

FINAL REPORT OF THE DG TDY TEAM TO GUINEA, APRIL 1997

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INTRODUCTION

This report develops an analytical and strategic framework for a Democracy and Governance strategy for USAID/Guinea. It draws on extensively researched DG assessments carried out by members of the DG TDY team on previous visits (see Annexes), as well as consultations held during a 2-week trip in late April 1997. The analysis first provides an overview of the reasons for a DG strategy, the outlines of the proposed strategy and justification for its areas of focus, and some considerations regarding risks, assumptions and policy context. Four following sections spell out the main programmatic elements of the strategy--essentially, the areas in which Intermediate Results would be identified. Each section provides further analysis of the specific problem area as well as programmatic suggestions. Three annexes--reports from the previous research--are also attached.

WHY WORK IN THE DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE SECTOR IN GUINEA?

Guinea has made important strides in developing a participatory, accountable system of governance since the end of the repressive Sekou Toure regime in 1984, but much remains to be achieved. Guineans have enjoyed opportunities to elect their local and national leaders, but this right has been impinged upon in numerous ways by current political leaders unwilling to relinquish their grasp on power. Likewise, legal provisions are in place for decentralizing government and enabling economic development, but in practice, much control is still exerted from the national level over the political and economic choices of local communities. In essence, political leadership remains unaccountable to the large portion of the Guinean population and to the very laws which it has promulgated, and has shown very little commitment to allowing developments which would undermine its control. Thus executive power remains the fundamental constraint and risk for any programming in the area of democracy and governance.

This lack of accountability has significant impact on Guinea's development prospects. Corruption is endemic and results in the non-productive use of resources. Vested interests in the current situation go a long way toward explaining the slow progress of economic reform, which also contributes to non-efficient resource allocation, while the unstable macro-economic picture discourages needed international investment. Moreover, poor governance and misadministration hamper the efforts of average Guineans to improve their own lives, prolonging the poverty that holds back the country. In this context, improving the quality of governance and assisting Guineans to claim their rightful stake in the administration of the country is key to improving the overall prospects for development.

PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC APPROACH

During several research trips, the team members found a significant gap between the laws of the country and the reality of politics and administration. Not surprisingly, a related gap exists between those who take political decisions in Guinea and the bulk of the population which must live with the consequences of those decisions. The strategy proposed here aims to close these gaps by concentrating USAID/Guinea's DG resources mainly on local-level activities (local refers not only to rural areas, but also to urban localities--quartiers, etc.), reinforcing the nascent development of civil society at the local level to which USAID has already contributed through economic growth, natural resource management, health and education programs, as well as its experience as a New Partnerships Initiative Leading Edge Mission. While we suggest a greater focus on local-level programs than national-level, however, we also point out the important contributions that could be made with smaller amounts of resources being directed to central government institutions.

The factors constraining accountability and participation in Guinea are many. Poverty looms large, as do the concomitant lack of education, infrastructure, institutional capacity and information in the country. Twenty-six years of pervasive repression under Sekou Toure also undermined mutual trust and a sense of political efficacy, essential building blocks for the political participation that is necessary for political accountability. This lack of trust and hesitance about public or civic activity was striking to the team and played an important role in shaping the local-level orientation of the strategy we propose below, insofar as we believe that development of democratic practices and interactions between leaders and citizens at a very tangible and immediate level will be the best solution to distrust and fear.

This approach is cross-cutting insofar as it seeks to build on USAID/Guinea's success in local-level mobilization in other sectors, but it is specifically aimed at more than just mobilization around specific interests. We suggest that these interests--be they economic (e.g., access to credit), service-oriented (provision of health care), or social (improvement of women's representation in local government), or a combination of these--can be the catalysts for greater democratic participation and ultimately better governance. The strategy we propose could lead to programs that add advocacy and participation in governance to existing USAID activities, or to programs that seek out new local groups to work with.

In all cases, we believe USAID will have better success building on pre-existing community groups, even if they are in early stages of development, rather than attempting to develop interest organizations out of whole cloth, but it is also the case that this DG strategy is not one that simply assumes DG results from any sort of community organization activity. We see the results of this strategy not simply in community organization, which has important implications for democracy, but in the impact of citizen empowerment through community organization on the quality of local, and by extension, national governance and representation. While citizen empowerment through community group development is an important end in itself, Guinea has need of more. The country is in an early stage of democratic transition and needs to reinforce the foundations of that transition, and of a national governance structure. Thus this strategy looks specifically to the interlinkage of local associations and local government bodies.

By working at the local level to further develop the institutional capacity of civil society in all sectors and help local groups interact with local government more effectively, USAID can help Guinea meet two essential needs. First, this approach, since it takes a highly interactive and participatory approach, will help Guineans develop the skills, understanding and sense of efficacy that will assist them not only in managing their own group activities better to achieve desired results, but also in addressing their concerns to relevant local governing bodies, whether deconcentrated administrative authorities or decentralized representative councils. Second, by interacting with local governing bodies, Guineans will make more relevant and responsive a national structure which the country ultimately needs for nation building and effective administration, but which at the moment appear to be of marginal relevance to many Guineans.

The local focus of this strategy is also directly related to the team's assessment of the democracy and governance situation at the national level in Guinea. There is limited room to maneuver in the current political situation. The current political leadership, with a few notable exceptions, seems to have little interest in opening up the broadcast media, fundamental economic reform, or adhering to basic tenets of its own laws. National-level NGOs, for their part, lack resources, human capacity and an encouraging enabling environment to be effective watchdogs over government or to provide fora for alternative political ideas and activities. Professional groups, such as business or bar associations, which often play a key role in advocating better governance in developing countries, are weak or nonexistent. In consultations during the April TDY, the team learned that the Chamber of Commerce has been prevented by the government from holding elections for internal leadership for several years. The Guinean Bar Association, for its part, is constrained by political divisions that prevent it playing a significant role in opposing abuse of power. Religious groups may offer greater opportunities, given their very successful contributions to other USAID projects.

