for a name to have been deleted before the official lists were printed. As a consequence, many prospective voters who arrived at the polls with valid voter cards (*cedulas*) were turned away without being permitted to vote.

The delegation soon discovered that a disproportionate number of the disenfranchised were supporters of the principal opposition parties, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD). NDI observers reported that disenfranchisement was particularly evident in the greater Barahona, Comendador, La Vega Puerto Plata, San Francisco de Macoris and Santiago areas. OAS and IFES delegates and political party officials concurred in their observations of disenfranchisement.

Because of the number of these reports and the seriousness of the problem, the international observers, political parties and the leaders of the Civility Commission -- witnesses to the Civility Pact -- pressured the JCE to act to rectify the situation. The JCE eventually moved to extend the voting from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. to allow time for the disenfranchised to cast challenged ballots, but the resolution was not approved until 6:10 p.m., after many polling places had already closed at 6 p.m. as scheduled.

The NDI delegation reassembled in Santo Domingo on May 17 to discuss individual and team observations. Based on the findings of the nine teams, the delegation issued a preliminary statement on May 18, two days after the election, that concluded that "a number of features of the electoral process were marred by serious problems and irregularities . . ." Although it was impossible at the time to quantify the disenfranchisement, the NDI delegation and other observers agreed that the magnitude and sweep of the problem could affect the results. When the NDI preliminary statement was released the JCE's preliminary count showed a difference of fewer than 30,000 votes -- less than one percent of the total votes -- between incumbent Joaquín Balaguer (PRSC) and José Francisco Peña Gómez (PRD), the top two presidential contestants. The NDI delegation said in its report that the pattern of disenfranchisement suggested the real possibility that a deliberate effort was made to tamper with the electoral process. (See attached 1994 Interim Report: Preliminary Statement of the NDI delegation, May 18, 1994.)

The delegation noted other concerns and irregularities observed: violence that resulted in a number of deaths during the campaign; reports of more than 200,000 voter/identification cards that had not been distributed by election day; and delays in consolidating national results because of the ineffectiveness of the JCE's newly computerized and decentralized tabulation procedure.

The delegation emphasized the importance of Dominicans resolving all remaining issues and that international observers should participate in the process only if invited.

Tension and political maneuvering dominated the post-election period. The JCE announced May 20 that no official winner would be declared immediately; May 25 the JCE ordered vote counts from all polling places verified and re-tabulated. The board said challenged votes were to be entered into the count and that the voter list discrepancies would be reviewed, but it did not order a comparison of official and political party voter lists. On June 7 the JCE set up the Verification Commission, an *ad hoc* body charged with investigating election day irregularities.

On July 12, the Verification Commission July 12 recognized that the official and political party lists were distinct. The commission's final report agreed with the observations of the NDI delegation and other international groups: the names of some voters did not appear on official lists although they appeared on lists the JCE supplied to the political parties. The commission also found that *cedula* numbers of disenfranchised voters appeared on official lists but with different names. Review of voter lists from more than 1,400 polling sites established that there were as many as 45,000 disenfranchised voters. In a sample of voter lists at 321 polling sites the commission found some indications of likely computer error as well as signs that lists contained fictitious names. The commission did not, however, find conclusive evidence of the cause of the systemic disenfranchisement. (See attached 1994 Interim Report: Conclusions of the Verification Commission submitted to the Central Electoral Board, July 12, 1994.)

The Verification Commission was unable to determine why party representatives and international technical consultants were denied access to the JCE computer center when polling place official lists were produced; how the names of voters on official lists were replaced in 60 percent of disenfranchisement cases; or why disenfranchisement disproportionately affected opposition candidates. Party officials, the media, the public and international observers subsequently renewed their focus on the JCE. After the Verification Commission's report, NDI disseminated a letter updating the international community on the situation, widely circulated the NDI delegation's preliminary statement and actively communicated with the media about post-election developments. IFES and OAS also issued statements reiterating the troubling magnitude of the disenfranchisement and strongly urging JCE action. During this time NDI also helped prepare NDI delegation leader Solarz' congressional testimony concerning the elections, and helped Solarz prepare an opinion article about the elections that appeared in *The Washington Post* on July 8. (See attached 1994 Interim Report: Statement of NDI delegation leader Stephen J. Solarz and *Washington Post* article.)

On August 2, the JCE declared that incumbent Balaguer was the winner over Peña Gómez by 22,281 votes (about .74 percent of the valid votes cast), ignoring the fact that the margin was less than the Verification Commission's estimate of 45,000 disenfranchised voters. (See attached 1994 Interim Report: Resolution by the Central Electoral Board certifying Dr. Joaquín Balaguer as the winner of the May 16, 1994 elections.)

Following pressure from NDI and other members of the international community and Dominican business leaders in the Dominican Republic, on August 9 and 10, President Balaguer, Dr. José Francisco Peña Gómez and representatives of the PLD met at the National Palace to discuss a resolution to the political situation before the scheduled inauguration date of August 16, 1994.

Based on these negotiations, on August 10 the PLD proposed a "Pact for Democracy," which called for new elections in two-years time for President and Vice-President, prohibited the immediate re-election of President and Vice-President, established a "closed college" electoral process, and established a second-round electoral system which required the candidates for President and Vice-President to obtain more than 50 percent of the votes cast in order to win in a first round. If no candidate were to obtain more than 50 percent, the two leading candidates would participate in a second round that would be held 45 days later.

Following discussions by all parties, a final "Pact for Democracy" agreement was reached to hold new general elections in 18 months time. On August 10, President Balaguer announced this agreement in a public statement calling for congress to reform the constitution before August 16. On the evening of August 10, the parties were to publicly sign the Pact for Democracy. However, the Pact introduced by Balaguer at the signing ceremony was different from the Pact the parties had agreed upon and that President Balaguer had announced to the nation three hours before. The new Pact called for new elections in two years time. Nonetheless, the parties signed the modified Pact rather than risk a worsening of the political situation.

On August 11, the National Assembly began discussions on constitutional reform. The PRD, upset that the original Pact agreement was disregarded, withdrew its party deputies from the National Assembly. NDI widely distributed an interim report on August 12 that said in part: "given the closeness of the vote and the widespread irregularities, the legitimacy of the May 16 elections must be called into question. The Dominican authorities failed to fulfill their mandate to organize an electoral process that ensured that the will of the citizenry would be expressed." (See attached 1994 Interim Report.)

