



**CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: April 1 – June 30, 2005**

**MOROCCO: PARTY STRENGTHENING AND  
PARLIAMENTARY REFORM (04860/1)  
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

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**I. SUMMARY**

Over the last quarter Morocco has taken some significant steps on its path through democratic transition. A political party law has been put forward for ratification, revision of the electoral code is under discussion and a number of political parties held their national congresses with an eye to the pending party legislation. Elsewhere, the speech by the King on the need to develop the country's human capital called attention to the slow socioeconomic development of the country while highlighting its relationship to the development of more robust democratic processes.

Political parties are becoming increasingly aware of the need to join together to face the challenges of the upcoming 2007 elections. As a result, they are moving slowly to form several unified poles. The Popular Movement (MP) and National Popular Movement (MNP) have taken the lead by fully merging their parties, while the Union of Socialist Popular Forces (USFP) and Democratic Socialist Party (PSD) are on their way. Parties such as the Justice and Development Party (PJD) have more confidence in their base of support and are working diligently to maintain and expand popular backing in the lead up to the 2007 polls.

Within this context, the specific objectives of NDI's parliamentary reform and political party strengthening programs are the following:

Parliament Program

- To bridge the gap between members of Parliament (MPs), civil society leaders and constituents; and
- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of MPs and party caucuses.

Political Party Program

- To help political parties to develop a better understanding of citizen perceptions and to overcome the gap dividing parties from citizens;

- To build the capacity of women and youth to participate fully in political parties; and
- To improve political party members' access to skills and resources and communication within and between their parties.

Through its parliamentary program this quarter, National Democratic Institute (NDI) organized a constituency outreach activity, a pilot mobile parliament project and two forums addressing timely political issues. NDI also coordinated the development of the terms of reference for the development of a communication strategy for the House of Representatives, with support and collaboration from USAID and UNDP. The Institute also engaged in substantial consultations with the League of Parliamentary Staff to define a joint work plan for coordinated training of parliamentary staff.

Through its political party program, NDI held a number of activities this quarter to support the empowerment of youth and women within political parties and create opportunities for promoting them to decision making positions. In this respect, NDI conducted an intensive five-day training academy in Ifrane with a follow-up session in Rabat. NDI was also actively involved in technical assistance and trainings with the youth sections of three political parties: the PSD, Istiqlal and Al Ahd. More cooperative efforts are also being discussed with the USFP youth section. The political party program was also able to consolidate a solid core of trainees from 15 different political parties to form a group of trainers who will provide consistency and long-term support for their respective parties.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

During this quarter, several major developments affected the character of the Moroccan political landscape. One of these was the King's speech on May 18, in which he stressed the importance of developing the country's human resources. One result of this was the establishment of a National Initiative for Human Development (INHD) with a dedicated budget and significant attention by political actors across the spectrum. More recently, the designation of *walis* (governors) from non-security-related backgrounds for the sensitive Casablanca, Laayoune, Tangiers, Meknes and Kenitra-El Gharb regions can be seen as a move to operationalize this promotion of development. One aspect stressed during the King's speech was the relationship between this process of socioeconomic development and the need to address it politically.

Second, the USFP, the National Democratic Party (PND) and the Front of Democratic Forces (FFD) organized their first national party congresses in light of the much debated political party law. Yet none of the congresses showed any real inclination towards providing more internal democracy or significantly integrating youth and women into decision making structures. The exception to this was the youth wing of the USFP, which gathered its forces together to give the majority of its members' votes to the party's Youth Secretary General, Mohammed El Gahs, and elect him to the executive bureau of the party.

