

# **FINAL REPORT ON USAID's PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION**

## **Section I: INTRODUCTION – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Republic of Macedonia is a democratic state. Its democratic character is guaranteed by its Constitution (1991). The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia exercise their power through democratically elected representatives, on referendum and through other forms of direct democracy. The democratic character of the state is also translated into constitutional guarantees for a large number of political, economic, social and other human and citizens' rights, in the political pluralism and free direct and democratic elections, in the division of the legislative, executive and judicial powers, in the rule of law, the local government etc.

In the first years following the independence, in practice the Republic of Macedonia experienced relatively low level of democracy manifested by lack of communication between the citizens and their elected representatives; civil society not strong enough to make significant influence in the decision-making processes at national and local levels; elections usually shadowed by electoral irregularities. At national level, the executive power dominated over the legislative Assembly which, could rarely modify any proposed law by the Government and had no power in practice to oversee implementation of laws by the Government. The Government also tended to exercise influence over the judicial power in the areas of its interests. The legislative and executive powers had low representation of women.

Over the past eight years, major changes have taken place in the political system of the Republic of Macedonia that has significantly improved the democratic capacities of the country. The Parliament has significantly improved its capacities by legislative changes introducing three readings of laws that have brought about opportunities for critical reviews of laws proposed by the Government. The introduction of the oversight function has become means that might hold the executive power accountable for the activities implemented in a given area. All these changes are an assumption for diminishing of the imbalance between the executive and legislative power with a tendency this process to be intensified in the ensuing period. The representation of citizens has also been improved in this period and a permanent channel of communication between the citizens and legislators has been established through the constituency offices. The citizens have thus been given the opportunity to voice their needs, give testimonies to their problems before the legislators and demand resolution. Some citizens have

also requested legislative changes. Among the novelties are the public hearings as a tool for the citizens to advance their views and proposals relevant for adoption of laws. The representation of women in the national Parliament has also increased to reach a tune of over 30%.

In addition to the legislative changes, the political capacity of the Assembly was strengthened by training interns who assisted the representatives in performing their tasks as well as training MPs. The contribution of NDI in improvement of the overall political system functioning lies in enhancement of political parties' capacity by training their activists and the tendency to increase the elections' regularity by changing the political behavior of the parties during the electoral period through promoting Code for Fair and Free Elections and implementing it generating a political climate the political parties' leaders to sign it and care about its implementation in practice.

**NDI**, financially and programmatically assisted by USAID, achieved great success in its projects. The success can be attributed to several factors, first of all, the carefully selected project areas and projects that were highly relevant for the intended changes in the political system of RM, which were mentioned before. The success of NDI's projects can also be attributed to proper selection of activities and commensurate means for their achievement. Namely, the objectives were achieved through various activities ranging from training delivery to various target groups including legislators and assistants in the constituency offices, to preparation of manuals, reforms in the legislation and other regulatory texts; transformations in the political practice, particularly the electoral behavior of the political parties. The success can also be credited to the appropriate technical and professional staff who worked on achievement of the goals. The allocation of sufficient financial resources towards achievement of the goals is another factor of success. The accomplishments of NDI are also linked with factors such as effective internal organization, high level of commitment for achievement of the goals, and flexibility, i.e. readiness to adapt the interventions to the prevailing circumstances in order to reach the goals. NDI made serious attempts to provide a sustainability of its achievements by establishing legacy non-governmental organizations, MOST and IPD, and strengthening their professional capacity.

Finally, the overall analysis has not indicated existence of any substantial deficiencies in the program design and implementation nor has it pointed to any alternative paths that NDI should have taken in the first place.

The evaluation has shown that all thematic areas and the related project activities are very important (Strengthening Constituent Relations, Legislative Practice, etc.) and they should continue in the future. This is particularly significant given the fact that on one hand, the capacity-building exercise is a long-term process; while on the other hand, the Parliament has been undergoing significant changes in the composition of legislators in every electoral period. In terms of the project Constituency Offices, NDI, together with IPD, should continue cooperating with the Parliament beyond 2012. In that context, a new project should be designed for raising the awareness of

the citizens for participation in the political processes, which may further contribute towards creation or development of politically proactive and participatory political culture. The project may also tap on the potentials for public promotion of ideas and views via the mass media channels, as well as through specialized trainings with citizens.

## **Section II: THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE LEGISLATURE**

The Republic of Macedonia is a democratic state. Its democratic character is guaranteed by its Constitution (1991) which proclaims the democratic character of the state and details it out in the specific provisions. According to the Constitution, the sovereignty of the Republic of Macedonia stems from and belongs to the citizens. The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia exercise their power through democratically elected representatives, on referendum and through other forms of direct democracy. The democratic character of the state is also translated into constitutional guarantees for a large number of political, economic, social and other human and citizens' rights, in the political pluralism and free direct and democratic elections, in the division of the legislative, executive and judicial powers, in the rule of law, the local self-government etc.

In the transition period, the relation between the state bodies was outlined in the Constitution. The Parliament was bearer of the legislative function, it was responsible for passing laws and it also held the representative function on the grounds of being elected by the citizens to represent their interests. The Parliament's competences vis-à-vis the Government were pertaining the former to appoint and dissolve the Government and control over the inquiry communications and question to Ministers. The executive power was divided between the President and the Government, although the Government enjoyed much more powers compared to the President. The third power was the judicial power. In terms of elections, there were special laws regulating the election of legislators initially elected based on the majority electoral model which was later changed to proportional electoral model. The participation of women in the elections was not specifically regulated.

In the first years following the independence, in practice the Republic of Macedonia experienced relatively low level of democracy. The communication between the citizens and their elected representatives (in the legislative or representative body both at the central and local levels) was reduced to the period of elections only. Between two electoral cycles, legislators seemed reluctant to attempt to establish communication with the people and consequently were unable to represent their specific interests. At the time, the civil society was also not strong enough to make significant influence in the decision-making processes at national and local levels. The elections were usually shadowed by electoral irregularities; some political parties boycotted the work of the Parliament and other state organs. At national level, the executive power dominated over the legislative Assembly which, for its part, could rarely modify any proposed law by the Government and had no power to oversee implementation of laws by the Government. The Government also tended to exercise influence over the judicial power in the areas of its

interests. The legislative and executive powers had low representation of women.

Over the past eight years, major changes have taken place in the political system of the Republic of Macedonia that has significantly improved the democratic capacities of the country. The Parliament has significantly improved its capacities and strengthened its political will to be more independent vis-à-vis the Government and the other political entities in the country. The reforms of the Parliament have included more focused work of the Parliamentary commissions facilitated with the introduction of the rule of three readings of laws. These changes have brought about opportunities for critical reviews of laws proposed by the Government and have led to an increased number of amendments and proposed laws resulting from requests and knowledge obtained from the constituency offices introduced in 2003. The introduction of the oversight function has become means that might hold the executive power accountable for the activities implemented in a given area. All of these changes are an assumption for diminishing the imbalance between the executive and legislative power. The representation of citizens has also been improved in this period and a permanent channel of communication between the citizens and legislators has been established through the constituency offices. The citizens have thus been given the opportunity to voice their needs, give testimonies to their problems before the legislators and demand resolution. Some citizens have also requested legislative changes. Among the novelties are the public hearings as a tool for the citizens to advance their views and proposals relevant for adoption of laws. The representation of women in the national Parliament has also increased to reach a tune of over 30%.

The legislation pertaining to the political system has undergone major changes over the past several years. In 2006, changes to the Election Law were enacted to allow for better representation of women candidates in the candidates' lists of political parties. In 2008, the Rules of Procedure were amended, introducing three reading in procedure of passing laws while in 2009 the Law on Parliament was passed and it also provided for introduction of a budget for the Parliament; public and oversight hearings, establishment of constituency offices etc. All of these reforms, as mentioned before, have contributed to improved democratic capacities of the Republic of Macedonia.

### **Section III                    DETAILED DESCRIPTION – EVALUATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROJECT**

#### **STRENGTHENING CONSTITUENT RELATIONS**

This programmatic activity consisted of two projects, which will be analyzed below.

### **Constituency Offices**

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia defines its form of government as “representative democracy” where the Assembly is the representative body for the people and holds the legislative power in the country. This means that the Members of Parliament are elected by the citizens and are charged with the responsibility of acting in the people's interest. The regular parliamentary elections for MPs are held in four-year intervals.

Notwithstanding the legislative provisions, the transition period in Macedonia saw a practice of loose relationship between the legislators and their constituency; this relationship was reduced to mutual communication in the period immediately preceding elections and during actual elections. In the mean time, the absence of any communication between citizens and their elected representatives in the Assembly of RM seem to have been a prevailing phenomenon. Evidently, this lack of communication led to a large number of MPs being unfamiliar with the real problems of the people. The MPs therefore tended to be unaware and undetermined to resolve the pressing issues, even at the level of adoption of laws.

In 2003, In light of these circumstances and with the aim to create communication channels between the MPs and the citizens, NDI helped the Assembly establish constituency offices. In the constituency offices, the MPs, who were the main bearers of activities, had assistants who worked five hours a day, five days a week and received stipend for their work by NDI. The MPs and their assistants received training about the operation of the constituency offices. The citizens were informed of the establishment of the constituency offices through the media.

In order to obtain information on the circumstances under which the constituency offices operated, interviews were conducted with some of the MPs who were among those engaged in the constituency offices. The first question posed to the respondents was related to the efficiency of operation of the constituency offices primarily in terms of whether the technical equipment (computer, printer, telephone etc) was adequate to the operational needs of the office. All respondents confirmed that the equipment was adequate to meet the needs of the offices.

The second question to the respondents pertained to the competence of the assistants hired to help out in the constituency offices, i.e. whether the assistants possessed best-suited qualifications to work in the offices and to what extent the assistants performed their tasks in a quality manner. The following responses were received:

The MPs believed that the selection of assistants had been made according to sound and tested criteria by NDI and they said that the most adequate persons were selected for the job. In terms of how competent the assistants

were to perform their tasks, we were informed that all of the assistants were skillful in performing organizational and administrative duties; they were also generally skilled in performing case work. However, while some MPs believed the assistants were considerably competent in doing case work, others pinpointed to minor shortcomings. As regards the motivation of the assistants, some MPs said that the assistants were sufficiently motivated for their work, while others believed that the assistants were not highly motivated because they faced job insecurity due to the fact that their contracts were of limited duration without pension fund benefits. Consequently, the nature of the contracts led the assistants to seek other jobs that would provide better security for them. In terms of the creativity of the assistants, the opinions were divided: some MPs said that the assistants were rather creative in their work and sought solutions to certain cases; others, however, maintained that the assistants lacked creativity and tended to strictly follow the instructions of the MPs in relation to any given case work.