On August 13, without the participation of the PRD deputies, the National Assembly reformed the constitution, calling for Presidential elections to be held in two years time. The new constitution also called for a four-year presidential term, the establishment of a second round voting system if no Presidential candidate receives more than 50% of votes cast, and the establishment of a "closed college" electoral process by the JCE. The constitutional reform did not alter the four-year term of the National deputies, senators, and locally elected officials.

On August 16, 1994, President Joaquin Balaguer was sworn in as President of the Dominican Republic to serve a two year term.

1995 Election Studies Program (1562)

In early 1995, NDI reprogrammed separate funds from within the Latin America regional grant to explore the possibility of working with the civic group Participación Ciudadana to sponsor an election observation and parallel vote tabulation (PVT) to support the 1996 electoral process in the Dominican Republic. NDI organized an electoral studies program for the April elections in Peru to enable Participación to benefit from the experiences of the Peruvian civic group, Transparencia. NDI invited Rafael Pengsien Sang Ben, a Participación board member, to participate. The program was to be designed to increase transparency and citizen confidence and participation in the elections. NDI had conducted a similar program with the Peruvian group Transparencia for the April 1995 Peruvian national elections, as well as with other civic groups around the world (refer to the Election Studies sub-section of this report for a complete evaluation of this activity).

1995 Assessment Mission (1365)

In July 1995, NDI proposed to use the remainder of funds allocated for the 1994 election observation for an August 1995 assessment mission. From August 2 to August 5, 1995, an NDI survey team traveled to the Dominican Republic to assess preparations for the 1996 election and to determine how NDI could help to promote transparency and citizen participation in the electoral process. The NDI team included: Neil Nevitte, professor of public policy and statistical research at the University of Toronto, Canada; Santiago Canton, NDI director for programs in Latin America and the Caribbean; and Catherine Kelsch, NDI program officer. The team met with top officials from the three major political parties, political analysts, and U.S. embassy and AID officials.

The NDI team reported that a new JCE with professional and independent members had been established and was devoting itself to updating and improving the voter list. Party representatives were still skeptical that the JCE possessed adequate oversight capability, and they urged NDI to support activities to help ensure an open and transparent process. Party leaders encouraged NDI to organize an international observation delegation and to help civic groups organize a domestic observation.

To learn more about the work of local civic groups the team met with a representative of the Action Group, a local democracy-oriented organization formed out of the Pact for Democracy. The team held several meetings with leaders of Participación Ciudadana, a civic group that was planning an observation and a parallel vote tabulation (PVT) of the 1996 election. The Action Group was helping Participación conduct election-related programs. At a working meeting with Participación leaders the NDI team offered suggestions and ideas concerning the PVT and the organization of domestic observers. After the August mission NDI designed a PVT and observation assistance program but, at the suggestion of USAID, did not proceed with the program because USAID had contracted the Costa Rica-based Center for Electoral Assessment and Promotion (CAPEL) to conduct similar work.

1996 Election Survey Missions (1674)

From February 5 to 9, 1996, NDI launched a follow-up assessment mission to evaluate the political situation and explore possible NDI activities for the May 16, 1996, presidential election. The members of the survey team included: Santiago Canton, NDI director of programs for Latin America and the Caribbean; Gerardo Le Chevallier, a former congressman in El Salvador and the director of the NDI field office in Haiti; and Curtis Cutter, NDI senior consultant. NDI team members met with presidential candidates, political party representatives, electoral board members, civic organization representatives, and U.S. embassy and USAID officials.

The NDI team found that positive steps had been taken to ensure a more open electoral process. The JCE had updated the voter registry, consulted frequently with the political parties and approved the election day presence of international and domestic observers. However, political party representatives and others engaged in Dominican politics remained concerned about transparency. The new closed college electoral system appeared likely to complicate balloting and confuse voters, and the JCE's oversight capabilities were suspect. The assessment team concluded that NDI should send an international delegation to the election because, in the view of Dominicans the team interviewed, an international observation would contribute to an open electoral process and increase the confidence of the Dominican electorate.

1996 Pre-Election Assessment Mission (1685)

NDI subsequently proposed a six-month program to be conducted with the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government. The program included: the presence of an NDI field representative during the electoral process; a pre-election assessment mission before the May 16 first round; and the sponsorship of international observer delegations to both rounds of the election. From April 23 to 26, 1996, NDI and the Council used Regional Grant funds to send a pre-election team to the Dominican Republic to demonstrate the international community's interest in and support for the democratic process there and to provide the international community with an objective assessment of the Dominican electoral process. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former Colombian President Belisario Betancur led the delegation, which also comprised: José O. Bordon, former Argentine senator; Curtis Cutter, NDI senior consultant; Robert Pastor, the Council's executive director; Santiago Canton, NDI director of programs for Latin America and the Caribbean; Becky Castle, the Council's program coordinator; and Catherine Kelsch, NDI program officer.

The delegation met with presidential candidates José Francisco Peña Gómez of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and Vice President Jacinto Peynado of the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC). Delegates also met with: President Joaquin Balaguer; Cardinal Nicolas de Jesús Lopez Rodriguez; the five members of the JCE; representatives of the Action Group and of

Participación Ciudadana; prominent journalists; and other Dominican leaders. The Dominicans welcomed an NDI/Council international observer delegation for the May 16 election.

The delegation observed that the JCE was broadly supported and had worked closely with political actors to remedy the flawed voter registry used in 1994. The delegation also heard reservations about the efficacy of the new closed college voting procedure and about the lack of access to the JCE's computer center. The delegation noted with concern that there was no direct access to the JCE's computer center (the JCE said that its integrity would be undermined if anyone not employed by the JCE entered the computer center). Moreover, the JCE capped the number of national observers at 1,140. The move severely limited the observation capability of Participación, which had more than 3,000 trained observers on hand.