Third, there was the much-awaited merger process of the *haraki* (movement) parties, bringing together first the MP and the MNP without the Democratic Union (UD). The latter decided to postpone its participation in the merger while continuing to maintain its alliance with its former Union of Popular Forces (UMP) coalition partners. On the other side, the PSD broke from the Socialist Alliance and declared its intention to merge with the USFP. However,

#### **MOROCCO'S PRINCIPAL POLITICAL PARTIES**

- ADL: Alliance of Liberties
- Al Ahd Party
- FFD: Front of Democratic Forces
- MNP: National Popular Movement
- MP: Popular Movement
- PI (Istiqlal): Independence Party
- PJD: Party of Justice and Development
- PND: Democratic National Party
- PSD: Democratic Socialist Party
- PPS: Party of Progress and Socialism
- RNI: Rally of National Independents
- UC: Constitutional Union
- UD: Democratic Union
- USFP: Union of Socialist Popular Forces

youth activists in the PSD have surprisingly voiced open criticism for the party's decision and expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of the process by the party's leaders.

With regard to human rights and the freedom of expression, the sentencing of reporter Mohamed M'rabet to 10 years of prohibition from journalistic activity and the postponement of the court hearing of Nadia Yassine for her controversial statements on the monarchy showed a reactionary and piecemeal approach by the government on the issue of the freedom of press. However, it is noteworthy that most political constituencies with an Islamist orientation, such as the PJD, denounced Yassine's comments calling for the establishment of a republic in Morocco to replace the monarchy.

With the realization that key politicians and reformers within parties and their parliamentary caucuses are critical to introducing change, NDI has targeted both caucus members and senior party officials in forums on timely political issues to engage them jointly in pertinent discussions and recommendations. This approach has demonstrated the strong link between parties and their caucuses in parliament. At the same time, it has shown both caucus and party leaders the importance of ensuring coordination in their parties' participation in trainings and seminars related to both parliamentary and party operations.

In light of the upcoming 2007 elections, NDI's parliament program has been working with reform-minded members of parliament (MPs) on constituency outreach activities. These are intended to raise the MPs' visibility while at the same time demonstrating their commitment to organizing local activities and actually acting on recommendations from those activities. The program has also engaged parliamentarians, who also happen in many cases to be senior party officials, in discussing modifications to the electoral law to organize better elections and redefine Morocco's political map with more significant reforms.

Likewise, the political party program has been working consistently to share with parties a variety of skills, techniques and know-how to enable them to face the coming electoral challenges with confidence. Workshops on strategic planning, conflict resolution, group facilitation, communication, public speaking and organizational development are meant to provide a solid ground for party activists to restructure their party wings in ways that would enable, on the one hand, fuller participation by women and youth in the political game, and, on the other hand, prepare the ground for more significant structural changes in parties to further promote internal democracy. Although a tangential result of NDI activities, it is noteworthy that bringing activists from various and sometimes opposing parties has created a sense of shared cause among the youth and women of parties regardless of political affiliations. They have become collectively aware of the need to fight for change and bring new blood into their respective party structures.

Within this context, the specific objectives of NDI's programs are the following:

Parliament Program

- To bridge the gap between members of Parliament (MPs), civil society leaders and constituents; and
- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of MPs and party caucuses.

Political Party Program

- To help political parties to develop a better understanding of citizen perceptions and to overcome the gap dividing parties from citizens;
- To build the capacity of women and youth to participate fully in political parties; and
- To improve political party members' access to skills and resources and communication within and between their parties.

### III. ACTIVITIES

**PARLIAMENT PROGRAM**

*“Congratulations for getting at the heart of an MP's work, which is conducted in each MP's constituency. I also salute your commitment to following up on previous activities by taking things a step further.”*

**- Mustapha Yaagoubi, Member and Vice-President of Parliament (Al Ahd Party), June 13, 2005**

***Mobile Parliament Roundtable Pilot Project in Azrou***

On April 10, NDI organized a pilot project on bridging the gap between constituents and their MPs. The event was coordinated with a local association in the district of Mostapha Yaagoubi, an MP with the Al Ahd party of the Socialist Alliance. The event was held at

the *Center d'Accueil*, a government-operated meeting center in Azrou, a town in the Middle Atlas Mountains. This activity launched the Mobile Parliament program—a program that seeks to bring MPs to their districts to hold on-site events that will strengthen their connection with constituents. More specifically, the event targeted local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to explain to them the role of their MP and gather their ideas for enhancing communication between citizens and representatives.