As to the question of how well the legislators were trained by NDI to work in the constituency offices, the answers were invariable insofar that NDI offered high-quality training and provided important information and tools relevant for the MPs not only to work in the constituency offices, but also to effectively help in resolving the problems of the people.

The MPs assessed the role of NDI in the daily support of the constituency offices (in the period when the offices were managed by NDI) as extremely positive primarily because of the readiness of NDI to provide additional trainings, consultations, resolution of technical problems etc.

The legislators were also asked to make an approximation as to what percentage of population gravitating towards certain constituency office they thought was familiar with existence and terms of reference of the given constituency office. The answers differed: one MP was not able to give any ballpark figure, while the prevailing answer among the rest of the MPs was that over 50% of the citizens were familiar with the constituency offices and the possibility for them to communicate with the MPs in order to satisfy their needs.

As regards the question as to whether there were reservations on the part of the citizens to visit the offices on the grounds of their different ethnic or political affiliation as compared to the affiliation of the MP in a particular constituency office, some of the respondents said that there seemed to have been certain reservations at the outset, which were later overcome. Other respondents said, however, that some citizens refrained from visiting the offices primarily for reasons relating to different political affiliation rather than because of differences in the ethnic affiliation between the given MP and the citizen.

As regards the trust of the citizens in the MPs, the answer was generally positive, but partial, because the respondents believed that the trust grew or declined depending on the total number of resolved cases.

Most of the respondents said that the frequency of visits of citizens to the constituency offices grew in time. One of the surveyed said that initially they were more visits, the number of which was later reduced and stabilized.

As to the most frequent requests and needs expressed by the citizens and what type of assistance they demanded, most of the MPs said that most often the citizens requested resolution of individual problems. The major individual problems were related to the status of unemployment of the people, i.e. the citizens requested that the MPs find employment for them. Among other issues raised by the citizens were those related to unresolved real estate disputes, denationalization, i.e. return of property or just compensation, problems related to long judicial processes, mobbing at the work place etc. Least present issues were those where the MPs were asked to advocate for changes in the legislation, adoption of new laws and regulations that would resolve the problems of the citizens at systemic level. In the context of the requests by the citizens, the MPs tried to seek solutions in communication with private firms, local self-governments, local branches of the ministries, while the changes in the legislation were initiated through amendments and adoption of new laws in the Parliament. Given that the NDI reports include figures on solved and unsolved cases of the constituency offices, we asked the legislators to pin down the cases that they could not resolve. The answer was that most of the unresolved cases pertained to unemployment issues, evidently, which the MPs could do little about. There were some cases, nonetheless, with good track record of solutions: particularly related to communal issues that were reported to have been resolved in more than 50% and the issues related to changes in the legislation under the direct competence of the MPs.

According to the MPs, the **main benefits from the constituency offices, i.e. the communication between the citizens and the legislators**, for the development of the overall political system are:

- a) By getting to know the problems of the citizens, the legislators start thinking about designing strategies to resolve the problems and become aware of the specific issues that they should target and work upon;
- b) By getting familiarized with the problems, the MPs, as representatives of the political parties, feel more confident in the electoral campaigning;
- c) The feeling of responsibility and accountability of the MPs is improved;
- d) The relationship between the citizens and MPs is improved. Citizens feel more respect towards governance structures and the state;
- e) Awareness among the citizens that they are represented is raised, i.e. that someone cares for them.

**Functional weaknesses, noted by the MPs:**

- a) Not all MPs have their own offices;
- b) Not all municipalities have their own offices;
- c) The assistants are not full-time employed;
- d) The offices do not have their budgets;
- e) Some assistants need additional training;

f) Some MPs do not show up in the offices, i.e. they fail to respond to their obligations.

Some of the respondents, however, denied any functional bottlenecks in the operation of their offices.

The attitudes of the MPs indicate that the Assembly as a whole has not realized the importance of the constituency offices in order to take measures towards overcoming the current weaknesses in their functioning.

Most of the respondents said that this type of communication between citizens and legislators was very important achievement for the political system of the Republic of Macedonia. One MP said that the offices were of medium importance for the development of the Macedonian political system.

In 2007, NDI signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Parliament of RM and the Association of Local Self-Government Units (ZELS), according to which the Parliament would take over the project in time. In terms of expenses, it was agreed that initially the Parliament would only partially cover the costs, and later would fully cover the costs for functioning of the offices. As for the question whether the take-over of the offices by the Parliament would have an impact on the quality of work, they answers differed as follows: One response was that the Parliament could prove to be a good manager, while others expressed skepticism in terms of its ability to fulfill its obligations at the level of quality standards set by NDI.

The MPs made the following recommendations as to the possible activities that can be undertaken in the future to improve the functioning of the constituency offices:

- a) To secure sufficient budget and other resources for smooth operation of each constituency office;
- b) To report back to the citizens on the results of the work;
- b) To hire full-time assistants with all employment benefits, if only for the period of the term in office of the given MP engaged in the constituency office,
- b) In perspective, each office should hire additional assistant who will help the MPs deal with the large number of issues under their competence.

## **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the goals set forth in the USAID Cooperative Agreement to strengthen the ability of citizens to communicate their interest to legislators and to increase the level of citizen participation in the parliamentary process, NDI worked on establishment and continuously supported the constituency offices. This is an exceptionally important novelty and remarkable achievement for the Macedonian political system because the constituency offices have proven instrumental for introduction of functional links between the people and the legislators represented in the National Assembly. Furthermore, the benefits from this activity are very important since the citizens communicate their interests and needs before their representatives in

an organized way, which in turn creates participatory political culture in Macedonia (unknown in the political history thus far) where the resolution of the problems is sought from the competent authorities rather than from unofficial circles. In this context, the expectation is that the citizens will gradually improve their awareness of the possibilities opened from this communication and will demand and expect important systemic changes in the legislation and the overall political and social system. The development of participatory political culture of the citizens would potentially lead to increased pressure on the MPs to resolve citizens' problems in a systematic manner. The failure of the MPs to accept changes would in turn question their political status, the status of their political party etc., and would hence lead to increased likelihood for their defeat at the following elections.

The legislators, for their part, are able to obtain important information relevant for the electoral and legislative processes, and at the same time, they become more responsible and accountable. In this manner, they tend to take more initiatives as political entities, and they change their attitude towards the Government in terms of striving to become its equal partner rather than its voting machinery. Thus, the healthy division of power may lead to more functional relations and important development of the political system, noting, of course, that this process requires time and is subject to inevitable evolutionary oscillations. In this context, the role of NDI in the programmatic activities was assessed as very important particularly in terms of provision of training to the legislators and the assistants, further monitoring of the situation and assistance in the resolution of problems. NDI was also instrumental in the release of the manual which contained information needed for efficient work in the constituency offices. NDI was commended for its efforts to secure sustainability through transfer of competences in the Parliament and IPD in case of termination of its mission.

### **Assembly Open Days**

With the aim for the Assembly to be open towards the citizens and to raise the awareness of the people about the work of the Parliament, NDI secured technical and financial assistance for holding of "Assembly Open Days". These are important events that raise the political interest of the citizens and enhance the mutual trust between the citizens and MPs.

## **STRENGTHENING LEGISLATIVE PRACTICE**

This area of programmatic intervention was consisted of several projects. We will elaborate on each of the constituent projects of this program.

## **Parliamentary Internship Program**

The Parliamentary Internship Program, implemented in the period between 1999 and 2005, targeted 183 interns who were engaged across various Parliamentary (political party) groups, administration units and parliamentary working groups. The selection of interns was made by NDI, while the specific assignments across Parliamentary groups were consulted with the Parliamentary group coordinators. The main goal of the project was for the interns to contribute to the work of the Parliament with research and analytical inputs and get involved in the related legislative procedures. The interns have indeed made contribution to the work of the Parliamentary groups and commissions.

The training was positively evaluated by the interviewed persons and their contribution to the work of the Parliament was acknowledged. The role of NDI in this process was seen as important primarily because, in addition to the basic training provided to the interns, NDI continuously followed the work of the hired interns and assisted them in their professional advancement.

## **Orientation Program for MPs**

The one-day session for the new MPs, which took place in September 2006, was well organized and contained beneficial information for introducing the MPs with the new functions they were to assume. The MPs showed great interest in the session and hence the session was well attended. The program was evaluated as extremely important given the different backgrounds of the MPs. Thus, this comprehensive training that covered topics related to the competences of the MPs, the legal framework and the manner of operation of the Parliament provided for high degree of initial professional adaptation for the MPs.

For easy reference, a manual "Representing the People" was designed, which was also assessed positively by the MPs. The MPs further underscored that the manual contained useful information and practical advice and was particularly relevant for the period when they were assuming their function. Although the manual is readily accessible to the MPs, it is yet not fully utilized by all intended target beneficiaries and its use varies depending on individual interest of each and every MP. Of course, even partial use of the manual is of great benefit for the work of the MPs.

## **House Democratic Partnership - HDP**

Within the partnership arrangement with the democratic group of the U.S Congress, 12 MPs were selected to benefit from a study tour to the U.S Congress. According to some of the interviewed MPs, the selection was made jointly by the parliamentary groups and NDI. Other MPs, however, said that the selection had been made according to the criteria set by NDI, while the final decision had rested with the parliamentary groups themselves. During

the visits, which took place between 2005 and 2009, the MPs were exposed to gaining knowledge and skills, as per the planned program. The study visits proved particularly relevant in terms of improvement of the knowledge and skills for communication with citizens and debating, as well as for establishment of MPs groups. During the visit, the MPs became familiarized with the work of the Congress, the research centre of the Congress as well as the procedure for adoption of laws and preparation and adoption of the budget. The fact that the study visits included representatives from different political parties contributed to strengthening of the inter-party cooperation and general fostering of collaboration between the MPs. Some of the interviewed MPs noted that the study visit programs had been rather intensive, which can also be viewed as an indication of their value. Most of the study tour beneficiaries said that the study visits had been of particular significance for development of the political system in the Republic of Macedonia.

### **Rules of Procedure and the Law on Parliament**

The disagreement around the scope and content of the Book of the Rules of Procedure has been customary ever since the introduction of the multi-party system in the Republic of Macedonia. Namely, despite the several changes and amendments, the Rules of Procedure have never fully met the demands of the opposition parties which have always appealed for longer time for discussion and greater involvement in the working bodies and plenary sessions. The idea for adoption of a Law on Parliament has been present in the scholarly and political debate for some time now. Some analysts argue that adoption of a Law on Parliament is unnecessary as the related issues are already dealt with by the Rules of Procedure. Others, by contrast, hold that such law is required for the reasons that it may potentially reinforce the position of the Parliament in the political system and further clarify the constitutional provisions relating to the competences and operation of the Parliament. The latter believe, therefore, that such clarifications can only be possible with adoption of such a law. The political criteria reflected in the European Commission reports have always emphasized the need for further clarification of the competences of the Assembly and its stronger positioning between the other two powers in society. The reports have also been calling for greater transparency and better exercise of democratic principles.<sup>1</sup> According to the reports, these aims can only be achieved through commensurate normative actions, i.e. adoption of a new Rules of Procedure and a Law on Parliament. In that regard, the efforts of NDI have proven very relevant in the process of design of normative provisions and provided grounds for invigorated employment of the democratic principles in the Parliament and the political system in general.

