



**CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: April – June 2005**

**YEMEN: POLITICAL PARTY CAPACITY BUILDING  
AND WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION (04864)  
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

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**I. SUMMARY**

During the past decade, Yemen has led the Arab world in movement toward meaningful democratic reform and in prospects for a more representative and inclusive political system. Yemen holds claim as the first state on the Arabian Peninsula to enfranchise women, boasts a multi-party electoral system, and has implemented a decentralization process that included the creation of elected local councils in 2001. Its political leaders, through both actions and rhetoric, have created an expectation among the Yemeni people that they should have a say in how their country is governed. Despite these accomplishments and a stated commitment to modernization and reform, events in recent years have destabilized fragile party relations and illustrated the continuing challenges to Yemen’s democratic aspirations.

The 2003 elections highlighted challenges that remain in carrying out the commitments made by Yemen’s political leaders to implement democratic reforms and ensure a representative, equitable political system. Yemen’s female population is becoming discontented with the lack of concrete action stemming from leader’s rhetoric to support women’s participation. The role of women remains a central issue that Yemen’s political leaders will have to address to maintain the legitimacy of any democratic progress while the political implications of the April polls illustrate the need for consistent support of reform-minded individuals, both within the government and amongst political party and civic leaders.

In this context, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) launched the Political Party Capacity Building and Women’s Participation program in May 2004 to address issues facing political parties and women’s political role. This program seeks to meet the following objectives:

- To increase parties’ abilities to engage in constructive dialogue with each other, with the government and with the country’s citizens;
- To assist the country’s leaders to strengthen the representative nature of Yemen’s political party system and to improve the internal party structures to make them more democratic and inclusive; and

- To increase the ability of women to participate in the country's decision-making processes within their communities, political parties, government and as elected officials.

To meet these objectives, NDI undertook the following activities during the last three months:

- Conducted a series of trainings for political party leaders and party committees in conflict resolution and group facilitation to improve intra- and inter-party relations;
- Held consultations with political party branches in Taiz and Aden to assess the capacity of local party organizations and determine areas of need to foster political participation throughout Yemen's governorates;
- Conducted training for the women's committees of the GPC, Islah, YSP, and Nasserite parties in strategic planning, organizational development, and time management to assist them in achieving greater political participation by women and increased support within the parties for women's participation; and
- Held regular meetings with the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda (SCER) to forward the establishment of the Women's Department and the selection of a qualified chair of the new department.

Additionally, NDI carried out the following activities that contribute to the success of these programs and NDI's overall commitment to democratic development in Yemen:

- Partnered with the Danish Media consultant to inform the diplomatic community of Yemeni Journalism Syndicate concerns regarding the new media law and the lack of stakeholder consultation;
- Continued to advise and support the newly founded tribal NGO, the Yemen Organization for Social Peace and Development;
- Worked with the Chairman of the SCER to identify measures the SCER can take to enhance its enforcement role in the upcoming elections in monitoring the compliance of each commissioner with election statutes.

NDI's program is focused on strengthening the capacity of political parties and women so that they may more positively impact the decision-making process. The Institute's activities in the last quarter aimed at preparing the ground for the 2006 elections by improving the political framework and institutional environment in which parties will compete and women will campaign.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### ***Political Parties***

Of the countries in the Middle East that have committed to establishing more democratic and representative forms of government, Yemen has exhibited a relatively consistent commitment to maintaining a multi-party system. Three major parties currently play a leading

role in the country's political arena: the General People's Congress (GPC), the party of President Saleh and the ruling party of Yemen; the Yemen Congregation for Reform (*Al-Islah*), an Islamist party that comprises a sizable reform and modernist element; and the left liberal Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) which ruled former South Yemen until unification in 1990. There are a number of smaller parties which participate in the parliament and electoral politics including the Nasserite Unionist Party and the National Baath Party, although their influence on the national level remains minimal.

Despite this significant experience with a multi-party system, the ruling GPC is seen as synonymous with the government and the President's party continues to dominate the political and economic life of the country. The development of the opposition coalition, the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), which includes *Islah* and the YSP, was a step forward in the emergence of a viable opposition. GPC attempts to exploit the competitive elections environment through negative and provocative campaigns, however, led to weakened relations between the parties.