The most significant result of this pilot was Yaagoubi's statement, made at the end of the event, that he would hold regular meeting with NGO leaders in his constituency at the local youth center on the last Saturday of every month. The idea of having regular meetings with the MP had been raised by participants as a means of addressing communication problems, but not in the detail suggested by Yaagoubi. Developing this kind of commitment to forming long-term plans for improving communications was the core goal of the event. In addition, a list of other recommendations for addressing the communication gap was developed by the participants.

Later in the quarter, NDI discussed follow-up activities to the April pilot with Yaagoubi. NDI will help organize a training for local NGOs in Azrou in September on project cycles, including their conception, implementation and follow up. The need for this training became clear to participants as a critical step in finding funds for community development projects identified during the pilot. For the MP, it is part of enhancing ongoing constituent outreach efforts and showing how deputies play a role in addressing local needs.

### ***Forum on Electoral Law Reform and Follow-up Consultations***

On April 29, NDI organized a joint activity with the School of Law of Mohammed V University on electoral law reform. U.S. political science professor and governance and democracy expert Joel Barkan participated in the activity and offered a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of various electoral systems. His insights were complemented by presentations from local experts on the current issues with the Moroccan electoral law. Parliamentary caucuses also made presentations in which they outlined their perspectives on electoral law needs. More than 75 participants attended this activity, including party secretaries general and caucus leaders.

A series of individual consultations between Barkan and interested political parties followed the forum. The USFP, PJD, Democratic National Party (PND), Istiqlal and Socialist Alliance each requested confidential working sessions, which provided an opportunity for them to discuss ways to change the electoral law in order to achieve their political objective. A significant result of this forum was the fact that it stimulated debate about the importance of changing the electoral law as an important step towards the consolidation of the political party law. Since the organization of this seminar, various newspapers and parties have been stressing the importance of amending the electoral law in preparation for the 2007 elections.

### ***Constituency Outreach Pilot Project in Tata***

*“I would like to highlight and thank NDI for the role it played in convening civil society players and politicians around the same table to jointly discuss how they can work together to promote local development.”*

**- Participant, May 19, 2005**

On May 19, NDI organized a constituency outreach activity in the city of Tata in southern Morocco. The activity was organized in partnership with MP Mohamed Oudour of the National Rally of the Independents (RNI), with support from the governor and local provincial authorities. Over 100 people attended the event, including representatives of local NGOs, locally elected officials, government ministries, the Regional Investment Center (CRI) and the Social Development Agency (ADS). The theme of the program was *The Role of Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Agriculture in the Economic Development of the Province of Tata*.

During the course of the day, participants broke into three working groups on tourism, handicraft and agriculture to discuss and outline a series of recommendations in each sector that can contribute to the development of the province. One of the activity's immediate results was the formation of a committee, presided over by the local governor and consisting of the MP representing the region, representatives of the ministries of Culture, Tourism and Agriculture and the directors of CRI and ADS, to follow up on the various recommendations made by the working groups. Since the organization of this activity, MP Oudour has approached NDI for assistance in following up on this activity by organizing a working session with the new governor of Tata and local NGOs on the creation of a micro-credit association for local women.

### ***Forum on the Role of the Media in Preventing Human Rights Abuses***

On June 4, NDI partnered with three local human rights organizations to organize a forum entitled *Media and Serious Violations of Human Rights*. Over 60 participants attended this forum, representing parliamentary caucuses, human rights organizations, the media and academia. The legal advisor to the South Africa Truth and Justice Commission, Hanif Vally, participated in this event as NDI's international expert offering comparative examples and experiences. The forum focused on providing an overview of: 1) the history of the media and human rights in Morocco; 2) the current situation of the media in light of improvements in human rights and the creation of the Truth and Justice Commission (IER); and 3) the political, legal and procedural measures necessary to guarantee that serious violations of human rights do not happen again.

