

## **THE FUNCTIONING AND MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REVISITED**



**Report of the regional conference jointly organized by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) through its Eastern and Southern Africa Programme (ESARP) and the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Malawi)**

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## Foreword

It is with profound pleasure that I present to you this report of the regional conference of political parties that participate in the NIMD supported Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Programme (ESARP). The theme of this conference: *“The functioning and management of political parties in Eastern and Southern Africa”*, was not only timely, but also underscored the centrality of political parties as core pillars of contemporary democracies for without them (political parties), democracy is a facade. However, while political parties remain central in any democracy, we realise today that the world over and particularly so in Africa, these very important democratic institutions face enormous challenges in countering the growing public mistrust in them so that they can continue to occupy their indispensable niche in a democratic society.

Being a programme conceived by and working for political parties, the NIMD-ESARP is encouraged by the conscious decision taken by political parties in the region to take a critical reflection on themselves in such a way that they can be open to both criticism but also new ideas on how best they can improve their institutional functioning. Such a self soul searching exercise provides hope to the efforts being undertaken in the region to consolidate the democratic gains being made in the various countries. Admittedly, this is but a long walk to the better management and functioning of political parties in particular and the consolidation of democracy in general. However, even a longest journey starts with a mile.

That this conference was publicly acknowledged as a great success in terms of both content and logistics was a result of the hard work and cooperation of a number of players. Let me take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge them. As part of strengthening ownership, ESARP is yearly run under the leadership of one of the six member countries in the region (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia). This conference took place under the able leadership of Kenya through their Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD). Due to the unstable political environment that followed the December 2007 general election in Kenya, the actual conference had, however, to be relocated to Malawi where CMD-Malawi, through the winning team of its Secretariat headed by Kizito Tentani solved all the logistical nightmares even at short notice. The Directors and Coordinators of all the NIMD country programmes in the region were also crucial as they had to facilitate the composition of their respective country delegations and had, in this regard, to deal with their own dose of logistical gymnastics. ESARP receives conceptual and financial backstopping from a capable but a very small ESARP team located within the Africa Department under the leadership of Japer Veen at NIMD Head Quarters in The Hague. This conference would not have been feasible without their continued and unwavering support. I would also wish to single out and acknowledge the intellectual and programmatic guidance of highest order provided by Mr. Roel von Meijenfildt, the Executive Director of NIMD. Even when the going got tough in the last minute preparations for this conference, he timely intervened and made sure that the momentum remains high within the team. Finally, I am grateful to all the resource persons and participants for making this conference a success through their valuable contributions and active participation. It is my hope that to them, this report will not only serve as a mnemonic cue but – and more importantly- be a valuable instrument as we all endeavour to make democracy ‘the only game in town’.

**Dr. Augustine Magolowondo**

Regional Programme Coordinator-ESARP  
Lilongwe, June 2008.

# Part I

## INTRODUCTION

This workshop was part of a series of workshops run under the auspices of the NIMD's East and Southern African Regional Programme (ESARP). At the conclusion of the last ESARP workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in December 2006, it was resolved that the next regional conference examine a number of issues pertinent to the management and functioning of political parties. While previous regional conferences tended to focus on democratizing institutions and practices outside of the political party, this conference was devoted to placing democratic practice within political parties under the microscope. In pursuit of this, the conference was devoted largely to introspection by political parties of their own internal processes and practices, judging these against the precepts of democracy.

The overall goal of the workshop was to act as a forum for political parties and their collaborating partners to critically examine the salient challenges that face parties internally in their quest to be the kind of democratic institutions that they seek for society generally. It was aimed at empowering political parties to play their role as the building blocs of democracy through ensuring that they set the example for society by guaranteeing that they themselves functioned and organized in a democratic manner within their organizations. This introspection dissected and discussed the shortcomings of political parties in the ESARP region in this respect and made recommendations on how any democratic deficits could be corrected. Other issues discussed which impact directly upon parties' abilities to function as democratic institutions, were *Floor Crossing* and *Party Financing*. Lastly, the conference dissected the crisis in Kenya and its causes, and briefly examined the prospects for a peaceful and open election in Zimbabwe.

Key issues discussed were: the state of internal party democracy; the key dimensions of internal democracy in political parties; the challenges faced by parties in ensuring intra-party democracy; best practices in the region; and what role was there for external actors in this regard. The conference agenda is attached

The conference was aimed at political parties in the ESARP region and more than 50 representatives of political parties (both ruling and opposition) from six African states: Kenya; Malawi; Mozambique; South Africa; Tanzania; and Zambia. In addition, representatives of civil society organisations and other like-minded organisations were also invited. Also in attendance (as observers) were some representatives of the diplomatic community in Malawi. A list of delegates is attached (see Appendix 2).

The workshop was praxis oriented in that the experiences of the participating political parties were used to inform the discussions and complement the expert input by resource persons. A balance was thus sought between experts and delegates in the following ways:

- Every session began with an expert presentation which was responded to by a politician chosen by his/her party delegation. In this way the theoretical perspectives presented by the experts was balanced by the practical experiences brought to bear by the respondents.
- The cross-pollination of theoretical and practical experience was further reinforced by input and comments from delegates on the floor.
- The chair of each session was taken from the country delegations.

The following papers were presented:

- *Political Parties as Pillars for Contemporary Democracies: A Critical Analysis of the State and Affairs and Perspectives for the Future*, by Mr Victor Shale, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
- *Democracy within political parties: A comparative analysis of the state of affairs in Eastern and Southern Africa, its challenges and how it may be institutionalised*, by Dr. Augustine Magolowondo, NIMD
- *Models for financing of political parties: A regional comparative analysis on sources of funding, administration, management and accountability mechanisms*, by Ms. Geraldene Chaplog-Louw, Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa
- *To cross or not to cross the floor: a critical assessment of the rationale and the impact of floor crossing on party systems and representative democracy*, by Dr. Anthony Mawaya, UNDP
- *Party coalitions, elections and representative democracy: A comparative analysis of the recent experiences of the making, unmaking and remaking of party coalitions in the sub-region*, by Dr. Neo Simutanyi, Centre for Policy Dialogue
- *The process, mechanics and challenges of coalition making: the experiences of Dutch political parties*, by Mrs Sharon Dijkma, Netherlands State Secretary for Education, Culture & Science and Mrs Sharlo Esajas, her Senior Political Advisor

## Part II

### SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

#### 2.1 Official opening

The conference was officially opened by Her Lordship, Justice Anastazia Msosa, Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal (Malawi) and Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). She was preceded by three speakers. The chairperson of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy Malawi, Mr Humphrey Mvula, kicked off with a welcome to all delegates. He was followed by the chair of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy Kenya, Prof Lawrence Gumbe, who underlined some of the more important issues facing political parties both internally & externally. Speaking about the 2008 crisis in Kenya, he said that it was not just a result of the electoral crisis but was essentially rooted in a deeper social crisis.

*In the photo from left to right: Mr. Humphrey Mvula, Justice Anastazia Msosa, Prof. Laurence Gumbe and Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt*



In his opening address, the executive director of the NIMD, Mr Roel von Meijenfeldt, said that there was increasing evidence that democracy was better for the prosperity and development of states than autocracy or dictatorships. He added that the challenges ahead included the constitutional reviews underway in the region and the need to level the political playing fields. He concluded by revealing the two most important lessons he had learned in the past year. Firstly, that failure to ensure an inclusive constitutional review process supported by a substantial majority is likely to end in serious conflict at one of the upcoming elections. Secondly, that elections needed to be managed professionally and impartially and political parties need to enter into codes of conduct with enforcement mechanisms; this helps set the standards for a free and peaceful election.

#### **Keynote Address**

In her keynote address, Justice Anastazia Msosa started by congratulating people of Kenya for resolving their crisis and pronounced that democracy was on the move in Africa and that many African countries were now democracies with formal democratic institutions. And many had gone through not less than three elections since the reintroduction of multiparty politics. She argued that democracy comes with its basic virtues which make any country better off than when it is not a democracy.

She agreed that a vibrant civil society, an independent media, judiciary and legislature were important to ensure democracy. However, she pointed out that political parties were also essential to the functioning of a modern democracy. But like other institutions of democracy, political parties were

facing critical challenges. Firstly, they have been given very little attention and organizations working exclusively towards strengthening political parties are rare. She asked the conference to reflect on this and the lack of dialogue between civil society and political parties. There was also a need to address the general distrust that the public had in political parties, which she noted must be reversed.

## **2.2 Presentations and discussions**

### **2.2.1 Setting the Context: The State and Functioning of Political Parties in the ESARP Region**

The first presentation was made by **Mr. Victor Shale**, Head of Political Parties Programmes at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. The paper explored the state of political parties and their role in the democratization process in the Eastern and Southern African (ESARP) region. He said that all countries in the region had functioning multiparty systems except for Swaziland while all had constitutional and legal frameworks for the existence and operation of political parties.

#### ***Challenges:***

Mr Shale identified the following challenges facing political parties: the nature of the party system in place; a lack of ideological orientation and solid policy frameworks; poor linkages between and among parties across borders (regionally, continentally and internationally) aimed at building foundations for cross-border solidarity; floor crossing; a lack of adequate party funding; a poor record of inter-party relations such as party alliances and coalitions within countries; intra-party conflicts due to a lack of internal party democracy; and a paucity of visionary, democratic leadership. There was and need to urgently address these, he said.

#### ***Solutions:***

Mr Shale posited that gender equality was imperative for intra-party democracy, but pointed out that the Southern African experience in this respect was mixed. Despite governments having committed themselves to gender equality through the SADC gender declaration, the challenge still remains immense. He said that it was imperative, therefore, that parties strive for an efficient, transparent and accountable management of party affairs, if intra-party democracy is to be established and institutionalized. Furthermore, effective and efficient management systems needed to be put in place from the village/community branches up to the national structures of parties if their management is to be adequately improved.

The **discussant, Mr Richard Kapita** from Zambia, agreed with most of the issues and challenges raised by the presenter but noted that the presentation was slanted towards the SADC region. He went on to describe the position of political parties in Zambia and said there was a proliferation of parties in the country over issues other than ideological differences. He added that the way in which some party leaders were elected was not good for democracy. Sometimes the person who is able to provide the most money to the party becomes its leader – this is especially so in countries where there is no public funding for parties. Parties become dependent on these individuals for survival.

Plenary discussions centred on the inclusion of women in important party positions and in the legislatures, as part of intra-party democracy. Delegates also remarked that floor-crossing in countries such as Zambia tends to deplete state resources because it results in costly by-elections. As part of their on-going constitutional reform process, in Zambia, it is being proposed in future, an MP should not

stand for election for 5 years after crossing the floor – in order to discourage the act. A question on the role of Chiefs’ Councils was also raised and the speaker replied that these were as important as Western democratic structures and needed to be integrated into our democracies. Replying to a question on the First Past The Post electoral system, Mr Shale said that it was not working for Africa and needed to be reformed to take account of current realities in the continent.

## **2.2.2 Internal functioning and Structure of Political Parties**

**Dr Augustine Magolowondo** made the second presentation on the state of intra-party democracy in the ESARP region. He noted that if parties were the building blocks of democracy they could ill afford to be undemocratic. Intra-party democracy, he said, was the extent to which a party abides by basic democratic tenets within its operations and practices internally.

### ***Challenges***

Formally most political parties in the ESARP region have established systems, rules and regulations necessary for democratic practice. However, implementing these systems and regulations in practice remains the major challenge. For instance, the frequency of conventions is often laid down in party constitutions but this hardly happens as often as stipulated. An innovative example of how parties seek to inspire competition for voters in its various regions was cited: South Africa’s Democratic Alliance (DA) attempts to ensure that the number of delegates from the provinces at its federal congress (convention) is proportional to the party’s electoral strength in those provinces.

While all parties are membership-based, the challenge is often that these registers are not accurate or updated: one voter often belongs to several parties as a result. Selection of party candidates can be a divisive issue where decisions by the party vetting committee differ from the membership’s wishes. So the procedures in place must produce what members want. The financial standing of members becomes critical because if they are in good standing then they will be more able to hold the party leadership to account if they are a major source of the party’s funding. Funding is important as it helps ensure that independence of parties from resourced individuals.

### ***Solutions***

Dr Magolowondo cautioned that strengthening internal party democracy requires the factoring in of the peculiar environment in which parties operate. For instance, many parties in the ESARP region were young and fragile, so there was often a need to balance the need for internal democracy against the need for unity or the party could be killed in its infancy. Also the cultural dimension in some countries resulted in a lack of women participation despite imposed quotas, and had to be urgently addressed. The legal framework within which parties exist and their funding, were equally important in influencing intra-party democracy. Another issue to be addressed was the motives that people have in joining a party; some do this for patronage and when it does not provide this it loses relevance. So the mindset of members needs to be changed. Parties also need to have operational mechanisms in place that: made their executives responsive and accountable to membership; fostered internal political contestation; encouraged participation of members in the affairs of the party; and resulted in tolerate and accommodation of divergent views.

Dr Magolowondo argued that the basic infrastructure for internal democracy can be put in place and that a functional membership database was a start for recruiting and tracking members. Also, members need to

be made relevant and able to influence policy and the election of party officials. Diverse funding sources can ensure that parties are not perpetually dependent on one person who then becomes the party leader for life and dictates policy. State funding of parties can go a long way to ensuring this; it could be tied to certain minimums – such as the number of women elected on the party’s ticket or how often they hold congresses. In this way internal democracy can be reinforced. He concluded by suggesting that the African Peer Review process could also reflect on the state of democracy within political parties.

**The respondent, Ms Magdalena Sakhaya** from Tanzania, pointed out that every five years all Tanzanian political parties have to hold an internal election for office bearers and elections are from the branches up. All parties are governed by their own internal rules and regulation, she said, but noted that there was a need for more transparency in these processes; lack of transparency was why there was so much floor crossing. More internal communication was needed to keep members informed and the methods of selecting candidates need to be revisited. A mechanism that facilitates the changeover of leadership is urgently needed. Uneven party funding is also problem as most opposition parties are badly funded – so that the ruling party can offer funding to attract opposition MPs and members.

The discussion from the floor raised the following issues: political parties with no connection to the people on the ground tend to disappear; some parties never even go to conventions yet somehow develop definitive positions – this was an undemocratic practice that should be stamped out; in Kenya some parties tend to die off between elections and are resurrected again during elections - so there needs to be mechanisms for giving funds to parties - with a fair minimum allocation to all; not all parties should automatically receive public funding, they must prove support; a larger survey needs to be undertaken on internal party democracy in the ESARP region. The ideology of political parties needs to be developed as part of its identity in conjunction with its members. Regular internal party elections for party positions is important as it allows for all the members to be united and independently of region or tribal leaning members feel integrated because of such elections. In Mozambique’s Frelimo party, such internal elections happen from the ground in the cell, which is the basis of the party.

### **2.2.3 Money and Politics: the Case of Political Party Funding**

**Ms Gèraldene Chaplog-Louw** of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, made the next presentation on public funding of political parties in the ESARP region. She focused on public funding of political parties in the ESARP region and pointed out that parties in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa received public financing, while Kenya recently passed party legislation which is still not operational. Zambia does not have provision for state funding. But even where parties are funded by the state, the criteria, administration, management and accountability mechanisms are different and none have regulations forcing the disclosure of private funding to political parties. This lack of transparency increased the likelihood of undue influence in the political process and the dangers of patronage in public appointments.