NDI and the Council again determined that an international observation of the May elections would demonstrate the international community's interest in and support for the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes in the Dominican Republic; and that an NDI/Council-organized international delegation could provide the international community with an objective assessment of the Dominican electoral process. To prepare for the observation, NDI and the Council immediately established an in-country presence in Santo Domingo, distributed the pre-election delegation's May 7 report throughout Latin America and Washington and prepared briefing materials. (See attached May 7, 1996 Pre-Election Report.)

Following the pre-election mission, NDI used funds from the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to sponsor an NDI/Council international delegation that observed the May 16 first-round election and the June 30 second round between Peña Gómez (PRD) and Fernández (PLD). The impact of NDI's decision to send a delegation is discussed in the next section of the report.

Evaluation

In the months immediately following the NDI observer delegation's declarations about serious and widespread irregularities that affected the results of the 1994 election, the three major political parties peacefully negotiated and agreed upon "The Pact For Democracy." The Pact called for positive reforms and compromise from Balaguer including: a new presidential election to be held in 18 months; constitutional prohibition of a president serving two successive terms; a second round of voting if no presidential candidate received a majority; a JCE comprising members approved by each of the major political parties; a reliable computer system that could guarantee an accurate voter list and be operated transparently; the timely and public posting of voter lists; public display before the election of the official voter lists used by polling place officials; and access to all stages of the electoral process for political parties and domestic and international observers.

Based on the ideas proposed in the signed Pact, the National Assembly reformed the Dominican constitution. The new constitution called for elections in two years, established a

four-year presidential term, instituted "closed college" elections administered by the JCE and introduced a two-round presidential election process. International pressure from the NDI delegation and others was instrumental in spurring the government to enter into negotiations with opposition parties and enact reforms.

NDI also recommended in the Institute's post-election interim report that electoral reforms be enacted before the 1996 presidential election. All of the recommendations on electoral reform outlined in the NDI report were eventually enacted for the 1996 electoral process. Among NDI's recommendations were:

- a reconstituted JCE, of which all board members were approved by each of the major political parties;
- a reliable computer system that could guarantee the accuracy of voter lists and ensure it would be operated in a transparent manner;
- access to all stages of the electoral process for political parties as well as domestic and international observers; and
- new voter lists used by officials on election day to be posted publicly well in advance of election day and to remain posted for a reasonable time.

NDI's observations about the flawed 1994 elections also spurred international pressure for the Dominican government to peacefully resolve the post-election crisis. This pressure eventually led to the negotiations between the government and opposition which resulted in electoral reform and early elections in 1996.

The 1996 elections took place under quite different circumstances than previous contests. For the first time in years, the Dominican Election Commission garnered the respect of all political parties and gained public confidence in the process and its results. Despite some accusations of irregularities, all political parties accepted the final results of the elections. The presidential election held on May 16, 1996, was a result of the political compromise following the disputed 1994 presidential contest. A second round of elections took place on June 30 because no candidate obtained a majority of the votes in the first round. The presence of an NDI/Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government delegation in both the May first round election and the June second round election promoted confidence in the process as well as demonstrated international support for a transparent electoral process.

The 1996 elections were the most credible in Dominican history and the first peaceful concession of electoral defeat. The NDI delegation reported that the elections, while not without problems, represented an important step forward for the democratic process in the Dominican Republic and a turning point in a country where presidential elections have spawned political violence and controversy. International pressure in 1994 and continued international support for

the process in 1996 contributed measurably to this important advance for Dominican democracy. In keeping with the objectives outlined in the project proposal, NDI achieved the following results and accomplishments through activities carried out during the program:

1) *NDI sought to bolster voter confidence and turnout by increasing trust in the election process;*

NDI's decision to organize international observer missions to the Dominican elections of 1994 and 1996 effectively buttressed voter confidence and civic participation in the electoral process. The NDI delegation called into question the validity of the 1994 elections because of massive disenfranchisement, and its steadfastness helped maintain international scrutiny of the Dominican government's response to the widespread irregularities. Because of NDI's formal assessment of the 1994 process, the presence of an NDI delegation in 1996 gave Dominicans the added measure of assurance that no irregularity would go unreported. By having international observers deployed at various polling sites throughout the country, the delegation's presence helped suppress the potential for violence and unrest.

José Francisco Peña Gómez, the losing candidate in the election, told NDI that because of the support of the international community and his faith that NDI would maintain outside pressure on the Balaguer government, he canceled a nationwide strike, which he admits could have resulted in violence and possible deaths, following the delegation's confirmation of his charge of electoral fraud. NDI's conclusion led to international pressure for the Dominican government to peacefully resolve the post-election crisis. This peaceful behavior from the opposition parties demonstrates the confidence that Dominican voters had in NDI and other members of the international community.

The NDI survey missions undertaken with the regional grant in 1995 led to an NDI/Council observation of the 1996 election, the presence of which undeniably helped deter irregularities and bolster confidence in the election by the political parties and the Dominican people. NDI was told by members of the Action Group for Democracy, a civic group formed following the flawed 1994 elections, that the presence of President Carter and the NDI delegation during the April 1996 pre-election mission created an atmosphere of confidence and faith in the 1996 elections. The survey missions also aided the domestic observation effort organized by Participación Ciudadana by providing technical assistance to the Dominican civic organization.

Because of international pressure in 1994 and continued international support for the process in 1996, the NDI/Council delegation was able to issue a preliminary statement after the 1996 elections that noted: "the election process, while not without problems, represented an important step forward for the democratic process in the Dominican Republic. The sense of public service and guardianship of the democratic process that was demonstrated in this election...marks an important juncture in the development of Dominican democracy." (See attached Preliminary Statement of the NDI/Council delegation July 1, 1996.)

2) *NDI increased the integrity of elections by deterring and detecting fraud.*

NDI's 1994 and 1996 delegations successfully detected and deterred fraud, which helped provide a peaceful resolution to the 1994 post-election crisis. The NDI international observation mission to the 1994 elections was the first delegation to validate charges of electoral irregularities brought by opposition political parties. The observation delegation's independent assessment of widespread disenfranchisement, among other irregularities, and of the effect the disenfranchisement had on the results of the election was hailed by most Dominican participants in the electoral process and spurred international pressure on the Dominican government for a resolution of the situation.

