

**CEPPS/IRI Quarterly Report: April 1 – June 30, 2005**  
**NIGERIA- Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Political Party and Civil Society**  
**Partnerships**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. #620-A-00-03-00246-00**  
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## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The International Republican Institute-Nigeria (IRI-Nigeria) continued implementing activities for this phase of programming in the April-June quarter. Programming in this quarter seeks to build on IRI-Nigeria's previous program by continuing to strengthen the foundation of political parties in Nigeria. During the quarter, IRI-Nigeria conducted its sixth *State Party Leaders Academy* (SPLA) workshop in Bauchi State in Northeastern Nigeria. IRI also organized another event in its series of Conflict/Political Roundtables on the topic of "The National Political Conference, the Process, Outcome and the Way Forward." Additionally, IRI held frequent consultations with its partners, political parties and other NGO's in this quarter in order to receive valuable feedback on IRI's training workshops and to gauge the changing capacity needs of the parties.

## **BACKGROUND**

Political parties acting in concert with civil society organizations (CSOs) constitute the mechanism par excellence of democratic consolidation. However, the years immediately following Nigeria's transition to democracy provided limited room for the development of these essential institutions. With only three political parties, whose leadership was dominated by former military ruling elites, Nigeria struggled to open political space in which a truly representative government could grow. Furthermore, CSOs struggled to transform themselves from opponents of the military regime to issue advocates that could pressure a legitimate government for essential reforms.

Shortly before the 2003 elections, a total of twenty-seven new parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), unfortunately most of these new parties possessed weak internal structures. Even with limited time for campaigns, some of these new parties' made an impressive showing in the elections. The emergence of these new parties in the Nigerian political spectrum and the expansion of the civil society leading up to the 2003 elections continue to offer new promise for democratic consolidation. Enhancing the capacity of these institutions and developing the latent synergies between them is fundamental to realizing sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

In designing its post-elections program, IRI consulted with political party leaders at the state and national levels, as well as with representatives from CSOs. As a result of the consultations, IRI ascertained that the majority of Nigerian political parties are deficient in their basic structural elements. IRI seeks to address various needs for capacity through

a series of programs tailored to help the parties develop better communications strategies, issue-based platforms and to improve their organizational structures. Additionally, through workshops, symposia and roundtable discussions, parties are encouraged to partner with CSOs to explore partnership opportunities for promoting mutual agendas. Furthermore, parties are encouraged to increase the participation of women and youth in the political process. With Nigeria now holding a National Political Reform Conference, IRI is preparing political parties and civil society for constitutional changes that will greatly affect the nature of politics in the years to come.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **State Party Leaders Academy**

The IRI-Nigeria team traveled to Benue state on April 14<sup>th</sup> for a post SPLA assessment and mentorship of the state parties. The team brought together a total of eight political parties which included the state's ruling party, the PDP, and the major opposition party, ANPP. This assessment and mentorship program enabled IRI to appraise the activities implemented by the parties since the initial Benue SPLA in November 2004. The program also enabled IRI to dialogue with the parties and come up with best practices to overcome challenges they have encountered in implementing listed activities.

IRI then traveled to Bauchi State from May 16-20 for a Pre-State Party Leaders Academy (SPLA) assessment meeting with party stakeholders in the field. During the meetings IRI sought to understand the composition of the parties' structures and their level of organization. The sixth State Party Leadership Academy (SPLA) was held from May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005. The event witnessed an impressive turn-out of political party leaders at the workshop. The activity was designed to address the capacity needs of the parties identified at a prior pre-SPLA visit and during consultations with the parties. The parties were asked to develop an action plan of their activities which will both guide the performance evaluations and serve IRI as a basis for technical assistance in the near future.

### **Stakeholders Forum**

IRI was represented at a stakeholders' summit on political party finance reform organized by the Center for Law and Social Action (CLASA) on May 17, 2005. The meeting reviewed ongoing advocacy efforts for transparent party finance reform and the draft electoral reform bill submitted to the National Assembly by INEC. In view of the fact that political finance reform issues are not attracting enough public attention, the meeting suggested strategies for bringing the issues to the fore of public attention

### **University Outreach Workshop**

The University Outreach workshops are a sub-component of IRI-Nigeria's youth programming. The goal of these workshops is to educate, train, and teach student leaders about salient issues such as accountability, rule of law, participatory governance and

transparency. In order to commend the efforts of the students and university officials in making the last University Outreach Workshop, held at the University of Jos in March 2005, a success, the IRI Nigeria team sent thank you letters to all participants. Training sessions for student leaders and university officials at the workshop centered on leadership, democratic values on campus, team-building and conflict resolution tactics that can be utilized to reduce tension and conflict between the student unions and the staff at the university. After the workshop in March, student leaders and university officials held an immediate meeting to resolve their past differences and work together using the skills they received from the training.

### **Conflict/Political Roundtable**

The monthly roundtable brings together stakeholders from diverse background to deliberate on matters of national interest which are topical issues in the country. The Conflict Roundtable (CRT) for May 2005 focused on National Political Conference, “The Process, Outcome and the Way forward”. The Conference took place on Thursday May 26, 2005 with full representation from political party leaders and members of the civil society groups.

### **Consultations**

IRI hosted officials of political parties and representatives of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at a meeting on May 11, 2005. The objective was to have an open discussion with political parties on their opinion of the recent party finance/funding manual jointly published by IFES and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). It was agreed by all participating parties that IRI would facilitate and host a monthly consultative meeting between the parties and INEC.