#### ***Challenges***

All political parties need to mobilise significant resources for elections and running expenses, yet most members of parties in Africa were poor and indigent hence few parties were able to survive solely on membership subscriptions: many were thus forced to raise large amounts of money from individuals or businesses (both local and foreign) as well as from foreign governments or agencies, and public resources. Without adequate funding the party structures are unable to organize and mobilize and

leaders and entrenched incumbents can establish personal monopoly over funding and stifle intra-party debate. More often than not, the rules of public funding aim more at controlling corruption than at providing adequate resources for political competition. The view that government exists to ensure technically sound administration of the funds allows governing parties to shape political finance systems in such a way as to solidify their own advantage. Often the rules laid down for funding and accounting for it are violated with impunity by all contenders. Parties with too many resources may silence competitors and become isolated from their own social bases. And parties funded from too few sources may fail to represent broad segments of the public, and represent the interests of the funders instead.

### **Solutions**

Party funding impacts on internal democracy in parties. Monetary contributions by members and supporters is an important form of political participation. Appealing to citizens for funds is a party-building opportunity which should spawn party accountability - although this is not always borne out by fact.

Adequate state funding is necessary to level the political playing field but where it is given, this must be based on a well balanced policy framework and be carefully legislated to emphasize the value of free, open political contention under citizen-ownership, adequate disclosure, monitoring and punitive measures to minimise the possibility of abuse of funding through patronage and incumbency violations. Entrenching the public funding principles in the constitution is desirable while national legislation should provide the framework for establishing the fund, its management and administration, as well as accountability for the public fund, she recommended. Accountability mechanisms to ensure transparent and democratic public financing were important; there needs to be rules on how money is contributed, raised, spent and disclosed. For political party funding policies to be democratic, essential funding for running the party should be provided both during and between campaigns so that all parties have an equal chance of success. Also, citizens' interest in financing political parties' needs to be rallied, regardless of whether public funding is available, in order to enhance political contestation and ensure strong responsible parties. Ms Chaplog-Louw cautioned that although transparency in funding was important for open and accountable politics, it could also expose contributors and political activists to reprisal and this could result in the disappearance of new groups or weaker parties. She asserted that public funding for political parties was imperative for consolidation of democracy on the continent but said that the challenge was to find the right balance between a policy framework and legislation in each country so that this will result in a levelling of the playing field while providing adequate measures to negate abuses. She concluded by pointing out that most of the ESARP countries had already begun a process aimed at legislating aspects of the funding of their political parties.

The input from the **respondent, Ms Alice Wahome** of SAFINA Party (Kenya), as well as those of the other delegates centred around the need to ensure that funding is provided equally to all parties. Accountability of public funding was important to ensure that individuals could not capture the party and use it as their personal property. There was however, general agreement that political parties needed to be funded by the public purse in order to even the political playing fields. Also, there was some debate over whether private funds given to political parties should be disclosed. The advantage of disclosing this was to ensure that parties were not beholden to a group of financial backers rather than voters. The disadvantage was that private funders who do not want to be identified because of fear of reprisals, will no longer back parties financially and this could be particularly bad for opposition parties.

## 2.2.4 Floor Crossing and the Institutional Development of Political Parties

**Dr Anthony Mawaya**, of the United Nations Development Programme (Malawi), made a presentation on floor crossing. He said that the practice was unpopular and pointed out that in a 2004 Washington Post survey, some 32% of respondents showed “some” or “strong” approval for floor-crossing, while 63% showed “some” or “strong” disapproval for it. The rationale for floor crossing was to allow representatives to represent their constituents without fear or hindrance and move according to their conscience. But this was often complicated by factors such as the defections being motivated by financial considerations rather than ideological differences. Outlining the positive features of the practice, Dr Manway said that: it allowed representatives to move to parties which truly represented their constituents’ interests; it tends to hold party leaders’ dictatorial tendencies in check; once members cross the floor, the party they left usually takes stock and reviews their way of doing things to prevent further departures; it can bring about a true representation of constituencies’ interests and lead to a more robust democratic political system.

### **Challenges:**

On the negative features of floor crossing, he said that: it robs parties of the opportunity to engage in debates that could lead to their improvement; it benefits dominant/ruling parties at the expense of the opposition. Floor crossing also had a negative impact on internal party politics. It resulted in tensions within parties that could break up some; in many cases personal interests motivate crossings and the defections weaken the party and rob it of important internal debate; it also leads to increased tensions and disagreements inside and outside of Parliament as parties which never won an election could suddenly end up with increased numbers; the absence of strong ideologically-driven political parties makes it easy for people to cross; in proportional systems there is a distortion of the balance of voter choices; the major/ruling parties gain at the expense of smaller ones; it results in voter alienation and apathy as they become disaffected with voting as a result of the crossings. He said that there was widespread antipathy towards floor-crossing in the ESARP region as this often resulted in feelings of betrayal that lead to loss of popular trust in the democratic process and voter apathy.

### **Solutions:**

Dr Mawaya suggested that there could be a real chance for significant party policy change where the law required a percentage of a party to cross – rather than just individuals - as is the case in South Africa. He agreed with sentiment from the floor that the practice should be done away with in many countries – depending on its political circumstance. He further suggested that where floor crossing occurs it should be done in an open and transparent manner and for ideological or policy reasons rather than personal gain. Also, the nature of the electoral system should be taken into account when deciding whether to allow the practice; for instance, in a PR electoral system with a fixed party list, voters give their mandate to a party and not individuals and floor crossing diminishes voter wishes and the party’s mandate.

The respondent, Ms Annelize van Wyk of the ANC (South Africa) made the point that she herself was a product of floor crossing. She said that the process was appropriate for the time when it was introduced as it allowed for people such as herself who found themselves in parties based on tradition and socialisation (as a result of South Africa’s segregated past) rather than ideological bent or principle. However, the ANC had at its December 2007 national conference decided that even though it had been the major beneficiary of the practice, it would have to be reassessed as it was often being done for the wrong reasons and negatively impacted voter confidence in electoral democracy.

Issues from the floor included remarks that floor crossing was expensive for a country when it resulted in continuous by-elections; voters also became fatigued by it. Some arbiter, perhaps the Electoral Commission or the Courts of Law, was needed to decide the validity of members' reasons for crossing. Bigger parties tended to benefit at expense of smaller ones.

## **2.2.5 The Politics of Party Coalitions and Alliances in Eastern and Southern Africa**

**Dr Neo Simutanyi** of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Zambia, spoke about the experiences of making and remaking coalitions in the ESARP region. He analysed the experiences of party coalitions in Kenya, Malawi and Zambia in the last decade and concluded that they had been dismal failures. The ethnic and regional basis of these coalitions; a culture of mistrust in party politics; and a reluctance to share power have been responsible for the failure of party coalitions. Many had been formed mainly to achieve short-term political goals such as the capture of state power – a short-term goal - rather than longer-term political considerations, can be destabilizing to the party system and affect long-term democratic consolidation.

### ***Challenges***

The challenges included: a lack of consensus on why coalitions are needed; these coalitions tend to be temporal and not based on prior arrangement by cooperating parties; they are opportunistic and intended to achieve a given objective at a given time; there is often a failure to honour coalition commitments; they are rarely based on the desire to cooperate on policy issues and tend to be coalitions of unlike-minded parties; they are often elite-led and reflect elite consensus and not popular support; dominant parties tend to marginalize junior partners; there is a lack of experience with coalition-building and absence of a culture of give-and-take, especially where ethnic grievances lead to polarized positions on power-sharing; requirements to have parties dissolve before join a governing coalition impedes coalition formation; factional struggles in ruling coalitions for access to the spoils of office; and the absence of a political culture and supportive institutions for coalition politics.

Other challenges include a lack of loyalty to the coalition but rather loyalty to personalities, aimed at ensuring access to power, privilege and material benefits and a tendency by the executive to co-opt members of the opposition into government without going into formal coalition with their parties.

### ***Solutions:***

Coalitions should be based on honest negotiations and agreements should be binding on all; there needs to be a genuine willingness to share power; ideally, they should be between like-minded parties broadly sharing similar ideological or policy platforms. Many constitutions do not have explicit provisions for coalition governments therefore it is important to have formal rules on coalition-building and coalition government to guide parties and political practice and minimize the practice of the President poaching MPs without having to form formal alliances with their parties; if parties are to be democratic internally then consultation with members is necessary; coalitions need to plan for the future of the alliance, even for the eventuality of losing an election.

## The Dutch Experience

The second input in this session was from the Dutch experience with coalition formation and operationalisation. Honourable Sharon Dijksma, the Netherlands State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science and her Senior Political Adviser, Sherlo Esajas, spoke on the extensive Dutch experience with coalition building and provided some useful pointers on how best to go about this. They explained that the



*Honourable Sharon Dijksma (above)*

Dutch political system lent itself to coalition-making since no one party was able to achieve a majority. The aim in forming such coalitions was to get broad consensus on important issues such as military missions. The secret was not to rush the process but to take the necessary time. A carefully chosen negotiation team is also necessary as is knowledge of one's potential partners – as this empowers your team to negotiate better on issues that are of importance to your prospective partners. Party should define beforehand their goals in entering the coalition, especially

what their minimum outcomes might be and if these are not attained, they should be prepared to pull out of the talks. The presenters also provided some important ground rules for building a successful coalition. Firstly, the process should not be forced or rushed - negotiations should take their course. Secondly, the coalition should be built on common ground between the partners rather on merely winning power, for instance.



*Mr. Sherlo Esajas*

Importantly, the coalition must be based on respect and trust between the partners. Finally, the chemistry between the leaders is important as it facilitates a good and enduring partnership. They said that a good negotiator was needed who can be an interlocutor between the sides in the negotiations. Parties must be prepared to make concessions – bearing in mind their bare minimums. But parties must also be prepared to take the negotiations behind closed doors when talks may get difficult, and not to emerge until the deal is sealed. The speakers then outlined three ways to negotiate. The first was by force of one's argument – attempting to persuade one's prospective partners. The second was to negotiate from a position of power where one essentially holds the better hand and can set the terms. The third and preferred method was by bargaining, exchanging and reaching some kind of mutually beneficial deal. Maintaining a coalition means having to stand by the terms of the coalition agreement and investing in your coalition partners. All partners should be given the chance to enhance their profiles – this should not be the preserve of the largest partner. Importantly, the political problems of your partner should be treated as if they were your own and you should endeavour to solve them together. Finally, the role of each coalition partner in Parliament must be clearly defined between and among the coalition partners, as well as how the coalition will deal with the opposition.

Input from the delegates in the plenary included observations that politicians in the ESARP region often tend not to stick to the agreements made and that the bigger parties in a coalition tend to marginalise the smaller parties after a while. And the coalitions tend to be made after elections when parties realise that they cannot get power alone – these coalitions have a tendency to be based on gaining state power rather

than shared principles. Also, rather than form coalitions, some ruling parties would simply entice the individual party representatives with all kinds of positions or financial considerations.

## Part III

### PANEL DISCUSSION

#### **The December 2007 Elections in Kenya and the aftermath: Lessons for the Region**

This regional conference took place at a time when within the Eastern and Southern Africa region, democracy is facing challenges. Of great importance were developments in Kenya following their December 2007 elections: the crisis and its peaceful settlement. It will be recalled that when Kenyans went to the polls on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007, it was clear that this was going to be one of the highly contested polls Kenya has had in her history. What followed after the announcement of Kibaki's victory and his swearing in ceremony is what we all know: over 1000 people died and close to half a million people were declared as 'internally displaced'. Following the numerous efforts to try to resolve the situation with a long-term perspective, a power sharing deal was finally signed and there are now prospects for Kenya to regain her strategic position in the region.

But what went wrong in Kenya and what is it that other countries in the region should strive to circumvent or adopt? These were questions that were at the centre of this two hour panel discussion that the conference organisers planned in the spirit of learning from each other and learning together. The importance of reflecting on these questions need not be overemphasised. While the holding of elections, as bedrock of democracy, is increasingly becoming 'the only game in town' daunting electoral challenges still prevail in a number of ESARP countries and the developments in Kenya only testifies to this reality.

In reflecting on these questions, the discussion aimed at addressing the following critical questions:

- i) What are the key underlying issues that led to the post elections violence in Kenya?
- ii) How do these underlying causes obtain in other countries in the region?
- iii) What role can the emerging inter-party dialogue platforms play in electoral related conflict management: The case of the Kenyan Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-K).
- iv) Building on the Kenyan experiences, what role can the international community effectively play?

This panel discussion was held in the evening and was followed by a briefing on the situation in Zimbabwe in the run-up to the March 2008 elections in that country. The executive director of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Kenya, **Ms Njeri Kabeberi**, and the chairperson of the Kenya Centre for Multiparty Democracy, **Prof Lawrence Gumbe**, said that many underlying factors in the social fabric of Kenyan society that had gone unattended for that past several decades had set off the crisis. For instance the Youths were unhappy because of having no chances for them as the elders continued to cling to power. There was also an inequitable distribution of national resources, often between the regions. The distribution of power was also an unaddressed issue – power was centralised in the presidency. Also, some politicians used this inequitable distribution of resources to play the tribal card and preached ethnic hatred. Tribalism was used by the elite to hold on to power. So the crisis was not only a result of the fact that the election had been stolen, the socio-economic issues and the flawed elections process were intertwined. The Electoral Commission and the Judiciary lost face in Kenya because they took the ruling party's side. The Police Commissioner also took the government's side.

In order to help resolve the situation, the Kenyan CMD board formed a State of the Nation Committee to work with Civil Society and Women's groups. This Committee managed to influence the agenda of the chief negotiator in the crisis, Mr Kofi Anan, especially on the point that deals with political reforms, poverty, employment, land reforms, transparency and accountability. They resorted to waylaying him in the corridors on his way to the talks. CMD-Kenya also solicited international solidarity as Kenya has submitted to International standards and protocols around democracy and peace. It provided alternative positions and sought to engage various leaders and the Anan team. It also organised meetings with ambassadors from the EU, the US and Africa. The African ambassadors have still not given them an audience. They engaged faith-based organisations, business, and the media. Also a multi-sectoral Salvation Forum comprised, *inter alia* of MPs, trade unionists; residents groups; members of the international community; members of the Peoples' Parliament and womens groups met. A draft Constitution, a Marshall Plan and a Roadmap has been produced.

Panellist, **Mr Victor Shale**, said that the electoral body was ill-prepared for the situation that arose. It had not put in place a crisis management mechanism when there were all the signs that a crisis was developing. He argued that contemporary elections could not be run without conflict-management resolution mechanisms. He suggested that the electoral processes, particularly the handling of election results, were a major factor for the conflict. The use of the First Past the Post electoral system, against a backdrop of poverty and unequal distribution of resources, tends to add fuel to fire, he argued. He suggested that in Kenya's case, diplomatic persuasion rather than sanctions or gunboat diplomacy, had won the day and restored calm, unlike the case of Iraq, for instance.

Commenting on the situation in Zimbabwe, the executive director of the Zimbabwe Institute, **Mr Isaac Maposa**, proclaimed Zimbabwe a failed state with an inflation rate of some 250,000 and unemployment at about 95%. He predicted that the upcoming March 2008 election could not be a free process. He pointed out that SADC had mandated South African President Thabo Mbeki to ensure that the election was not disputed by resolving the disputed issues around the upcoming elections. But the SADC mission resulted in failure. Of concern is that a SADC observer has already pronounced that he expected the elections to be free and fair. So attempting to come up with an African solution has had a negative impact. His assessment of the current situation was that the 'decks have already been stacked' against the opposition and this could lead to open violence in the aftermath of the results.