On election day in May 1994, NDI observed that prospective voters with valid identification cards were turned away from the polls because the voter lists did not contain their names. The names of these potential voters, however, were on voter lists previously issued to the political parties by the JCE. Furthermore, it appeared that a disproportionate number of disenfranchised voters identified themselves as members of the opposition parties -- the PRD and the PLD. The NDI delegation's preliminary statement gave widespread publicity to the serious irregularities witnessed by observers. Prompted by NDI's and other international observer delegations' publicity of these irregularities, a Verification Commission was established shortly after the elections to determine the magnitude and possible reasons for the irregularities.

3) *The NDI/Council sponsored international observation of the 1994 election in the Dominican Republic provided an independent assessment of official results and kept the international community informed about subsequent developments.*

The NDI delegation was the first international delegation to make a public declaration on the irregularities of the 1994 election. The delegation's May 18, 1994, preliminary statement acknowledged that apparent disenfranchisement could have affected the election results. The delegation urged Dominican authorities to investigate the nature and extent of the problem and to seek a remedy. NDI's firm statement led other delegations as well as the international community more generally, to call into question the legitimacy of the 1994 elections.

Following the election, Stephen Solarz, who led the NDI international observer delegation, issued a statement in conjunction with testimony on the conclusions of the NDI observer delegation at a U.S. Congressional Hearing called by the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. In the months following the elections, NDI continued to actively monitor post-election developments, calling on opposition parties to present documentation of their allegations and calling on the Dominican authorities to take appropriate steps to investigate and remedy the situation.

In addition to circulating the preliminary statement of its international observer delegation to members of the international community and helping prepare Congressional testimony submitted by Solarz, NDI widely circulated a letter on June 13 updating interested

individuals on post-election developments. (See attached 1994 update letter.) NDI also maintained active communication with news media and interested persons throughout the process. On July 8, Solarz published an opinion-editorial article in the *Washington Post* concerning the post-election situation in the Dominican Republic. On August 12, NDI widely distributed an interim report on the 1994 election in the Dominican Republic that concluded that, "Given the closeness of the vote and the widespread irregularities, the legitimacy of the May 16 elections must be called into question. The Dominican authorities failed to fulfill their mandate to organize an electoral process that ensured that the will of the citizenry would be expressed". By keeping the international community informed of the flawed 1994 elections and therefore maintaining heightened pressure on Balaguer, the Dominican government ultimately negotiated to hold new elections in 1996.

Mexico: 1994 Election Observation (1471)

Overview

Elections in Mexico have been marred by controversy and charges of fraud raised by opposition parties. These allegations prompted electoral reform and a pact between political parties designed to guarantee free and fair presidential elections in 1994. The importance of effective elections was underscored by the growing rejection of the political system exemplified by the emergence of Zapatista guerrillas and the assassination of ruling party presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. Surveys during this period indicated that Mexicans had little confidence in the election process. These factors made the 1994 elections a critical test of judging the effectiveness of electoral reforms and the commitment of the government to consolidating democracy in Mexico.

At the invitation of the major political parties, NDI and the International Republican Institute (IRI) organized an international observer delegation for the August 1997 elections. Comprised of 80 persons from 17 countries, the delegation included the participation of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government/Carter Center of Emory University. Delegation members included former heads of government and diplomats, political party and civic leaders, regional specialists and election experts.

Beginning in February 1994, NDI's field representative in Mexico maintained contact with all political sectors and followed election issues. NDI staff members from Washington also traveled to Mexico City to meet with Mexican political leaders to discuss the importance of permitting national and international observers to assess the election process. These discussions enabled the NDI/IRI delegation and Mexican civic groups to make a long-term assessment of the quality of the electoral process.

On election day, the NDI/IRI delegation divided into 34 teams to observe voting in cities across Mexico. The delegates' presence at hundreds of polling sites helped increase the confidence of Mexican voters in the process and deter fraud. Based on its systematic

observations, the delegation drafted a statement which concluded that, on balance, irregularities reported were not sufficient to affect the election results. This meant that ruling party candidate Ernesto Zedillo had won by a wide margin. This declaration was widely reported in the print and electronic media and helped to build confidence in the election results. NDI staff remained in Mexico months after the election, enabling the institute to track the resolution of electoral complaints and demonstrate the international community's interest and support for all phases of the electoral process.

Background

The quality of elections have been challenged for decades by opposition parties and others. For years, the National Action Party (PAN) alleged electoral fraud in the northern states. On the national level in 1988, Cuahtemoc Cardenas, then presidential candidate of the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD), claimed that the election was stolen from him when official results gave Carlos Salinas de Gortari of the incumbent Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) 50.7 percent of the vote to Cardenas' 31.1 percent. Allegations of fraud persisted in state and municipal elections since 1988.

To improve Mexico's tarnished image, President Salinas gave considerable attention to electoral reform throughout his term. In 1990, the Federal Chamber of Deputies approved a new federal electoral code (COFIPE) to take effect during the 1991 midterm elections. The legislation contained provisions for the compilation of a new national electoral registry and a requirement for photo credentials on voter identification cards. The COFIPE also authorized domestic election observers and created the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) to oversee all aspects of elections in Mexico. In September 1993, the government approved modifications to the COFIPE that aimed to reduce the government's influence over the IFE.

In January 1994, eight of nine political parties agreed to a package of reforms designed to guarantee free and fair presidential elections that August. The accord was regarded as a significant step toward genuine electoral reform in Mexico and its symbolism, if not its mandate, was expected to have far reaching effects on the Mexican election process. The Mexican government also implemented additional modifications to the electoral code, such as permitting international visitors to observe the voting and counting process on election day.

Several factors continued to push the Mexican government toward the electoral reforms that began in 1990. The Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas and the continuing peace negotiations severely challenged Mexican political stability. The rebels denounced the PRI's dominance over the Mexican political structure and demanded national political reforms. The uprising and ensuing peace negotiations revitalized the debate over the government's commitment to electoral reform and democratic practices.

Despite reforms, surveys conducted in early 1994 showed that most Mexicans had little confidence in the Mexican electoral process. Such public dismay prompted late presidential

candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio of the PRI to publicly support further political reform. Tragically, Colosio was assassinated in March 1994 at a campaign rally in Tijuana, Mexico. His campaign advisor and former education secretary, Ernesto Zedillo, was named to lead the PRI presidential ticket. PRD candidate Cardenas and Diego Fernandez de Cevallos of the PAN were the leading opposition presidential candidates.