However, since events and developments at the national level have important repercussions at lower levels, and since important exceptions to the generally closed political situation do exist, the strategy includes results and activity suggestions at the national level. Opportunities to strengthen centrally-based NGOs which could assist in implementation of the strategy are discussed. Positive developments in the National Assembly, including the very progressive stances taken by the President of the Assembly (despite his being a member of the ruling party), indicate that further opportunities to build on such openness should be pursued over the period of the strategy. These opportunities are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Guineans also enjoy a vibrant and growing independent press, though distribution of newspapers--state-owned or private--barely reaches beyond Conakry. We propose some suggestions for pursuing further options in supporting the independent press. But the real need in Guinea is for freer airwaves, given the country's low level of literacy. At present, government controls all broadcast media, and the team saw little evidence that domestic independent radio or television would be allowed in the foreseeable future, though the government seems somewhat more open to allowing international broadcasting access to Guinean airwaves. Local observers we spoke with, however, were adamant that while international broadcasting would surely improve the information deficit in Guinea, it would not be capable of addressing the difficult political issues that Guineans face. Local private broadcasting, especially radio, we were told, could make a real difference in the amount of political

information and debate in the country. We recommend that USAID pursue any opportunity to support the idea of freeing the airwaves to private domestic broadcasters, through policy dialogue and perhaps even through creative uses for government-owned community radio (civic education, etc). Independent television broadcasting would also add to the freedom of information and ideas, though it reaches a significantly smaller audience than does radio.

The strategy also proposes limited assistance in the area of rule of law, but it should be emphasized that the activity proposed--translation and dissemination of laws and summaries of laws--is aimed at meeting a specific stated need of the local and national groups that are at the center of the strategy. It was pointed out in several meetings with NGOs that they need to have better access to the provisions of law regarding their activities. It is not an overall strategy for improving rule of law in Guinea. This is a very large need in Guinea, but beyond the capabilities of USAID's limited resources at this time. From our consultations, we have the sense that nearly everything in the judiciary needs improvement, from the quality of judges to the quality and distribution of court facilities. While this is a fundamental shortcoming of the conditions for democracy and governance in Guinea, we believe that before major efforts to reform the judicial system are undertaken, it is more important to build up Guineans' capacity to participate in the making of laws and to address themselves to the legal system. Such prior developments would also contribute to improving incentives for government to hold its own accountable for legal infractions.

We also point out that since no member of the team is an expert in the legal sector, we could not offer the mission well-developed recommendations for assistance. Rather, we have taken the approach of soliciting views about the legal and judicial framework from many government and non-government representatives, and we have identified a specific target of need that addresses a specific aspect of the overall problem of accountability and participation in Guinea. If it is determined that broader assistance in legal reform is necessary, we recommend a more complete evaluation of the needs of the judiciary and the broader legal sector be conducted.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

The central assumptions on which this strategy is based are 1) that citizen empowerment in Guinea is best achieved through organizational development, civic education and advocacy based on tangible interests of small groups, and 2) that this community-level approach will yield positive and cumulative results over time in the form of a more active citizenry participating in a more democratic and open society, as well as generating more resources and employing them effectively. The risk of this approach, of course, is that progress may be slow, unspectacular and susceptible to reversals, particularly in the shorter term. Success also depends on government willingness to allow activities which may seem to threaten its hold on power. In addition, this approach is labor- and time-intensive, both for implementers and participants. Yet, for all the reasons cited above, we believe that this locally-oriented approach, in combination with strategic assistance at the national level where possible, holds the best possibilities for long-term sustainability.

Following from the labor-intensive nature of this kind of approach, and also from our assessment that any DG interventions, perhaps particularly for elections support, will require extensive

negotiations between USAID and the Government of Guinea, a further critical assumption is that USAID will have a full-time DG officer and team to oversee the process

Democracy in Guinea also faces the risks of military intervention and ethnic conflict. The predilections of the military for either intervention through a coup or further disorder along the lines of the February mutiny are not clear, but any activity that mobilizes Guineans for change should be evaluated in terms of its possible contribution to discontent in the military. Ethnic tension is a more clear concern, as many of the current political parties--and divisions within some of them, including the ruling party--follow ethnic lines. National law does not stipulate that parties have a minimal "national" presence. Thus electoral competition in particular is bound to be fraught with ethnic overtones. Local organization activities could also have an ethnic aspect, especially if it translates into advocacy and mobilization above the local government level. The best antidote to the first problem of ethnicity is probably transparent elections, though even transparency cannot guarantee acceptance of results. The second problem can be ameliorated by careful geographical and cultural distribution of local-level activities. This approach could provide an additional benefit for USAID and others working in Guinea by offering the possibility of comparing the success of different types of organizational approaches in different cultural and economic settings.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT #1: IMPROVED LOCAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT

Statement of Intermediate Result

Proposed IR: Improved local governance through grassroots empowerment. This IR constitutes the major component of the DG strategy, which seeks to increase responsiveness of governance through citizen advocacy. By building on community activities already being fostered through other SOs and supporting new ones, the program under this IR would 1/empower citizens through strengthening their grassroots associations, 2/ foster effective linkages between local associations and local government through citizen advocacy, 3/ increase responsiveness and transparency of local governance, and 4/ encourage dissemination of the resulting good governance models. Activities under this IR would focus on improving the internal practices and capacities of local associations, but with an explicit aim at creating more effective linkages between local associations and the governing bodies that affect their ability to achieve their goals.

Problem Analysis

The team believes that the sustainability of the democratic process in Guinea will largely rest on strengthening representative local institutions through the empowerment of grassroots communities.

The overall logic behind this approach is presented in the introduction. We simply point out here that

it is widely accepted that representative local institutions are better placed to solve local problems than centrally appointed officials. Moreover, local institutions are more accessible and have more relevance for most people, especially in poor, predominantly rural countries. We propose approaching the problem of improving the performance of these institutions through strengthening local associations because we see the need in Guinea for individuals 1) to have a tangible interest at stake to encourage willingness to speak out, and 2) to have an organizational network behind their advocacy, both to support individuals who do speak out and to serve as a training ground for more active participation in public life.