Since 2005, NDI has been actively involved in the process of harmonization of the positions of the MP's groups around the adoption of the new Rules of Procedure. The said Rules of Procedure was adopted in July 2008 – thereby opening new horizons for development of parliamentarianism. The proposals

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<sup>1</sup> Observations and recommendations for improvement of the work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in the reports of the European Commission on the progress of the Republic of Macedonia for 2009, 2008, , 2007, 2006.

advanced by NDI have contributed to strengthening the position of the working bodies in the decision-making process; more democratic course of the plenary sessions; changes in the process of adoption of laws; greater public in the three readings of the laws, improved transparency in the work, and more openness in regard to the role of the administration of the Parliament.

The adoption of the Law on Parliament in 2009 is a result of the political will of the political parties; it responds to the observations of the European Commission and reflects the efforts of NDI. The adoption of the Law provided for clarification of the position of the MPs, the establishment and operation of the MPs groups, the role of the President and vice-Presidents of the Parliament, the oversight role of the Parliament, coordination within the Parliament, the financial independence, informing the citizens and improvement of the contacts between the MPs and the citizens. All these changes brought about improvement in the position of the legislative power relative to the other powers in the Republic of Macedonia. At the same time, the Law made a strong impetus to advancement of the overall political system. NDI has made significant contribution to improvement of the communication between the MPs and citizens<sup>2</sup>, improvement of the position of the Parliament vis-à-vis the Government through reinforced oversight function<sup>3</sup>, fostering of the public debate in the legislative process<sup>4</sup> and utilization of better expertise through the establishment of the Parliamentary research institute (Parliamentary institute).<sup>5</sup>

In the process of adoption of these key documents, NDI played critical mediation and stimulating role particularly in terms of keeping the issue high on the agenda and stressing the need to reach compromise on adoption of the legal acts. Otherwise, there seems to have been a fair level of agreement among the MPs groups on the proposals advanced by NDI. The disagreements mostly refer to the reluctance of the ruling majority parties to accept the requests from the opposition parties and are linked to the issues such as the use of languages of communities which are not majority in the state, increase in the duration of speeches and the possibility for the opposition parties to propose agenda items for every plenary session. The process of adoption of the acts was compromise-based and went without major problems. Any issues that may have emerged were mostly of technical, rather than of substantive nature. The finding is that the new acts have considerably improved the performance of the Assembly and have made strong input to the process of strengthening the political system in the Republic of Macedonia. As for the adoption of these legal documents, the interviewed MPs have found the role of NDI to be consistent, unimposing, exceptional and key to the process.

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<sup>2</sup> Set forth by Article 36 of the Law on Parliament published in the “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 104/2009, whereby Friday is designated a day for meetings of MPs their constituency.

<sup>3</sup> As provided for by Articles 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 on the oversight hearings of the Law on Parliament, published in the “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”, No104/2009

<sup>4</sup> The possibility to invite persons in the oversight hearings, regulated with Article 20, paragraph 3 of the Law on Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia

<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to Article 42 of the Law on Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia

## **Public hearings**

The openness of the legislative power for public participation in the decision-making processes is one of the main indicators of democratic practices. Such openness not only refers to transparency of work, but also exercise of participatory approach in the decision-making processes, including the citizens, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. Such participation normally opens opportunities for inclusion of specific knowledge, information and interests in the legislative process. At the same time, the public hearings are institutional forms for filtering the proposed laws by having critical review of their quality and collecting proposals for overcoming any problems of public interest for all concerned segments of the population. The EC progress reports as well as the analytical reports of various institutes and NGOs have been continuously voicing criticism for the Republic of Macedonia in relation to the insufficient frequency or lack of public hearings in the legislative process. For this reason, the engagement of NDI in the stimulation of parliamentary public hearings has been of particular importance. More specifically, NDI has managed to keep the interest alive not only among the public, but also among the MPs and has provided technical assistance in the design and implementation of such public hearings.

NDI has organized trainings for parliamentary public hearings for the MPs and for the employed in the parliamentary administration. The trainings have been positively evaluated by the interviewed MPs and were considered to have been well designed and competently implemented. NDI also assisted with preparation of a Manual to bring the concept of public hearings closer to the MPs. The MPs found the Manual to be useful; however, they think they need more time to study the issues since the process is in its initial stage.

The role of NDI in the project implementation has been assessed as extremely positive particularly for the reasons mentioned that NDI has organized the public hearings in a professional manner from the beginning to the end. This approach has had positive impact on creating overall professionalism in the work of the Assembly.

In addition to the public hearings, NDI has also supported three oversight hearings. The oversight hearings are particularly important for the development of the political system as they tend to strengthen the role of the Parliament vis-à-vis the Government. With the oversight hearings, the Parliament may now critically review and challenge the proposed laws by the Government and thus assume control function in relation to the executive power. This function was practically non-existent prior to the introduction of this mechanism. The oversight hearing is therefore a strong control mechanism of the Parliament in terms of the implementation of laws by the Government. Notwithstanding, there are certain limitations to it. The first limitation is that the oversight hearing may be initiated by the originating working body with majority of members in attendance, or by a written request signed by 15 MPs. The first alternative is unlikely to be employed as the Commissions are dominated by MPs from the ruling majority who are

reluctant to oppose the executive power and hence the highest officials from their political parties. According to the political literature, the Macedonian political parties are undemocratic because they are dominated by a leader, or, less often, by party oligarchy, which are the ones to nominate the candidates for MPs in the national elections. This is in contrast with the definition for the oversight hearing, which represents critical review of policies or proposed laws coming from the party leadership represented in the highest positions of the executive power. The second possibility, as mentioned above, is for 15 MPs to initiate an oversight hearing. The problem here is that it is the originating body which decides on the duration of the hearing, which implies that restrictions may be imposed in terms of time thus not allowing for the most critical issues to be tackled. Last but not least, the financial resources for the oversight hearings are provided by funds of the Parliament allocated with the central budget of the Republic of Macedonia<sup>6</sup>. This, of course, means that budgetary constraints may be preventing sufficient number of hearings from taking place, i.e. the lack of budget resources may be an excuse for refusing to hold oversight hearings on sensitive issues. Therefore, the role of NDI in organization of oversight hearings is of great significance and has had impact on strengthening of the political role of the Parliament and the overall political system of the country.

## **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the goals outlined in the USAID Cooperative Agreement to assist the National Assembly to improve its legislative capacities, its institutional independence and the oversight function, NDI has undertaken a large number of activities to achieve these goals. The activities have been focused on the internship program, initial training for MPs who assumed duty in 2006, organization of a study tour to the Democratic House of the US Congress, improvement of the Rules of Procedure, adoption of the Law on Parliament, public and oversight hearings. The analysis has shown that most of the activities have yielded results, although some segments, such as the oversight hearings cannot be expected to show dramatic results in short run. This for the reason that there are several factors influencing the effective implementation of oversight hearings which are realistically beyond the NDI's capacities to influence. Notwithstanding, NDI has proven its strong professional, organizational and financial capacities and its work has led to measurable improvements in the work of the Parliament, thus contributing to improvement of the overall political system.

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<sup>6</sup> Law on Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Articles 20-23

## STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

### Club of Women MPs (Women Deputies Club)<sup>7</sup>

The Club of Women MPs was established on 7 March 2003 within the framework of the regional project of the Stability Pact – Gender Equality Table, with assistance from the local partners of the Macedonian women’s lobby, the Union of Women’s Organizations of Macedonia (SOZM) and the Unit for Promotion of Gender Equality at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Over the past five years, the Club of Women MPs has operated as informal group within the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia and has been comprised of all women MPs irrespective of the political party they represent.<sup>8</sup>

NDI has delivered over 20 trainings to the women MPs. The women MPs expressed great satisfaction with the conducted trainings – they particularly stressed that the trainings contributed to improvement of their knowledge and skills and appreciated the in-depth focus on gender issues. They also said that the trainings “offered opportunities for them to get relieved from party-prone thinking”. In an indirect way, the trainings were also found to have contributed to the overall functioning of the Parliament of RM: they helped in building self-confidence of the women MPs and raised their awareness of their own abilities and capacities. The operation of the Club of Women MPs has been also instrumental in bringing to the surface priorities other than those of the political parties. The training events have also contributed to improvement of inter-party cooperation and lessening the tensions among the MPs, particularly around the gender issues. The trainings have opened some fresh ideas as to the role of the MPs and have provided solid grounds for more organized influence of the women MPs in the Parliament. The topics linked to communication with citizens and awareness of gender-based discrimination was identified as areas where the women MPs had no significant prior knowledge. The interviewed women MPs did not express any shortcomings or weaknesses in the trainings. On the contrary, they said the trainings have made significant contribution to the development of the political system in the Republic of Macedonia. The role of NDI was positively assessed not only in terms of the overall operation of the Women MPs Club, but also the women MPs commended the readiness of NDI to respond to the

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<sup>7</sup> Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Book on the Rules for Organization and Scope of Work of the Women MPs Club of 5 March 2008

<sup>8</sup> The scope of work of the Club includes improvement of the status and position of women and establishment of equal opportunities for women and men pursuant to the Law on Equal Opportunities, standards and principles of international conventions and documents ratified or signed by the Republic of Macedonia which refer to the equal opportunities and protection from discrimination in the area of labor, social welfare and social insurance, economy, health, education, security and the political system

real needs of the parties along with their technical skills and allocation of sufficient resources to conduct the trainings.