Internal divisiveness on issues related to political reform weakened the PRI. The assassination of Colosio augmented the sense of uncertainty that penetrated Mexican politics. Following Colosio's assassination several high level government officials resigned their posts. In June 1994, Interior Minister Jorge Carpizo, announced his resignation. President Salinas, however, rejected the resignation. After several days of negotiations, Carpizo agreed to remain at his post. At that time, the Ministry of Interior oversaw the IFE and the minister led the IFE's governing body, the General Council. This internal turmoil further eroded confidence in the government's ability to administer the elections effectively.

The reform initiatives that were undertaken during the Salinas Administration made the 1994 elections particularly important. The elections provided an opportunity for Mexican civic leaders and the international community to gauge the effectiveness of President Salinas' efforts for political reform and the progress made toward consolidating Mexican democracy.

Program Activities

In February 1994, NDI opened a field office in Mexico City. Field Representative Jorge Rivera began to meet with leaders of political parties, labor unions, civic groups and the election commission on a regular basis to assess the election environment and discuss concerns about the election process. Rivera also worked with the civic group coalition, Civic Alliance, to prepare to observe the August elections. His efforts were supplemented by periodic visits by NDI election experts advising the Civic Alliance civic groups. Rivera's reports coupled with assessments by NDI elections teams provided an ongoing analysis of the election environment and laid the groundwork for the international observer delegation. (See attached Terms of Reference.)

In July 1994, the three major political parties, electoral authorities, and civic organizations invited the NDI/IRI delegation to observe the Mexican elections. (See attached Political Party Invitations for NDI to Observe Elections.) In late July, NDI and IRI staff members arrived in Mexico City to begin preparations for the delegation's arrival and election-day deployment. (See attached Press Releases, August 2 and 15, 1994.) These preparations built on Rivera's efforts included sending staff teams to 24 states where they met with election authorities, political party leaders, United Nations representatives, and civic group coordinators. NDI staff received briefings on each state's electoral climate and made recommendations on routes for election-day observations.

The international delegation arrived in Mexico City on August 17 and was accredited by the IFE. The delegation was provided access to all stages of the election process and enjoyed the

same rights afforded to election observers in other countries. (See attached IFE Regulations for International Observers.) The delegation aimed to demonstrate the international community's support for the democratic process in Mexico and provide the international community with an objective assessment of the elections. It also sought to learn from the Mexican people about the nature of the electoral process and its implications for further development of Mexico's democratic institutions.

The delegation comprised 80 members from 17 countries and was coordinated with members of the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government/Carter Center of Emory University. The delegation included former heads of state and government, former diplomats, elected officials, political party and civic leaders, legal scholars, regional specialists and elections experts. Leading the delegation were Andres Allamand, national deputy of Chile; Joseph Clark, former prime minister of Canada; Paul Kirk, chairman of NDI's Board of Directors and former chairman of the Democratic National Committee; and John McCain, United States Senator and chairman of IRI's Board of Directors. (See attached Observer Co-leader Joe Clark's opening statement, August 23, 1994, and List of Delegation Members.)

The delegation's mandate included the examination of three aspects of electoral process: the pre-election environment, election day proceedings, and the tabulation of results. Prior to the election, the delegates met with national representatives of the IFE, including citizen counselors, the three major political parties, the United Nations, news media and national election monitoring organizations. These briefings provided an assessment of national preparations for the elections and insights into the concerns of the political parties and government. (See attached Delegation Agenda, NDI Briefing Papers and Observer Delegation Media Relations Memorandum, August 8, 1994.)

Days before the election, the delegation divided into 34 teams and deployed throughout the country. Each delegate team held meetings with local party, election and civic leaders to discuss concerns about the process. Based on staff reports and these interviews, delegates developed a sound understanding of local election issues. These meetings also enabled the delegation to target problematic polling sites on election day and investigate concerns that could have undermined confidence in the election results.

On August 21, election day, the delegation teams visited hundreds of polling sites across the country. Using a standardized assessment form, delegates recorded their observations of the election proceedings focusing on such issues as: the time polling places opened; the presence of polling site officials; availability of ballots, indelible ink, tally sheets, curtained voting booths, transparent ballot boxes and the voter registry; secrecy of the ballot; evidence of vote-buying or voter intimidation; disenfranchised citizens; presence of political party pollwatchers and the military or police; delays in voting due to long lines; counting of ballots; posting of election results; and transport of vote tally sheets to local election authorities.

Following the election, the teams returned to Mexico City to share their findings with other delegates in a debriefing session. By comparing the findings of the teams, NDI was able to determine if any systematic and intentional efforts to alter the election results had taken place. Based on this analysis, the delegation prepared the preliminary post-election statement which was released on August 23. (See attached Observer Delegation Preliminary Statement.)

In its statement, the delegation emphasized that the election represented a significant step forward for the Mexican democratic process. The positive election experience resulted from the ongoing electoral reforms that had began in 1990 with the creation of IFE and implementation of a computerized voter registry. In particular, several election-day procedural safeguards had been instituted, such as curtained voting booths, transparent ballot boxes, sequentially numbered ballot packets, improved indelible ink, posting of polling station results, and provision of tally sheets to party representatives.

Delegates noted that procedural aspects of the Mexican electoral process had improved dramatically since the 1988 elections. All were impressed by the high voter turnout, demonstrating the strong desire of Mexican citizens to express their will through the ballot box. Similarly, the delegation noted the high degree of citizen participation in the elections as polling officials or election observers. Political parties deployed thousands of party representatives at polling stations to observe the voting and counting process. Representatives of nonpartisan civic groups also stationed thousands of pollwatchers to help ensure the integrity of the process.

Delegation members noted cases of irregularities and isolated instances of intimidation of voters. The most consistent irregularity occurred at the special voting stations (*casillas especiales*) set up for individuals in transit on election day. As agreed upon by all political parties prior to the election, IFE delivered to each *casilla especial* no more than 300 ballots for each federal office. By early afternoon on election day, most *casillas especiales* ran out of ballots, preventing thousands of Mexican citizens from voting. In addition to problems with the *casillas especiales*, delegation members received a number of allegations of partisan behavior by some local elections officials.