The recent history of antagonism, aggressive politicking and confrontational interactions between the ruling and opposition parties following the elections resulted in a need for trainings in conflict resolution and effective methods of communication between political parties. Following a post-election assessment and with assistance from NDI, opposition parties and civil society activists, whose rhetoric and stances toward the SCER were initially provocative, began to work more effectively to present their concepts to the SCER. The SCER has agreed to include in its recommendations for election law change approximately seventy-five percent of the ideas presented by the committee of women candidates organized by NDI.

Individual consultations with the leadership of the GPC, as well as *Islah* and the YSP, indicate that these leaders recognize the importance of and their stake in building confidence in a legitimate political party structure. With local elections scheduled for 2006, the current political environment presents an opportunity to establish a healthy and productive way of resolving conflict before another round of contentious electoral contests are under way.

Additionally, Yemen's parties continue to rely more upon connections with tribal leaders and social figures than on reaching out to constituents at the grassroots level. None of the parties articulate consistent policy positions on national issues. The GPC's failure to articulate policy direction is not surprising given the party's numerical dominance in parliament. However, the opposition has reached a sufficient level of cohesiveness and sophistication to effectively form an opposition caucus and begin to debate public policies.

World Bank and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) analyses indicate that Yemen is threatened with imminent economic collapse unless concrete steps are taken to address problems of corruption, water usage and population growth. NDI encouragement of inter-party dialogue will be a key factor in assisting the parties to move to address national issues in a more constructive manner. This aspect of NDI's work with the political parties intersects with NDI's parliamentary program. Ruling party and opposition positions are too often adopted for reasons of political expediency with little regard to national interests. By engaging in dialogue and cooperation on common goals and issues, the parties will be better positioned to promote a more democratic and representative political system.

## ***Women in Political Parties and Elections***

Women's political participation in Yemen is significantly higher than in other countries in the region. Yemen was the first country on the Arabian Peninsula to enfranchise women, and Yemeni law allows women to run for all national and local offices. The country has, in fact, elected women in every election since unification in 1990: in 1993, 21 women ran for parliament and two won seats; in 1997, 17 women ran for parliamentary office and again two women won seats\*; in the country's first local council elections in 2001, 147 women ran, and 38 won. The registration of women voters also increased significantly during the last elections, from 1.8 million in 1997 to 3.4 million voters in 2003.

Despite these figures, women's participation in Yemen's political life has been diminishing overall, rather than growing. Each parliamentary election has seen a decrease in the number of women running for office – only 11 women ran in 2003, and only one won a seat in parliament, lowering the number of women legislators from two to one. Although there is cultural resistance to women breaking into the political realm, particularly in tribal areas, recent experiences of women candidates suggests that the problems in urban areas are more political and institutional than cultural. Yemen's political parties - who failed to nominate women candidates in any significant number or appoint women to the electoral commissions for the April 2003 polls - did little to encourage women candidates or to protect the rights of those who were running.

Women's organizations put pressure on the parties and government to set aside seats for women in certain districts, but this initiative failed when the GPC refused to negotiate with the opposition on a formal agreement. Institutional barriers to women's participation also exist in the implementation of seemingly neutral regulations. Most women are forced to run as independent candidates because of the lack of party support. In the April 2003 elections, a requirement that independent candidates submit a petition with 300 signatures collected from a majority of centers in the constituency served as a barrier for women since their female supporters had less ability to move around the area.

Recently, the GPC put forward a quota initiative that calls for a 10% quota in parliament, the government and the *Shura* council and is encouraging political parties and international organizations to discuss its proposal and listen to additional ideas and suggestions. There is reason to be cautious about the sincerity of the GPC. NDI has seen previous GPC commitments to promoting women evaporate when the campaign period begins. The opposition parties, however, have read the proposal and appear to agree on its content, though they have additional demands. The YSP is pushing for the quota to be incorporated into existing law, whereas the Nasserites want the electoral system to be changed from a first-past-the-post system to proportional representation. *Watan*, an umbrella women's group established to coordinate efforts to increase women's participation in the 2006 local elections, has also presented a proposal which includes a recommendation for the creation of a code of conduct and mechanisms for enforcing the code to insure that any legal changes are fully implemented.