As a result, participants developed a list of recommendations, including among other things the importance of introducing a law in parliament about the public's right of access to information. Some MPs present voiced their interest and support for such a law, and NDI will explore the possibility of organizing a seminar examining comparative studies of access to information laws in the future. Following the forum, Vally held separate

follow-up consultations with the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights (OMDH), the Moroccan Association of Human Rights (AMDH) and Truth and Justice.

### ***Launching a Bidding Process for a Parliamentary Communications Strategy***

*“I would like to thank UNDP, USAID and NDI for their support to the Chamber of Representatives in the communications area, and express special thanks to NDI for taking the lead on the development of a communication strategy for the Chamber.”*

*- Abdel-Jalil Zerhouni, Secretary General, Chamber of Representatives, June 16*

During this quarter, NDI completed an initial draft of the terms of reference for developing a communication strategy for the House of Representatives of the parliament. This communication strategy aims at improving the House’s external communication with civil society, the media and citizens in an effort to improve the parliament’s overall public image. The terms of reference were further elaborated and enriched by a local communication expert hired by USAID. Following the completion of this document, NDI has been consulting with parliamentary executive bureau member Mostapha Yaagoubi and Secretary General Abdel-Jalil Zerhouni on the legal and technical aspects of the bidding process.

### ***Consultations on the Next Phase of Parliamentary Programming***

During this reporting period, NDI conducted a series of consultations with parliamentary caucuses, MPs and staff members to discuss activities for NDI’s next phase of parliamentary programming. Based on substantial feedback provided by NDI’s parliamentary contacts and the leadership of the League of Parliamentary Staff, the Institute outlined a proposed program that aims to: 1) continue work on improving MP/constituent relations; 2) increase the effectiveness of parliamentary caucuses; and 3) enhance parliamentary communications.

## **POLITICAL PARTY PROGRAM**

### ***Ifrane Political Party Training Academy***

During this period, NDI hosted an intensive five-day political party training academy at Al Akhawayn University for party youth and women activists. The academy consisted of a series of workshops in Ifrane from April 10 to April 15 on four different subjects: 1) strategic planning, led by NDI Resident Director Gérard Latulippe; 2) interpersonal conflict resolution, led by Armen Balian of the Lebanese Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN); 3) effective communication techniques, led by local communications expert Mohamed Belghouate; and 4) strengthening women and youth structures in political parties, led by Elizabeth Weir, leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the province of New Brunswick, Canada.

The workshops targeted political party members belonging to women and youth sections. A total of 43 participants attended the five-day academy, representing 15 political parties:

USFP, Istiqlal, MP, MNP, UD, Constitutional Union (UC), PSD, PND, Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS), RNI, Alliance of Liberties (ADL), FFD, Al Ahd, National Ittihadi Congress (CNI) and Citizen's Initiative for Development (PICD). The participants ranged from grassroots members of youth and women's wings to representatives of party political bureaus, executive bureaus, central committees and several youth section secretary generals. The programs were very rich in terms of subjects covered and the participants had the opportunity to share and discuss different issues related to real-world case studies and the actual situations, challenges and expectations they face regardless of their political backgrounds and affiliations.

To continue and enhance the training experience, several follow-up programs were offered and more are planned for the next quarter. From May 26 to 28, NDI conducted two follow-up sessions with training academy participants on conflict resolution. The objective of the follow up was to ensure that the participants had been using the skills learned during the original conflict resolution workshops. In preparation, participants were asked to present a case where the conflict resolution techniques had been utilized. The percentage of original participants attending the follow-up session was over 80 percent which, according to trainer Armen Balian, has never been experienced in any follow-up activity by LCRN in the Middle East and North Africa region. Moreover, many of the participants had already incorporated the conflict resolution concepts into their party work and organized workshops for fellow party members.

### ***Workshop on Internal and External Party Communications***

On May 3, Knight International Press Fellow Michelle Betz conducted a communication workshop at NDI's Rabat offices for nine members of the UD. The workshop aimed at imparting communication techniques with the public, with the media, within the party and with coalition partners. Specific areas addressed included developing and organizing communication strategies, press releases, press conferences, internal communication plans and training-of-trainer programs.