The delegation also raised concerns relating to the pre-election period, including documented accounts of bias in campaign media coverage, widespread use of state resources by the governing PRI, disparity of financial resources between political parties, and delays in the appointment of the head of the Special Prosecutor's office for Electoral Crimes.

While the delegation viewed the problems with the electoral process as serious, it did not receive evidence to suggest that the outcome of the presidential contest was affected. In its statement, the delegation made several recommendations for the election authorities to consider in continuing the electoral reform initiatives. These recommendations included: complete independence for the IFE; a review of political party campaign spending regulations; new measures to prevent the misuse of government funds to support a candidate or political party; enforceable guidelines for balanced media coverage of candidates; continued development of

independent civic organizations as a feature of the democratic process; prompt processing of electoral complaints; development of a system to enable voters who do not appear on a registry on election day to vote through other mechanisms, such as tendered ballots; and a solution to the ballot shortage that disenfranchised voters faced at the *casillas especiales*.

Although many Mexican citizens and the international community declared the August 21 elections perhaps the cleanest in Mexican history, the two leading opposition parties, PAN and PRD, reported incidents of electoral irregularities that they believed could have affected the official results. Both parties called for an investigation of electoral anomalies and urged that the disputes be resolved through peaceful and legal means.

The post electoral climate reflected Mexican voters' mixed reactions to the final election results. Many engaged in peaceful, though often heated, debate over the legitimacy of the elections. The incumbent PRI, which won the presidency with 50 percent of the vote, declared that its victory reflected Mexico's call for change as incoming President Ernesto Zedillo announced his commitment to continue the political reforms initiated under his predecessor. The PAN, which finished second in the presidential contest with 27 percent, acknowledged that irregularities had occurred but deemed them insufficient to change the outcome of the elections. The PRD, which finished third with 16 percent, denounced the elections as fraudulent and staged demonstrations to protest the official election results. Shortly following the elections, PRD supporters rallied at the *Zocalo*, Mexico city's main square, and challenged the party leadership to form "truth committees" to investigate fraud allegations and to peacefully demonstrate against the official results. NDI leaders met with individually with party representatives to encourage stability and explain the delegation's findings.

In monitoring post-election developments, NDI's field representative held meetings with government officials, electoral authorities, political party representatives, academics, business and labor leaders, political analysts, members of human right groups, domestic observer groups, the media, and other nongovernmental organizations.

NDI's field representative also followed the activities of the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TFE) and the Special Prosecutor for Electoral Crimes. The TFE was an autonomous body created under the federal electoral code of 1990 that has the highest jurisdictional authority over federal electoral disputes. The Tribunal comprised five magistrates, which included a permanent central court in Mexico City and four regional courts during election periods in the cities of Durango, Jalapa, Guadalajara, and Toluca. The TFE ruled on more than 1,200 complaints from political parties and overturned the results in six federal deputy races. The TFE ruled twice in favor of the PRD, once in favor of the PAN and once for the PRI, and ordered that in two federal electoral districts new elections be held within 45 days.

The office of the Special Prosecutor for Electoral Crimes was established under the electoral reforms of 1994 to enforce sanctions against electoral crimes. Appointed by the president, the special prosecutor fell under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Attorney General

but could only be removed by the General Council of the IFE. The Special Prosecutor's office investigated 521 electoral complaints. By October 30, 1994, the Special Prosecutor had dismissed 123 charges filed and had decided to prosecute three complaints.

The new congress took office on November 1, 1994, with the PRI maintaining its solid majority in both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. As stipulated in the constitution, the congress approved the presidential election results and Ernesto Zedillo was inaugurated on December 1. While some opposition supporters led demonstrations throughout Mexico City, President Zedillo delivered his inauguration speech and vowed to continue the political reforms initiated by former President Salinas.

Evaluation

Based on the objectives of the international observer delegation, NDI was able to make a measurable contribution to open and honest elections in Mexico. The objectives and NDI achievements are described below:

- *Encourage public participation and confidence in the electoral process through the network of informed international monitors;*
- *Help deter electoral irregularities on election day;*
- *Develop and implement a system for comprehensive substantiated reports on the elections from the monitors.*
- *Promote greater understanding regarding the appropriate role of international and domestic monitors in the electoral process.*

NDI staff members met with political party leaders before the elections to discuss international concerns about the polling process. These meetings helped bring attention to such issues as the participation of international and national observers. The delegation helped overcome reluctance within the Mexican government to permit both types of observers, who later played a critical role in assessing the quality of the electoral process. These consultations also maintained international pressure on the ruling PRI to implement additional electoral reforms.

Several days before the elections, the NDI\IRI delegation traveled to 34 cities across Mexico. The delegates met with political leaders and election officials at the local level to discuss concerns about the process and demonstrate the international community's interest in honest and open elections. On election day, delegates visited hundreds of polling sites providing a highly visible presence and enabling them to collect systematic information on the quality of the elections. In many instances, Mexicans turned to members of the delegation for assistance in resolving complaints about the process. Mexican election observers also reported that local election authorities had acted more professionally knowing that the international observers would

be assessing their activities. The presence of observers helped deter fraud and encourage Mexicans voters by giving them greater confidence that their vote would be counted.

After the elections, the NDI delegation released a statement concluding that on balance the elections were fair. This statement was given broad coverage in the print and electronic media by national and international press. (See attached press articles.) The availability of balanced information about the election process contributed to political stability since much of the Mexican public was suspicious of the official election results. This information also helped calm opposition parties. The delegation's statement also included recommendations for improving the electoral process in the future which helped raise awareness and pressure for continued reforms.

NDI's observation program was able to effectively monitor the entire electoral process through its field presence, including pre-election issues and post election adjudication of election complaints. This presence helped to maintain continuous international scrutiny of the process and pressure for honest and open elections. (See also attached Congressional Briefing Presentation Outline and Press Release, September 1, 1994.)

D. Election Studies

Peru: 1995 Elections Study Mission (1562)

In light of the controversial 1990 and 1994 elections in the Dominican Republic, the civic group Participación Ciudadana (Citizen Participation -- PC) decided to organize a domestic election observation effort in anticipation of the May 1996 elections. To support the development of this initiative, NDI sent a member of the group's executive board to observe the Peruvian monitoring group Transparencia's observation of the April 1995 national elections. Drawing on this and other lessons from domestic observation initiatives throughout the region, PC trained more than 4,000 Dominican elections monitors.