### **Changes in the electoral law**

From 1994 to 1998, there were only 3% women in the Parliament of RM which was due primarily to the majority electoral system in force during the parliamentary elections of 1994 and the traditional culture of the citizens who tended not to vote for women candidates. The political parties, aware of these factors, seem to have been reluctant to nominate women candidates. With the changes in the electoral legislation, primarily the Electoral Law of 2006 and the introduction of a proportional electoral model for election of MPs and municipal Council members, an opportunity emerged for normative regulation of the gender representation. Thus, in the parliamentary elections of 2006, 31% of the MPs were women, while in 2008, 32% were women. These numbers substantiate the great success achieved by the Club of Women MPs and NDI who advocated for legal guarantees for gender representation. The problem remains in the mayoral elections because Mayors are elected on the basis of the majority electoral system and gender equality cannot be achieved with interventions in laws. For this reason, during the last local elections of 2009, no single woman Mayor was elected. The gender inequality problem is also present among the nominated officials. At the level of ministries, the situation is the following:

- 2 women Ministers of a total of 22 ministerial positions (internal affairs and culture);
- 3 deputy ministers (education and science; information society and environment);
- 6 state secretaries (internal affairs, justice, finance, economy, local self-government, transport and communications).<sup>9</sup>

The interviewed MPs stressed that there have been no major disagreements among the political parties on the changes in the electoral legislation and inclusion of the gender-relevant concepts. Any disagreements were said to have been sporadic and voiced by only few MPs; compromise was mediated by NDI. At the same time, the MPs stressed that the changes in the electoral law signified an important step forward in the electoral process and thus in the overall electoral process and the political system of RM. Namely, through better representation of women, new opportunities are created for tapping into the professional potentials of the entire population and their mobilization into the political processes. The women MPs also concluded that these efforts were illustrative of the principle of positive discrimination. The concept of quota, however, can prove risky under certain circumstances; this means that under pressure, the political parties may risk to nominate women candidates that are less competent than the male candidates. Notwithstanding, the choice as to which candidates to nominate and how to distribute them on the

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<sup>9</sup> Towards Gender Equal Macedonia, publication of the Centre for Research and Policy Making, 2009, p. 15.

candidates' lists rests with the political parties. Given that within the political parties, there are enough women to fulfil all criteria for quality candidates, the risk for nominating candidates only to fulfill quotas is diminishing. It is generally accepted that NDI has played an important role as initiator, supporter and coordinator of the process of changes in the legislation. This is the main reason why the interviewed MPs assessed the role of NDI as "positive and essential in all phases of the changes of the legislation."

### **Amendments to other laws**

The official documents of the Club of Women MPs<sup>10</sup> reveal records of fruitful activities pertaining to the changes and amendments of the existing laws in the areas of family law, health law, civic law, penal law etc., from the viewpoint of improvement of the status of women and protection against any form of discrimination. The interviewed MPs said that major achievements had been made for promotion of gender equality. However, they also said that it had been difficult for them to reach consensus within their Club on issues relating to budgeting and mobbing. The changes that were initiated by the Club of Women MPs, with support of NDI, were found to have had positive impact on the legal system of the RM. Although the Club has been generally recognizable for its ability to reach consensus on gender equality issues, yet, specific issues with budgetary implications have borne reflection of political party positions. Resistance has been particularly evident on initiatives coming from the opposite parties (ruling vs. opposition parties) as well as from non-governmental organizations in cases when they were not in line with the projected budget by the Government. Major differences in political party opinions have also been noted on the issue of prolonging the terms and conditions for retirement of women.

The role of NDI in the process of changing the legislation has been assessed as positive and encouraging not only for the women MPs, but also for all other MPs and helped in their support for measures aimed at improvement of the status of women.

### **Training for future MPs**

In the pre-electoral period, a large number of women NGOs, foundations and international organizations focused their work on strengthening the capacities of women candidates to present themselves and improve their knowledge of political issues. Those trainings were primarily focused on certain geographic regions, ethnic communities or political party. NDI conducted trainings which were rather comprehensive both in terms of the choice of curricula and number of women-candidates for MPs covered.

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<sup>10</sup> Programme for work of the Club of Women candidates for 2008, of 5 march 2009 and the you-year report of the work of the women MPs Club

During 2006, NDI initiated training for women candidates for the parliamentary elections held the same year. The contents of the trainings were found to have led to significant improvement in the knowledge and skills of the women MPs. It cannot be ascertained however, which trainings topics were most relevant (or needed). No major shortcomings were noted in terms of training organization and delivery. Taking into account the importance of gender equality in the political arena as well as the need for more qualified women candidates at the parliamentary elections, the assessment is that the trainings have made significant contribution for development of the political system of the country. NDI is seen to have played essential and important role in the training process and proved ready to continuously improve the quality of trainings, respond to the real needs of the political parties, demonstrate technical competence and provide sufficient financial resources for trainings.

## **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the goals set forth in the USAID Cooperative Agreement for securing equitable representation and active participation of women in the political processes, NDI has taken a large number of activities for reaching these goals. The activities included provision of trainings, assistance to the Club of Women MPs for changes in the electoral legislation and identification and amendment to other laws that bear implications on gender equality. The changes are evaluated as successful and with real impact on the overall political system and legal order of the Republic of Macedonia.

## **STRENGTHENING THE DEMOCRATIC LEGACY**

This programmatic activity consisted of two projects, which will be analyzed below.

### **Citizens' Association Most**

With technical and financial assistance from NDI, the Citizens' Association MOST was established as domestic organization for elections monitoring in 2002. In the initial two years MOST was exclusively financed by NDI. At later stages, MOST also received resources from over ten donors including the German Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia, SDC, USAID, ITZ, BTM and others. Today, in addition to the Republic of Macedonia, MOST is hired by OSCE and the U.S ENEMO to monitor elections in many other countries in the world.

MOST is a non-governmental organization with 4 full-time core staff members, 14 regularly engaged contractors in the centre and 19 regularly engaged

contractors in the regional offices. The Assembly of MOST consists of 35 members who are also founders of the NGO. The personnel of MOST have undergone numerous trainings and are able to perform various kinds of activities relevant for the mission and mandate of their organization.

NDI and MOST have cooperated on projects either fully financed by NDI, or projects that have received funds from joint application by NDI and MOST. NDI has organized the signing of the *Code for Free and Fair Elections* several times, while MOST has been monitoring the elections.

Based on the above, one can draw the conclusion that NDI assisted in the establishment and operation of MOST in an area that is of great significance to NDI, that is, the elections. NDI invested considerable financial resources in MOST from early on, and also provided trainings and premises when needed (MOST availed of the premises of NDI for certain period of time). NDI remains partner of MOST in implementation of elections projects. This partnership demonstrates the willingness and commitment of NDI not only to partner with MOST in project implementation, but also to ensure sustainability of efforts in the future, once NDI withdraws from their mission in the Republic of Macedonia.

### **Institute for Parliamentary Democracy (IPD)**

The Institute for Parliamentary Democracy (IPD) was established by NDI in 2008 as a locally-based organization with mission to continue working with the Macedonian Assembly once NDI withdraws from the country. Since its inception, IPD has been receiving considerable financial, technical and professional assistance from NDI. The initial staff composition of IPD included 6 former NDI employees who transferred their gained knowledge and skills to the new organization. The number of employees increased in time and the criteria for employment always considered the experience in the local offices established by NDI as requirement.

IPD is currently working on the NDI project relating to the Constituency Offices, which should be fully transferred to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia after 2012. We already elaborated on the significance of this project for the development of participatory political culture in the Republic of Macedonia and the overall strengthening of the role of the National Assembly. The second project, developed and funded by NDI (jointly implemented by NDI and IPD) is the project dealing with the establishment of Parliamentary Research Centre at the Assembly of RM. This project is particularly important given that the comparative experiences from other countries on certain vital issues may prove instrumental for building the capacities of the Parliament to respond to the tasks at hand. The project has been undergoing several phases, such as for example the phases of defining the project structure, setting the directions and procedures, staffing, obtaining premises and equipment, training and development of staff, formulating the outputs and services and establishing domestic and international cooperation. In all these phases, NDI and IPD have been building direct partnership relations, or have

been undertaking complementary actions. This means that the responsibility for implementation of some components of the project have been assumed by NDI, while other components have been within the authority of IPD; in some project segments NDI and IPD have shared responsibility for implementation. NDI has been entrusted to build partnerships with the international, while IPD with the domestic entities. In that context, IPD has found NDI to be a very serious organization, which has played critical role in the establishment and development of IPD.

## **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the goals outlined in the USAID Cooperative Agreement to ensure the sustainability of NDI's program results beyond the end of NDI's USAID funded activities in Macedonia by establishing a legacy non-governmental organization and to strengthen the organizational capacity of the Institute for Parliamentary Democracy (IPD) to promote an open, participatory and accountable legislative process, putting into operation the identical goals that preceded the establishment of MOST. NDI undertook a large number of activities to achieve these goals including trainings for the employees and other engaged persons, provision of professional, technical and financial assistance to those organizations by applying systematic approach over a long period of time. The programs of NDI were successfully implemented. These two organizations (MOST and IPD) have professional capacities or trained staff, competences and program orientation by which they can secure sustainability of NDI's programs upon completion of its mission in the Republic of Macedonia.

## **STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PRACTICE**

This programmatic activity consisted of several projects, which will be analyzed separately below.

### **Program for political parties**

In addition to the State as the most important institution, the political arena in any contemporary society is also occupied with political parties as exceptionally important instruments for meeting the needs and interests of specific social groups and the society at large. The development of the political parties stimulates political competition; the political parties substantiate their existence with achievement of vital interests for the society. Hence, progress in development of the political parties is an important assumption for development of democracy and the overall political system.

With those considerations in mind, NDI delivered over 100 trainings to representatives of various political parties in 2002. The criteria for participation

were set by NDI, while the final selection was made by the political parties who proposed the names of participants. The interviewed persons said that the trainings were useful for improvement of their knowledge and skills in the covered topics.

According to the interviewees, the content of the trainings significantly contributed towards better organization and work within the political parties. The trainings were also useful for the political parties in terms of taking a more functional approach to their work; the training events also contributed to emergence of improved political programs on the political scene. The interviewed attendees said that progress was particularly visible in the overall operation of the local branches of the political parties. Improvements were particularly noted in the efficiency of communication with the citizens at the level of local self-governments. The surveyed people said that the number of training participants were sufficient insofar to yield effects for the practical work of the political parties. Another positive observation was that the participants came from different geographic regions, which was seen to have increased the impact of the trainings. The trainings were found to have facilitated inter-party cooperation and also helped in mitigation of tensions among representatives of the various political parties (which is commonly seen phenomenon for the Macedonian society) through cooperation and joint work on various topics, as well as through informal communication among the participants. Some of the interviewees quoted an example of improvement in the cooperation between the ethnic Roma political parties. However, prevailing conclusion is that inter-party cooperation and the communication between the various political parties is still not at the desired level.

The greatest benefit from the trainings delivered by NDI is the personal/individual upgrade of knowledge and skills of the participants, along with the opportunities for communication and joint work of the participants. Another indicator of success is that a large number of participants were later nominated to assume responsible positions/functions. The participants were found to be least knowledgeable in the issues of planning and organization of electoral campaigns and the modalities for communication with citizens. NDI is seen to have played essential and important role in the training process and proved ready to continuously improve the quality of trainings, respond to the real needs of the political parties and demonstrate technical competence. Some of the interviewed persons commended the good communication with NDI.