It is probably on the above assumption that GOG after the 1984 military coup initiated a policy of deconcentration and decentralization in Guinea. Through a series of ordinances and decrees between 1985 and 1991 the country was reorganized into communes (in the urban areas) and *communes rurales de developement (CRD)* run by elected local government bodies (*conseils communautaires*) (See Annex for more details). Although those local government bodies lack fiscal autonomy and a separate legal existence, they have contributed to the on-going decentralization process in Guinea, which is the second oldest experience in the region, after Cote d'Ivoire. Although decentralization in Guinea has been initiated from the top it has in some cases contributed to the grassroots' taking initiatives and making decisions on local matters. Much more needs to be done, however, before local governments throughout the country effectively serve their dual purposes of local representation and local administration.

For the past 15 years and even more since the beginning of the democratization process in 1990, a Guinean civil society has emerged and is very active both in the cities and in the rural areas. A large number of grassroots associations are involved in a wide range of economic and social activities, including small business/micro-enterprise, horticulture, environment protection, training/extension, etc. These different grassroots associations have become donors' focus for assistance. USAID for instance has worked with grassroots associations in micro-credit activities (the PRIDE project), democratic governance training (the CLUSA project), natural resources management.

Gathered evidence from field investigations revealed that there remains a disconnection between representative local government institutions and the grassroots associations. One aspect of this problem can be seen in the fact that the *Conseils Communaux* and the *Conseils Communautaires* are mostly controlled by elderly and the village notables while economic activities are dominated by women and the youth. Empowering grassroots associations will strengthen their ability to participate in local government bodies, the end-result being better solutions to local problems and better representation of marginalized groups in government. A further result should be that local government bodies will become a more integral and legitimate part of the national governance structure.

Critical assumptions

The essential conceptual assumptions behind this activity are that citizen empowerment can be achieved through local associations, and that such empowerment will result in more active, participatory governance processes.

In addition, this program assumes that locally-elected governing bodies will remain an integral part of the Government of Guinea's decentralization plans. At this time, Conseils Communautaires and Conseils Communaux exist without a legal mandate, since elections have not been held on the specified timetable. There has been no suggestion that these elections will not be held in the future, but evidence that the process is going to move forward would be an encouraging sign. It will be important to follow the outcome of the current proposal before the National Assembly that would change the method of selecting secretaries-general of the district and quartier councils from election to government appointment. The outcome of this proposal should provide some insight into the government's desire to control local representation.

The proposal also assumes that citizens want more from government than they are currently getting, and that they would be willing, given the necessary skills and encouragement, to advocate for change.

Causal relationships

Democratic governance training of grassroots associations will lead to more participation, transparency and accountability within those associations. Giving assistance to economic and service provision activities carried out by these associations will provide more incentive and enhance the sustainability of the DG activity. Based on this assumption it can be argued that stand alone DG activity could be short-lived.

Commitment and capacity of other donors

The French remain the major donor to decentralization, yet their assistance is largely concentrated at the central level, that is providing equipment to MATD and short-term staff training. In collaboration with the CENAFOD, a local NGO, the Canadian Government through the Centre Canadien d'Etudes et de Cooperation Internationale (CECI) is providing training to elected officials from 13 CRDs in the Moyenne Guinee (see Annex for further details). The training curriculum includes understanding of local laws and regulations, management of local resources, project design, and democratic governance.

The UNDP is supporting grassroots associations through the "Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base" (PAIB). The program consists in providing technical assistance (training and alphabetization) and micro-credit. However it should be mentioned that the PAIB project was initially scheduled to close by end-December 1996. A June 1996 impact evaluation team recommended that the project be extended for one year, a recommendation which was accepted. Building on that experience UNDP has planned to have a comprehensive DG program which would involve buy-ins from various donors in Guinea. At the same time, UNDP is also developing a new strategic plan for the next five years, so it is not clear how preexisting programs will fit into any new framework that emerges.

GTZ has mostly adopted a cross-cutting approach in dealing with DG. It has introduced DG components into its support to health and micro-enterprise programs.

Finally it should be noted that the above are low-budget and geographically-limited coverage programs, using the services of international NGOs/PVOs which in turn subcontract with local NGOs.

Illustrative approaches

Programs under this IR would seek to develop both the internal capacities of local associations and their ability to affect local governance through support and training for internal democratic practices, advocacy skills training and civic/legal education. This could consist of adding new activities to existing USAID community organization programs (health management, commodity production/marketing, natural resources management) and/or seeking new associations based on different types of interests (e.g., women, neighborhood improvement, literacy). The selection criteria should include cultural differences (particularly differences in social relations of production and patterns of political recruitment), geographical distribution (including rural-urban), socio-economic differences. Other criteria could also be based on the perceived degree of commitment of local governing bodies to improve their capacity and performance. Whether USAID decides to select on the basis of local associations or on the basis of local government interest is mainly a policy decision, though we would suggest in any case building on existing momentum rather than attempting to jump-start processes where they have not already begun on their own.

Potential partners CLUSA and AFRICARE have acquired a commendable field experience in Guinea and in the region in general. Other USPVOs include VITA and ATI. Subcontracting with local NGOs would strengthen their own capacities as well as build on the connections they already have in the country. Local NGOs with experience in local development include CENAFOD, OVODEC, UEPD, UGVD (See Annexes for more details on these groups).

Programs to achieve results under this IR would have two aspects. Grassroots associations would be involved in income-generating, service provision/management, or other interest-based activities on the one hand, and these associations would be provided with training in democratic practices and advocacy skills, as well as information about their legal rights and responsibilities and the roles of governing bodies they deal with, on the other. Bridging the "empowerment gap" between the grassroots associations and the local government bodies is an integral aim of the proposed strategy, and of projects under that strategy. The DG project would not just assume spillover effects from strengthening local associations through other sectoral programming, but would add specific activities assisting local associations to achieve real changes through their local government bodies.

A final step in this process could be the investment of resources in training and institutional capacity building for local government bodies themselves.