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\* The number of actual candidates is open to dispute. Some organizations take a more liberal approach including women who dropped out early in the campaign season.

NDI presented the SCER with draft legal language establishing the department for Women. In June, the Commission interviewed candidates nominated by NDI to head the Women's Department. It is expected that the Department will be fully functional by September 2005. Once the Women's Department is fully staffed, NDI will organize a team building, strategic planning workshop for the staff and liaison from the commission sectors.

### ***Current Political Developments***

On the elections preparation front, the SCER is moving extremely slowly. While the Chairman has agreed to take steps relating to enforcement of the law during the elections period, decisions and actions which need to be completed this summer are not happening. No steps have been taken to initiate the boundary redrawing which is required by the constitution. The SCER has yet to put forward its proposals for election law changes (some of which will affect the registration planned for January of 2006). Decisions about the selection of supervisory, main and sub-commissions, which took over three months to make in 2002, have not been taken.

The ruling General People's Congress (GPC) party formed a national dialogue committee headed by the party's Secretary General and called upon Yemeni political parties to enter into a discussion of challenges facing the country. Opposition parties responded with expected scepticism; however, the Joint Meetings Party (JMP) did cautiously welcome the call for dialogue. The JMP demanded certain points be addressed before the commencement of a dialogue, including a draft list of issues to be discussed, a timeline for the dialogue, procedures to ensure success of the dialogue, mechanisms for implementing outcomes, and transparency through media coverage. The GPC has yet to respond to these demands.

Last year President Saleh called for an amendment to the media and publication law that would end the imprisonment of journalists. The Ministry of Information quietly began work on a new draft of the law. Despite assurances to the contrary, stakeholders have not been included in the drafting process and the resulting draft has been highly criticized by journalists and internationals alike as both more repressive than the current law and filled with internal contradictions. Although the public statements of the Ministry of Information have been unfriendly toward the demands for stakeholder inclusion in the drafting process, the Ministry did tell the U.S. Embassy that input should occur when the *Shura* Council reviews the draft law.

In recent months a number of Yemeni political writers and party leaders, including a Member of Parliament, have written articles proposing a federal system for Yemen. Such proposals have been met with threats of imprisonment. In the wake of the '94 Civil War and the recent fighting in Saada, such proposals are seen by the government as a threat to national unity.

On September 26, the Defence Ministry-funded Armed Forces weekly newspaper reported that Yemen will host an international conference on democracy at the beginning of 2006. The conference will be attended by high-level representatives of the "Greater Middle East" countries, the G8, international NGOs and regional civil society representatives.

### III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### *Conflict Resolution Training*

NDI conducted a workshop in Sana'a May 2-3 on conflict resolution techniques for 18 men and women of the Organizational Oversight Committees (OOC) of the branches and center of the GPC, YSP, *Islah*, and Nasserite parties. The workshop was the second in a series organized in cooperation with the Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN) and responded to requests from political party participants in the previous workshop for targeted training for the OOCs. The workshop was designed to address the lack of problem solving techniques within the parties: Yemeni parties utilize negative messages in responding to each other rather than concentrating on jointly addressing policy problems.

The workshop emphasized the importance of analyzing the conflict and addressing the roots of conflict. Participants discussed types of conflicts, conflict resolution theory, and tools for different methods of conflict resolution. Participants committed to applying the acquired knowledge to their work within the parties and their personal lives. On June 11, the OOCs participated in a follow-up meeting where they presented a case of conflict they had experienced in the intervening time between the training and the follow-up. The case studies demonstrated where they utilized skills learned during their conflict resolution training.



“We usually don’t meet other party’s members, and when we meet we start to have clashes and conflicts ... but this workshop gathered us friendly and brotherly.”