He reminded delegates that this was a 'synchronised election' with national, regional, local and presidential elections all in one. Yet the Electoral Commission does not have staff or expertise to handle such a wide-ranging election – so it is likely to be left in the hands of the government. Mr Maposa noted that while the security forces had so far been in the hands of the governing party the entry of Mr Simba Makoni, the support of some parts of the military forces may have gone to him: so there may be the danger of armed groups.

### **Solutions**

In the open plenary, delegates asked is it was possible to come up with genuine results in Zimbabwe and were told that it did not appear to be possible in the upcoming March 2008 elections. Mr\*\* said that if the police had behaved differently then the situation would have been different in Zimbabwe. He asked what mechanisms there were in place to handle the fallout of an incumbent losing an election – as might be the case if President Mugabe loses. There were few if any, to secure a smooth, peaceful handover, and this was needed.

Ms Kababeri noted that the constitution of Kenya had failed the people of the country when it was needed the most. So it has to be fundamentally amended so that it can work for the people in their hour of need or the crisis may well reoccur; the election was stolen and the constitution gave no clues as to how this was to be handled. And the police were part of the cause of violent actions, as in Zimbabwe, as they prevented Kenyans from demonstrating peacefully.

## Part IV

### CLOSING CEREMONY

**A joint conference statement** was crafted by party delegates in the final session (attached). The conference concluded with a vote of thanks from the chairperson of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Kenya, Prof Lawrence Gumbe, the chairperson of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Malawi, Mr Humphrey Mvula and Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt, the NIMD Executive Director. In their remarks, the three speakers noted with great appreciation the commitment that delegates had demonstrated in trying to address the daunting challenges facing political parties in the region. They also recalled with delight the role being by the newly established inter-party dialogue platforms. In the words of Mr. Humphrey Mvula, CMD Chair for Malawi: *“CMDs have been a wonderful experience. Even in times of difficulties, they (CMDs) have provided us with the opportunity to sit and talk”*. On his part, the NIMD Executive Director reiterated that whilst *“democracy may not be exported or imported, democracy can be supported”*. He further emphasised: *Democracy may not bring paradise but democracy can prevent this world from turning into hell*”. At this optimistic note, the conference came to an end.

## **Part V**

### **Documentation of Speeches Delivered**

## 5.1 Welcome remarks by Mr. Humphrey Mvula, Chairperson of CMD-Malawi

Our Guest of Honour, Your Lordship Justice Anastasia Msosa, Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission and Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal;

My Senior Chair, Professor Lawrence Gumbe, Chair of Centre for multiparty Democracy in Kenya who is also current chair of ESARP;

The Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt and your Delegation from the Netherlands;

All Leaders of the various delegations present;

Honourable Members of Parliament Present;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished participants;

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Malawi, the warm heart of Africa. On behalf of CMD – Malawi, I would like to say **TAKULANDIRANI**. CMD – Malawi and indeed all its member parties are positively excited and feel honoured to host such as very high profile conference.

The pressure, tensions and anxiety that go into pulling such a high profile conference involving multiple countries were gladly borne in anticipation of the positive outcomes that emanate from the interaction and sharing of ideas with like minded people.

Your Lordship, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, before I proceed with my remarks, I would like to ask all of you to join me applauding our colleagues from Kenya who have proved to all of us that it is indeed possible to find solutions to political problems as long as leaders are willing to burry their hatchets and allow themselves to meet in the middle – all for the sake of national unity and development. I will not dwell on this subject because I am aware that later in this program, there will be an opportunity to learn more about the experience that our Kenyan friends have gone through.

Your Lordship, ladies and gentlemen, the Centre for Multiparty Democracy – Malawi is a growing institution of political parties that are committed to the institutionalization and entrenchment of multiparty democracy. In CMD – Malawi, we believe that democracy without plurality would be a non starter. And further, we believe that plurality without well functioning political parties and party systems would equally be a futility. I am pleased to say that CMD- M serves to us as a symbol that pluralism in Malawi can work – or in simple terms that political parties who are otherwise competitors can actually work together.

In order to claim its rightful place in the political space, CMD – Malawi has been working in a number of areas. One of the highlights of our programs has been a study of voter apathy in Malawi, particularly to find the how political parties as critical stakeholders in the electoral process have contributed to this

worrisome trend. The outcomes of that study positively surprised us as political parties. That our own acts have contributed to the discouragement of the voter and thereby, the dwindling of the numbers of votes that we so badly need was a rude awakening. As CMD- M we intend to work with critical stakeholders including the Malawi Electoral Commission to see how we can reverse this scenario, thereby also working on the negative image that subconsciously portray to the public.

CMD also embarked on a training programs in conflict resolution and mediation, leadership training programs. We also took part in the Constitutional Review program, that has now reached the cabinet state. These are just a few programs that CMD has been working on.

Turning to this conference your Lordship, Ladies and Gentlemen, I can only say that this conference would never have come at the right time other than this one. Malawi will be going into an elections year, and soon, political stakes will be too high to allow us to engage objectively with issues like money and politics, internal functioning of political parties, floor crossing and issues of building of party coalitions. We believe and we anticipate that the sharing that we are going to have will give us a lot of ammunition to start engaging with these very salient issues and that ultimately they will make our democracy better and more meaningful. We really look forward to share with you our experiences, which are plentiful while at the same time, taking notes that will inform our own dealings.

Your Lordship, Ladies and Gentlemen, my role host is make sure that you are all comfortable, and not to make a long speech. But before I take my seat, allow me to repeat that you are all most welcome our country Malawi. I am aware that we had quite a number of logistical challenges particularly regarding travel, where we had to re –route of cousins from Zambia through Johannesburg; where some delegations were split in two, with others arriving way into the night like the case of Mozambique and Zambia; and some flight delays and such other hiccups. Most of the problems were beyond our control, but we tried within our limits to make you as comfortable as we could. We believe that you are all well rested and that you are ready and fit to give in your best in the coming two days.

In the event that you need any assistance, our staff from the secretariat will be glad to assist you and these will be supported by the members serving in the CMD Board.

I would like to wish you all a nice meeting. Enjoy the meeting, and enjoy Malawi.

Zikomo Kwambiri Thank you very much.

## **5.2 Prof Larry Gumbe, CMK-Kenya Board Chair and also 2007, Chair of ESARP**

Your Lordship, Justice Anastazia Msosa, Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission;

The Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt and your Delegation from the Netherlands;

The Chairman of CMD-M, Mr. Humphrey Mvura;

Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament Present;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of the various political parties present;

Distinguished participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of CMD-K and all the various delegations present, let me start by expressing my profound gratitude to our dear brothers and sisters from Malawi for the warm reception accorded to us since we arrived yesterday. It is such wonderful feeling to feel at home in another country. I must say that you have made the case for the African Union even stronger with the way you have made us feel part of this beautiful country. Asante Sana!

Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, some of you who may be very familiar with the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Programme of NIMD, that brings us together at conferences like these, would recall that at similar conference that took place in Dar es Salaam in December 2006, the idea of having one country per year, to take the lead as chair of the regional programme through its Centre for Multiparty for Democracy, where such a centre exists, was mooted and adopted. Kenya was privileged to be the first country to take up this role through our CMD-K, with Malawi as the Deputy through their CMD-Malawi. This arrangement, Mr. Chairman, goes a long way in further deepening the ownership of these regional activities by political parties since through the CMDs, we are able to follow-up as a country, some of the conclusions arrived at conferences like these.

In line with this arrangement, the country/CMD chairing the regional programme has the following as its main responsibilities:

- a) In conjunction with the Regional Office of NIMD and in liaison with the representatives for the other ESARP member countries, to identify the main theme, sub themes and prepare the agenda of the regional conference in line with the recommendations of the preceding regional conference(s);
- b) In connection with the foregoing, the chair, in liaison with the NIMD Regional Representative and Regional Programme Coordinator, facilitates a preparatory meeting with representatives from the other ESARP countries (drawn from the CMD's or their proxies) to provide a concerted advise and to streamline the preparations in a spirit of sharing and ownership;

- c) In close cooperation with the NIMD Regional Office (Regional Representative and Regional Programme Coordinator), to identify resource persons for the regional conference;
- d) To take care of all relevant logistical preparations of the regional conference;
- e) In close cooperation with NIMD Regional office, to finalise the list of participants for the regional conference;
- f) To facilitate production of the conference report.

As you will recall, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, CMD-Kenya, consequently organized a preparatory meeting which took place in Nairobi on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2007. This, Mr. Chairman, was exactly one month before we were to hold our presidential, parliamentary and local elections on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007. Unfortunately the developments that followed those elections overshadowed our own preparations for this conference. I do not have to go into the details of these developments because we will have ample time to do so later this evening when we have the panel discussion. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it was for us a very unfortunate situation to have this conference relocated. You can understand our interest and commitment to this programme and the relocation that would turn, hosts into guests, was the last thing we would have loved to see. However, we had to reluctantly accept this reality and here we are today. We are nevertheless happy that this conference has still taken place and that it promises to be a very exciting two days that are a head up of us. We are for this reason very grateful to Malawi to have taken up this burden from us at a short notice.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me get back to the regional programme as whole and give some highlights of this programme as we wind up our term as Chair.

As we know, the NIMD East and Southern Africa Regional Programme (NIMD-ESARP) brings together ruling opposition parties from the six countries in the region which have an NIMD programme (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia). The aim of the NIMD regional programme is to support inter-party cooperation, and to strengthen institutional development of the parties. By sharing best practices and lessons learned, or by addressing difficulties together, the political parties in East and Southern Africa learn from each other, and learn together.

Your Lordship, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, ESARP is therefore a forum for exchange. We see this regional programme also as a tool to strengthen the institutional capacity of individual political parties. In this regard, **key components of ESARP** include the following:

a) **Regional conferences:** Holding of regional conferences remains characteristic of ESARP. They are the climax of that forum for parties where they come together, interact, share experiences and address common challenges jointly.

b) You will also recall that we political parties had strongly recommended to NIMD that regional conferences alone are not enough if we were to strengthen our regional interactions and sharing of experiences. We then recommended that as part of the ESARP, we should have as a second programme component, **bilateral (country to country) exchange programmes** to enrich the regional programme. Under such programmes, tailor-made and carefully planned country to country visits of representatives of political parties from one country to another are being organised.

c) This regional programme to us political parties in Eastern and Southern Africa is also as a **regional 'knowledge centre'**. We hope that political parties will be offered comparative information and lessons

on themes that are of relevance to the institutional strengthening of political parties in particular and democratisation in general.

So, what can I report under each of these programme components as Chair of ESARP?

Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference is one of the important activities that we are happy to report on as having taking place under the leadership of Kenya despite the fact that it is actually taking place here. The relevance of these conferences need not be overemphasized. We political parties need to talk to each other more often than we do. We need the solidarity of each other when the going gets tough. We need to learn from one another. These conferences offer us those opportunities and we can only urge NIMD and other organisations to support us in this initiative.

The inter-country exchange programmes have been an innovation that took shape since the beginning of 2007. In this context, three exchange programmes took place in 2007: A delegation of South African political parties that are members of the South African Political Parties Forum (SAPF) visited Malawi where together with their Malawian counterparts (from the Malawi Centre for Multiparty Democracy) they shared experiences on the role of political parties (both in government and opposition) in fighting poverty, an issue that concerns the people and governments in both countries. Important here was the realisation that political parties need to get more united in addressing the plight of the poor despite being from different political divides. South African political parties had also the opportunity of discussing issues related to the institutionalisation of inter-party forums like their SAPF into a CMD.

In a bid to further strengthen youth participation in political party structures and political processes, Kenyan youths had the opportunity under the exchange programme to learn from the success stories of Tanzanian political parties. Their (Kenyan) experiences gave momentum to the participation of young people (as candidates) in the elections that Kenya was to hold in December 2007 in addition to encouraging the formation or strengthening youth wings of Kenyan political parties.

To enrich their constitutional reform debate, particularly in the area of regulatory frameworks governing political parties, Zambian political parties had a study tour to South Africa where they had an in-depth discussions with political parties there around the various party related legislations including those pertaining to party funding and party registration. This visit enhanced the role of the Zambian Centre for Interparty Dialogue as it increasingly took a leading role in constitutional reform process there.

In addition, ESARP (through its Coordinator) was also involved in the preparations and implementation of the visit of Malian politicians to Malawi which was aimed at offering Malian political parties insights into the structures and functioning of a cross party Centre for Multiparty Democracy, whose establishment was under consideration in Mali .

In a bid to deepen understanding of the state of affairs of the internal functioning and management of political parties and also as part of knowledge generation, management and sharing, the ESARP programme undertook a preliminary survey on internal party democracy in a number of NIMD partner countries. Results of this survey were presented and discussed at the 2007 Partnership Days. Since then, ESARP has become a strategic partner to NIMD's Knowledge Centre that is being developed at Head Quarters level.

As Chair of the ESARP, I am glad that we have made some progress and I hope that we will make further strides this year.

Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen, you can therefore agree that no one can now question the relevance of this programme. Our Challenge to is not to justify the cause of this programme. Rather, our challenge is to further strengthen this regional programme.

CMD-Kenya remains committed to this programme not just because we have been the first Chair, but because we see that there is great value in this forum. It is my sincere hope that our friends at the NIMD will continue to partner with us in this endeavour.

Your Lordship, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me finish by saying that as CMD-K, we are grateful for the confidence that you had hopefully you continue to have in us having taken the political mantle of this regional programme in the year 2007. Sometimes in politics, never say I will never be back. As we wind up our term, therefore, we do so with a great sense of satisfaction and hope that one day, we will be back.

I look forward to a very successful conference.

Thank you vey much/ Asante Sana/ Zikomo/ Dank/ Obrigado/

### **5.3 Remarks by Roel von Meijenfeldt, NIMD Executive Director**

#### Greetings

Your Lordship Justice Anastazia Msosa, Prof Larry Gumbe, chairperson of the ESARP network and CMD-Kenya, Honorable Humphrey Mvura chairperson of CMD-Malawi, Honorable members of parliaments present and members of political parties, dear friends and colleagues,

#### Introductory remarks

It is a great pleasure to address you at this fifth regional ESARP meeting. It is also the fifth ESARP conference I am attending.

The first one took place in 2004 in Muldersdrift near Johannesburg, South Africa and I don't know if there are any veterans of that conference attending this conference today. The first one was organized to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of apartheid and of the birth of multiparty democracy in South Africa.

It was the first time political parties from within the southern African region came together from both governing and opposition sides with the common aim to discuss how the performance of democracy can be enhanced to serve the development of our people and how political parties can improve their functions to contribute to this aim.

The first conference took some important decisions. The first was to focus the regional inter-party cooperation on four themes: the relationship between democracy and development, improving the quality of democracy, the functioning of political parties as building blocks of representative democracy, and on sharing of knowledge about the supranational agreements enforcing democratic government and adherence to human rights. Next to these four themes, which have remained the foci of the interregional cooperation, the second important decision was the establishment of the regional ESARP programme itself.