In order to increase the impact of activities under this IR, we suggest additional activities should be undertaken to share experiences and successes with other communities and government entities. Activities to promote this "demonstration effect" might include regional fora on local government practices, fora for associations (organized at the CRD level, for example), or inclusion of local government officials in monitoring good governance achievements.

A further element of programming should be careful donor coordination in order to complement and not duplicate efforts. In addition, consultation among donors should look to learning from the different approaches being used for local development and governance.

Sustainability

Sustainability should be a direct result of this IR, as local associations mobilize their own resources more effectively and become vested in the process of participatory governance. Efforts to achieve the "demonstration effect" discussed above should also enhance sustainability.

Periodic media coverage in the form of documentaries (TV and rural radio) could also be encouraged to help inform other associations/CRDs of achievements.

Use of ATLAS/AFGRAD/IYP alumni: USAID has invested in the training (long and short-term) of hundreds of Guineans both in the US and elsewhere in Africa. Some of those alumni now hold important political and senior administrative positions in the country. Well-organized and integrated into networks they could be of important help in supporting AID's initiatives in Guinea.

Internet: Guinea is one of the partners in the Leland Initiative. As the latter is planning to apply Internet to decentralization West African region-wide, the IR's networking aspect could be further strengthened.

Possible Indicators

- * number of local associations practicing internal democracy
- * representation of youth/women in the Conseils Communaux and Conseils Communautaires
- * a measure of citizen advocacy to councils--i.e., number of decisions made with input from assisted groups
- * citizen understanding of the role of the councils

[A note on timing: Given pre-existing differences in local associations' capacities and local government bodies' institutional capabilities, results in terms of advocacy and greater representation on local councils may take much longer to achieve in some cases than in others.]

INTERMEDIATE RESULT #2 IMPROVING GUINEA'S POLITICAL PROCESS

Statement of Intermediate Result

There is a need to improve Guinea's political process. Work with the population on the receiving end of Guinea's laws and administrative practices can be complemented by efforts targeting decision-makers at the national level. Potential activities will focus on the support of the National Assembly and the increase of popular participation in the political process via transparent, competitive elections.

Activity in this area is intended to improve the National Assembly's capacity to professionally analyze and prioritize agenda items. Another potential outcome of this support is the creation of a legally--and financially--autonomous election administration. A related anticipated product of assistance in this

area is the promulgation of a revised election law and instructions that foster the transparency of Guinean elections at the national, regional, and local levels. Activities designed to achieve this intermediate result can be customized to fit within all sectors of USAID/Guinea's program over the period covered by this strategy.

Problem Analysis

The National Assembly Guinea's 114-member National Assembly is poised either to provide dynamic leadership into the 21st century, or to become an ineffectual but personally lucrative club for the leaders of the political class. An operational, and well-informed Assembly will advance the establishment of a real balance of power within the government. As the Assembly gains standing and as the population's awareness of the Assembly's potential increases, there will be more interest in the role of local government as a means of accessing the Assembly. At the same time, one can expect the gradual shift in the understanding of the legal--versus the actual and/or perceived--role of the tutelle as a result of activities like those proposed in the other IR's in this strategy.

The Assembly is receiving limited support from a number of donors. However, much remains to be accomplished. USAID is well-placed to engage local and international organizations and individuals to assist the Assembly in the expansion of its analytical capacity. If successful, this assistance could be reconfigured for application at the regional and local levels, where similar needs exist. As exhibited by the recent visit to the United States by the National Assembly President and several of his colleagues, the Assembly's exposure to the workings of their counterparts outside of Guinea stands to have a positive and lasting impact. Suggested activities aimed at strengthening the Assembly's role in the government and in Guinean society are discussed later in this section.

The Electoral System Two years after Guinea's last national elections, the issue of election administration continues to dominate conversations inside and outside of Conakry. There is widespread agreement that both the presidential and the legislative elections yielded flawed outcomes. A programmed event, elections serve as a mechanism for the peaceful and timely transfer of power to individuals or groups that have the support of a majority or of varying percentages of the population. To be successful, elections must be organized in order to allow maximum participation by the eligible electorate and to yield a result meeting the approval of both winners and losers. The presidential, legislative, and local elections conducted between 1993 and 1995 illustrated the need for substantial legal and procedural improvements in order to put into place a process that strengthens, rather than diminishes, Guinean democracy.

To date, Guinea's elections have not been free of manipulation by the Guinean administration or by the political class. These manipulations have been compiled in reports generated by domestic and international organizations that have had the opportunity to monitor one or more of Guinea's elections. In 1993, the GOG, in response to encouragement from inside and outside of the country, facilitated the establishment of a national election commission (NEC). This commission was designed only to supervise the conduct of the presidential and legislative elections by Guinea's Ministry of the Interior and Security. Created by presidential decree, the NEC possessed no formal legal or financial foundation. Its over 60 members drawn from the Guinean government, political parties, and civil

society, were appointed by the interior minister and approved by the President

Despite its organizational shortcomings and limited mandate, the NEC established itself as a potentially credible "moral guarantor" of Guinea's electoral process. Citing the lack of timely preparation for the December 1993 presidential elections by the interior ministry, the NEC joined a diverse group of civil society groups and political parties in demanding their postponement. Ignoring popular opinion, President Conte ordered that the elections take place as planned. The NEC publicly refused to assume its mandated oversight role. The flawed results of the presidential election generated strong domestic and international criticism. The Commission did oversee the June 1995 legislative elections. Their procedural and legal role was governed by the presidential decree forming the NEC, and was further minimized by the Ministry of Interior and Security. However there was no way to control for the Guinean public's memory of the NEC's stand in December 1993. Many Guineans acknowledge that the presence of the NEC members at the national and constituency levels diffused numerous conflicts over the period of the legislative elections.

Guinea's first elected multiparty National Assembly took office on August 11, 1995. With the election fresh in their minds, groups within and outside of the Assembly called for substantive revisions to the electoral process. The concept of the professionalization of Guinea's electoral system prior to the next presidential elections scheduled for 1998 has received bi-partisan support within the National Assembly. This support has drawn attention specifically to the ongoing power struggle within the majority party. President Conte and the leadership of the majority PUP-PCN have spoken out against the creation of an independent commission, citing the lack of a role for such a commission in France, the United States, and other western nations. National Assembly president, and former PUP-PCN Secretary General, El Hadj Biro Diallo has indicated his support for the establishment of an election commission in the interest of transparency.