On April 1, 2005, the IRI team met with NDI and IFES in response to the initial draft program description from USAID on support of the electoral process in Nigeria. The objective of the meeting was to comment on the type of activities the implementing partners would carry out in preparation for Nigeria’s 2007 election, and also to address some of the problems associated with the 2003 elections in order to specify areas of program focus leading up to the next election cycle. Further meetings and seminars with IFES were held to consider the content of the draft electoral bill 2004 submitted to the National Assembly by INEC. General areas of discussion also included the election process, the status of disabled voters, political party finance reform, election tribunals and book-keeping workshops for political parties based on INEC findings on the audits of the parties’ accounts.

### **Additional Programming**

IRI conducted a one-day National Communications Workshop on June 1, 2005 for members of the Nigerian media. The objective of the workshop was to enhance

knowledge of political party reporting of media practitioners from eighteen print and electronic media outfits spread across Nigeria. During the workshop, the media officials were reminded that the effort to consolidate democracy in Nigeria will not be achievable without objective, informative and educational political party reporting. Relationships between the media and political parties were also reviewed and strategies were developed for the media to overcome obstacles to objective political party reporting.

Regarding internal IRI matters, Nigeria Country Director Dr. Matthias Zana Naab returned to the office on May 9, 2005 to resume his official IRI duties, having taken a leave of absence in order to conclude his education. Dr. Naab is now a qualified Ph.D, having completed his defense at the University of Pittsburgh.

## **RESULTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### ***Objective 1: To strengthen the organizational structure and viability of Nigerian Political Parties.***

The SPLA workshop held in Bauchi State strengthened the organizational capabilities and viability of the Nigerian political parties that participated in the event. By conducting pre-workshop assessments, IRI-Nigeria was able to grasp the capacity needs of the parties involved and tailor the workshop content accordingly. IRI has noted and documented increased capabilities from one workshop to the next, a sign that organizational capacity at its foundation is increasing in those political parties with which IRI works.

### ***Objective 2: To improve the capacity of Nigerian political parties to work closely with civil society organizations in the development of issue – based strategies to respond to voters’ concerns.***

IRI-Nigeria aims each quarter to build linkages and foster partnerships that will respond to voters’ concerns. During the media workshop held in June, the parties and journalists developed better methods of communicating to the public the particular issues that each of the parties stood for. Impartial political news coverage and accurate reporting allow the voters to better determine whether their concerns are being met and thus to make well informed decisions in future elections.

### ***Objective 3: To assist women and youth in political parties, civil society and governmental structures***

This quarter, IRI-Nigeria continued to work on increasing women’s participation in the political process. On April 14, 2005 IRI was invited to a 2 day workshop organized by the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) in collaboration with the World Bank and UNICEF, in recognition of its efforts at encouraging women participation in the political process. The workshop brought together stakeholders on women’s’ issues to

validate and harmonize the compilation and review of all existing international conventions and the Nigerian constitution, including related state regulations, religious laws, customary laws and practices and court decisions / applications relating to the status of Nigerian women and children.

To continue its assistance of youth participation in government and politics, IRI convened a one-day Leadership Retreat on June 23, 2005 for the Youth Democratic Initiative based in Benue state. The retreat was held at the IRI Resource Center. Ten members of the executive of the organization learned relevant skills in Organizational Management, Leadership and Team Building, Strategic Planning and Basic Concept of Democracy. The group developed an action plan of their activities at the end of the training. Participants agreed that the skill sets addressed had better equipped them in reorganizing their goals and improving the quality of their programming.

## **EVALUATION**

Nigeria's political parties have come a long way since independence. From the increase of three parties to over 81 registered parties it is tempting to assume that quantity equates quality. Unfortunately, this is not the case. IRI-Nigeria addresses this problem by improving quality, determining purpose and developing strength in political parties. This quarter IRI's Nigeria programs continued to improve internal communication within parties, assist parties in developing platforms that are responsive to citizens' interests, support parties in improving development and management among women and youth, and aid parties in the improvement of local and national coordination on programs and activities. IRI also continued to receive steadfast support and active participation from its partners in its current chapter of programming. The State Party Leaders Academy (SPLA), the flagship of IRI-Nigeria's current activities, enjoys tremendous success as it spans across Nigeria's geo political zones and continues to generate large interest and positive feedback. The Conflict/Political Roundtables highlight relevant contemporary issues, redefining politics in Nigeria as well as fostering and strengthening the partnership between the parties and civil society groups. This quarter the program continued to ensure that political party and civil society involvement in the political process remain a strong element of the country's political realm. For Nigeria's democracy to flourish, political parties must be highly effective and organized on the state level to respond to voter's concerns.

## **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

In the month of July, IRI will conduct a Post SPLA Assessment in Bauchi State. This assessment will provide assistance to participants of the Bauchi SPLA workshop as they implement the training they received at the conference. SPLA participants from the January conference last quarter will receive mentorship in Enugu state during the month of August. A Pre-SPLA assessment for next quarter's conference will take place in Cross Rivers State where the 7<sup>th</sup> conference is slated to take place in September.

Also in July, IRI-Nigeria team members plan to attend the Electoral Act Public Hearing in Minna as part of an ongoing evaluation of the Electoral Act and its reception in widely varying communities.

In August, IRI will host meetings on Civil Society and Political Party Finance and Advocacy, as well as additional youth events and womens' forums that are slated for August and September.