*Eiz Aldeen Qaeed  
al Maqtari,  
Nasserite Party*

NDI conducted a workshop in Sana'a June 12 and 13 on group facilitation techniques for

“I will make some efforts to teach and train *Islah* members the group facilitation skills I learned.”

*Dr. Najeeb  
Ghanem, Islah*

members of the central branches of the *Islah*, GPC, YSP, and Nasserite parties. This workshop was the third in the LCRN workshop series and sought to improve the skills of the participants in making group work more effective, understanding group dynamics, and achieving synergy in group issues and discussions. Despite some cultural shock related to the idea that the chair should behave in a neutral manner, the workshop was well accepted by the participants. The second day was particularly successful when participants had to reach a decision jointly on a controversial issue, i.e. *qat* in Yemen, pro and contra, or whether a man

should take a second wife. A full assessment and evaluation of outcomes from the training series is scheduled in July.

As the group facilitation workshop included participant presentations, NDI was able to identify potential participants for the July training-of-trainers (TOT) workshop. The TOT workshop will provide party trainers with more effective pedagogies for extending conflict resolution and other skills trainings to their branches.

### *Building Relations within and among Political Parties*

June 3 through June 8, NDI staff completed its tour of the branches with trips to Taiz and Aden meeting with the leadership of the GPC, YSP and Nasserite parties. (Due to party reorganizing that was occurring at the same time, *Islah* branch leadership were not available for meetings.) Party officials uniformly indicated a need for computer trainings; development of women's skills to improve their political participation, as well as skills training for party members generally; member and volunteer recruitment techniques; message development and delivery training; and campaign training. A further need identified was improved communication between party branches and the center.

Women's committees indicated a need for training of women candidates and campaign workers, training on communication strategies among women and with voters, strategic planning assistance, and the promotion of a quota for women. The women's committees also highlighted a need for an awareness campaign to educate people generally about women's participation and specifically the party leadership on the importance of women's participation, as in most cases the leadership is not convinced that women have a place in politics. There is also a challenge in educating women about women's participation as many are not convinced that women could do as good a job as men can. The head of the GPC women's committee in Taiz indicated that there is significant mistrust by men toward women in the party and their demands; however, she also indicated that there is access for women to over 80% of the party's decision-making meetings, though the *qat* chews present an obstacle for some women (she herself is comfortable participating in those meetings). The YSP in Aden, to increase women's participation in decision-making meetings, agreed to cease holding meetings around *qat* chews. Similarly, the Nasserite party's *qat* chew room in their central office was converted to a proper meeting room as a result of women's complaints about the men meeting while chewing, limiting female participation. With NDI's intervention in support of the women, this conversion has happened at the center in all four main parties and is beginning in the branches.

The women's committees in both Taiz and Aden agreed to hold monthly meetings to develop unified plans to promote women's participation and recruit other women to their network. They appointed a person to maintain direct contact with NDI and to link the committees to facilitate coordination.

Echoing the sentiments of the women's committees, representatives of the Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC) in Taiz expressed a need for an awareness campaign throughout Yemen to explain to citizens why it is important to increase the number of women in politics and to inform Yemeni women of their political rights. HRITC identified the same problems inhibiting women's ability to promote increased participation which the internationals

working in Yemen have noted: the lack of cohesion and unity among women's organizations and the weakness of organizing skills. HRITC proposed holding a monthly dialogue with the Women's Network and the women's committees on political participation of Yemeni women. NDI plans to provide the HRITC with potential dates to commence the dialogues.

### *Building Women's Participation*

On April 30, NDI held a consultative meeting with the women's committees of the GPC, *Islah*, YSP, and Nasserite parties to assist the women in developing strategies for preventing inter-party struggles from adversely affecting their collaboration. The first portion of the consultation assessed the current state of collaboration among the women's committees, practical steps for cooperation, and conflict resolution tools that could be utilized in resolving issues within the network of women. In the second segment, the participants identified obstacles facing the women's committees and developed potential solutions to facilitate cooperation. The women identified the need for a further strategic planning session and support in building a solid organization. At the conclusion, NDI agreed to conduct a one and a half day strategic planning workshop and an institutionalization session. The consultation enabled participants to identify obstacles and solutions for strengthening the Women's Network and prepared them to fully engage in the longer workshops that were forthcoming.