### **Political party monitoring of elections**

In the parliamentary democratic systems, elections have two-fold aims: to provide legitimacy for the elected representatives to exercise power; and to serve as means to hold politicians responsible for the activities undertaken during their term in office.

In addition to the members of the electoral boards present at the polling stations, the voting process is closely monitored by observers from political

parties, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. The monitoring process is intended to ensure democratic flow of the electoral process. Evidently, the observers coming from the political parties tend to be less impartial, and yet are by far more interested in the actual voting process at the polling stations as compared with the independent monitors. Furthermore, the electoral experience thus far has seen a large number of incidents caused precisely by the political party observers. It is for those reasons that the training delivered by NDI to the political party monitors on the electoral rules and the related violations proves to be particularly important. The training participants were selected by the political parties without prior criteria set by NDI. This is understandable, of course, given that every political party member may avail of the opportunity to monitor the elections on behalf of the given party. The trainings focused on the legal framework, particularly the electoral system and processes, the democratic approach to be exercised during elections and the significance of every vote cast. During the trainings, the participants gained knowledge and skills that were needed for monitoring of the electoral process. The interviewed persons said that the number of political party representatives trained in the issues of elections monitoring was sufficient in terms of providing the political parties with tools to effectively observe and participate in the electoral process. As for the mixed political composition of the training groups, opinions varied as to whether the trainings managed to improve the inter-party cooperation. Namely, some of the surveyed participants said the trainings had positive influence on the inter-party relations, while others disagreed. Among the likely reasons for these opposing opinions is the timing of the trainings, i.e. the trainings took place in the immediate pre-electoral period rather than well between two elections. Some of the interviewed persons said that the trainings should continue, while others said that the trainings were not so effective precisely because of the problems caused by some election monitors. All surveyed participants assessed the role of NDI as very important and positive, particularly in terms of the preparedness of NDI to continuously improve the quality of trainings, respond to the real needs of the political parties, demonstrate technical competence and provide sufficient financial resources for trainings.

### **Code for Free Elections**

The electoral legislation in the Republic of Macedonia has been continuously improved to ensure free and fair elections. Notwithstanding, the OSCE/ODIHR and the national monitors alike have always identified electoral irregularities. Certain irregularities have been continuously noted in EC progress reports on the Republic of Macedonia<sup>11</sup>. Under such circumstances, a need has been identified for design, adoption and implementation of a Code for Free Elections. However, taking into account that the legally binding norms for free and fair elections are not fully observed, one is hesitant to conclude to what extent the legally non-binding provisions of the Code may be realistically implemented.

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<sup>11</sup>Reports of the European Commission for the progress of the Republic of Macedonia, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

Some of the surveyed people believed that it was the OSCE which had initiated the adoption of the Code, while majority of the interviewed contended that it was the NDI to play that role. There seem to have been no major disagreements among the various political parties in terms of the substantive content of the Code; the Code was signed by all political parties. Of course, the signing of the Code may also be seen as part of the public relations agenda of the political parties to present themselves before their constituencies as democratic political parties which strive for fair elections. According to the interviewed people, although the Code has been slowly implemented in practice, it is nonetheless an important tool harmonized and adopted by all political parties. The interviewees believed that the Code had proved instrumental for some political parties to advocate among their supporters to refrain from illegal activities during elections. However, the Code is not fully observed as yet which is illustrated with the fact that some political parties continue to attempt at gaining political positions through electoral irregularities. The interviewees also said that the EC reports had also contributed to positive developments in terms of the electoral process: namely, the EC recommendations are seen as mandatory and every political party desires to leave good impression before the European Union. The interviewed persons said that most of the suggestions given by OSCE, as well as the contents of the Code for Free Elections were incorporated in the Election Law, but also stressed that there was room for further improvements. The role of NDI in the entire process of adoption, signing, implementation and monitoring of the Code was assessed as positive and important.

### **Changes in the electoral legislation**

One of the major benefits of the changes of the Election Law that were proposed by NDI is related to greater participation of women candidates, which contributed to further democratization of the political parties. The changes in the Election Law are seen as particularly important not only for the electoral process, but also for the development of the overall political system in the Republic of Macedonia. For the purposes of democratization of the electoral system in the Republic of Macedonia, the issue of candidates' lists was also raised. More specifically, the closed party lists seem to reduce the election of candidates to a decision coming from a small number of top decision-makers within any given political party. The open party lists would leave room for the citizens to decide which candidates to give their trust to. Thus, the open party lists would help in achievement of higher democratic goals within the political system.

Most of the political parties, particularly the major ones, advocate for closed candidates' lists. This opinion was shared by the interviewed people: they noted, nonetheless, that although their political parties preferred the closed candidates' lists, they personally were more inclined towards open lists. By organizing meetings on open and closed candidates' lists, NDI initiated a debate on the positive and negative sides of the open and closed lists and this paved the way for changes in the electoral model in the Republic of

Macedonia. From an academic point of view, such meetings were useful and encouraging, but from a practical viewpoint they had limited significance as it was difficult to launch the debate without the necessary commitment by the political parties. Notwithstanding, bringing the topic on the agenda is by itself an important step, which may lead to democratic changes in the electoral legislation and practice in the forthcoming period.

Generally, the role of NDI in the process of changes in the electoral legislation was assessed as educational, positive and creative.

## **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the goals set forth by the USAID Cooperative Agreement to strengthen the capacities of the political parties, to promote dialogue on election law reform and to improve the accountability of elected representatives to their constituency, NDI implemented several projects, including the program for political parties, monitoring of the elections by the political parties, signing and implementation of the Code for Fair and Free Elections and changes in the Election Law. Most of these projects have yielded significant results; some of them, such as the project on the Code for Fair and Free Elections had only limited results, primarily due to the fact that the electoral behavior is influenced by many factors, some of which are beyond the capacities of NDI. Notwithstanding, the achievements of NDI are significant contribution towards strengthening the political parties and the reform of the electoral legislation in the Republic of Macedonia.

## **OTHER ASPECTS RELEVANT FOR EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

The first question is whether the project was integrated, supported or undermined by other donor programs. In that context, one should note that there are indeed other donor projects also focused on building the capacities of the National Parliament. Among the donors is the Westminster Foundation for Democracy Macedonia, which undertakes projects focused on the experiences and good practices of the British political or parliamentary system. The Westminster Foundation has been covering the following topics:

1. Parliamentary democracy
2. Working in the Parliament service – function of the commissions: how to hold the executive power accountable
3. Financial oversight for Parliament officers
4. Reporting from Parliament for journalists
5. The role of Parliaments in adherence to the rule of law and their obligations in terms of observance of constitutional and human rights; and the like.

Other group of projects are financed with IPA funds from the European Union (EU pre-accession funds). These projects focus on issues of the EU legislation

and experiences. The following project activities will be undertaken in the period 2010-2012:

1. Training/study tours for the relevant Parliamentary units/sectors (Human Resources Unit, Legislation Unit) related to the role of the Parliament in the process of negotiations with the EU and training on nomotechnics, preparation of amendments, refined legal texts linked with the EU process
2. Training/study tours of the relevant Parliamentary units/sectors on research and analysis for preparation of quality reports on legislation and EU policies and utilization of relevant data-bases for preparation of reports and analysis
3. Procurement and training of people for use of special software/hardware for electronic archiving of audio/video records on EU laws, policies and institutions
4. Establishment and equipping of a EU centre for use of the Parliament units, legislators and citizens, with literature on EU laws, policies and institutions.

Judging from the previous account of activities all aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Parliament, it is clear that the projects of NDI/USAID have been markedly most diverse in topics and rich in frequency. This is not, of course, to underestimate the role of other donors: their projects seem to have been important as well and by rule complementary to the NDI projects. With the aim to harmonize the work of the various donors, the Parliament has established a standing Steering Committee. It may happen nonetheless that a specific topic covered by one project may coincide with a topic of another project, such as for example, the topic of cooperation and communication between the Parliament and journalists. Namely, this topic has been subject of interest both to NDI and the Westminster program and has been incorporated in the strategic program activities of both organizations. However, the tendency for application of a systemic approach has brought about the necessity to have the topic covered by both organizations, which in this case, has been seen as an advantage, not redundancy.

Currently, the legislation pertaining to the legislative, oversight and representative functions is strong and rather functional. The political will for full exercise of these functions has also improved over the past few years, albeit with room for further improvements particularly in terms of the oversight functions.

As regards the appropriateness of program staffing vis-a-vis the NDI's activities and objectives, NDI Macedonia has a total of 12 employees, consisted of a Country Director, Program Director, 6 Program Managers, 2 Program Officers, and 2 Program Assistants. The program activities are managed by Program Managers, who, together with any of the other employees, may be involved in any of the activities and phases of project implementation. The projects are implemented by external experts or experts from the U.S.A, but also Macedonia and other countries who provide training or other form of professional or technical support to the project participants. MOST and IPD (the two organizations created by NDI) have also been partners to the projects. Given that the project beneficiaries maintained that the projects were useful and professionally organized, one is safe in

concluding that the NDI staff was appropriate insofar to successfully implement the activities and achieve the project objectives.

USAID has invested 7,185,196.00 US\$ in NDI projects, which is a considerable amount of financial resources. Given that the work of NDI resulted in strengthened and more functional Assembly, improved exercising of the rights of the citizens and better citizens' participation in the political process, we trust that the resources spent have been commensurate to the program objectives and have justified the investment goals.

## **Section IV: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

The importance of the projects undertaken by NDI is multi-fold and is linked with the functionality of the political system. Namely, the political system is considered functional when the citizens and the authorities enter into active relationship. For this relationship to be productive, it should take place not only during the electoral process as such, but also in the periods between elections when the citizens are called upon to observe the political developments with critical eye and provide their inputs to the development processes. This relationship also requires from citizens certain degree of participatory political culture, i.e. a considerable level of information, understanding of the importance of the political institutions and politics and measures undertaken by the state authorities and their (citizens') determination to actively participate in the political processes. In its political history, the participatory political culture was not the one prevailing in Macedonia. Instead, the citizens have mostly felt like "subjects" in the system in which they have been relatively well informed of the overall developments, had little knowledge of the work of the institutions, almost no communication with the MPs after elections and almost no influence or attempts for exertion of pressure on the authorities in the decision-making process. To address the issue, NDI worked on improving the direct contacts between the citizens and the Members of Parliament for resolving the problems of the citizens through the establishment of constituency offices for communication between MPs and citizens. Although the citizens mostly approached the MPs for resolution of their individual problems, the establishment of such offices is considered very important for the development of the political system in Macedonia since the citizens have been given the opportunity to receive first-hand information from the MPs about the functioning of the political institutions and have become aware of the opportunities to influence the decision-making processes in a systematic way. In the meantime, the citizens have indeed availed of the opportunities to advocate for legislative changes on issues affecting their lives and managed to influence the Assembly to adopt laws serving their interests. More importantly, with the establishment of this

communication channel, the way has been paved for development of participatory political culture and the awareness has been raised that the citizens should be an active factor in the political processes and should be able to influence the authorities in the processes of adoption and implementation of decisions. In other words, the activities undertaken by NDI have led to important democratization of the political system as a whole.