Background

Prior to the May 1996 elections, NDI explored the possibility of working with Participación Ciudadana to sponsor an election observation and parallel vote tabulation (PVT) in support of the electoral process. The program was to be designed to increase transparency and citizen confidence and participation in the elections. Although NDI sent a member of the group to Peru to observe Transparencia, as well as organized an international delegation to monitor the elections, for a variety of reasons the Institute did not ultimately work directly with PC during the elections.

Program Activity

In anticipation of the May 1996 national elections in the Dominican Republic, NDI sent Rafael Pengsien Sang Ben, a PC board member, to observe the election monitoring activities of Transparencia, which has organized several model national election observations. The electoral

studies delegation also included two civic organizers and an election official from the West Bank and Gaza. NDI reprogrammed funds from existing accounts within the Latin America Regional Grant to finance Sang Ben's participation. (See attached Study Mission Terms of Reference.)

The objective of the program was to enable Sang Ben to observe Transparencia's programs and to witness how the Peruvian National Election Commission (JNE) administered the election. The delegation's agenda began with extensive briefings with Transparencia staff members responsible for the PVT and election observation. Topics discussed included: the role of civic groups in elections, recruiting and training volunteers, cultivating positive media relations, organizing regional chapters, developing constructive relationships with political parties and the JNE, organizing a computer and communications system, and administering a PVT. NDI also arranged visits to Barranca and Huacho -- small towns outside of Lima -- to give the delegation an idea of how local Transparencia chapters are organized. (See attached Program Agenda.)

The electoral studies delegation later met with key political sectors including the JNE, the Organization of American States, and nongovernmental organizations such as the Flora Tristan Womens Center; Peru, Vida y Paz; and SER/CEAPAZ. The delegation also visited the JNE's election day media center and met with Patrick Merloe, NDI's senior associate for election processes, and Neil Nevitte, professor of political science at the University of Toronto. Both Merloe and Nevitte have extensive experience with election observation programs and PVTs, and both later provided advice to PC in the Dominican Republic.

On election day, the delegation visited numerous polling sites to observe the voting and counting process. The delegation also toured Transparencia's communication centers where data from the PVT and election observation was received. At Transparencia press conferences, the delegation witnessed techniques for presenting politically sensitive reports on the outcome and quality of the elections to the media.

Evaluation

Transparencia's activities proved to be a useful model for the electoral delegation. The Peruvian group was able to field more than 9,000 volunteers and conduct a PVT accurate to within several hundreds of a percent. Based on subsequent conversations with Sang Ben and other members of PC, it is clear that lessons from the Peruvian election were incorporated in the group's strategy for the PVT and election observation. The personal contacts established between Transparencia members and PC also provided a continuing source of information and advice as the Dominican program developed. The relationship built in Peru continued throughout Participación Ciudadana's development as a monitoring organization. Leaders of Transparencia, worked closely with PC during the organization and implementation of the Dominican civic group's PVT and observation effort. In the end, PC trained and organized more than 4,000 domestic observers during the 1996 presidential election.

E. Governance Programs

As the branch of government most visible and accessible to the average citizen, the performance of local government can determine the degree of public confidence in the democratic system. Thus, local governance is a crucial link in democratic development. In many countries, however, democratization has resulted in significant political changes on the national level that have yet to reach the local level. There is a growing appreciation of the benefits for a democratic government of devolving more authority and autonomy to elected municipal governments.

To date, NDI has conducted five basic types of local governance programs: orientation and training for newly elected officials; consultations with national leaders on structures of local government; mechanisms for increasing citizen participation in local decision-making; organization of non-partisan local government associations; and advice on technical issues such as drafting public budgets.

Objectives

NDI seeks:

- to grow democracy at the grassroots level by increasing citizen participation in government decision-making at the local level and government responsiveness to citizen needs; and

- to foster communication between local government officials and the community that they serve.

Guyana: Strengthening Local Governance (1661)

Competitive polls in 1992 ushered in a new era of democratic development in Guyana. But years of controversial elections and undemocratic rule have led to weak political institutions and little tradition of citizen participation in the political process. Democratic local governance in particular was almost nonexistent before local government elections in 1994. To help overcome this legacy of centralized political power, NDI used Latin American Regional Grant funds to sponsor activities to strengthen local-level citizen participation and local government. Activities conducted under the regional grant complemented other NDI programs in Guyana funded through the Institute's Guyana Strengthening Democracy project with the USAID-Guyana.

Background

Following the 1994 local elections, Guyanese political leaders requested that NDI help train the 1,238 newly-elected local councilors. The Institute assisted the Ministry of Public

Works, Communication and Regional Development in conducting a series of day-long orientation seminars for newly elected local officials throughout the country. NDI also produced a report, entitled, "Local Democracy in Guyana, an Institutional Assessment" which was widely distributed in March 1995.

In August 1995, based on recommendations made by local councilors, NDI sponsored a nationwide local government summit entitled, "Serving the People -- Making Democracy Work at Home." More than 120 local officials participated in workshops on communication, community development, meeting management, and citizen participation. In addition, NDI produced a manual for every local official in Guyana, entitled "Building Effective Governance, A Guide for Local Councilors."

In November 1995, the Guyanese government created a new Ministry for Local Government directed by Senior Minister Moses Nagamootoo. Since taking office, Minister Nagamootoo has taken steps to improve the funding base of local councils, as well as to provide for increased autonomy of the Neighborhood Democratic Councils. In collaboration with the ministry, NDI worked to continue strengthening local government using Latin America Regional Grant funds.

Project Activities

In April 1996, NDI invited Senior Minister of Local Government Moses Nagamootoo to the second Inter-American Conference of Mayors entitled, *An Emerging Policy Agenda for Local Government*, held in Miami, Florida from April 17 to 19, 1996. The objective of the visit was to support the newly created local government ministry and to familiarize the minister with the structures of local government associations throughout the region.