Two follow-up workshops to the consultation took place May 28 and May 29 and were attended by 19 members of the women's committees of the four major political parties. The first day, a participant from the consultative session outlined the obstacles identified on April 30, and the workshop participants then divided into groups to prioritize those obstacles they face in reaching their goal of greater political participation for women by the 2006 local council elections. After a presentation on strategic planning, the participants divided into groups again with each group developing a strategic plan to tackle one of four primary obstacles: 1) lack of trust between the women's committees, 2) gaps in support for the Women's Network and women's committees from the individual parties, 3) lack of or low interest of Yemeni women in politics, and 4) lack of media attention towards activities of the Women's Network and women's committees. To address these challenges, the participants agreed to 1) hold monthly meetings among the women's committees, 2) hold meetings with the party leaderships, 3) submit a summary of women's committees' activities, goals and objectives to the party leaderships, and 4) conduct biweekly evaluations of their meetings to plan further courses of action.





The second day was used to institutionalize the women's network, focusing on developing a Coordination Committee. The coming year was divided into quarters, so that each party could head the Coordination Committee once. *Islah*, the Nasserites, GPC, and YSP will chair the committee in turn, with *Islah* assuming leadership in June. The Coordination Committee was divided into four sub-committees: 1) Legal and Consultative Committee, 2) Media and PR Committee, 3) Logistics and Coordinating Committee, and 4) Technical Committee. The heads and two deputies of the main committee were selected during the workshop, with the heads and deputies of the sub-committees appointed at the next meeting. To aid the selection process, each of the participants submitted a list of their skills so the appointments could be made on the basis of merit.

On June 18, NDI and Partner Aid International (PAI) provided a time management workshop for the women's committees. The workshop was built around the key concepts of 1) time usage analysis through a time log, 2) listing and prioritization of tasks to be done, 3) review of tasks with regards to importance and urgency, and 4) dealing with time wasters. Participants expressed initial scepticism regarding their ability to engage in time management; however, by the end of the workshop, all agreed that some, if not most, of the techniques introduced could be applied to their work and committed to implementing them after the workshop. A follow-up assessment is scheduled for July to determine the participants' success in utilizing the techniques they learned. An initial side benefit to the time management workshop was that women who were frequently in competitive or opponent relationships were able to share a learning experience where all were supportive of the others.

#### *Developing the Women's Department of the SCER*

With Phase Two of the Elections Support Program up and running, NDI provided the SCER with draft language for the Women's Department. An executive order establishing the department is expected to be issued mid-July.

NDI also provided the SCER with a list of candidates to head the Department. The Chief Technical Assistant for the UNDP congratulated NDI on the quality of the candidates. With the assistance of a SCER staff person, NDI also identified staff in each sector to liaise with the Department. Following the legal establishment of the Department and the hiring of all department staff, NDI will organize a team building and short- and medium-term planning retreat.

#### *Complementary Activities*

In addition to regular program activities, NDI undertook several additional activities that complement and lend support to program goals and objectives:

#### Support for Open Media Reform

During this quarter, Yemeni journalists continued their opposition campaign against the government's draft press and publications law. Under the motto: "Let's stand unified to clean laws and regulations from punishments that restrict our freedom," the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) held a meeting in Sana'a to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Press Freedom

Day, demanding the draft law be rewritten. The main concern of the YJS is that the new law is more restrictive than the current law promulgated in 1990.

In April, NDI organized a meeting for the Yemen Journalist Syndicate's (YJS) with the international community in Yemen to brief them on the development of a new media law and the lack of consultation with major stakeholders. The YJS drew attention to the fact that the problem is not solely the media law; laws restricting or punishing journalists exist in 19 other articles in the penal and criminal code. According to the penal code, the death penalty may in theory be applied to journalists in cases where information related to national security or state secrets is published. The YJS is compiling and translating these articles. Copies of the draft law are in circulation, but the law has yet to be translated. During the meeting, the YJS developed a strategy that included:

- A public campaign calling for public hearings before the *Shura* and parliament when the draft media law reaches them. Embassies would be asked to support the campaign in their private meetings with the government;
- A media campaign placing the YJS proposed law side by side with the government version of the law and drawing attention to differences and perceived problems; and
- Interviews with a foreign expert on what media laws should and should not do and a discussion of the YJS version.