In this context, another important activity undertaken by NDI is the introduction of the practice of public hearings. Namely, the openness of the legislator towards the public in the decision-making processes is one of the most important indicators of the degree of democratization of any society. Such democratization implies transparency of work and more opportunities for participation in the decision-making processes by the citizens, non-governmental organizations and the commercial entities. The public hearing events significantly increase the level of citizens' and other entities' knowledge on particular issues which also leads to creation of critical awareness among all stakeholders about the situation in a given area and also improved likelihood for incorporation of the specific interests of various groups in the political decisions. As such, the public hearings are important factor for creation of participatory political culture among the citizens. Of course, few public hearings cannot radically alter the level of political culture of the citizens, but are nevertheless significant for their role in paving the way towards lasting improvement of the level of participatory political culture of the citizens as active factors in the political processes.

From the point of view of the political science, another important aspect of the NDI's work is the efforts for strengthening the role of the Parliament vis-à-vis the Government. Namely, the activities have been focused on supporting the Parliament to become equal partner to the Government or at least minimize the inequality gap between the two institutions. In order to be functional, any division of legislative, executive and judicial power needs to be based on existence of bodies with virtually equal political force and power as the only way for the institutions to exercise checks and balance, which, in turn, improves the overall functionality of the political system. The Macedonian Assembly is seen as significantly inferior partner compared to the executive power of the Government and as such has thus far failed to exercise effective control over the work of the Government, i.e. has not exerted sufficient pressure on the Government to be more responsible and effective in the process of preparation and execution of political decisions. As mentioned earlier, NDI has focused its work on strengthening the political capacity of the Parliament through several projects. One of the projects of NDI dealt with establishment of constituency offices for communication with citizens where the MPs were informed about the situation in the field, but also got exposed to citizens' pressure to act in certain manner. In this manner, the MPs could also amplify their pressure on the Government for adequate action.

The "Orientation Program for MPs" is another NDI project which aimed to inform the MPs about the essence of the work of the Assembly, the rights and responsibilities of the MPs and their important role in the overall political

system. This program has built the overall capacities and improved the assertiveness of the MPs to become equal partners to the Government.

The HDP project is another project being implemented in the U.S Congress in which NDI has only organizational and intermediary role. This program opens new horizons for the participants and improves not only the individual capacities of the MPs, but also contributes to building the overall professional capacities of the Parliament.

A very important project is the Parliamentary Internship Program, which has raised the analytical and research capacity of the Assembly's caucuses and commissions, and the Assembly as a whole.

NDI has also implemented a project for introduction of oversight hearings in the legislative processes and helped in practical organization of the oversight hearings in the Assembly. The oversight hearings are particularly important for the development of the political system as they are instrumental for strengthening the role of the Parliament vis-à-vis the Government. Namely, the process of adoption of laws has thus far allowed for the Assembly to critically review and examine any proposal law submitted by the Government for adoption and in that manner exercise its control mechanism over the executive power. However, before the commencement of the NDI's project, the control mechanisms were non-existent in the phase of implementation of the adopted laws. The oversight hearings introduced by NDI practically created new and strong control mechanisms for the Parliament to monitor the implementation of laws by the Government.

The oversight hearings, however, cannot be expected to achieve immediate political effects due to the short period of their practicing as well as the lack of political will among the MPs of the ruling political parties to hold public hearings on sensitive issues and in more frequent intervals. Nonetheless, it is great achievement for its own right that this control mechanism has been introduced both in the legislation and in practice. This instrument is expected to be better utilized in the future once the ratio between the ruling and opposition political parties in the Parliament is changed and the political culture of citizens improves so that they can critically examine the Government policies in any given area.

Certainly, a very important project is the one intended to strengthen the political status of the Assembly or its political will through changes in legislation. From formally legal aspect, the changes have taken place with the amendments of the Rules of Procedure (2008) and the adoption of the Law on Assembly (2009). The procedure for adoption of laws has introduced a novelty of three readings of laws before adoption. In this procedure, several working bodies participate, such as the originating working body and the legal-statutory commission. If any given law implies allocation of financial resources, the working body on budgetary-financial affairs becomes part of the process as well. The Assembly may also decide that a certain law should be accompanied with public hearing and for that purpose may assign a body in charge of the related public hearing affairs. The political will of the

Assembly to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the executive power has been also demonstrated with introduction of a budget for the Assembly and the establishment of a Budgetary Council mandated to decide on all budgetary issues, as well by introducing public and oversight hearings. The Assembly has also introduced its own security service.

The NDI's project for establishment of Parliamentary Institute is aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Parliament by providing knowledge and skills that would be instrumental for the MPs to bring decisions and improve their position vis-à-vis the Government.

The third area of work of NDI is linked with the democratization and strengthening of the political parties. The program for political parties has provided training for political party activists with the goal to improve their working knowledge and build their capacities to take own initiatives. This activity has increased the efficiency of work of the political parties in the political processes, which in turn improved the political competition. The improved political competition serves as a motif for the political parties to succeed on the political scene by recognizing the specific interests of the increasing number of social groups, which creates higher development assumptions for functioning of the overall political system. On the other hand, there is the fact that there are political parties in the Republic of Macedonia which are not democratic and the political party leadership assumes more dominant position compared to its membership. The improved knowledge, mobilization and motivation for action of the political party members contributes toward better and more organized inter-party dynamics, which leads to internal political party democratization and reduces the monopoly of the political leadership, i.e. the political party oligarchy or the party leader.

The fourth area of work of NDI is the area of elections. The elections are considered a defining moment for any democracy. The elections secure legitimacy for execution of the power, which in turn implies that the specific interests of the various groups of citizens can be represented in the Parliament through the elected representatives while the elected politicians can be held accountable for the actions in their term-in-office. The choice of NDI to work in this area effectively addresses the bottlenecks in the electoral legislation and the electoral behaviour of the political parties and citizens. In this context, NDI initiated changes in the electoral legislation in order to increase the participation of women so that 1/3 of the elected MPs be women. These efforts have allowed for one important social group to make its social contribution, which has contributed to further democratization of the political processes and strengthening of the capacities of the Assembly and the overall political system. In addition, NDI implemented the project on open party lists. The idea for open party lists is linked with the need for democratization of the political processes, i.e. better competition within the political parties. This is for the reason that the MPs who feel they "owe" their MP status to the citizens rather than to the political party leadership are more inclined to act independently in the Assembly and take into account the needs of the citizens for their own political survival. This contributes to reduced monopoly over the decision-making by the political elites and leads to democratization of the

relations within the political parties, the Assembly, and the overall political system. This initiative has not yielded actual results yet, i.e. the open party lists have not been translated into electoral legislation provisions. Notwithstanding, the idea for open party lists has triggered social debate about the importance that such novelty may bring about in the multi-party elections and the related positive results that may be yielded in the future.

In addition to the changes and/or tendency for changes in the electoral legislation, NDI also worked on changing the electoral behaviour, i.e. overcoming the anomalies in the electoral process related to the attempts of some political parties to violate the electoral legitimacy by illegally trying and succeeding in getting more favourable electoral results. To address the issues at hand, NDI organized trainings for political party observers and facilitated the adoption of the Code for Free and Democratic Elections whereby the political parties committed themselves to behaving correctly during the elections.

The fifth area of focus of NDI was related to gender legislation. The training provided for women MPs was focused on improving the gender legislation. In that context, several laws were adopted for improving the status of women in many areas of social life in the Republic of Macedonia.

Certainly, we shall emphasize the commitment of NDI to create organization which will carry on their projects after their eventual termination of mission in RM, to which end NDI assisted in establishment, funding, training and operating of its legacies, MOST and IPD.

A certain, but not a big number of indicators measuring the success of programs realized by NDI, more precisely measuring what changes have been undergone within the political system of the Republic of Macedonia can be applied within this Evaluation. It means, current changes can be identified in some situations such as the laws passed by the Assembly proposed as bills by the MPs, which had been previously proposed by the citizens or civic associations within the activities of the Constituency Offices. As well, some current changes can be identified in the field of gender legislation, where the women MPs have proposed bills, later on passed by the Assembly, intended to strengthen the social status of women. Indicators of success can be found in the attitudes of the MPs who have positively assessed the Internship Program, Orientation Program, HDP, training of women MPs and legislative changes, by which they regard the position of the Assembly in relation to the Government has been strengthened raising in that way the overall effectiveness of the political system in the Republic of Macedonia. The identical type of indicators can be seen in the attitudes of MPs who have positively assessed the Political Parties Program, regarding it has produced positive changes in the political parties' activities in front of the citizens and in respect to the elections, both at the level of electoral legislation and pre-election behaviour of the parties. A very relevant indicator for the strengthened position of the Assembly is the opinion of the citizens respondents within the annual USAID Survey, where averagely 34,4% of the respondents had trust or considered the work of the Assembly successful in

the period 2001-2005, which percentage raised to 40,1% among the respondents having trust or finding the work of the Assembly successful in the period 2006-2009. It means that the level of trust of the citizens pertaining the functionality of the Assembly was raised visibly, although not dramatically. The impetus for the Assembly to undergo some changes could come from the reports of the European Commission which had the task to analyze the weaknesses in functioning of the state authorities in the Republic of Macedonia, including the Assembly, but the same impetus could come from the NDI projects, that are far more significant for the changes of the Assembly, because in addition to the impetus produced NDI had the skill and energy to conceive and put into operation the changes.

Anyhow, objective indicators measuring the success of the changes is not easy to identify, because there are a myriad political changes within the political processes, influenced by many factors, and some of these changes do not cause any effect in a small course of time; to identify some other indicators we need a much longer project than this dealing with the NDI evaluation. Nevertheless, the projects carried out by NDI funded and programmatically supported by USAID are very significant for the development of the political system of RM, a part of them for making current changes in the political system, another part of them because of establishing institutions and practices relevant for the political system that will prove their values in future becoming a driving force of the system. It means success is attained by the projects of NDI.