Prior to the Miami conference, the minister was invited to meet with representatives of Washington-based local government associations including the Conference of Mayors, Sister City International and the International City/County Management Association. The minister also met with Mark Sullivan, a specialist in Latin American Affairs at the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Sullivan provided the minister with an overview of the scope of work and mission of the CRS and documents describing local government associations in other Latin American Countries.

NDI Program Officer for Democratic Governance Marissa Brown accompanied Minister Nagamootoo to the Miami conference and facilitated contacts for him with representatives of other countries. The minister and his chief development officer, Basil Benn, met with OAS representatives and mayors and local government officials from other Latin American and Caribbean countries. They also met representatives of local government associations and discussed topics ranging from environment preservation to the relationship between local government and private enterprise. As a follow-up to the conference, the Institute provided the minister with a number of documents on local government organization.

In March, the Institute received a proposal from the Ministry of Local Government requesting assistance in organizing training seminars for local councilors on topics such as public management, community development and financial accountability. In response to this proposal, and in an effort to develop a self sustainable training mechanism, NDI worked with the ministry officials to develop a "train-the-trainers" workshop.

In anticipation of the workshop, in July 1996 NDI and the ministry developed a questionnaire that was distributed to all 65 councils throughout the country. The questionnaire was designed to help local representatives determine their staff training needs. Based on the responses collected, NDI sponsored a two-day training workshop on August 2-3, 1996. The seminar was entitled, "Local Government Training Strategies" and brought together 45 potential local government trainers from seven different NGO's and institutions, including: the Guyana Volunteer Corps, the Institute for Adult and Continuing Education, the Guyana Management Institute, the Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers, Partners in Community Development and the University of Guyana. (See attached Local Government Training Workshop Agenda and List of Participants.)

During the two-day workshop, participants developed new strategies for training councilors and discussed designs for training materials. The workshop included a plenary session on "Training Strategies-Methods of Involving Councilors," followed by five small group "brainstorming sessions" on financial administration and accountability, ethics, leadership, community development, management issues and public participation and constituent relations. Each of the small groups summarized its deliberations and recommendations about training materials and techniques in a verbal report to the other participants. The workshop concluded with a plenary review of recommendations developed in the five small-group sessions. (See attached Transcript Proceedings and Training Outilnes.)

NDI local government expert Wallace Rogers, a former city manager and NDI local government field director in Estonia and the Ukraine, participated in the seminar and brought to the discussion the extensive experience he has acquired in the U.S. and abroad. Rogers concluded that the seminar, ". . . was well worth pursuing. The teaching method used during the workshop -- dividing the attendees into several issue-oriented sub-groups and asking them to prepare presentations like the one's they would be doing in the field -- was an excellent teaching technique." (See attached Evaluation Analysis.)

Rogers also met with mayors and local officials to continue discussions about the formation of a local government association. In addition, Rogers conducted an assessment of local government financing and deeds registries in Guyana. Following his return to Washington, D.C., Rogers developed a list of recommendations which have been incorporated in NDI's follow-on Guyana Strengthening Democracy program.

Following the conference, the Institute hired a local consultant to develop training materials based on the recommendations made at the seminar. The materials provide tips on

training and small working group exercises and activities to build the skills of local councillors. NDI also compiled a directory of all Neighborhood Democratic Councils (NDC) and Regional Democratic Councils (RDC) to improve communication among local and regional councils. The Ministry of Local Government made a commitment to update and distribute the directory to mayors, councilors and other interested institutions nationwide.

Evaluation

1) *To grow democracy at the grassroots level by increasing citizen participation in government decision-making at the local level and government responsiveness to citizen needs; and*

2) *To foster communication between local government officials and the community that they serve.*

The primary focus of NDI's local governance program in Guyana has been to spur citizen participation in local decision-making, whether it be through training local officials in the importance of constituent relations, or through educating councilors about the importance of citizen participation in community development.

The local governance training program created a pool of 45 local government trainers that have led subsequent workshops to encourage citizen participation at the local level throughout Guyana. The Ministry of Local Government can also call upon these trainers for future workshops. Materials developed on the conduct of meetings, management, financial accountability, community development and public participation will be essential in better preparing trainers for future assignments. The program has been well received by local officials as evidenced by the numerous requests for training sessions the ministry has received from NDC and RDC representatives. The Ministry has continued to organize local council training sessions around the country based on the materials and training methodology developed during the train-the-trainers seminar. For the first time in Guyana, the concept of local government training has been institutionalized and training materials have been developed that can be used by local officials and councilors for years to come. (See Press Release and News Articles.)

The "Local Government Training Strategies" seminar also broke ground on the political front by including representatives from all political sectors in the program, an important achievement in this highly polarized country. Minister Nagamootoo stressed in his presentation the need for cooperation and appeared on this dias with members of the opposition party the People's National Congress (PNC). This tone and interaction were unprecedented in previous local government meetings.

The development of a local government directory for 65 NDCs and 10 RDCs is also one of the ways in which NDI helped strengthen cooperation among local governments. According

to Ministry officials, the directory will increase communication among councilors, mayors and the Ministry.

Minister Nagamootoo's visit to the Miami conference of mayors helped the ministry establish contacts with colleagues throughout the region and familiarized the minister with the role of local government associations. The visit also helped Nagamootoo establish contacts with organizations that can respond to requests for technical assistance in the future. Upon his return to Guyana, the minister was active in developing the ministry, reaching out to local councilors and implementing reforms to facilitate local governments' access to public funds. The minister was also able -- through contacts made at the Mayors conference -- to acquire computer equipment. Finally, the minister, who had before the visit expressed scepticism about the Internet and its usefulness, subsequently chaired the Computer Trade Show in Georgetown and openly supported access to the information "super-highway." NDI's Internet presentation played a key role in spurring institutional interest in this new medium.

Finally, local government expert Wally Rogers' visit served to identify the need for local government officials to work together to resolve the problem of tax collection. Rogers made suggestions about possible improvements to the system to Minister Nagamootoo, Mayor of Georgetown Ranwell Jordan, People Progressive Party Executive Director Donald Ramotar, PNC Vice Chairman Vincent Alexander, PNC Chairman of the Georgetown District Oscar Clark, PNC Commissioner Malcolm Parris and Mayor of Linden Abdul Kadir. His visit also spurred further discussion among Guyanese officials about the need to create a local government association.