It first extended to the participating countries from southern Africa but with the joining of the Kenyan political parties from 2005 the regional cooperation was extended to include East Africa as well. Following Muldersdrift, the regional conferences took place in Dar es Salaam, Maputo, Dar es Salaam and today in Blantyre.

As you will know, this conference was planned to take place in Kenya but due to the uncertain political situation in Kenya following the recent elections, our colleagues in Malawi were willing to host this conference. With the political agreement reached at the end of February in Kenya, I obviously hope that the next ESARP conference shall be held in Kenya.

At NIMD we are immensely pleased that the Kenyan leadership reached an agreement to stop the unprecedented political violence and with the role that the leadership of CMD-K has played and is playing to keep Kenya united and to address the underlying political causes of the conflict that erupted over the outcome of the presidential elections. CMD-K could have easily been paralyzed and could have chosen to lay low for a while. But instead, CMD-K took up its responsibility from day one in forging wide coalitions between politicians and representatives of many sectors of Kenyan civil society to craft the

way out of the conflict under the banner Truth and Justice. Let me congratulate our Kenyan colleagues - in particular the members of the Board of CMD-K present and the Executive Director Njeri Kabebere - at this occasion for the responsibility they immediately assumed in addressing the crises in their country and the input they provided and continue to provide in the crucial Annan mediation process. We obviously look forward to hear more about your experiences and perspectives at this conference.

At the outset of this conference, I also like to extend a very special appreciation to our Malawian colleagues from CMD Malawi - again the members of the Board present and the Executive Director Kizito Tenthani and to the ESARP secretariat, Augustine Magolowondo - for stepping in - at very short notice - to host this regional conference. Thank you for all the hard work and dedication you have put into the excellent organization of this conference and for the friendly reception you prepared us upon arrival in Malawi.

In this introduction I like to proceed by briefly highlighting four subjects in this introduction:

- 1) the state of democracy
- 2) the achievements within the ESARP network
- 3) the recent development at NIMD
- 4) the challenges that we face in the period ahead

#### 1) The state of democracy

This in itself could be a theme to dedicate the entire introduction to. That would, however, take too much of your time. For that reason I like to mention a few developments that I consider important in the context of the issues on the agenda of this conference.

Let me start by reminding ourselves *why* democracy is important. It provides for government that governs by the will of the people; it is the people who are sovereign in a democracy. The government is accountable to its people and serves the interest of its people. Because governments are accountable to the people and people can alternate their governments in regular free and fair elections, democratizing countries generally outperform autocratically ruled countries on the major human development indices. Countries are *not* poor because they are democracies; they are poor because of mismanagement by governments that are *not* accountable to their people.

We used to believe that countries should first develop economically before they would be fit for multiparty democracy. However, low-income democracies and democratizing countries have outperformed their authoritarian counterparts during the past 40 years on a whole range of development indicators. Whether we consider life expectancy, literacy, access to clean drinking water, agricultural productivity or infant mortality, democracies at all income levels have typically achieved results that are outperforming those of autocracies by 20 to 40 percent. 95% of the worst economic performers over the past 40 years were overseen by non-democratic governments. Virtually all contemporary refugee crises have been wrought by autocratic governments.

Why do democratizing countries outperform their authoritarian counterparts? Democratically governed countries tend to ensure a more inclusive representation of the diverse population interests compared to their authoritarian counterparts, tend to be more accountable to their population and, hence, are more sensitive to the interests of their people and, finally, tend to respect the rule of law and the separation of powers more strictly. Representation or inclusivity, accountability and separation of

powers are key dimensions for democratic dispensations that enhance the legitimacy of governments and hence reduce the reasons for violent conflict.

Often, dictatorships are said to maintain stability by repressing tribal, ethnic or political dissent. This has proven incorrect also. Of the forty-nine poor countries embroiled in civil conflict in the 1990s, forty-one were dictatorships. Democracies appear to be especially good at managing ethnic diversity – they use ballots instead of bullets. And, there is a powerful pattern of “democratic peace” – democracies rarely go to war with each other.

Where ethnic diversity is not managed well, it should be the incentive to return to the design table of our democratic dispensations, to the electoral systems and laws, and to reform them from the perspective of making democracy work better. The rules of the game about how we interact in the political arena is a matter of choice. If the current rules are no longer adequate or if those rules lead us to the abyss of civil wars, you can change those rules. To quote a famous young Afro-American from Kenyan descent: *Yes, we can!*

Democracy is *not* the problem, it is the lack of democracy that causes the conflicts and the process through which the entrenchment of democracy is achieved. Let us not forget, in every survey about democracy, 8 out of 10 people prefer to live in democracies, in Africa it is even 9 out of 10. At the same time, people indicate that you are very dissatisfied with the performance of their democracies but it has not resulted in a rejection of democracy.

If we are to serve the interest of the people, if we are to live up to the trust people have invested in us, we are obliged to improve the performance of our systems, of our rules of the game in how we as politicians operate. That is what brings us together in the ESARP network and at this conference. It is hard and necessary work because democracy does not come by itself as we all know. It is hard work because you can not import democracy and we cannot export democracy. It has to be developed from within to be sustainable.

In our reflections we may have to go back from time to time to the principles of democracy - such as diversity, tolerance, due process, alternation of power, social justice, freedom of speech and assembly, equality for the law, separation of powers, etc. - and to ask ourselves whether the rules of the game that apply under the current constitutions deliver on those principles and if not, what is needed to reform them. How can systems and procedures be changed to provide incentives to the politicians to become more inclusive, more policy oriented and overcome the winner-takes-all syndrome that has come to dominate much of political behaviour. If we want to stop the backsliding, if we don't want to see countries go up in flames, there is no alternative.

Many current systems have been designed on the assumption that you need a strong government to be effective, resulting in systems with powerful executives and few checks and balances. But to have a strong government, you need *legitimacy* from your electorate, *legitimacy* is the key word to be effective. People want their governments to be responsive to their needs and to cater after the interests of the population at large in ensuring social justice and development.

The value of democracy was not long ago summarized by the former UN Secretary General, the respected Kofi Annan, when he stated (on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006): “...*democracy is a universal right that does not belong to any country or region, and that participatory governance, based on the will of the people, is the best path to freedom, growth and development.*”

In the past year, the importance of democracy was codified by the Heads of State and governments of the African Union (AU) with the adoption on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 of the *AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE*. The Charter lays down the normative and institutional standards for the member states of the African Union and should become *the* reference document for all people on the continent working towards the consolidation of democracy, ending violent conflict and poverty.

Allow me to quote just one article from this African Union Charter, namely article 13 under Chapter 5 on The Culture of Democracy and Peace. The article reads: *“State parties shall take measures to ensure and maintain political and social dialogue, as well as public trust and transparency between political leaders and the people, in order to consolidate democracy and peace.”*

The importance of this article was emphasized by former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa, when he emphasized in a discussion in 2006 that one of the biggest obstacles to democratic development and stability in Africa today, is the lack of trust amongst the political parties. To overcome this deficit in trust, dialogue is the key instrument to resolve this obstacle. Dialogue, creating trust among political leaders and between the people and political parties, are the essential ingredients of the cooperation between the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and the political parties present at this conference.

## 2. the achievements within the ESARP network over the past year

At the opening of this conference I think it is appropriate to briefly highlight three achievements within the network over the past year.

a. The network embarked on its first bilateral peer exchange visits. South Africa to Malawi, Zambia to South Africa and Kenya to Tanzania. Mali, from West Africa, also paid a visit to Malawi. These exchanges appear to have been a valuable expansion of the activities within the network.

In addition, the ESARP countries participated in the 50-year anniversary of the historic Ghanaian independence conference in Accra in May 2007 on *the Role of Political Parties: Promise, Decline and Resurgence*. This conference reconfirmed that making multiparty democracy work is the challenge for the future on the continent and looked more specifically on key matters in relation to the institutional development of political parties (NB: CHECK the STATEMENT of conference)

Also, all ESARP countries participated in the second NIMD Partnership Days in The Hague in September last year. These Partnership Days provided an opportunity to deepen our mutual partnership and address some of the strategic issues in our relationship and on the subject of internal party democracy which also features on the agenda of this conference.

b. The network also strengthened the programmatic linkages between ESARP and the different country programmes. The direct involvement of the Boards and Executive Directors of the Centers for Multiparty Democracy (CMDs) has started to firmly root the ownership of the ESARP network and programmes within the participating political parties. That is a major step forward.

c. The knowledge centre function of the ESARP network has also come off the ground with the comparative study on internal party democracy and holds the promise of serving a practical information

exchange between the political parties and the CMDs within the region and between the region and other regions in Africa and beyond.

Besides the achievements of the ESARP network, I need to mention in this context the impressive steps that have been taken over the past year in the development of the Centers for Multiparty Democracy (CMDs) in the region.

The *Zambian CMD*, the *Zambian Center for Multiparty Democracy ZCID*, was launched in June last year and immediately caught the headlines in the media in Zambia as the institution through which the *Zambian* political parties had brokered the long awaited agreement about the constitutional review process and the roadmap for the review. The *National Constitutional Conference* has since been enacted and inaugurated and has commenced its work. ZCID has not been out of the spotlight since.

The *CMD-Malawi* has gained the trust of the political parties and is the only place where political parties are quietly meeting each the otherwise polarized political environment in which Parliament has not been convening since September last year. Parties are also meeting to discuss the leveling of the playing field in preparation for the general elections next year.

The *CMD-Kenya* proved to be an indispensable institution to lead and participate in the coalition between political parties and sectors of society to show the way out of the conflict that erupted over the elections and to ensure that Kenya's path to democracy is not aborted.

The *Tanzanian Center for Democracy, TCD*, made an important contribution to a review of the *Political Parties Act of 1992* and the *Media Law* and is facilitating debates between the parties over possible constitutional modification to adapt provisions that allow for the reinforcement of multiparty democracy in Tanzania.

Good news also from South Africa where our partners have agreed to establish a *Center for Multiparty Democracy (CMD)* which establishment is currently under discussion. The initiative received a major boost when President Mbeki welcomed in his *State-of-the-Nation address* in 2007 the establishment of an inter-party platform, *a national process, to take up issues on which political parties should act in partnership, inspired by a common patriotism that would enable us to build the cross-party partnership that would be united by a voluntary national consensus...*

The country in which parties are still considering their options in moving to more institutionalized inter-party dialogue is Mozambique. NIMD was honored to receive President Guebuza three weeks ago at our offices in The Hague when he was at a state visit to The Netherlands. President Guebuza emphasized the value of dialogue among the political parties and expressed his appreciation for the support NIMD is providing in this regard. He left me convinced that it will be a matter of time before the political parties in Mozambique may also decide to establish their own Mozambican form of CMD.

The CMDs are new and, indeed, innovative institutions for which no blueprints exist. They are an unforeseen outcome of the inter-party dialogue processes supported by NIMD. In a short space of time, the CMDs have become the platforms where politicians across the political spectrum can meet to analyze national issues and to find solutions or agreements about procedures to develop solutions. Furthermore, the CMDs have become platforms where linkages are established between political parties, members of parliaments, and sectors of civil society and the business community. It has been very

stimulating to witness how quickly these CMDs have found a place within the political societies of the participating countries thanks to the leadership of their Boards and the ED's managing the CMDs.

But the hectic pace of development of these new institutions has also posed its own challenges. Hence NIMD is paying special attention to provide assistance with the professional institutionalization of the CMDs as to allow them to fulfil their potential to the fullest. Some of these challenges relate to the modalities of the NIMD assistance during the initial establishment phase of the CMDs. We have embarked meanwhile with each CMD to discuss these modalities as to ensure that the implementation of the partnership reinforces the development of the CMDs. We hope that the outcome of these discussions will be captured in a new Memorandum of Understanding between the CMDs and NIMD.

### 3. Recent developments at NIMD

At NIMD the presidency was handed over mid last year from Prof van Kemenade who some of you may have met to Mr Bernard Bot who was the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs until early last year.

A new government took office in The Netherlands last year, a coalition of three parties, two Christian parties and the Labour Party. The new Minister of Development Cooperation, Mr Bert Koenders, has expressed his full support for the NIMD mandate at different occasions. In fact, he recently invited NIMD to submit a supplementary programme that will include programme support for two additional countries in the ESARP region, Uganda and Burundi. And let me reassure you at once and preempt possible questions on this subject, the expansion of support will not be at the expense of the support to the existing programmes. We hope that initial activities can be undertaken in the second part of this year and that political parties from both countries will be interested and able to joint the ESARP network in the future.

The NIMD knowledge center published its first, very useful and assessable, short publication about electoral systems, titled: *Engineering Electoral Systems: Possibilities and Pitfalls*. One of the most assessable booklets on this complex subject. I would hope that it becomes standard reading for all the political parties within countries considering to review electoral systems. If you are interested you can order the required number of copies through your CMDs who can order them from NIMD.

Finally, NIMD has been in the forefront for some time now to establish a European Foundation for Democracy through Partnership to widen the European support for democratic development. I am very pleased that the new European Foundation shall be launched by Commission President Barroso on April 15<sup>th</sup> in Brussels together with President Vaclav Havel from the Czech Republic and President Chissano of Mozambique as Chair of the Forum of Former Heads of Government and State from Africa.

### 4. Challenges on the road ahead

The agenda for this conference lays out important challenges both within the political systems and within the political parties themselves.

I like to finalize by mentioning two challenges in particular:

a. *Constitutional review processes and leveling the playing field for elections:* This year will really become the year of constitutional reforms in the region. The Zambia process is in full swing, the delayed

constitutional review has now been put back on the agenda for this year in Kenya, on-going discussions about possible constitutional reforms in Tanzania and Malawi, and the promise of a new constitution for Zimbabwe, as agreed in the talks between ZANU(PF) and MDC in the context of the SADC mediation by the South African government, now depending on the outcome of the elections at the end of this month. And preparations for elections at the end of the month in Zimbabwe and in Malawi and South Africa in 2009.

The most important lessons I have learned during the past years is that the failure to find agreement about an inclusive constitutional review process that results in a substantial majority support for a new constitution, is likely to end in serious conflict at one of the upcoming elections. One can not postpone needed reforms without risking serious conflict. Democracy needs maintenance.

Constitutional review processes are important moments in the nation building of countries. Constitutions should be unifying processes and not dividing nations. It can not be decided in winner-takes-all approaches since constitutions are essentially the codification of social contracts between the citizens and the way they want to be governed. It can not be decided by simple majorities but as the successful South African constitution making process in the mid 90s has taught us: you need substantial majorities to provide for legitimate and effective governance. Constitution making processes should unite and not divide. The failed constitutional processes in Zimbabwe in 1999 and the failure to agree constitutional reforms in Kenya in the period 2003 - 2006 are illustrations within the region from which we can learn.

The other critical lesson relates to the management of elections, as someone in this room once qualified as the 'foul period' in political life. Elections need to be managed professionally and impartially and political parties should enter into codes of conduct with enforcement mechanisms setting the standards for assuring a peaceful and fair competition. With the free press and the modern mobile technology available to our people, people no longer accept results from elections that are not managed impartially.

b. *Institutionalizing political parties as pillars of democracy:* As the conference document states: political parties are the 'forgotten part of the democratic equation', the missing link in discussions to make democracy perform better. That is the underlying rationale for our cooperation, what has forged our partnership, to ensure that political parties are no longer forgotten and that they assume their rightful place in the democratic reform processes. To do so, we need to assure that our parties are well defined policy wise, well democratically organized and well transparently financed. Subjects we are to engage in in discussion at this conference.