The meeting benefited from training provided by NDI for the Journalism Syndicate on how to conduct a meeting, particularly one that includes the international community. NDI has continued to work closely with the Danish Joint Yemeni Media Development Programme and the Public Diplomacy Department of the US Embassy to bring media law experts to Yemen to assist stakeholders to respond to the Ministry of Information draft media law.

### Election Reform

On the elections preparation front, the SCER is moving extremely slowly. Regarding enforcement, the SCER continues to resist assuming a role other than that of administrator for the 2006 elections. During a meeting in April with the Chairman of the SCER, NDI privately laid out its concerns and stressed that the SCER's performance in 2006 will be judged on political grounds, not simply administrative ones. With NDI encouragement, the Ambassadors of the U.S. and Netherlands pushed this point in a donor meeting with the SCER. NDI reached an agreement with the Chairman of the SCER that the Commission would investigate and enforce compliance by Main Commissioners, removing if necessary commissioners found to be in violation. The Chairman also agreed that the SCER would publicize that it will organize unannounced visits to observe Main Commissioners' compliance, inform citizens how to bring problems to the attention of branch offices and Supervisory Committees as well as to courts, and make known when commissioners are punished as a warning to others.

While the Chairman has agreed to take steps relating to enforcement of the law during the elections period, decisions and actions which need to be completed this summer are not happening. No steps have been taken to initiate the boundary redrawing which is required by the constitution. The SCER has yet to put forward its proposals for election law changes (some of

which will affect the registration planned for January of 2006). Decisions about the selection of supervisory, main and sub-commissions, which took over 3 months to make in 2002, have not been taken.

#### IV. RESULTS

*Result 1: Yemen's political parties gain experience in techniques to achieve constructive dialogue on issues of national import*

##### **Indicator**

- Organizational Oversight Committees of the parties learned conflict resolution techniques to facilitate intra- and inter-party cooperation and have begun to implement those techniques in their party work.

*Result 2: Political party leaders and local branches develop strategies to improve their internal structures and communication*

##### **Indicators**

- Women's committees at the branch level established monthly coordination meetings among their parties and a strategic plan to create party and public by-in to greater political participation by women at the local level;
- Local branches in Taiz and Aden identified areas of need and requested NDI assistance in improving internal party communication mechanisms and establishing closer ties between the branches and the center; and
- The parties at the center converted *qat* chew rooms into meeting rooms to facilitate participation by women in decision-making meetings. This conversion has also begun at the branch level.

*Result 3: The Republic of Yemen Government, in particular the SCER and Ministry of Local Administration, take steps to implement electoral reforms and remove impediments facing women running for local and national office*

##### **Indicators**

- The SCER selected a woman nominated by NDI to head the Women's Department;
- The SCER is finalizing by-laws establishing the Women's Department in the SCER; and
- The SCER has agreed to exercise its enforcement role in the 2006 elections and will publicize information for citizens on how to bring grievances to the attention of branch office and Supervisory Commissions.

*Result 4: Women develop strategies to promote and improve their capacity to participate in the processes of their political parties, government, and as elected officials.*

**Indicators**

- Women party leaders prioritized the issues and problems they face in political participation and developed strategies for:
  - increasing cooperation among the women’s committees;
  - gaining at-large party support for the committee; and
  - institutionalizing the Women’s Network;
- The branch office women’s committees agreed to hold monthly meetings to develop unified plans to promote women’s participation and recruit other women to their network; and
- They have requested NDI assistance in coordinating meetings and developing their strategies.