The polarized nature (along philosophical and perhaps also ethnic lines) of the debate over the election commission suggests that more time is needed to develop a consensual approach. USAID can play a role in developing that consensus through the support of a series of activities designed to foster an inclusive debate on the administration of future elections in Guinea. These activities are discussed below.

Causal Relationships and Critical Assumptions

Causal relationships Developing the capacity of the National Assembly and building popular confidence in Guinea's electoral process will strengthen Guinea's fragile democracy. The capacity of the Assembly may be enhanced through its exposure to the practices and successes of similar groups. Building confidence in the electoral process will develop with the gradual professionalization of Guinea's election administration, and with the education of all actors in the political process--citizens, administrators, elected officials, aspiring candidates, and civic organizations--of their responsibilities and rights within a competitive, participatory political process.

Critical Assumptions (1) Government leadership seeks to achieve the balance of powers between branches of government as set out by Guinea's Constitution, (2) the Government of Guinea is

committed to supporting the administration of transparent elections at the national, regional, and local level, (3) civil society is capable of playing at least a minimum role in election administration, (4) transparent elections are a key condition for sustainable democracy in Guinea, and, (5) local and international resources to support qualitative improvements of the National Assembly and the election process will be available and provided in a timely manner

Commitment and Capacity of Other Development Partners

The National Assembly benefits from assistance provided by a number of international donors. It is reasonable to anticipate that those groups, including the European Commission, the French Cooperation, the United Nations Development Program, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation will continue to provide technical and/or material assistance through direct assistance, exchanges, and conferences. Based on experience elsewhere on the African continent, if Guinea were to make substantive moves toward the establishment of a legally and financially autonomous election authority, a number of multi- and bilateral donors would support the effort. Between 1993 and 1995, the European Commission provided substantial support for the development of Guinea's computerized voter registry. For its 1995 activities, the NEC received financial and material support from the EC. The United Nations Development Programme has been involved in providing human and financial resource support to the organization of both the 1993 and 1995 elections. It is reasonable to believe that both will be involved in the support of an election administration that meets the requirements of the majority and the opposition political parties.

A number of non-US foundations and bilateral donors will find it easier to justify their involvement with the establishment and support of an autonomous election administration. Elections Canada, the Sweden-based International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance, and Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation number among some of those groups. Finally, several US foundations offer expertise in the areas of election systems design and election administration, including the members of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening.

Pending the establishment of an autonomous election authority, there exists the opportunity for the support of useful dialogue between Guineans. This dialogue is necessary to build consensus around a model for Guinean election administration. The target population for this exercise should be the National Assembly, select appointed and elected officials, Guinean NGOs and the Guinean press. Among Guinean NGOs, AID-Afrique, COFED, AFJG, OGDH, and AGDH have expressed interest in being involved in this discussion. A recently accredited NGO, the Guinean Electoral Assistance Office (Bureau Guineen d'Assistance Electorale--BGAE), stands to play a role as well. There is reason to question the capacity of these organizations to support national, or even regional initiatives. Most have small memberships. Some key individuals are involved in more than one group. The facilitation of the participation by local groups calls for substantial institutional and logistical support to be provided by the donors.

Illustrative Approaches

There are numerous activities that could be undertaken to improve the quality of Guinea's political

process. Listed here are activities that could be considered for implementation soon after the adoption of the strategy.

Organization and facilitation of a series of workshops on national election administration The opportunity remains for discussion on the design of the administration of Guinea's future elections. Interest in continuing dialogue has been expressed among Guinean opinion leaders. The President and the majority party have pronounced themselves as opposed to the creation of an independent election commission. However, the majority leadership admits that there is a need for future elections to be transparent and to yield results that are acceptable to the population. Presently, the Majority is prepared to completely disregard the proposed text calling for the composition of a national election commission submitted by the opposition. It is apparent that any piece of legislation proposed within the National Assembly is seen as a partisan submission, regardless of the content of the text. Once in place, the long overdue Economic and Social Council may provide a venue for a political debate on issues such as election administration. In the meantime, the organization of one or more working groups on election administration involving elements of the National Assembly, qualified Guinean civil society groups such as those mentioned above, and international specialists may prove to be the most timely approach. Crucial to the workshops' success is not only the selection of the proper mix of participants and facilitators, but the timing of the event(s). The workshop should be organized when the National Assembly members are convening in Conakry for the next session. The first activity might be scheduled for September/October 1997, two weeks or one month prior to the opening of the Assembly's budgetary session. A second workshop might take place during the session. If, following the second workshop, there has been no movement on the submission of a new law to the Assembly, and if it is determined that the space for debate remains, a third workshop could be organized near the end of 1997. It is important to encourage the establishment of a new election administration body by as early as possible in 1998 to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the December 1998 presidential elections.

The first workshop could involve a review of election administration practices across sub-Saharan Africa. It is recommended that with each successive event, that the focus of the program gradually be shifted solely to Guinea. The support of this activity could be shared with other donor groups working in Guinea such as UNDP and Freiderich Ebert.

Support of "issues briefings" for the National Assembly In reviewing the pending legislation to be discussed by the National Assembly, a tendency was noted for the Assembly members to focus first on who submitted the project, and second, on what the project actually says. Once aware of the content of a document submitted to the assembly, USAID, coordinating with the heads of the National Assembly and the Assembly administration, could offer resources for the support of issues briefs for the Delegates prior to their discussion of such matters as regulation of natural resource use, tax structures, vaccination programs, health care, and elections administration. Depending on the subject matter, the briefs could be facilitated by local, regional, and/or international specialists, in partnership with local or regional interest groups. This unique approach can aid in counteracting the personalization and partisanship of Guinean politics.