With these opening remarks I wish you all another interesting and valuable conference and sincerely hope that the relations between all present will be further strengthened to serve the common objective of making democracy perform better for the advancement of sustainable development of our people.

Thank you!

#### **5.4 Keynote address by Her Lordship, Justice Anastazia Msosa, Justice of the Malawi Supreme Court and also Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission**

The Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Mr. Roel von Meijenfheldt and your Delegation from the Netherlands;

The Chairman of Centre for Multiparty Democracy of Malawi, Mr. Humphrey Mvura;

Professor Larry Gumbe, Chairman of the Kenyan Centre for Multiparty Democracy, and all Leaders of the various Delegations present;

Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament Present;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of the various political parties present;

Distinguished participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with profound pleasure and sincere gratitude, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I have this opportunity to deliver a key note address and officially open this very important conference. As Chair of the Electoral Commission, I often have the opportunity of interacting with politicians for that is what my job is largely all about. However, to have this chance of meeting with key politicians from the entire sub-region is but a rare privilege. I am therefore very grateful that I could be here this morning. That is also the whole reason why I had to drive well over 700km yesterday from the Northern end of this country where I was on duty. As a matter of Fact, I was as close to Dar es Salaam as I was to Blantyre!

Mr, Chairman, our dear brothers and sisters from Kenya call themselves the pride of Africa and comrades from South Africa are happy to be proudly South African. Now, we are here, in the Warm Heart Africa. I would like to join you, Mr Chairman, in extending a very warm welcome to each one of you. I trust you will find your stay in Malawi a memorable one.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to extend a special welcome to our dear brothers and sisters from Kenya, who, I am informed, were supposed to have hosted this conference but that due to the post election crisis there, it has ended up being held here. I followed the events in Kenya as they unfolded, the details of which we are all aware of. I am delighted that the events that led to this relocation of the conference are now part of our history. Kenya is once again back on track and has regained her rightful position of being a beacon of hope in the region. I am sure that like the rest of us, our dear brothers and sisters are here with a much more settled mind than it would have been a few weeks ago. I therefore take this opportunity to convey my deepest congratulations to the people of Kenya who have demonstrated that democracy in Africa is on the move and it is the move in the right direction. Even more important, Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the realisation that the crisis there was resolved by Kenyans themselves with the help of fellow Africans led by our own Kofi Annan. Indeed, Africa works.

Indeed, Africa works and democracy is on the move. Today, many of the countries in Africa are democracies with key formal democratic institutions in place. Assessments made by various research

institutions, including our own Afro-Barometer do testify that on balance, no one in the region would wish to go back to the old days of one party systems of government and those other forms of authoritarian regimes. When you look at the compendium of elections published by the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa, you will notice that to date, many of the countries in the region have gone through no less than three elections since the re-introduction of democracy. While elections are not the only yardstick of democracy, but they remain its bedrock for without them, democracy is a sham. That is why, Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to be optimistic to say that as a region, we are marching and our march is a forward one.

To be sure, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, democracy may have its own challenges and limitations. However, as Winston Churchill once said, democracy remains “the least bad system of government we have yet devised”. Compared to other alternatives, we can agree that we are better off in a democracy than in any other form of government. One development Economist, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Amartya Sen rightly observed that these days, it is not a question of a country not being “fit *for* democracy”; it is rather a question of making a country “fit *through* democracy”. What basically he means, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that democracy comes with its basic virtues, which makes any country better off than when it is not a democracy. These are the virtues we all cherish and must protect. Talk of the basic freedoms and basic rights for instance. It is also in a democracy that citizens have the right to effectively shape their own destiny, by among other ways, taking part in elections and expressing their opinions.

I am therefore, very pleased, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen to note that democracy is on the move and it is the move in the right direction. Now, as democracy is taking root, we have come to realise and acknowledge that this democracy has its building blocks. A vibrant civil society is important for democracy because you need a society that subscribes to and abides by basic democratic values. You need an independent media if there has to be free flow of information and enhance transparency and accountability. Democracy can also not thrive in the absence of key democratic institutions like the judiciary and the legislature. The list goes on and on but the message is clear: that democracy does not and cannot exist in a vacuum.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to submit that of the various institutions that are key to democracy, political parties are one of the most instrumental institutions. Today’s democracy is democracy through representatives and it is political parties that provide us with those representatives. For instance, Parliament, one of the three arms of Government is predominantly comprised of politicians. In fact, others say it is a battle ground for politicians. These politicians have their roots in political parties. It is also from political parties that we get our Executive arm of Government. Furthermore, it is the Legislature, working hand in hand with the Executive that plays an important role in the appointment of people to key democratic institutions. By implication, this means that political parties do also have a significant influence in shaping key institutions in a democracy, although indirectly.

To further make my case for political parties, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I just observed that elections are a bedrock of democracy. However, it is the same political parties that are the main stakeholders of any electoral process. As a matter of fact, in a multiparty system of Government, you may not have elections without political parties.

So what does all this mean? It simply means we cannot talk of democracy today minus political parties. This is the plain truth of our contemporary democracies. It is also this plain truth that makes your

gathering today not just another conference, but a conference which has a special place in our efforts to make further positive strides in our marching forward with democracy. Why I am saying so?

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I say this gathering touches at the core of democracy. Political parties, like other institutions of democracy are facing critical challenges and problems that we need to pay attention to. Having looked at your programme, I am delighted to observe that you have carefully and comprehensively captured some of these challenges. I would not want to render jobless the eminent scholars that are here by pre-empting what they are going to say. However, I would like to offer my own personal reflections that may hopefully enrich your debate for the next two days.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, we all acknowledge that ours in this region is an emerging democracy. Well, I think we should now be saying a growing democracy since we cannot remain emerging for ever! Whatever the case, the point I want to make is that as a growing democracy, I have noted in the couple of years that we seem to have had an unbalanced approach to the debate on democracy. For a long time, much attention had been given to civil society organisations, the media and other actors but not much attention had been given to political parties. Even organisations that are exclusively working towards the strengthening of political parties are rare. It is only in the recent years, for instance that I have noted with some delight that we have organisations like the Netherlands Institute for Democracy and some German political foundations like the Konrad Adenauer Foundation who have shown special interest in strengthening political parties. I think this omission has been a major contradiction in our debate for if we agree that political parties are important, we needed to have accorded them with as much attention as their importance deserves. The question, therefore, I would have loved this conference to reflect on is: Why is this so? That is, why have we, for a long time, not considered political parties as seriously as we should have done? In the same, why is there not so much civil society –political parties’ dialogue? Regrettably, in many African countries, civil society and political parties only meet in the press and often the meeting is confrontational. Why is this and what can be done to improve the relationship between political parties and civil society?

Another thing, Mr. Chairman is the general mistrust the general public has in political parties. This is not the problem of Malawi only. Indeed, it is not the problem of Africa only. As a matter of fact, political parties world over are not the best liked institutions and yet we cannot do without them. Is it not time that we addressed this crisis of trust in political parties?

Thomas Carothers, a prominent American political scientist, has summed up some of the underlying causes of this crisis of trust in political parties based on his global survey on this subject. He observes that the world over, and particularly so in Africa, political parties are less liked institutions because they are considered to be very much pre-occupied to maneuver each other and are often not very much concerned with the people. He also argues that in Africa, many of our political parties do not stand for anything; meaning they have no ideologies and you can not distinguish one from the other on that basis. Even worse, he further notes that political parties tend to talk democracy but they are not democratic themselves. The list is long but I think. Being an objective study, I can only convey these observations to this right audience. However, it is not enough to just complain and present a picture of hopelessness. More important, in my view, is to acknowledge that there is a problem and seek ways of addressing them. My submission to this conference is therefore, that not too much time be wasted in complaints and out cries. Let more time be dedicated to searching for solutions and solutions that can work.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to also submit that this gathering is a unique Forum that must be cherished, protected and promoted. Historically, we are all one. The boundaries

were imposed on us. The coming together in this way, therefore, helps us to reunite. We all face common challenges and there is no good reason why we should not seek common solutions jointly. I therefore commend the NIMD for coming up with this kind of a regional programme. Democracy needs friends and we can only be grateful that we have organizations like NIMD around us.

However, the efforts of our collaborating partners will be meaningless if we do not put to good use the opportunity this gathering has accorded us. As we interact in the next two days, therefore, I would encourage you to have an interest in identifying what you can learn from your neighbor. I would encourage you to appreciate the successes of your neighbor and see them as a source of inspiration. I would encourage you to look at the difficulties your neighbor has gone through as danger warning signs for your own journey toward democratic consolidation.

This is why, I am particularly glad that you have created special time to jointly reflect on what our dear friends in Kenya have just gone through. There are plenty of lessons that as a region we can draw from Kenya. For us in Malawi, this could not have happened at any better moment. I would have also loved if there was a special session to reflect on the conference of the African National Congress that took place in December last year where we saw party democracy in action. Similarly, I hear that our friends in Zambia launched the Zambian Centre for Interparty Dialogue (ZCID), that is spearheading the constitutional reform process there. Here in Malawi, the CMD has been an active partner in our own National Constitutional Review programme and I am sure the two can share lessons. I hear also that CMD-Kenya has played a pivotal role in the settlement of the crisis there. I am sure that we can learn some thing from them too. The bottom line here is that there is in this Forum a unique opportunity that must be grabbed and put to good use.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks, I have the singular honour and privilege to declare this conference officially open. I wish you a very successful conference. Thank you for your attention and may the Lord Bless you.

## **Part VI**

### **Documentation of Papers Presented**

**6.1 Political Parties as Pillars for Contemporary Democracy: A Critical Analysis of the State of Affairs and Perspectives for the Future**

**By  
Khabele Matlosa and Victor Shale \***

**Prepared for the ESARP Regional Conference on “ Functioning and Management of of Political Partiesin Eastern and Southern Africa”  
Blantyre, Malawi  
Mount Soche Hotel  
13-14 March 2008**

## **Abstract**

*It has become an article of faith in recent political discourse that democracy without political parties is a distant mirage. Indeed, today more than any time in the past, political parties are a useful vehicle for contestation of power. There are six key functions that distinguishes parties from other political institutions. These are to socialize and mobilize, represent, recruit, formulate goals, articulate and aggregate interests as well as organizing of government. In order to carryout these functions, political parties need to have good intra-party democracy, proper organizational structures, adequate financial resources and good relations with other parties. Research on political parties points to huge gaps in terms of capacity of both ruling and opposition political parties to carryout their mandate. There is evidence of lack of capacity in many areas and these include lack or absence of internal democracy, lack of leadership skills, poor administrative skills, lack of conflict management skills and tolerance, poor financial management skills, lack of clearly defined goals and little ideological differences. To ameliorate these challenges, there should be adequate attention to the leadership as well as funding problems of parties. We should address critical questions such as what is the ideal type of leadership required to steer a political party in the right direction? What are the necessary mechanisms required to institutionalize smooth internal functioning of parties? Coupled with this, what has to be done to ensure adequate financial resources for parties? We conclude that without serious attention to the foregoing, political parties will have difficulty to act as effective agents of democracy.*

## Introduction

Political parties have increasingly become a prominent feature of political systems in Africa, particularly since the onset of democratization in the early 1990s (see Salih, 2003; Matlosa, 2005; Kadima, 2006; Salih, 2006; Chege, 2006). Prior to the 1990s, the political systems were marked predominantly by either mono-party, one-person or military regimes which did not create a political climate conducive to multiparty democracy. Today, almost all the member states in East and Southern African region have embraced multiparty democracy in which a plethora of parties exist and participate in the political process including regular elections to contest state power, a function that, by definition, distinguishes parties from other organizations such as interest or pressure groups.

The International IDEA handbook on *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaign*, aptly notes that “since the end of the cold war, combined internal and external pressures for democratization and good governance in Africa resulted in the reinstatement of multiparty politics and competitive elections in country after country” (2003:21). In essence, therefore, political parties have become, in a majority of Eastern and Southern African countries, a critical linchpin for the institutionalization, nurturing, deepening and consolidation of democracy.

This paper explores the state of political parties and their role in the democratization process in the Eastern and Southern African region. We do not intend to provide a blow-by-blow account of parties in this region, but we will make relevant broad strokes of the state of parties across the region with appropriate examples where need be. The paper is organized into various sections. Following this introduction, the first section of the paper discusses the conceptual understanding of the essence of parties to a functioning democratic system. The second section sketches the evolution of party systems and their shifts and turns over time. The third section grapples with the contemporary/current trends of party politics highlighting challenges. The fourth section outlines challenges facing internal functioning and governance structures of parties. The fifth section focuses our attention on women’s political participation through parties and parliaments. The last section wraps up the discussion, highlighting the main observations as well as suggesting some solutions to the challenges raised in the paper and drawing conclusions.

### **The Essence of Political Parties to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework**

Political parties have to be understood within the overall theory and practice of democracy. While democracy has proved a fairly nebulous term to grasp, there is a fair amount of consensus in the literature in respect of what political parties are and their role in a democratic system. Following on the footsteps of Todd Landman’s analysis (see Landman, 2005; Landman, 2006), democracy can be defined or explained in three different ways. Firstly a minimalist definition (explanation) of democracy locates the theory and practice of democracy around two principles or values namely **political competition or contestation** and **participation**. The notion of contestation “captures the uncertain peaceful competition necessary for democratic rule, a principle which presumes the legitimacy of some opposition, the right to challenge the incumbents... the existence of free and fair elections and a consolidated party system” (Landman, 2005:20). Participation presupposes political control of the citizens over the people who govern on their behalf. This notion “captures the idea of popular sovereignty which presumes the protection of the right to vote as well as the existence of universal suffrage” (Landman, 2005:20). This is what is often referred to as **procedural democracy or electoral democracy**. Secondly, the liberal notion of democracy transcends procedural democracy and extends its essence beyond just contestation and participation to include the protection and promotion of political

rights and civil liberties. It includes other institutional dimensions (guarantees) such as accountability, transparency, constraint over leaders, representation of citizens, rule of law, property and minority rights. It places the pride of place to **institutional dimensions** of democracy. This is what **liberal democracy** is all about. Thirdly, the **social-structuralist** definition of democracy extends the theory and praxis of democracy beyond both the proceduralist/electoralist and institutionalist dimensions found in the earlier two definitions (explanations) and introduces the **socio-economic dimensions** and **structural configuration of power**. While maintaining the proceduralist and institutionalist dimensions of democracy, it pays more premium to social and economic rights and social power relations in society. This is the defining feature of **social democracy** or what others would equally term **developmental democracy**. In a nutshell, a useful approach to our understanding of democracy in Southern Africa is to have in mind these three epistemological ideations namely that (a) at the very minimum democracy is simply just procedural and limited to elections; (b) at a slightly higher level, the institutional dimensions of democracy have emphasized its liberal form with emphasis on civil and political rights (ala Freedom House) and (c) at another relatively higher ideational level, social-structuralist perspectives of democracy conceive of the system in its socio-economic characteristics and the concomitant social configuration of power.