*Result 5: Civil society organizations and syndicates strengthen their ability to engage on national issues*

**Indicators**

- The Journalism Syndicate developed a strategy to address the new media law that included:
  - A public campaign calling for public hearings before the *Shura* and parliament when the draft media law reaches them;
  - A media campaign placing the YJS proposed law side by side with the government version of the law and drawing attention to differences and perceived problems;
  - Interviews with a foreign expert on what media laws should and should not do and a discussion of the YJS version; and
- The newly established Yemen Organization for Social Peace and Development was introduced to modern conflict resolution concepts and methodologies.

**V. EVALUATION**

The level of participation and representation of political parties in NDI’s workshops is a good indication of how seriously the parties are taking party reform and election preparation issues. Previously the Nasserite party had not been so readily involved in NDI activities, but recently requested to be included in NDI party programs. The Nasserites have become active and involved participants.

In conflict resolution trainings, men and women have engaged equally in the program, allowing women party leaders the opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions while normalizing their participation amongst other male party leaders. While the conflict resolution trainings are providing practical skill building and participants are responsive in applying

techniques in daily life, it will still be a challenge for the parties to make use of these techniques when faced with difficult negotiations on electoral issues.

Visits to branch offices in Taiz and Aden have provided a clearer image of how the parties operate across the country and the level and quality of leadership at the branch level. The branch offices tend to be less equipped administratively than the center offices in Sana'a, and communication is often very poor between the branches and Sana'a offices. For some parties, the branch leadership does not appear to be as committed to improving party functions as leaders in Sana'a. The message needs to be better communicated and overseen throughout the party structure. There is a clear interest amongst the branch offices and NGOs in improving relations with each other and with their party centers. Their stated commitment to meet regularly and reach out to others is a good start. However, it will take some coordination and support from NDI and the party centers to encourage this ongoing action.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

During this quarter, NDI requested and received a no-cost extension of the Political Party Capacity Building and Women's Participation program. The request resulted from difficulties NDI experienced in securing full-time staff with appropriate qualifications to reside in Yemen at the outset of the program. Due to this delay, NDI's programming also experienced delays. The extension period will allow NDI to conduct regular conflict resolution trainings with political party leaders and party committees, especially the women's committees, to allow for continued inter-party exchanges and learning during July and August. A training of trainers (TOT) approach will enable party representatives to transfer conflict resolution skills to their branch offices, thus building a more consistent system for dealing with conflict throughout the party structure. These trainings will culminate in presentations on the efficacy of these trainings by the TOT trained party members to the General Secretaries of their respective parties; presentations will include strategies for institutionalizing conflict resolution techniques within the party.

During the next quarter, NDI will also continue its work with the government, political parties and citizens to address reform-related issues and discuss potential future steps. To support the parties' efforts, NDI will monitor the implementation of their proposed projects and continue ongoing meetings and consultations with party leaders. NDI has developed a schedule of political trainings through December 2005, which reflects consultations with the parties regarding their specific needs. For example, *Islah* presented NDI with a prioritized list of trainings in April and that list has been integrated in the party and women program activities through the end of the year. Trainings in the fall and winter will include: developing internal questionnaires, door to door canvassing, time management, message development (for individual parties), and media trainings as well as public opinion research to assess perceptions of women as local council candidates in political party stronghold and independent tribal areas.

Additionally, there appears to be a growing number of young members of the GPC from prominent families who want to see the government, and therefore the GPC, change and are approaching NDI for assistance in forwarding a reform program. They seem to recognize the serious impact of corruption on Yemen's development and one member has asked NDI to

incorporate anti-corruption programs in our program plan. NDI will continue to meet and consult with these GPC members.

The Institute will also work with in conjunction with SCER to provide training for the new head of the women's department. NDI will also push to have the department established by decree of the commissioners to ensure it continues to function till 2009.

NDI will continue to work with the women leaders from each of the three parties to monitor their progress and assist them in the development of additional programs to enhance communication between the branches and the center, in particular in pushing for the implementation of the principles of the joint declaration.

Discussions also continue regarding a series of focus groups addressing popular attitudes toward women as local councillors. Both the planned message development and door to door trainings scheduled for later in the year would benefit from the results of the focus groups.