### ***Joint Workshops with the Istiqlal Youth Section***

At the Istiqlal Party Youth Section's request, NDI co-sponsored the organization of a series of workshop on *Communication, Discourse Analysis and Group Facilitation* that were held in Bouznika on May 7 and 8. The activity was organized for branch office secretaries of the party's youth sections and some other party members from around the country. NDI co-sponsored the program by providing technical assistance, providing materials and equipment, and attending the workshops to give participants background information on NDI programs. Several of the organizers, namely Mounia Rhoulam and Mohamed Zhari from the party's central committee, have participated in previous NDI trainings and had the opportunity to act as trainers and share their acquired skills with their peers.

### ***Joint Conference and Workshop with the PSD Youth Federation***

On June 18-19, NDI helped organize a joint conference with the Moroccan Youth Federation of the PSD entitled *The Future of the Leftist Youth in Morocco*. The conference was attended by over 130 party youth activists, and brought together speakers from several parties, including the USFP, PPS and Party of the Unified Socialist Left (GSU). The conference was timely given current negotiations between the PSD and USFP to merge. The presentations tackled a number of topics, including: “Experiences of the Left in the Seventies;” “The Left and the Societal Modernist Project;” “Coalitions and the Future of the Left;” and “The Contribution of Youth to the Future of the Left.” A debate followed the presentations giving the young activists an opportunity to engage the members of the PSD political bureau on a number of controversial issues related to the role of the PSD youth members in the merger process.

The conference was followed by a series of workshops held on the topics of public speaking, strategic planning, youth and local governance and educational/pedagogical practices in training. The workshop on public speaking was conducted jointly by an NDI staff trainer and the National Secretary of the PSD Youth, Said Taghi, who was a participant in previous NDI trainings. The workshop focused on the skills needed to prepare and present a speech in a student-oriented environment such as a university campus.

### ***Joint Conference with the Al Ahd Youth Section***

In the same vein, NDI organized another joint conference on June 18 with the youth section of Al Ahd Party entitled *Democracy as a Foundation for Human Capital Development*. The topic of this seminar closely corresponded to the framework of the King’s May 18 speech calling for the establishment of the National Initiative for Human Development. The seminar was held at the Maghreb Arab Press (MAP) and was followed by a robust debate.

### ***Completion of the Constituency Outreach Report and Guide***

Based on the a series of NDI-sponsored focus groups conducted in five major cities (Rabat, Fes, Agadir, Oujda and Tangier) between June 2004 and February 2005, the Institute has prepared a report that consolidates lessons learned and recommendations into a constituency outreach guide. The guide, which focuses on the issues of communication and outreach between political parties and their constituencies outside of election periods, is currently being finalized and translated into Arabic, and will be distributed to political parties as a tool for helping them prepare for the coming election period.

### ***Consultations on the Next Phase of Political Party Programming***

In preparation for the next programmatic phase, NDI has been conducting meetings with the secretaries general of several parties, including the MP, PPS, RNI and Istiqlal. The

objective of these meetings has been to present the next phase of NDI party activity ideas and solicit feedback from party leaders. This was also an opportunity to ensure that participants in recent NDI workshops are receiving the support of their party leaders and highlight that they may become part of the future leadership of the party.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

##### **PARLIAMENT PROGRAM**

*Objective One: Bridge the gap between members of parliament (MPs), civil society leaders and constituents.*

##### **Results:**

- This quarter, NDI implemented a mobile parliament activity in Azrou and a constituency outreach project in Tata, both aimed at promoting communication between MPs and their constituents and involving nationally elected officials and their constituents in development regional and local projects. The Tata outreach project resulted in the creation of a follow-up committee tasked with acting on the recommendations from the activity and making them concrete. On the other hand, the Azrou project led to the commitment of the MP to hold monthly meetings with local NGOs in his constituency and also his commitment to organize a follow-up training for the same NGOs on project cycles, planning and implementation.
- During this quarter, NDI responded to two timely political questions by organizing joint activities with local organizations and involving international experts, namely the forum on electoral law reform and the seminar on media and human rights. The seminar on the media and serious violations of human rights resulted specifically in human rights activists and MPs jointly recommending the introduction a law in parliament about the about the public's right of access to information.