In all the above definitions (explanations) of democracy, it is evident that a democratic system has, of necessity, to be marked, at the very minimum, by political pluralism. One of the measures of the degree of pluralism in a political system is the existence and operations of political parties. This is so, because political parties compete for ideas and political power and promote citizen participation in the political process; they play a crucial role in ensuring that the institutional foundations of democracy are firmly grounded; and they espouse the promotion of a better socio-economic dispensation for the electorate. In essence, therefore, political parties are the hallmark of representative democracy (be it a procedural democracy, liberal democracy or social democracy).

It is worth reiterating that political parties play a crucial role in democracies. Democracy is unthinkable without political parties (see Bratton et.al, 2005). According to the ACE Encyclopaedia, a political party is defined as “an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seek to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office” (<http://aceproject.org>). The main functions of parties in any democratic system are to:

- Aggregate and articulate needs and problems of members and supporters;
- Socialize and educate voters and citizens in the functioning of the political and electoral system and generating general political values;
- Balance opposing demands and convert them into general policies;
- Activate and mobilize citizens into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options;
- Channel public opinion from citizens to government; and
- Recruit and train candidates for public office (<http://aceproject.org>).

It is evident from the above remarks that political parties constitute the most critical institutional foundation or expression of a working democracy. A recent publication by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) notes that “political parties play a vital role in democratic governance. No democratic system can function without alternative parties and candidates. Political parties are crucial in aggregating interests, presenting political alternatives to citizens, nominating candidates and linking voters with elected public officials. Moreover, political parties can play a central role in

generating cadres of leaders who promote democratic governance principles and monitor elected representatives” (2006:92).

Hague et. al, remind us that “party competition is the hallmark of liberal democracy. It is the device which makes governments responsive to the electorate, providing voters with some choice while also restricting that choice to a few broad alternatives” (Hague et al, 1992:236). Corroborating the UNDP (2006) and Hague et al (1992) above, Webb argues aptly that “political parties are universally regarded as essential components of democratic regimes and key vehicles in the process of securing effective political representation, mobilising voters, organising government and shaping public policy”(2005:631).

While recognising the significance of political parties to democracy and democratisation, it is important to note that political parties everywhere are becoming unpopular and increasingly experiencing declining public trust as reflected by Afrobarometer data (see Matlosa, 2005). The more parties become unpopular in the eyes of the public, the more their mandate as agents of democracies is likely to diminish. Part of the explanatory argument why parties tend to fail to become drivers of the democratic process and also fail to democratise within themselves is precisely because, as Kellman rightly points out, they tend to have inevitable and inherent “oligarchic tendencies and are thus inherently undemocratic” (2004:14).

It will become clear in the subsequent discussion that party systems have been in a state of flux over the past four decades since political independence experiencing a brief period of multi-partyism, abandoning multi-partyism and adopting a one-party system until recent efforts towards multi-party democratic systems as part of the global wave of democratisation that began in the early 1990s. It needs to be emphasised right from the on-set that while political parties are confronted with a myriad of challenges, opposition parties face even greater challenges partly due to political pressures placed upon them by ruling parties and partly due to their own internal weaknesses (see Olukoshi, 1998; Matlosa, 2006; Chiroro, 2006). In the next section, we will provide some sign-posts of shifting party systems which in themselves marked part of paradigmatic shifts of governance regimes and democratic trajectories in the region.

### **The evolution of party systems in Eastern and Southern Africa**

The Eastern and Southern African region has witnessed political shifts that have influenced party systems and the way political parties operate with implications for democracy. After a majority of the countries attained independence in the 1960s, there was a brief existence of a multi-party system and, indeed, all the elections preceding political independence were contested by more than one party in each country. In all these elections, parties chose candidates to contest state power on their behalf in an open competitive system. However, the brief spell of multipartyism was soon replaced by the adoption, in many countries, of the one-party system. The two main exceptions to this pervasive trend were Botswana and Mauritius. Many other states adopted the one-party system of either *de jure* (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Malawi etc) or *de facto* (Lesotho, 1970-1986 etc) varieties. The implication of the one-party system was that it closed the political space for democratic politics in that multiparty contestation for state power was denied. Not only that. Even the elections would be contested by only one party (namely the ruling party). Thus, the democratic space was severely restricted. In other countries, such as Lesotho under the military rule (1986-1993), politics were banned, political parties outlawed and elections banished. Since the 1990s, the region has made yet another shift back to multipartyism of the early 1960s. This has been marked by the re-introduction of multiparty politics, proliferation of political parties and the holding of regular multiparty elections contested by candidates representing their political parties and independent candidates depending on each country’s electoral system. Thus, in a nutshell, the region has experienced three shifts in terms of parties and

elections since independence. These are the multiparty system (Early 1960s-mid-60s), the one-party system (Mid-1960s-Early 1990s) and multiparty system (Early 1990s- To date). Each of these political epochs has had their own distinctive imprint on the democratic nature of the political systems over time. In this article we focus specifically on the current epoch of multi-party system in the SADC region. What is the current state of parties? It is to this question that the next section now turns.

### **The Current State of Political Parties and the Challenges for Democratisation**

To be sure, the state of political parties today varies from one country to the other. However, we will raise key issues around this subject highlighting common trends throughout the region and variations between and among countries through a comparative perspective. All the countries in the region today have functioning multiparty systems with the exception of Swaziland (in Southern Africa) where political parties still remain banned. All the countries have in place constitutional and legal frameworks that allow for the existence and operation of political parties and to all intents and purposes, this is a positive development, even if in many instances it has amounted to mere proceduralist/electoralist forms of democracy. Be that as it may, having multiparty systems in place, together with constitutional and institutional frameworks, is one thing, while ensuring the effectiveness of parties and institutionalizing robust party systems is quite another. Although laws governing political parties exist, studies undertaken jointly by International IDEA and the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) between 2003 and 2006 provide compelling evidence suggesting that the functioning of parties is governed primarily by their constitutions and internal regulations, themselves limited by lack of internal democracy in most parties. We propose that seven major challenges confront political parties in terms of their role in the democratization process in the region.

**The first factor** relates to the varying **party systems** in the SADC member states. In terms of party systems, the experience of Southern Africa is mixed. One country, namely Swaziland, operates a one-party system in part due to its authoritarian monarchical regime. Zimbabwe operated a multi-party system upon independence in 1980, but changed to a mono-party system in 1987. However, since independence, the political hegemony of the ruling ZANU-PF has been profoundly entrenched and was subjected to a serious challenge by the emergence of opposition parties since the latter part of the 1990s. Be that as it may, the opposition parties in Zimbabwe, including the major opposition (Movement for Democratic Change-MDC) remain paper tigers without a serious threat to the tight grip that ZANU-PF still has over the control of state power. The status quo is likely to remain so after the scheduled March 2008 even with the emergence of Simba Makoni who, we argue, despite having attracted a lot of attention has in essence further splittted the opposition vote thus perpetuating ZANU-FP dominance.

Angola is still dominated overwhelmingly by the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) with the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as the main opposition. But Angola's party system remains fluid and unstable because the country has not yet undergone a democratic transition since the abortive 1992 general election. Planned elections for September 2008 could lay foundations for a transition that would allow political parties to be firmly established and play their role in the democratization process. Only recently has the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) undergone a democratic transition with its transitional elections of July (parliamentary and first-round presidential) and October 2006 (second round presidential and provincial). This historic development has allowed parties to be formed, exist and contest state power. The DRC has the largest number of political parties in the SADC as well as the Eastern region estimated at around 270. This means that the party system in the DRC is extremely fragmented and borders on political anarchy. How do parties get sufficiently institutionalized under these circumstances becomes a major challenge and how a truly

competitive multi-party systems emerges remains one of the big challenges for the post-conflict DRC. Part of the reasons why Angola and the DRC have not yet established robust and well-functioning party systems has a lot to do with their history of protracted violent conflict which has also affected adversely their political systems in terms of the postponement of the democracy project as priority has tended to be given to the peace project.

New democratic transitions have happened in a majority of other SADC countries which have allowed for the political liberalization and ushering in of the multiparty system. These include Zambia (1991); Lesotho (1993); Malawi (1994); and Tanzania (1995). In all these countries, multi-partyism is rather frail and fragile given not only the lack of robustness of the party systems, but also the yet evolving process of institutionalization of democratic governance which is intermittently punctuated by different types of conflict. In three other countries, interesting democratic transformations with implications for parties and party systems have been underway too. Namibia (1989), South Africa (1994) and Mozambique (1994) have undergone a double transition: transition from war to peace and transition from autocracy to democracy. This dual transition has allowed for multi-partyism to germinate and has allowed these countries to inculcate a culture of competitive politics where parties contest state power no longer through bullets but through ballots.

Only two countries in SADC boast a long-enduring political tradition of stable liberal democracy wherein multi-partyism is entrenched. These are Botswana and Mauritius. While Botswana's political system has evolved largely within the framework of the dominant party syndrome whereby the ruling BDP has never experienced electoral defeat since 1965 to date, Mauritius presents a different case whereby alternation of state power is a regular occurrence. Mauritius is the only country in the SADC region where power alternation has become an embedded aspect of the country's political culture and thereby adding value to the consolidation of the country's democracy. It is no exaggeration to argue that although stable, the critical test of Botswana's liberal democracy will come when the ruling party is removed from power by an opposition and that situation is then followed by political stability.

The variations of party system, elaborated above, notwithstanding, virtually all the countries in the region operate dominant party systems cloaked behind the façade of multipartyism. What do we mean? SADC countries, including Botswana, the most celebrated stable liberal democracy in the region, are dominated by one party (often ruling parties) over a long duration of time under conditions of weak, fragmented and disjointed opposition parties. The main exception to this general regional trend is Mauritius where all parties have chances of alternating in controlling state power. Under conditions of a dominant party syndrome, uncertainty of election results tends to be compromised. However, on its own dominant party syndrome is not a serious threat to the institutionalization of democracy; it simply places limits to it. The first challenge facing political parties in the SADC region, therefore, rotates around the effectiveness of parties and the robustness of party systems.

**Secondly**, besides effectiveness of parties and the nature of party systems, it has been observed that political parties tend to lack **ideological clarity** and distinctiveness. As a result, they look much the same to each other and they tend to raise similar campaign issues which often lack policy substance and are generally a shopping list of promises which hardly get fulfilled after elections. Election campaigns tend to revolve more around individuals rather than being predicated upon well-defined and ideologically delineated policy positions/proposals. Consequently even voters choose parties and candidates not so much on the basis of their policy proposals, but rather on the basis of personalities involved, patronage politics and ethnic/tribal/racial affinities. The first ever democratic multiparty election after 40 years held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the most recent illustration of this stark reality.

We observed during the election campaign in the DRC ahead of the presidential and parliamentary election of 30 July 2006 that vote-buying was generalized trend and this was exacerbated by the entrenched poverty and an entrenched culture of patronage or pork-barrel politics. This trend further fuels political corruption within political parties that becomes even more rampant during elections. The challenge here is for parties in the SADC region to become ideologically differentiated and be in a position to present clearly differentiated policy proposals as they campaign for elections so that the electorate choose their candidates on the basis of policies and not individuals and other consideration such as patronage and identity politics etc.

**Thirdly**, political parties do not seem to embrace a culture of **cross-border linkages and alliances and or coalitions** with like-minded parties and foundations regionally, continentally and globally. Either these linkages do not exist at all or where they do, they are weak and confined to mere fund-raising strategies. The truth of the matter is simply that political parties in the region have a poor track record in establishing and sustaining harmonious inter-party relations at the national level, regional/continental level and international level. Evidence abounds suggesting that political parties exhibit serious weaknesses in terms of forming alliances and coalitions at the national level with the exception of a few countries in the region including Mauritius, Malawi, South Africa and Mozambique (see Kadima, 2006). In other countries, party alliances or coalitions at the national level have tended to be poor, often attempted only during elections and after the election the alliances or coalitions tend to die. Recently, have we witnessed some efforts in this direction of forming more sustainable party coalitions in countries such as Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia ( see Shale 2007 and Selolwane and Shale 2006). These new efforts in Lesotho and Zambia have not borne expected fruits as the ruling parties continued to win the elections in 2006 and 2007 respectively. The on and off opposition talks to coalesce in Botswana are yet to be tested during general elections scheduled for 2009.

The ephemeral and highly opportunistic nature of party coalitions and election pacts is vividly demonstrated by the short-lived political marriage between the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the minute and malleable National Independence Party (NIP) primarily meant to exploit the virtues of the new electoral model (the Mixed Member Proportional system) during the 2007 general election. After the election, in which it emerged a victor, the LCD, divorced NIP arguing that the latter is part of the opposition in parliament thereby throwing the pre-election alliance into disarray. This type of Machiavellian politics of intrigue mark party coalitions in many countries (see Kadima, 2006). The fact of the matter is that political parties have a weakness in relating to each other and developing mutually beneficial pacts at the national level premised upon common ideology and policy frameworks.

At the national level, while often the relationships between the ruling party and opposition parties tends to be marked by mutual suspicion at best and outright hatred at worst, opposition parties themselves hardly ever relate to each other in a harmonious way. An interesting episode happened in the recent second round of the DRC presidential poll whereby the main contestants namely Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba could not campaign themselves ahead of the highly charged poll, but delegated this responsibility to their wives who criss-crossed the width and breadth of that big country. The reason was simply that the political atmosphere was tense and the two candidates cited security reasons for this 'innovative' campaigning approach. We hardly ever hear of regular national dialogue between ruling parties and opposition parties both during and in between elections. Leaders of ruling parties are known for refusing to engage opposition party leaders in national policy issues. More glaringly, some leaders of ruling parties would even refuse to hold national debates with opposition leaders during election campaign.

**Fourthly, Intra-party conflicts** are a generalized trend in the Southern and Eastern region. These conflicts may be covert or overt; violent or non-violent; prolonged or short-lived depending on the specific political context of each country. Intra-party conflicts, especially violent ones, are a result of lack of intra-party democracy. If dissent is prohibited within parties, members may find themselves resorting to unconstitutional means of expressing their dissatisfaction about the way parties are governed. Conflict within parties may be prolonged and protracted or may become more intensified only around election time in relation to selection of party leaders and nomination of election candidates. Lesotho's 2007 general election was preceded by enormous intra-party tension, fragmentation, splits and floor-crossing in parliament. Almost all the major political parties in Lesotho namely the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), Basotho National Party (BNP), Marema-Tlou Freedom Party (MFP) and the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) entered the general election of the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2007 having suffered internal faction-fighting and splits. The ruling party split had come by way of floor-crossing (See Matlosa and Shale, 2006) leading to the emergence of the new opposition party-All Basotho Convention (ABC). Some of the adverse effects of the in-fighting within parties are the all-pervasive phenomenon of party splits, party proliferation and the prevalent trend of independent election candidates in many countries today. In its general election of May 2004, Malawi had a large number of independent candidates and in fact these candidates, taken together, polled more votes than parties and captured more parliamentary seats than parties (see Matlosa and Patel, 2006).

**Fifthly**, and related to the point above is the **floor crossing** factor. We have argued elsewhere (Matlosa and Shale 2007) that floor crossing like migration in countries which involves the movement of people from less developed to relatively well-developed areas, At the heart of floor crossing, or political migration, in legislatures is the hope by politicians that prospects for accessing state power are greater with the new rather than with the old party. Although not necessarily undesirable in a democracy, if not well managed, floor crossing can accentuate the proliferation of parties. This may have adverse effects upon already fragmented party systems and fledgling representative democracies. When splits occur it is not only parties as political institutions key to democratic politics that suffer; other institutions suffer as well - including the legislature. Faction-fighting within parties triggers break-aways and splits and the proliferation of parties through floor crossing in the legislature. Thus, the legislature is a key political institution for representative democracy wherein parties play an active role in the law-making process. But the legislature is only as good as its constituent parts (that is, MPs who are members of political parties). If the constituent parts are weak and fragmented, the legislature is bound to be adversely affected. The experiences of Lesotho and of Malawi are the case in point.