The success can be attributed to several factors, first of all, the carefully selected project areas and projects that were highly relevant for the intended changes in the political system of RM. The success of NDI's projects can also be attributed to proper selection of activities and commensurate means for their achievement. The goals were achieved through various activities ranging from training delivery to various target groups including legislators and assistants in the constituency offices, to preparation of manuals, reforms in the legislation and other regulatory texts; transformations in the political practice, particularly the electoral behavior of the political parties. The success can also be credited to the appropriate technical and professional staff who worked on achievement of the goals. The allocation of sufficient financial resources towards achievement of the goals is another factor of success. The accomplishments of NDI are also linked with factors such as effective internal organization, high level of commitment for achievement of the goals, and flexibility, i.e. readiness to adapt the interventions to the prevailing circumstances in order to reach the goals.

Finally, the overall analysis has not indicated existence of any substantial deficiencies in the program design and implementation nor has it pointed to any alternative paths that NDI should have taken in the first place.

The topics in these projects which relates to the Macedonian legislation and practice that can be recommended to USAID while performing some other foreign missions are the constituent relations, public hearings, oversight hearings and the Code for Fair and Free Elections.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation has shown that all thematic areas and the related project activities are very important (Strengthening Constituent Relations, Legislative Practice, etc.) and they should continue in the future. This is particularly significant given the fact that on one hand, the capacity-building exercise is a long-term process; while on the other hand, the Assembly has been undergoing significant changes in the composition of legislators in every electoral period. In terms of the project Constituency Offices, which is being now conducted under IPD, and will be fully funded and maintained by the Assembly beyond 2012. it is recommended that NDI continues to cooperate as a consultant to IPD at this project in giving support to the Assembly. This for the reason that the Assembly is not yet fully equipped in organizational and financial terms to sustain the operation of the offices at the level that was maintained by NDI. On the other hand, the MPs expressed readiness to accept the changes promoted by the US entities.

The professional status of the Constituency Offices assistants should be strengthened by their full time employment, at least during the mandate of their MPs.

The project Assembly Open Days is recommended to take place in the ensuing period.

The main recommendation is for all programmatic activities within this thematic area (Strengthening Legislative Practice) to continue in the future, in cooperation with the Assembly of RM. The interns should acquire a full time employment status in order to strengthen their work motivation and provide their further professional training and specialization. In terms of the legislation adopted by the Parliament, we recommend that research be conducted within a year to assess the negative and positive experiences from the implementation of the legislative changes. The ultimate legislative change should introduce mechanisms and criteria for dissolution of the Assembly, that will make it politically stronger and more responsible and accountable, which option can be found in many political systems of Parliamentary type, including the British.

The main recommendation is for all programmatic activities under this thematic area (Strengthening the Role of Women in Politics) to continue in the future. If the trainings are to be offered only to women candidates, it is advisable that the focus of the trainings should be on women's issues which should be covered in the campaigning process as well as the ways how women candidates should represent themselves in environments that have traditionally been reluctant to vote for women candidates. If the training topics are general, it is recommendable that some of them should be delivered jointly with men candidates for MPs so that to also sensitise the men on the gender issues and increase the feeling of equality.

The main recommendation is that all programmatic activities from this thematic area (Strengthening Political Parties and Electoral Practice) should continue in the future. In view of the issues pertaining to political representation and the electoral process, it is recommended for NDI in the future to focus on the changes in the electoral model to achieve better involvement of minority communities. The changes should also envisage mechanisms for the political parties to be obliged to nominate candidates from the marginalized groups, thereby opening space for their representation.

Taking into account the experience from the previous elections and the problems that have occurred hitherto, the recommendations would be for NDI to work towards making the provisions of the Code for Fair and Free Elections legally binding, which would mean for the provisions to be incorporated in the Election Law. This primarily refers to securing more equitable and just conditions for representation during the electoral campaign and more efficient control over the financing of the electoral campaigns.

The strengthening of the political parties' capacity is a project of a high relevance. In this context, a project improving the programs of political parties should be introduced that will further deal with the capacity building of the political parties' members and activists.

Considering the importance of the growth of civil society for any developed political system, particularly its benefits for the citizens, it is recommended for NDI to design a project for development of participatory political culture for the citizens through raising of their awareness about the political system and their role and modes to influence. Such project may help the people better articulate their interests before the legislators and be in the position not only to seek solution to their individual problems, but also to advocate for more principled and sustainable solutions at the level of legislation in the areas of economy, social welfare, real estate issues, functioning of the administration, the judicial system and other bodies and institutions. The long-term impact will be then seen on strengthening of the position of the Parliament in relation to the Government and other state bodies. The project may also tap on the potentials for public promotion of ideas and views via the mass media channels, as well as through specialized trainings with citizens.

Section V

ANNEX

INSTRUMENTS FOR CONDUCTING THE FIELD RESEARCH

## USAID/NDI Project

In -1

Constituency Offices

### INTERVIEW

WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Respondent

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\_\_\_\_\_

Constituency office

\_\_\_\_\_ (town/municipality)

1. Is the equipment in the constituency offices adequate to the functional needs of the offices?

2. Do the assistants (associates) in the constituency offices perform their work in a quality manner? More specifically, are they:

- a) Selected based on objective criteria (is the best candidate selected?)
- b) Sufficiently competent to perform:
  - b1) organizational activities
  - b2) administrative activities
  - b3) case work
- c) Sufficiently motivated to perform their tasks and duties
- d) Creative in performing their duties and to what extent? Do they contribute to improvement of the overall system and process of work in the constituency offices?

**3. How do you assess the consultations undertaken by NDI with you, the MPs, for your induction in the functioning of the constituency offices?**

**4. How do you evaluate the role of NDI in the daily support for the constituency offices starting from the establishment of the constituency offices, through training of staff and further operation of the offices, i.e. coordination, control and daily management of the constituency offices up until the end of 2008?**

**5. How many of the citizens in your constituency (people who gravitate towards your office) have been introduced with the terms of reference and manner of operation of the constituency offices?**

**6. Are you aware of any inhibitions or reservations of the citizens who are followers or members of other political parties, other ethnic or religious communities to visit the constituency offices?**

**7. Do the citizens trust or distrust the work of the constituency offices?**

**8. Looking back one or two years, is there a trend of increase or decrease of the interest of the citizens to visit the constituency offices, and why?**

**9. In your opinion, which are the most important issues, i.e. the development priorities of the Republic of Macedonia?**

**10. Which are the most frequently treated issues in communication with the citizens?**

**11. Have you, in your work as a MP, made selection or rejection of the issues of relevance to the citizens on the grounds of your thinking that some of the issues were not important or would not be likely to be accepted by the Parliament or the Government for their action?**

**12. Have you as an MP informed the citizens back about the actions you had taken to meet their requirements?**

**13. In terms of citizens cases assistance or intervention from your office, some of the cases have been closed, and some have not been closed. Why are there still open cases?**

**14. What is the average time for processing/finalization of a case in the constituency offices?**

**15. In your opinion, which are the main benefits for the development of the political system from the establishment and operation of the constituency offices?**

**16. Are there any weaknesses (bottlenecks) identified in the operation of the constituency offices? Can you pinpoint the bottlenecks and explain to which extent they affect the operation of the constituency offices?**

**17. What is your assessment of the work of the constituency offices from the point of view of their importance for the development of the overall political system in the RM:**

- a) Very important for the development of the political system of RM**
- b) Important for the development of the political system of RM**
- c) Somewhat important for the development of the political system of RM**
- d) Not very important for the development of the political system of RM**

**18. Will the taking over of the constituency offices by the Parliament of RM affect the quality of work of the offices: how and why?**

**19. In your opinion, what should be done in future to improve the functionality of the constituency offices?**

**20. In your opinion, what should be done to secure sustainability of the project? In other words, does this project have elements of sustainability as such?**

**21. What is the political importance of the Assembly Open Days?**

# USAID/NDI Project

In -2  
Strengthening Legislative Practice

## INTERVIEW

WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA AND OTHER  
STATE AND PARTY OFFICIALS

Respondent

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Party

In - 2a  
Parliamentary Internship Program

1.How have the participants of this program (training) been selected in the period 1995-2005  
-Was it an intra-party selection or the selection was based upon criteria established by NDI

**2. Was the training conceived well enough to improve the knowledge and skills of its participants, particularly in respect to their research capacities?**

**3. Did the training have a positive impact on the functionality of the Assembly?**

**4. What were the areas where the participants had the least knowledge prior to the training or which were the areas where the training improved the knowledge of the participants the most?**

**5. Was the training attended by members of various political parties established more cooperative relations among them i.e. did the training have an impact in decreasing the political animosity among some parties?**

**6. Generally, what are the accomplishments of the training organized by NDI**

**7. Could the training be characterized by some substantial weaknesses in terms that it had not been conceived well, performed well or it tended to pay much attention to some irrelevant details?**

**8. Generally speaking, did the training give its contribution to the development of the political system, and to what extent**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**9. How do you assess the role of NDI in the process of training, or their readiness to improve the quality of training, to meet the real professional requirements of the training participants, their proficiency in conducting training and provision of sufficient financial resources for successful completion of the training ?**

**In - 2b**  
**Orientation Program for MPs**

**1.To what extent does the Manual Representing the People contain useful information dealing with professional work of the MPs?**

**2.To what extent was the Manual Representing the People distributed and used among the MPs ?**

**3.Was the one day training session devoted to the new MPs (September 2006) well organized and useful to them ?**

**In - 2c**  
**House Democratic Partnership (HDP)**

**1.How have the participants of this partnership been selected in the period on the Macedonian side (12 MPs)**  
**-Was it an intra-party choice or the selection was based upon criteria established by NDI**

**2. Have the study trips to USA improved the professional knowledge and skills of the participants of this Program**

**3. Did the study trips to USA have a positive impact on the functionality of the Assembly ?**

**4. What were the most significant topic areas of the program that improved the knowledge of the participants ?**

**5. Was the Program attended by members of various political parties established more cooperative relations among them i.e. did it have an impact in decreasing the political animosity among some parties?**

**6. Generally, what are the accomplishments of the training organized by NDI**

**7. Could the visit trips to USA be characterized by some substantial weaknesses in terms that it had not been conceived well, performed well or it tended to pay much attention to some irrelevant details ?**

**8. Generally speaking, did visit trips to USA give their contribution to the development of the political system, and to what extent**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**9. How do you assess the role of NDI in this project ?**

**In 2d**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE AND THE LAW ON PARLIAMENT**

**1. In the period 2008 - 2009 some amendments on the Rules of Procedure and the Law on Parliament were passed under the initiative of NDI. Did some articles of these two documents cause some disagreement among the political parties?**

**2. Were there some problems in the process of their passing and what type of problems if they occurred ?**

**3. To what extent did these documents raise the functionality of the Assembly and have an impact on the development of the overall political system in RM?**

**4. How do you assess the role of NDI in the entire process of preparation and passing of these documents?**

**In - 2e**

**PUBLIC AND OVERSIGHT HEARINGS**

**1. Was and to what extent the training over the MPs and administrative staff of the Assembly useful to the attendants?**