*Objective Two: Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of MPs and party caucuses.*

##### **Results:**

- The forum on electoral law reform brought together both parliamentary caucus members and senior political party officials. Both had the opportunity to discuss together and think through necessary amendments to the electoral law that would consolidate the party law on the one hand and organize better elections on the other hand.

## **POLITICAL PARTY PROGRAM**

***Objective One: Help political parties to develop a better understanding of citizen perceptions and to overcome the gap dividing parties from citizens.***

### **Results:**

- After the forum on electoral law reform sponsored by NDI in April, many parties integrated recommendations for modifications to the law in their public memoranda. The parties have also been able to position themselves clearly on the choice of which electoral law and express such position to the public and the government.

***Objective Two: Build the capacity of women and youth to participate fully in political parties.***

### **Results:**

- The joint activity between the PSD Youth Federation and NDI (with the participation of PPS, USFP and GSU) contributed positively to calming tensions between the PSD political bureau and youth federation regarding the proposed merger with the USFP. NDI's assistance to the youth federation in holding this conference allowed the federation to clearly state its critical stand towards the way the PSD political bureau has been handling the terms of the merger process. Among attendees at the conference were political bureau members and MPs, providing an opportunity for youth activists to engage with senior leaders.
- The youth section of Al Ahd presented NDI with a project proposal for setting up a formal training unit within their party.
- The USFP Youth Wing is currently coordinating with NDI to establish a major training unit for all youth sections of political parties to benefit from shared experiences and lessons learned. The administrative board of this training unit would be composed of the heads of all party youth wings.

***Objective Three: improve political party members' access to skills and resources and communication within and between their parties.***

### **Results:**

- A core group of NDI workshop participants has shown itself to be a leading force in setting up training units and activating existing ones within parties. As a result of political party programming, NDI has been able to engage a significant number of young party activists—particularly with the PSD Youth Federation, Istiqlal Youth Section, Al Ahd Youth Section, UD Training Unit and RNI Fes Branch

Office—in organizing workshops within their own parties and outside the usual centers of Rabat-Casablanca. All of these workshops have been held with NDI technical assistance.

- Specifically, the UMP (newly merged MP and MNP) has approached NDI to assist in the organization of a training institute in Ifrane for party branch office managers on topics relative to the up-coming elections.
- In general, participants to NDI workshops have been using the skills learned on conflict resolution and negotiation to solve problems within their parties.
- Following the NDI-sponsored seminar in February on party mergers and coalitions and in light of the individual consultations between experts and parties, many Moroccan political parties coordinated internally to formulate amendments to the political party law and communicate those to the government. In particular, a number of these proposed amendments touched on reducing the grip of the Ministry of Interior over political parties.
- During consultative meetings with the PJD, PPS and PSD, the secretaries general of these parties requested NDI assistance for a follow-up activity to further assess in detail the impacts of electoral law reforms on the political landscape through comparative models of electoral laws internationally.

## **V. EVALUATION**

The past few months have demonstrated the continuing growth in trust between NDI and a wide range of Moroccan decision makers. Longer term impacts from eight years of partnerships with political actors in Morocco are becoming more evident, and there is demonstrable maturing in the expressed needs and activities of parties and caucuses. As mentioned in previous reports, NDI finds itself uniquely situated as MPs and party leaders approach NDI with proposed activities that fit within NDI's program objectives and address growing needs. Given the dramatic changes affecting the political landscape, the parliament, its caucuses, individual MPs and the leadership of political parties continue to articulate more specific needs addressing the evolving situation, and look to NDI for support given the Institutes flexibility and responsiveness.