Support of regional and international study tours for elements of the National Assembly and of the

election administration body A number of Guineans in key positions in government and the private sector have benefited from being participants in US exchange visits supported by USAID and USIS. These visits have achieved notable results and should be continued. Regional visits should be considered given their ability to present situations that are closer to home in terms of resource availability and government-society relations. International NGOs with experience in Guinea should be encouraged to include Guineans on election observation missions and visitors programs as appropriate.

Encouragement of the conduct of elections outside of the realm of national and regional politics in the classroom, in local associations, in professional associations and organizations One of the shortcomings of elections that are organized by a government ministry is that they are seen by the public as mysterious events. The conduct of elections with a secret ballot at the local level will increase the population's understanding of election mechanics while "demystifying" some elements of the process. The introduction of competitive elections for things as simple as cleaning the blackboard at the end of the school day can have a far reaching impact. Increasing the population's familiarity with elections will serve to reduce apprehensions and tensions on election day. Activities under IR1 should provide an important starting point for this kind of practice.

Development of a domestic election monitoring capacity With time, Guineans will demand accountability of not only their elections, but their government. A first step in developing this capacity can be the training of local NGOs in the techniques of election monitoring. As mentioned earlier in this section, the limited capacities of Guinean NGOs dictate that their involvement in any activity will require technical, material, and financial inputs. The establishment of an indigenous election monitoring network can enjoy a number of secondary and tertiary impacts in the areas of NGO capacity building and civic and voter education. Again, USAID's many points of contact among local associations might offer a foundation upon which to establish this network.

Assistance with the design of Guinea's national election administration A resolution to the question of how Guinea's future elections will be organized and by whom may or may not come out of the election administration workshops mentioned earlier. Assistance with the design of a new election commission can be provided within or outside of the workshops. A solution to this polarized issue will require a good deal of negotiation between Guinean decision makers and between them and donors who have particular interests in what they assist financially. USAID has a comparative advantage in the provision of technical support to the effort to create a new commission. The political climate surrounding this issue suggests that USAID consider coordinating its efforts with one or more donors active in Guinea that are experienced in technical election assistance, such as Canada, Germany, EC, or UNDP.

The old NEC's lack of legal and financial standing was one of its key weaknesses. The key to the commission's successful creation is its empowering legislation. The commission's structure and terms of reference should be laid out in that law. The law must also clarify to whom the commission is ultimately responsible.

The election commission membership could be composed of some mix of individuals nominated by

the National Assembly, the administration, political parties, and civil society. To diminish the politization of the commission, political parties could be asked to nominate individuals who are not card-carrying members of any party, but who have the respect of the parties. For the sake of efficiency and effectiveness, the total number of commissioners needs to be kept as low as possible.

Based on conversations held to date, it should be anticipated that it will be impossible not to include the Ministry of the Interior in the conduct of Guinea's future elections. The legal and financial structure of the commission can be shaped to limit the Ministry's contribution to transport and logistics. To further remove the commission from the shadow of the administration in general and the Ministry of the Interior in particular, the National Assembly could be asked to appoint the commission's director general, the commission's operations point person.

An inter-party advisory committee could be established to provide the political parties with a mechanism to monitor the commission's work. This structure also provides the commission with a mechanism via which it may more easily communicate with the political parties.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT #3 SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL¹

Statement of the intermediate result

Empowered national civil society organizations capable of (a) playing a more efficient public advocacy role, and, (b) catalyzing broad-based participation in decisionmaking processes

This intermediate result clearly supports the Mission DG strategic objective which is to pursue greater citizen participation in governance at local and national levels. First, a more vibrant civil society creates conditions for increased accountability and transparency at all levels. Secondly, civil society is one of the main communication channels between the citizenry and elites. The raison d'etre of civil society is to make sure that decisionmaking processes are informed by popular needs and concerns, and that citizens are educated about their rights and duties. A strong and well structured civil society is therefore a precondition for the formation of a credible public opinion, and the emergence of a democratic culture.

Problem analysis

The democratic transition in Guinea is contrasted and fragile. Its fragile nature --clearly shown in occasions such as the February 1996 mutiny and upheavals following or preceding major recent elections-- calls for a strong pro-democratic coalition which would serve as a dissuasive force capable of preventing risks of restoration of a despotic regime.

¹ For more details on the analysis and recommendations made in this section see Annex 2.

The democratization process is contrasted because of the huge discrepancy between the legal and regulatory framework, on the one hand, and actual practices on the other. In Hansen's "democratization ladder"², Guinea could arguably be considered as a country in the late or the consolidation phase of the transition to democratic governance, if are only considered the legal and regulatory framework. But, if assessed on the basis actual practices, the DG context in Guinea would be more close to the "early transition phase". In such a context, efforts should be directed primarily to rule enforcement -- which does not mean that improvement of the legal framework for democratic governance is not important. Indeed, the implementation of existing laws provides the building blocks for further improvements in the legal framework.

Rationale for supporting civil society at the national level

The weakness of civil society, and especially of civic advocacy organizations, is one of the most plausible explanations of the gap between the legal framework and democratic practices in Guinea. The fragility and the vulnerability of the democratization process in Guinea also result from the immaturity of civil society organizations and their inability to create a strong and dissuasive pro-democratic front.

In this section, civil society refers non-state organizations engaged or which could take part in activities aimed at improving governance and consolidating the democratization process. Organizations of this nature include civic advocacy groups such as human rights and pro-democracy groups, policy think tanks, the press, etc. Most of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or organizations registered as such are already involved to some extent or could take part in prodemocratic advocacy and civic education.

The associational life in Guinea has experienced a spectacular development over the last 15 years. The NGO movement has rapidly grown concomitantly with the political and economic liberalization in Guinea. Non-existent during the First Republic, embryonic during the second Republic, the movement became a real phenomenon since 1990. Currently 587 NGOs are officially registered, of which 76 have the statute of international NGOs. In addition, there exist currently about 1500 cooperatives organizations.