- a) Little
- b) Considerable

**2. To what extent does the Manual on Public Hearings contain useful information dealing with professional work of the MPs ?**

**3. To what extent was the Manual on Public Hearings distributed and used among the MPs ?**

**4. According to you what were the significant benefits of the Assembly public hearings?**

**5. To what extent did the public hearings have an impact on the functionality of the Assembly and public promotion?**

**6. Could this project of NDI be characterized by some substantial weaknesses?**

**7. How do you assess the role of NDI in this project?**

**8. According to you, what are the main benefits of the oversight hearings**

**9. To what extent did the oversight hearings have an impact on the functionality of the Assembly and public promotion?**

**10. Could this project of NDI be characterized by some substantial weaknesses?**

**11. How do you assess the role of NDI in this project?**

**12. What are the crucial weaknesses of the legislation regulating the role of the Assembly and which laws and law provisions should be passed in order to strengthen its political status?**

# **USAID/NDI Project**

**In -3  
Strengthening the Role of Women in Politics**

## **INTERVIEW**

**WITH THE WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**Respondent**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Party**

**In - 3a**

**The Parliamentary Women's Club**

**1. Over 20 trainings over the women MPs dealing with strategic planning, strategy in legislation, gender legislation, communication skills, etc. were conducted after the establishment of the Women's Club. Was the training conceived well enough to improve the knowledge and skills of the women MPS in performance of their professional tasks**

**2. Did the trainings have a positive impact on the functionality of the Assembly, and to what extent?**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**3. Were the trainings and the overall activities of the Women's Club attended by members of various political parties established more cooperative relations among them i.e. did they have an impact in decreasing of the political animosity among some parties?**

**4. Generally, what are the accomplishments of the training organized by NDI**

**5. What were the areas where the participants had the least knowledge prior to the training? Did the organizer pay a sufficient attention to these areas while designing the program?**

**6. Could the trainings be characterized by some substantial weaknesses in terms that it had not been conceived well, performed well or it tended to pay much attention to some irrelevant details?**

**7. Generally speaking, did the training give its contribution to the development of the political system, and to what extent?**  
**A) Little**  
**B) Considerable**

**8. How do you assess the role of NDI in the process of trainings and generally in the overall activities of the Assembly Women's Club, or their readiness to improve the quality of trainings, to meet the real professional requirements of the training participants, their proficiency in conducting training and provision of sufficient financial resources for successful completion of the training ?**

**In 3b  
Changes to the Law on Elections**

**1. Who was the initiator to pass the amendments to the Law on Elections in 2006 where 30% of women candidates on the political parties' lists were introduced?**

**2. Did some amendments of this law cause some disagreement among the political parties?**

**3. Did these amendments of the Law on Election make an advancement in the electoral process, by it in the political system of RM as a whole, in respect that the enhanced representation of women is paving the way higher professional energy of the entire population to be involved in the political processes**

**4. On contrary, as a result of the new legal regulation, can it happen in the political processes to have higher involvement of women that are less competent than men in performance of their professional tasks and duties?**

**5. How do you assess the role of NDI in the entire process of preparation and passing of these amendments?**

**In 3c**

**Passing amendments to other laws**

**1. Assembly Women's Club have an active commitment to pass some amendments in other areas dealing with the rights of women, such as the areas of labour law, health insurance law, family law, etc. What do you regard to be the main benefits and weaknesses of these amendments?**

**2. What is the importance of these amendments to the overall legal system of RM?**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**3. Did some of these amendments cause disagreement among the political parties?**

**4. How do you assess the role of NDI in the entire process of preparation and passing of these amendments?**

**In 3d  
Prospective Women Parliamentary Candidates**

**1. In the course of 2006 NDI initiated training for women candidates that would participate at the parliamentary elections the same year. Was the training conceived well enough to improve the knowledge and skills of the women MPS in performance of their professional tasks?**

**2. What were the areas where the participants had the least knowledge prior to the training? Did the organizer pay a sufficient attention to these areas while designing the program?**

**3. Could the trainings be characterized by some substantial weaknesses in terms that it had not been conceived well, performed well or it tended to pay much attention to some irrelevant details?**

**4. Generally speaking, did the training give its contribution to the development of the political system, and to what extent?**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**5. How do you assess the role of NDI in the process of trainings and generally in the overall activities of the Assembly Women's Club, or their readiness to improve the quality of trainings, to meet the real professional requirements of the training participants, their proficiency in conducting training and provision of sufficient financial resources for successful completion of the training ?**

# USAID/NDI Project

In -4a  
Democratic Legacy IPD

## INTERVIEW

WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INSTITUTE  
FOR PARLIAMENTARIAN DEMOCRACY (IPD)

**Respondent**

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**1.What are the sources of funds of IPD**

**2.Number of employees and their arrangement by areas**

**3.How was the staff selected?**

a)According to which criteria ?

b)Who made the selection?

**4.Are the employees adequately trained?**

a)Who organized and conducted the trainings?

b)Which were the areas (topics) of trainings?

c)Duration of training

**5.Are the employees sufficiently motivated for performance of their duties?**

**6.Are the employees creative in performing their tasks, i.e. do they contribute to improvement of the overall system and process of work?**

**7.Is the IPD equipment adequate for the operational needs**

**8. What is your assessment of the role of NDI in the operation of IPD?**

a) Establishment of the organization

b) Securing financial assistance for your activities

c) Professional support for your activities

d) Assisting in your promotion and provision of relevant information for your work (financial resources, possible partners etc)

**9. In its relations towards IPD, has NDI exhibited any omissions or weaknesses, and if yes, which are they?**

# **USAID/NDI Project**

**In -4b  
Democratic Legacy MOST**

## **INTERVIEW**

**WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITIZENS'  
ASSOCIATION MOST**

**Respondent**

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**1.What are the sources of funds of MOST**

**2.Number of employees and their arrangement by areas**

**3.How was the staff selected?**

a)According to which criteria ?

b)Who made the selection?

**4.Are the employees adequately trained?**

a)Who organized and conducted the trainings?

b)Which were the areas (topics) of the trainings?

c)Duration of training

**5.Are the employees sufficiently motivated for performance of their duties?**

**6.Are the employees creative in performing their tasks, i.e. do they contribute to improvement of the overall system and process of work?**

**7. Is the MOST equipment adequate for the operational needs**

**8. What is your assessment of the role of NDI in the operation of MOST?**

a) Establishment of the organization

b) Securing financial assistance for your activities

c) Professional support for your activities

d) Assisting in your promotion and provision of relevant information for your work (financial resources, possible partners etc)

**9. In its relations towards MOST, has NDI exhibited any omissions or weaknesses, and if yes, which are they?**

# USAID/NDI Project

In -5  
Political Parties and Electoral Practice

## INTERVIEW

WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA AND  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN  
RM

Respondent

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Party

In - 5a

## **NDI Macedonia Political Party Program**

**1. How have the participants of this program (training) been selected in the period 1995-2005?**

**-Was it an intra-party selection or the selection was based upon criteria established by NDI**

**2. Was the training conceived well enough to improve the knowledge and skills of its participants in the process of their political operation?**

**3. Did the training improve the organization and functioning of the political parties and to what extent, i.e. could the political parties after the training of their participants provide more effective acting and better political programs at the political stage of RM?**

**4. Did the training sessions (2002-2006) include a sufficient number of political parties' members to have a considerable effect to the development of the political parties providing the training was successful?**

**5. Was the training attended by members of various political parties established more cooperative relations among them i.e. did the training have an impact in decreasing the political animosity among some parties?**

**6. Generally, what are the accomplishments of the training organized by NDI**

**7. What were the areas where the participants had the least knowledge prior to the training or which were the areas where the training improved the knowledge of the participants the most?**

**8. Could the training be characterized by some substantial weaknesses in terms that it had not been conceived well, performed well or it tended to pay much attention to some irrelevant details?**

**9. Generally speaking, did the training give its contribution to the development of the political system, and to what extent?**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**10. How do you assess the role of NDI in the process of training, or their readiness to improve the quality of training, to meet the real professional requirements of the training participants, their proficiency in conducting training and provision of sufficient financial resources for successful completion of the training?**

**In - 5b**

**Poll Watchers**

**1. How have the participants of this program (training) been selected in the period 1995-2005?**

**-Was it an intra-party selection or the selection was based upon criteria established by NDI?**

**2.To which topic areas was paid the most attention in the training of poll watchers?**

**3.Was the training conceived well enough to improve the knowledge and skills of its participants, particularly in respect to their research capacities?**

**4.Did the training sessions (2002-2006) include a sufficient number of political parties' members to have a considerable effect to the development of the political parties providing the training was successful?**

**5. Was the training attended by members of various political parties established more cooperative relations among them i.e. did the training have an impact in decreasing the political animosity among some parties?**

**6. Could the training be characterized by some substantial weaknesses in terms that it had not been conceived well, performed well or it tended to pay much attention to some irrelevant details?**

**7. Generally speaking, did the training give its contribution to the development of the political system, and to what extent?**

**a) Little**

**b) Considerable**

**8. How do you assess the role of NDI in the process of training, or their readiness to improve the quality of training, to meet the real professional requirements of the training participants, their proficiency in conducting training and provision of sufficient financial resources for successful completion of the training?**

**In 5c  
Code of Conduct for Fair and Free Elections**

**Parliamentary elections 2006  
Parliamentary elections 2008  
Presidential and Local elections 2009**

**1. Who was the initiator to pass the Code?**

**2. Did some articles of this document cause a disagreement among the political parties?**

**3. Were there some problems in the process of its passing?**

**4.To what extent is the Code for Fair and Free Elections significant as a document that introduces a good political practice during the elections?**

**a)Little**

**b)Considerable**

**5.Did the Code exert an influence over some political parties to impose their sympathizers, members and activists refrain from illegal activities during the elections?**

**6.Did the signing of the Code create a better political climate /improve the relations/ among the political parties?**

**7.Were some articles of the Code incorporated in the Law on Elections?**

**8. Generally speaking, was by the adoption of the Code made a big step forwards in the electoral process, and wider in the political system of RM as a whole**

**9. How do you assess the role of NDI in the entire process of its adoption or signing by the political parties and its implementation, i.e. following of the elections?**

**In - 5d**

**Changes to the Electoral Law**

**1. NDI initiated some amendments in the Law on Elections. What do you regard to be the main achievements and weaknesses of these amendments?**

**2. What is the significance of these amendments to the electoral legislation and the political system of RM as a whole?**

**3.A gathering is organized discussing the open and closed party lists. Which type of party list during elections is supported by your political party?**

**4.How do you assess the role of NDI in the process of electoral legislation changes?**

**Prepared by: Prof. Dr. Ilija Todorovski**