Matching this increased demand-driven programming is increasing interest among parties and parliamentarians to get out of offices and beyond the traditional Casablanca-Rabat political corridor and engage in substantive issues at the local level. Two constituency outreach activities organized during this quarter in Azrou and Tata illustrate the commitment of MPs of these two places to follow through with recommendations resulting from engagement with constituents. In Azrou, MP Mostapha Yaagoubi has been holding monthly meetings with local NGOs to discuss various locally relevant issues and update them on his work for the constituency at both the national and local level. He has also requested NDI's assistance in organizing a follow-up training for local NGOs on

project development and funding to assist local civil society groups in taking their ideas to the next level. In Tata, MP Mohammed Oudour is planning a follow-up working session with NGOs representing women handicraft makers on the creation of a local micro-credit association. The initiative will involve mobilizing the help and resources of the local governor. Given the commitment of these MPs and others to constituency relations and local development, NDI has designed its next phase of programming to respond to their particular needs.

These pilot projects aligned with the increasing political interest in socioeconomic development throughout the country. The participating parliamentarians were clearly attuned to the changing political process, engaging on this front even before the additional attention given to socioeconomic issues by the King's May 18 speech. NDI continues to support caucuses, reform-minded MPs, parties and NGOs that take advantage of politically significant opportunities like these, providing platforms and venues for political actors to engage in addressing relevant current events. The seminar on media and human rights demonstrate this, coming on the heels of the conclusion of the Justice and Equity Commission (IER) hearings. Similarly, the forum on electoral reform showed the need to respond to evolving political thinking, with growing interest in the electoral structure stemming from party law discussions. It is also worth mentioning in this regard that key parliamentary participants in programming such as the electoral law forum are often also senior party officials and members of the executive committees of their parties. This ensures better coordination, follow up and processing of NDI training, skills and information throughout the political landscape.

As noted in a previous report, another significant change is that NDI is no longer the only actor working with the parliament. Over the past year, UNDP and ARD/SUNY programs have been established, and NDI now works in coordination with these other actors to create complementary programs promoting reform and avoid duplicating efforts. A case in point is the close and fruitful cooperation between the three institutions that resulted in NDI taking the lead on the development of a communication strategy for the House of Representatives of parliament, with assistance and input from USAID and UNDP on the development of the terms of reference for this project. As ongoing discussion and sometimes tense negotiations with the parliamentary executive bureau has recently demonstrated, this inter-organizational cooperation has largely been recognition of NDI's unique contribution to parliamentary development by close working relationships with parliamentarians and the flexibility to respond to their changing needs as they arise.

On the political party front, NDI programming continues to maintain sustainable training opportunities for youth and women activists in parties from across the political spectrum. In fact, after a series of meetings and consistent coordination with parties, NDI has been able to identify a core group of training participants from 15 political parties, including the PJD. This core group will constitute a leading force in the implementation of a party training program that addresses ongoing party needs. Through close coordination with parties, NDI has been able select these participants according to a specific profile, namely that they are young men and women with the potential to become part of party decision making structures, they are committed to internal reforms and they have the full support

of their party leadership. This attitude speaks to a new relationship between NDI and most parties, with increasing levels of trust and confidence by the parties in the work and capabilities of NDI and the individuals NDI chooses to engage.

On another level, the types of trainings offered and their caliber have allowed youth and women to start having a voice within their parties. The Al Ahd, PSD, UMP and RNI parties are all taking steps to initiate trainings within their parties with a focus on youth and women. With NDI assistance, some of them, such as Al Ahd and the USFP, have started planning projects to create permanent training units for their parties, with a particular focus on youth. At the same time, NDI insistence on having party leaders give their support by helping to select the right candidates for NDI trainings has ensured increased seriousness and commitment on the part of the leadership.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

During the next quarter, NDI plans to implement the following activities:

- Internship program between law students and parliamentary caucuses in Rabat
- Development of a communication strategy for the House of Representatives
- Training-of-trainers for political parties
- Development of the Morocco Democracy Online website
- Publication of the Constituency Outreach Report and Guide