Civil society organizations face a series of constraints which restrict their ability to play a more effective role in the consolidation of democratic governance in Guinea. Despite the fact that remarkable efforts have been made to set in place a relatively liberal legal framework for civil society, there is an urgent need for coordinating NGO interventions and for establishing more convivial relationships between State and civil society.

The other most common problems facing civil society organizations in Guinea relate their low level

² This heuristic device suggested by HANSEN (1996), is very helpful in comparing DG contexts in different countries. However, as the author himself recognizes, realities are generally hybrid and much more complex than the theory.

of awareness of the legal framework related to their types of organizations and to their sectors of intervention, their lack of internal democracy, their lack of unity, their lack of resources and/or their total reliance on external financial support. In addition, support NGOs are most of the time created from the top by university graduates and/or retrenched civil servants with weak linkages with the grassroots level, and are therefore unable to articulate and address community needs.

Institutional support to civil society could be envisaged in the form of training or technical assistance in order to improve their knowledge of the regulatory environment, increase their management skills and their capacity to develop proposals, identify funding sources and monitor their development activities. Whenever possible, partnership between support NGOs and grassroots associations should be facilitated. Attempts towards the formation of umbrella organization could be encouraged through logistical and financial support (renting and equipment of headquarters, funding of workshops and coordinating meetings, funding of a coordination bulletin, communication connections, etc.)

The printed press, and particularly the independent press, deserves a special attention, especially because the broadcast media are under the control of the government. The independent press plays a critical watchdog role in addition of its civic education functions. But given that journalists of the independent press are at the forefront of the battle for expanding and deepening democratic governance in Guinea, they constitute the segment of civil society most exposed to the repressive machinery of the State. Their vulnerability is accentuated by the fact that, as other Guinean civil society organizations, they are generally isolated both at the national and international level, partially as a result of Guinea's political isolation during the First and Second Republic. Journalists of the independent press would be less vulnerable if coalesced with human rights activists at the national level and if well connected with professional associations of journalists at the international level. Another way of reducing their exposure is to enhance their professional skills.

Given the low literacy rate in Guinea, the most effective way for undertaking civic education is the broadcast media, especially radio. In the current context, the only authorized broadcast media --the national radio and TV and rural radios-- are under the control of the government. However, a bill for the liberalization of the broadcasted media in Guinea recently submitted by Opposition Deputies is being reviewed by GOG and the National Assembly.

The emergence of a strong civil society, and the formation of a public opinion are necessary for the consolidation of democratic governance. But they require sustained long term efforts to which USAID/Guinea could contribute decisively by complementing other donor interventions.

Other donors

Most donors, if not all, direct part of their development assistance through civil society organizations, especially through NGOs. The most active donors in supporting civic education and/or civic advocacy are the following:

The Canadian International Development Agency, through its regional Democracy and Media project

started in 1996 and targeting Guinea, Benin, Mali, Niger and Senegal. This project provided training to journalists and equipment such as computers to editors of the independent press. CIDA is currently reviewing a request submitted by GERDDES-Afrique for the establishment of a "Maison de la Presse" in Guinea. The Canadian PVO CECI, funded by CIDA, has been also implementing the Program for Democracy and Human Rights (PDDP) which provides institutional support to civil society organizations such as OGDH for the design, printing and dissemination of brochures on human rights in Guinea, SLEEG (teachers' union) for the development of civic education modules to be included in primary school curricula, ADIK (a local NGO based in Kankan) for the translation in local languages and dissemination of key texts such as the decentralization law and the land tenure code.

UNDP, through the Support Project to Community-based Initiatives (PAIB), which is in its final stage, has provided institutional capacity building for grassroots organizations in Upper Guinea and Guinea Forestiere. UNDP has just designed a new follow-up project which will focus on good governance and civil society strengthening.

The Ebert Foundation has been also very active in support civic advocacy groups (human rights activists and the press) through funding of study tours, participation in conferences and professional meetings at the international levels, editing and dissemination of documents.

The World Bank increasingly uses local NGOs for the implementation of some of its activities. Local NGOs such as EUPD are for example eligible to direct funding from the World Bank for building education infrastructures.

Donor efforts in providing institutional support to civil society organizations in general, and to civic advocacy groups are therefore substantial. There are however key areas where USAID/Guinea --in addition to current activities being conducted under the New Partnership Initiative-- could make a decisive contribution. Critical domains when USAID could make a difference include the need to (a) forge partnership between national-level support NGOs and civic advocacy groups on the one hand, and local NGOs and grassroots associations on the other, (b) establish and/or strengthen coordination mechanisms among NGOs, and between the NGO community, the government and decentralized institutions, (c) improve the independent press's capacity to play more effective public advocacy and civic education functions.

Illustrative approaches

We consider the following approaches as the most constructive and efficient ones for improving civil society roles in the areas of public advocacy and civic education in Guinea.

Helping establish an institutional mechanism for better coordination of activities of civil society organizations and for more systematic consultation between State and civil society. Two options present themselves in order to solve this need:

- (a) restructuring and providing institutional support to GOG's SCIO (Service de Coordination des Interventions des ONG) to become an autonomous organization in which would be represented NGO and cooperative movements as well as decentralized

institutions and relevant GOG technical divisions, or/and,

- (b) strengthening networks of NGOs such as the *Forum des ONG* or the *Bureau Provisoire de coordination des actions des ONG* in order to play coordination roles and become a forum for dialogue between NGO, GOG, LGUs and donors. Support to these networks could include assistance for the establishment and equipment of headquarters

A thorough feasibility analysis will be needed prior to choosing any of these options. For each of these options the sustainability issue will need to be looked at closely. An idea worth exploring would be the remuneration of services provided by the restructured SCIO and the consortium of NGOs to their member organizations

Strengthening of the independent press to play a greater public advocacy and civic education roles
The support to the independent press could be done by