**Sixth**, as key role players in multi-party democracy, political parties need to be viable so that there is strong competition for power and shaping of a country's development trajectory. High on the list of the fundamentals that the political parties need to be able to deliver on their mandate is sound financing (**Party funding**) more than ever before both during elections and beyond the elections. It is only through adequate funding that political parties can participate effectively in governance. Financial resources enable opposition parties to become effective challengers to the ruling parties in their running of the country. Likewise, ruling parties need financing in order to be able to function in the communities so as to consolidate their positions on the electorate. Also equally important is the need for financial resources for general day to day running of the party and for election campaigns all of which are not cheap. It is for this reason that multi national companies and in other cases local companies have to intervene to ameliorate the finance problems that face many parties (EISA 2007). However, there is always a risk that the multi national companies could take over the control of the state where the political party only becomes their proxy therefore defeating the spirit of democracy. In South Africa for example, there have been calls by some to force parties to disclose their sources of funding. The biggest

fight was put up by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) who challenged the major political parties to disclose their sources of funding. IDASA wanted the parties to avail information on their sources of funding for the large amounts [over R50 000] when requested by members of the public. The argument was based on the understanding that funds and the sources of funding constitute part of the information about a political party. Put differently, the information about political party policies and their finances helps the electorate in making political choices.

**Seventh** and finally, a general challenge facing political parties in the SADC region revolves around **leadership**. Every organization is as good as its leadership. This principle applies to political parties too. Undoubtedly, therefore, the effectiveness and sustainability of these institutions are heavily dependent upon the caliber of their leadership. The main *raison detre* (reason for the very existence) of parties is to (a) contest state power, (b) control the levers of the state, (c) retain power as long as it is constitutionally permissible and (d) contain opposition within the limits of the established constitutional and institutional framework. Therefore, how badly or how well each party (both ruling and opposition) performs this primary task is overwhelmingly dependent upon how dynamic; how democratic and how visionary its leadership is. In a word, the leadership of the political parties influences greatly the dynamism of these organizations as key drivers of the democracy project. Even during election, the party leadership can either be a political asset or a liability.

Parties are supposed to be a political school for the development of democratic leadership; a leadership that is groomed to make these institutions effective, but again a leadership that is groomed to lead the country. Thus, if political parties are unable to produce democratic leadership, this comes not only at a political cost to them, but at a huge cost to the country, because it means the country is likely to be led by undemocratic leaders without vision and the requisite dynamism. In other words, democracy both at the macro-level of the nation and the micro-level of the parties requires democrats and it is thus imperative upon party leadership to embrace democratic culture and practice. Since the recent past, two major issues that have generated debate around party leadership revolve around (a) the nature of party-state relationships (ideally, there needs to be a distinction between these two and this requires prudent leadership) and (b) the idea of having one person leading the ruling party and another leading the government/nation a problem that leads to two (often contradictory, competing and conflicting) centers of power leading to bifurcation of state authority as the Zambian and Malawian examples demonstrate (see Matlosa, 2005). While in the case of Zambia, President Levy Mwanawasa seems to have stamped his authority firmly after sidelining the Frederick Chiluba, former president, in Malawi, the battle of the two centers of power still rages. President Bingu wa Mutharika has been involved in a running battle to stamp his authority in Malawi following the 2004 election as the former president Bakili Muluzi could not let go the reins of power completely aiming to exercise remote control as the leader of the ruling party. Mutharika had to resign from the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) and establish his own party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which was able to get many MPs through floor-crossing in parliament. There are media reports that Muluzi, after serving his constitutional two terms in office intends to make a come back and contest the presidency again during the up-coming 2009 Elections (Mail and Guardian, 2-8 March 2007). This development is likely to worsen the conflict between Mutharika and Muluzi. It is also likely to further divide the UDF. As reported in the Mail and Guardian, "UDF would be divided should Muluzi stand again because there are many senior members of the party who want to run for the presidency. As a result, Muluzi would be unlikely to win the elections despite endorsement from UDF supporters" (Mail and Guardian, 2-8 March 2007).

In sum, we have identified five major challenges facing political parties in terms of their role in democracy and democratization namely (a) the nature of the party system in place; (b) lack of

ideological orientation and solid policy frameworks; (c) poor linkages between and among parties across borders (regionally, continentally and internationally) aimed at building foundations for cross-border solidarity; (d) poor record in terms of inter-party relations by way of party alliances and coalitions within countries before and after elections; and (e) poverty of visionary, dynamic, vibrant and democratic leadership. Having scanned the role of parties in democracy and democratization, we turn, in the next section, to challenges that confront political parties in terms of their internal functioning and governance structures.

### **Internal Functioning & Governance Structure of Political Parties**

The challenges that confront political parties in terms of entrenching intra-party democracy are many and varied. Camay and Gordon persuasively argue that “political competition is also severely limited when internal democracy is constrained. Many African political parties – especially dominant ones – engage in internal ‘dissent management’ leading to autocracy. They restrict voices within the party and discipline MPs and other members who disagree with leadership positions. They exercise strict control over the selection of party officials and candidates for public office” (2004:6). We will focus spotlight on four major internal functioning challenges for political parties rotating mainly around (a) selection/election of the party leadership, (b) party primary elections, (c) management and administration of the internal affairs of the party; and (d) policy/programme development. We elaborate on each of these challenges below.

**Firstly, selection/election of the party Leadership** is as political an issue as the organizations themselves. Undoubtedly, the effectiveness and vibrancy of any political party in respect of its contribution to a working democracy is heavily dependent upon its leadership. Thus, a party’s performance during and in-between regular general and local government elections is determined, among other things, on how visionary its leadership is. In a word, a party can rise or fall on the basis of the nature and character of its leadership cadre. In a majority of countries the leadership issue still remains problematic. Leadership problems for many parties revolve around election of leadership; internal structures, hierarchy and accountability mechanisms; ethical codes of conduct by both the leadership and party rank and file; programme/policy development; international and regional networking among parties; national coalition formations among parties; party relations with the election management body (ies) (EMB) and civil society organizations (CSOs) and parties’ communications strategies. Available evidence suggests that political parties face daunting challenges for institutionalizing accountable, transparent and visionary leadership that has the appropriate requisites for inculcation of democratic culture and practice both within the party and the nation at large. ***In other words, democracy both at the macro-level of the nation and the micro-level of the parties requires democrats and it is thus imperative upon party leadership to embrace democratic culture and practice.***

**Secondly, Primary Elections** form another important *litmus test* of the extent and degree of the intra-party democracy within political parties. Often, the process of nomination of party candidates for purposes of contestation of state power during elections tends to be fraught with controversy and conflict due to the manner in which it is executed by the party leadership. The following issues become crucial in terms of the legitimacy of the outcome of primary elections: eligibility criteria for party candidacy; election process and procedure for party candidacy; and the type of electoral system used to select party candidates. Problems around primary elections rotate, *inter alia*, whether the process emphasizes centralized leadership control or it allows for the party rank and file to influence the selection process. These problems, to be sure, are rife in almost all the countries in East and Southern Africa irrespective of the electoral model each one of them operates. However, it is much more glaring

in those countries that operated the British-style First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) which easily allows candidates to contest elections in their independent capacity. The challenge revolves around the degree of openness when nominations for candidates are made. ***Parties need to open up to their rank and file membership for the collective ownership of nominations and party lists. In fact, it is desirable that an independent and impartial body is engaged and involved during party nominations and drawing of party lists. This ensures that the process is monitored and observed by an external impartial body as in the case of the party list development process in South Africa which is facilitated and observed by EISA for various political parties.***

**Thirdly, Management of the internal affairs of the party** is an important yardstick for the extent to which intra-party democracy is deepening in most countries. This issue is inextricably linked to the one around party leadership in some sense, but it is also dependent upon the ideological clarity and distinctiveness of each party as well as the relevance of its manifesto and programme. The management of party affairs involves the day-to-day running of party affairs, building of national, provincial, district, community and village branches of parties, management of party resources both moveable and immovable. This also includes the development of manifestos and programmes as well as the organization regular meetings and conferences for parties. In those countries where the leadership of parties is rather autocratic then obviously the management of parties tends to be less transparent and accountable to the party rank and file. In those countries where the leadership is more open and fairly democratic the management of parties tends to be more transparent and accountable. ***It is imperative, therefore, that parties strive for an efficient, transparent and accountable management of party affairs if intra-party democracy is to be established and institutionalized. Further more, effective and efficient management systems have to be put in place from the village/community branches up to the national structures of parties if their management is to be adequately improved.***

**Fourthly, policy and programme development** determines the extent of effectiveness of parties especially when it comes to mobilisation of support base and contestation for state power. In this regard, what is crucial is how parties develop their policy positions by way of programmes and manifestos. By and large, political parties experience difficulties developing policies and programmes. Parties hardly ever develop clear-cut ideological positions on a variety of issues. Consequently, political parties within most countries exhibit commonalities in ideological outlook and this situation presents the electorate with little political menu from which to make their choice during elections.

In a recent study that we undertook covering Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia in 2005, we found out that in all the four countries both the ruling and the opposition parties had public outreach programmes. We investigated whether or not parties have an outreach programme with specific reference to four main tools namely

1. Policy formulation
2. Manifesto
3. Voter education and;
4. Civic education

We observed, however, that “while political parties may have policy documents, manifestos, voter education and civic education initiatives, these tools tend to be used, in some instances, in a less coherent and systematic fashion, thereby reducing the optimal utility and effectiveness of their public outreach programmes. We further observe that there is no clear or systematic consultative process between the parties and their members between the election periods. Some parties were able to say

how the consultative process unfolds but were unable to prove definitively that it actually happens as it appeared that to most parties this was more in theory than in practice “(Kadima, Matlosa & Shale, 2006).

### Women’s Political Participation

Gender equality is an imperative principle for the entrenchment and institutionalization of intra-party democracy surely. The Southern African experience in respect of women empowerment in both quantitative and qualitative terms is a mixed bag (Molokomme, 2000; Lowe-Morna, 2004; Ballington and Karam, 2005). The SADC member-states took a positive step in 1997 when they signed *The Gender and Development Declaration* in Blantyre, Malawi. The member states committed themselves individually and collectively to the following policy measures, among others:

- The achievement of equal gender representation in all key organs of the state and at least 30% target of women in key political and decision-making structures by 2005;
- Promoting women’s full access to and control over productive resources to reduce the level of poverty among women;
- Repealing and reforming all laws, amending constitutions and changing social practices which still subject women to discrimination; and
- Taking urgent measures to prevent and deal with the increasing levels of violence against women and children (Molokomme, 2002:42).

The table below illustrates the extent of women’s representation in legislatures in the SADC region. One of our findings is that in countries where women participate actively in party politics, their participation in legislatures tends to be higher. The reverse is also true: in countries where women’s participation in party politics is low, their participation in legislatures tends to be correspondingly lower.

**Table 1: Gender Representation in SADC Parliaments**

Rank	Country	Lower or Single House			
		Electoral System	Seats	Women	% Women
1	Mozambique	PR	250	90	<b>34.8</b>
2	South Africa	PR	400	131	<b>32.8</b>
3	Tanzania	FPTP	307	97	<b>30.0</b>
4	Namibia	PR	104	19	<b>26.4</b>
5	Mauritius	FPTP-Block	70	12	<b>17.0</b>
6	Angola	PR	220	34	<b>15.5</b>
7	Malawi	FPTP	193	27	<b>14.4</b>
8	Lesotho	MMP	120	16	<b>13.3</b>
9	Botswana	FPTP	57	7	<b>12.3</b>
10	Zambia	FPTP	158	19	<b>12.0</b>
11	DRC	FPTP	500	57	<b>11.4</b>
12	Zimbabwe	FPTP	150	15	<b>10.0</b>
13	Swaziland	FPTP	65	5	<b>3.1</b>

Source: Matlosa, 2005

On the basis of the data above, a plausible argument can be made that an electoral system can either facilitate or inhibit greater women’s’ participation in governance. Evidently the PR system seems more

amenable to and conducive for enhancing gender equality in politics and increased participation of women. The converse is true for the FPTP system. Although PR, in and of itself, is not a sufficient guarantor for increased women's participation in the legislature, it is surely a catalyst for gender equality in the political governance arena. Table 3 above depicts women's participation in national assemblies in the SADC region and from this table evidently those countries using the PR electoral system are doing much better than those using the FPTP. It is clear from this table that the top two countries in terms of high women representation in Parliament are Mozambique (35%) and South Africa (33%) both of which operate the List-PR system. The bottom two countries on the list are Zimbabwe (10.0%) and Swaziland (3.1%) both of which operate the FPTP (plurality) system. A plausible argument can, therefore, be made that the PR is more conducive for the enhancement of gender equality in the legislature. In contrast, the FPTP is less amenable to gender equality and increased women's participation in the legislature. However, even though the PR system tends to be more conducive to gender equality, it often requires to be complimented by deliberate gender quota systems as the South African and Mozambican experiences demonstrate. This in part explains why Tanzania is now ranked number two in SADC in terms of gender representation (with 30% representation of women in the legislature) despite its FPTP electoral model. This is due mainly to its high quota for women (around 35%).

One of the major factors that help us explain the picture above, is that although political culture embedded in the ideology of patriarchy is responsible for bad performance in a number of SADC countries, equally important is the nature of the electoral system in place in each of these states. It is abundantly clear that the best performers operate the PR system reputable for its tendency to enhance participation of various stakeholders in the political system. Thus, it could be argued that there is clearly a positive correlation between the adoption and implementation of the PR electoral system and the enhancement of women's participation in the legislature, although other creative measures (such as the quota system, the Zebra-list of candidates etc) are still called for to supplement this system and achieve desirable results in the final analysis. The challenge therefore is that parties must ensure broader inclusiveness at the higher echelons of their governance by bringing in more women in position of leadership. Generally, both ruling parties and major opposition parties in the region are led by men and the executive committees are also dominated by men. We are yet to see women becoming leaders of ruling and opposition parties and not just cheerleaders. ***To this end, SADC member states and indeed the East African countries should strive to achieve gender parity in key positions of governance. This objective should not only be realised in parliaments and other organs of government, but should inform deliberate gender quotas within political parties themselves.***

## Conclusion

Political parties play a critical role in the democratisation process in Eastern and Southern Africa today. While in one country (Swaziland) political parties are not allowed to exist and operate freely, in others, they exist, although a dominant party situation tends to entrench the political hegemony of ruling parties. In another country (Zimbabwe), the degree of political polarization and intolerance renders opposition parties toothless under conditions of a hegemonic and repressive rule. In one country (Mauritius) a vibrant multi-party system exists. The regional context for political parties in the region, therefore suggests that the mere existence of a multiplicity of parties is one thing while the leveling of the playing field to ensure that parties contribute to democratization freely and fairly is quite another. This observation speaks, in particular, to the often tense relationships between ruling and opposition parties and the use/abuse of state resources by ruling parties at the expense of opposition parties-both common features of the African political landscape. While democratisation in many countries is fairly

advanced at the macro-level of the nation-state, internal democracy within parties remains a major challenge.