- (a) analyzing the impact of the press and developing programs aimed at improving the capacity of the press in the areas of civic education and public advocacy
- (b) improving journalists' access to information flows at the international level through office equipment and internet connection for the Maison de la Presse (pending the outcome of the funding request regarding this issue submitted by GERDDES to the Bureau d'Appui de la Cooperation Canadienne)
- (c) Helping journalists build working relationships and strategic alliances at the regional and international levels through study tours, participation in internal fora for journalists. As mentioned earlier such types of support are of paramount importance for Guinean journalists whose relative isolation increase their vulnerability
- (d) funding of workshops and training sessions to increase journalists' professional skills. The objective of such initiatives would be to increase Guinean journalists' ability to treat adequately issues of national interest in complex domains such as economics, finances, environment, etc

Assuming that legislation liberalizing the broadcast media will be promulgated before or during the implementation of this DG strategy, USAID could support the expanded use of private radios for educating the population on their civic rights and duties, for discussing issues of community interest and for information dissemination. USAID could for example finance broadcasted civic education campaigns. In the context of the upcoming elections, voter education (by for example selected civic advocacy groups) might be considered as a civic education theme

Institutional support for selected NGOs Some of the most dynamic and/or promising national NGOs

should be provided support in order to play a greater locomotive role for the NGO movement in Guinea. Assistance to these NGOs could include equipment of headquarters, internet access, training in areas such as financial management and accounting, project design, implementation and evaluations, etc. NGOs which could be considered for this type of support include OGDH, EUPD, CENAFOD, etc. Rapid institutional assessments will need to be conducted prior to selecting partner NGOs. Selected NGOs could be provided assistance in order to meet requirements for eligibility to the direct funding by USAID.

In areas selected for grassroots-level implementation of the DG program, USAID/Guinea should encourage the establishment of partnerships between national NGOs on the one hand, and local NGOs, CRD councils and targeted grassroots associations. For example, a community council could "contract" with an NGO such as EUPD to build a school or a health center. OGDH could provide assistance to local NGOs (developmental NGOs, home-town associations, etc.) in areas such as summarizing and translating key legal texts in local languages. By forging this type of partnerships, USAID/Guinea would address the need to develop capacities of national NGOs to respond to demands generated in the area of democratic governance, and thus would solve the sustainability issue.

6 Indicators

Umbrella organization for civil society

- * a functioning umbrella organization established
- * membership of the established umbrella organization
- * level of financial contributions of member organizations
- * level of diversification of sources of direct funding

Support to the independent press

- * Changes in the perceived role of the independent press through
 - average number of copies printed and sold
 - readership satisfaction about the quality of the press (requires periodic surveys)
- * Number of State decisions influenced by the press
- * Anecdotal evidence regarding the role of the press in the areas of public advocacy and civic education
- * Anecdotal evidence of decreased harassment of journalists

Civic campaigns through private radios

- * Number of people reached
- * Among number of people reached, percentage understanding civic education themes promoted

Institutional support to national NGOs

- * improved accounting and financial management systems
- * level of financial autonomy
- * diversification of funding sources
- * improved internal democracy

- * internal capacity in project design, management and monitoring
- * Number of national NGOs meeting USAID's direct funding requirements
- * Anecdotal evidence of improved and expanded partnerships between national NGOs on the one hand, and grassroots associations and local government units in DG intervention areas

Intermediate Result #4 Access to legal information, especially for USAID's development partners

Statement of Intermediate Result

Under this intermediate result, USAID would undertake a few focused activities to increase Guineans' access to information regarding the laws that govern their lives. This would focus particularly on providing USAID's development partners with legal information regarding their organizational activities and their rights vis-a-vis authorities with whom they interact. Some activities might also be undertaken to distribute information about basic rights in a more diffuse way.

Problem analysis

This IR is proposed to fill a specific need expressed by several of USAID's development partners, especially those carrying out community-based organizational activities, for increased access to the basic information about the legal provisions governing their own activities and those of the individual Guineans participating in these activities. It is directly related to the success of the strategy, as the local and national civil society around which the strategy is built cannot function successfully if Guineans do not know and cannot get access to the laws governing their activities. Particular needs were expressed for dissemination of the laws governing NGO activities, commerce, the powers of different branches of government at the local and national level, and basic individual rights and responsibilities vis-a-vis public authorities. Not only do the texts of the laws need to be centrally accessible, but even more important is access for the majority of Guineans who live outside Conakry and do not speak or read French.

A further need has been expressed for less-targeted approaches to legal education. Especially given the success of the recent World Bank "Know Your Rights" campaign, it could be very helpful for USAID to undertake follow-up activities so that the momentum of that campaign is not lost.

As was pointed out in the introduction, activities under this IR do not constitute a broad strategy for improving the rule of law in Guinea. During the course of its consultations, the team found that the Guinean legal/judicial system indeed requires any number of improvements, from the quality of officials (it was pointed out that there has been no new magistrate added in the last 11 years) and lawyers, to the distribution and quality of facilities, to the provisions of some laws (e.g., media). Judges have been found to be politically biased in many cases. Better commercial law enforcement and efficient commercial courts would help encourage private investment. Undoubtedly, these are serious problems for democracy in Guinea, but resolving them will require large amounts of resources, and it is not clear whether institutional changes from above will fundamentally change Guineans'.

willingness to address themselves to the legal system Moreover, USAID can achieve better results with limited resources by building on its pre-existing organizational linkages and experience in community development

Critical assumptions

1) That legal rights information and education will have significant impact when tied to tangible needs and interests of the individuals and associations with which USAID works

Illustrative approaches

The following approaches have the prospect of making significant contributions to achieving this IR

Making the existing legal archive in Conakry more effective by insuring timely printing of laws and providing institutional support for archiving, sorting and searching legal texts At the moment, someone who wants to know the laws regarding NGOs, for instance can be given nothing except copies of all Guinean laws (if they are all available), through which he or she must search by hand Computerization is already in place, but the process of archiving and cataloguing legal texts has lagged far behind expectations

Translation of laws into local languages, or the production of summaries of the basic provisions of relevant laws in local languages These could be distributed to/through USAID's development partners in local areas

Public information activities such as a follow-on to the "Know Your Rights" campaign

Sustainability

USAID should consider to what degree fees for access to the legal archive or for copies of legal summaries would be deleterious to access Such charges could make increase the likelihood of USAID being able to end financial support for these activities