In other words, many countries have made considerable strides in advancing democracy, while the key actors in the democracy process, political parties, have lagged behind in inculcating internal democratic ethos, practices and procedures. This, in part, explains the declining public trust towards political parties in most countries. The declining public trust towards political parties could also be linked to the nature of environment (external) that they find themselves operating under as well as the nature of their internal functioning. Despite the enormous challenges facing political parties, they remain a critical pillar for democratic governance in Africa. Where parties do not exist, democracy is well-nigh impossible. Thus, in order to ensure the effectiveness of parties the above external and internal challenges facing them will need to be addressed by governments and parties themselves.

While the critical role of political parties in the democratization process in the region is acknowledge, we have argued that political parties face enormous challenges in their efforts to institutionalize, nurture and consolidate democratic governance. We have isolated, in particular, five main ones. Firstly, the dominant party syndrome prevailing in many countries puts limits to the depth of the democracy underway. Secondly, political parties seem to lack ideological orientation and policy menus that differentiate them and as such fail to allow voters to make informed choices among candidates that stand for elections. Thirdly, political parties throughout the region exhibit a poor record in terms of national, regional and international alliances. Fourthly, political parties are beset by a plethora of conflicts that undermine their effectiveness as key agents of democracy. Fifthly and finally, parties and their effectiveness are overwhelmingly dependent upon the type of leadership that they have. As key agents of democracy, parties need democrats with vision at their helm. If parties are not led by people who embrace democratic culture and practice, it is unlikely that governments would be led by democrats. As the old cliché goes, democracy requires democrats. All things being equal, political parties are (in theory) perfect schools for grooming democratic political leadership. We identified four major challenges for internal functioning and governance structures of political parties as (a) selection/election of the party leadership, (b) party primary elections, (c) management and administration of the internal affairs of the party; and (d) policy/programme development. The above challenges, notwithstanding, we observe that to the extent that political parties are supposed to be a school for democratic leadership, a bridge between government and society and agents of political participation, they are, indeed, key assets for democracy building/consolidation. If our assumption is correct, then we conclude that they are, undoubtedly, agents of democratization in the Eastern and Southern Africa.

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## **6.2 Democracy within political parties: A comparative analysis of the state of affairs in Eastern and Southern Africa, its challenges and how it may be institutionalised<sup>1</sup>**

By  
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### Abstract

Political parties have a fundamental and indispensable role in contemporary democracies. There are, however, a number of 'institutional guarantees' that parties would have to fulfil if they were to effectively meet what is expected of them in a democracy. One of such institutional requirements is intra-party democracy. If parties are building blocks of democracy, they cannot afford not to be democratic themselves for to do so is a contradiction both in terms and in values. This paper provides an overview of the state of affairs with regard to internal party democracy in the eastern and southern Africa region. Considered from the formal perspective, it would appear that political parties do have established systems, rules and regulation that would facilitate evolution of political parties that are democratic both in words and in action. However, there are still a number of gray areas that would need some attention. Thus, the biggest challenge that parties face in enhancing internal party democracy is not the intention to be democratic (as manifested in the formal requirements that are easily fulfilled) but rather it is the actual practice of walking the talk. As such, any initiative to address this democratic deficit is both noble and pertinent. However, in Africa, there is need for a more holistic approach in the way intra-party democracy is to be addressed for there are a number of other considerations that have to be made in order to either better understand the scope of the problem or to deal with it.

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## Introduction

Although conceptually speaking, democracy continues to belong to the category of 'essentially contested concepts', in modern times, it is futile to labour oneself in defining this form of governance in the sense of the classical, Athenian concept which centred on direct democracy. The complexities of modern societies have made this (direct democracy) unattainable. Even Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's African deliberative democracy, -that of under the tree, where *people talk and talk until they reach a consensus*, (Erdmann, 2000) is not feasible as there is no single tree under which the entire population of a given country could sit. Modern democracy, as Samuel Huntington observes, "is not simply democracy of the village, the tribe, or the city-state; it is democracy of the nation-state and its emergence is associated with the development of the nation-state" (Huntington, 1991:13). Thus, no matter how one defines today's democracy, one thing is clear: such a democracy will not be direct, but rather representative. As such, contemporary democratic systems require intermediary actors between state and society as well as institutional mechanisms for the articulation and advocacy of diverse views and policy preferences. Although there are a number of intermediaries that claim to connect 'the people' to the state, it is increasingly becoming axiomatic that in essence, political parties have a fundamental and indispensable niche in contemporary democracies. Indeed, "So fundamental are political parties to the operation of modern politics that their role and significance are often taken for granted" (Heywood, 2002:73). As a matter of fact, today's democracy is inconceivable without them hence we talk of 'multiparty democracy'.

To be sure, the borderlines between political parties and other interest groups may in some instances be blurred if not conflated. However, what distinguishes political parties from any other political interest groups is that it is only the former whose primary goal is that of contesting and capturing state power through peaceful means (Matlosa, 2007). It is also this very distinctive feature of political parties that makes them important institutions to reckon with in any democratic society. Because of what they are or what they are meant to be, they become the main vehicle for political representation, the main mechanism for the organization of government and the channels for maintaining democratic accountability.

There are, however, a number of 'institutional guarantees' that these organised groups called political parties would have to fulfil if they were to effectively meet what is expected of them in a democracy. Such prerequisites include a) organisational strength, b) political identity, c) internal unity, d) electioneering capacity and e) internal democracy (NIMD, 2004).

While it may be relatively easy to identify and agree on these institutional preconditions, the problem is to assess the extent of their presence or absence in each of the political parties one is confronted with. The difficulty creeps in particularly because the aforementioned institutional guarantees touch on the internal workings of political parties and yet in Africa, these (political parties) are unfortunately the kind of institutions that have been subjected to far much less research in the democratisation field. It is only recently that they have started to become subjects of academic discussion (Erdmann, 2005; Erdmann, 2007; Salih, 2007) and explicit external support (Burnell, 2000ab, NIMD, 2004; Carothers, 2006).

This paper intends to shed some light on the question of intra-party democracy. It attempts to provide some conceptual clarification before presenting the state of affairs of democracy within political parties in the eastern and southern region. The paper then raises some of the important caveats that have to be taken into account if we were to have a more balanced and comprehensive view of this problem so as to ensure that the various ways considered key to the institutionalisation of intra-party democracy are

context sensitive. The paper is a result of the author's desk research that has benefited significantly from the previous work on this and other related matters done by International IDEA in cooperation with the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA)<sup>3</sup>. The author has also relied on a 'mini-survey' that he carried out as part of his work in trying to contribute to development of the Knowledge Centre within NIMD<sup>4</sup>. Naturally, the paper has also benefitted from the author's own experiences accumulated in the course of his work as coordinator for the NIMD-ESARP<sup>5</sup>.

### **On the question of internal party democracy**

Just as we do not have a universally accepted definition of democracy, intra-party democracy is also a concept that remains contested. In our case, we consider internal party democracy as simply democracy within the party. What this means is that we can possibly better understand what intra-party democracy is, or what it entails, if we were to explicate the term 'democracy' as it is commonly applied in contemporary literature. In this regard, we propose to draw insights from Robert Dahl (1971) who views democracy<sup>6</sup> as a political system in which those who govern are continuously responsive to the preferences and aspirations of those who are governed. Of course, Robert Dahl is mainly concerned with democracy in a society as a whole. However, his definition of democracy is still applicable to aiding our understanding of intra-party democracy particularly if we were to consider that the political party leadership or executive is in a way analogous of government while the rank and file are an approximation of the citizens or the electorate. According to Dahl, for a system to be qualified as a democracy, it would have to fulfil three fundamental conditions: Citizens should be able to formulate their preferences, express those preferences among themselves and also to the government, either as individuals or in groups, and those preferences have to be "weighed" equally "in the conduct of government" (Dahl, 1971:2).

Thus, to talk about internal party democracy is, in our case, to refer to the extent to which a party subscribes to and abides by the aforementioned basic democratic tenets. Consistent with our conceptual framework, it means we are concerned for instance with the extent to which a political party has put in place and follows mechanisms that allow for the party executive to be *responsive* and

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<sup>3</sup> In the early 2000, International IDEA and EISA launched their "Programme of Research and Dialogue on Political Parties" that resulted in case studies being carried out in a number of countries on three themes: Country Context of Political Parties, External Regulations and Environment of Political Parties and Political Parties' Internal Functioning and Structure. Their (IDEA-EISA) research project focused on a number of countries but this paper has mainly benefitted from the research reports on Malawi (Patel, Nandini, 2005. *Political Parties: Development and Change in Malawi*, EISA Research Report No. 21); Zambia (Momba, Jotham, 2005. *Political parties and the quest for democratic consolidation in Zambia*, EISA Research Report No. 17); South Africa (Lodge, Tom and Ursula Schneidegger, 2005. *Political Parties and Democratic Governance in South Africa*, EISA Research Report No. 25); Mozambique (Siteo, Eduardo J, et al, 2005. *Parties and Political Development in Mozambique*, EISA Research Report No. 22) and Tanzania (Shayo, Rose, 2005. *Parties and Political Development in Tanzania*, EISA Research Report No. 24).

<sup>4</sup> In essence, this paper is an updated version of the report that the author compiled as a result of that survey. See Magolowondo, Augustine, 2007. *Internal party democracy: the state of affairs and the road ahead Results of the mini-survey commissioned by NIMD Knowledge Centre*. Presented at the NIMD 2007 Partnership Days, The Hague, 11 September 2007.

<sup>5</sup> The views expressed in this paper are, however, those of the author in his own personal capacity.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Dahl however prefers to use the term "polyarchy" to democracy, in an attempt to make a distinction between the ideal (democracy) and what in practice exists (polyarchy). In the long run, the more a polyarchy will satisfy the necessary conditions, the more it will approximate the ideal cum democracy. See Dahl, Robert (1971): *Polyarchy, Participation and Opposition*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

*accountable* to its membership. It also means that in such a party, there is *internal political contestation* or *competition* and *participation* of the members in the affairs of the party. In addition, a democratic political party, like a democratic polity, should be able to be *tolerant* to and *accommodative of divergent views* within it. Thus, party discipline would not necessarily mean absence of what Scarrow (2005) calls an organized factionalism.

### **Internal party democracy: The state of affairs**

To be sure, there may be different ways of assessing the state of internal party democracy based on the foregoing basic conceptual dimensions. The subsequent discussion is partly modelled on the structure of a questionnaire developed by International IDEA and EISA to investigate the internal functioning and structure of political parties which in essence, as it will transpire shortly, is an investigation of internal party democracy. It is also the same questionnaire that the author used in his own survey on the subject as mentioned above. Thus, the subsequent discussion takes the following sequential order: A brief overview of the nature political parties in the region is presented first followed by a discussion on internal structure/ election of leadership, policy development, membership. Thereafter, we turn to candidate selection, and management and accountability of party funding.

### ***Nature/profile of political parties in the region***

#### *What triggers formation of parties*

The way in which political parties are formed may have an impact on not only the very survival of the party, but also the identity that the party develops among its rank and file and also within society. A closer analysis of the parties in the region shows that with regard to their formation, political parties here can, for analytical reasons, be put under three broad categories. There are those parties that are closely associated with the national liberation movements or pro-independence/ nationalist struggles. These are the oldest in the region although for various reasons, they may have been officially registered as late as the beginning of 1990s. The second category of parties in the region are those that were formed in the period after the independence but before the re-introduction of multiparty politics which had been banned in a number of countries immediately after the gaining of independence. Political parties in this second category emerged as resistance movements which in many instances were fighting the pro-independence parties which had transformed themselves in authoritarian regimes. These resistance movements were operative either in exile or underground within their respective countries and turned into political parties during the wave of political liberalisation that had hit the region following the end of the cold war. Then, there are those parties that could broadly be categorised as products of internal (unresolved) political rivalries within the established political parties (in both the first and the second categories). We see these political rivalries resulting in the formation of political parties mainly in the democratic era. One party in Zambia, for instance, reported that since its formation in 1990s, it has 'given birth' to five other parties. Of course, the question is why too many splits. Underlying causes of these rivalries revolve around issues like lack of internal and democratically established mechanisms of dealing with conflicts, greed of the leaders manifested in the tendencies of always wanting to govern and not to be governed, ideological differences (although this is rare) and taking advantage of the prevailing political dispensation- as an act of exercising one's own political rights. The table below gives some examples of political parties in the region that may be put under each of the three categories.

### Nature of political parties in the region (selected examples)

Category	Some Examples
1. Associated with Former National Liberation Movements (NLM) or pro-independence/ nationalist struggles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa,</li> <li>2. <i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> (FRELIMO) – Mozambique Liberation Front;</li> <li>3. Malawi Congress Party (MCP);</li> <li>4. Chama cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania;</li> <li>5. United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia;</li> <li>6. Kenya African National Union -KANU</li> </ol>
2. Those formed in the wake of the (re)democratisation agenda (Post independence, pro-democracy movements)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Movement for Multiparty Democracy –MMD of Zambia;</li> <li>2. United Democratic Front –UDF of Malawi;</li> <li>3. Forum for Restoration of Democracy- Kenya (Ford-K);</li> <li>4. Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo –CHADEMA of Tanzania;</li> </ol>
3. Products of internal (unresolved) party conflicts, floor crossing and/ or ideologically driven	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Malawi;</li> <li>2. African Christian Democratic Party –ACDP of South Africa;</li> <li>3. Foundation for Democracy and Development –FDD of Zambia;</li> <li>4. <i>União Democrática</i> –Democratic Union –UD of Mozambique;</li> </ol>

#### *Ideological orientation*

Almost all political parties in the region claim to be associated with one form of ideology or the other. However, in many of these parties, this is difficult to clearly discern, upon closer analysis. There are two exceptions that can be made here. First, when parties are broadly put under two categories, the “old” (those associated with nationalist/ liberation struggles) and the “new”, association with the third wave of democracy, then, the older parties tend to have a slightly more visible ideological orientation than the new. Good examples here are the African National Congress (ANC), Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and Frelimo which ideologically are more leftist oriented. In addition, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the Kenya African National Union would be regarded as largely conservative (centre-right) political parties. The second exception is when political parties are looked at from the perspectives of their respective countries. In this case, literature reviewed so far suggest that there are more clear ideological identities between and among political parties in South Africa than in any other country in the region.

#### ***Internal party structure: Existence of rules and regulations***

If there is anything that political parties have in common, then it is the way they are structured. All the political parties in the region do have written rules and regulations that govern their internal functioning as political parties. Key among these written rules is the constitution. Some parties do have also statutes or codes of conduct to regulate behaviour of either the leadership of the parties or, in some instances, the general membership. Some of these written rules and regulations are quite extensive. For example, Rule 25 of the South African ANC Constitution on discipline covers not only a good twenty five pages,

but it details all the various stages and procedures that are to be followed on matters related to conflict management and the kind of penalties that can be meted. Indeed, the ANC constitution is one of the most extensive party constitutions in the region to the extent that it has a provision for an oath of allegiance that any party member would have to declare before being accepted as a full member of this organisation. In Tanzania, it is the ruling CCM that is said to have “well designed and elaborate regulations governing almost every aspect of the party” (Shayo, 2005p.13).

While parties have these written rules and regulations including constitutions, what cannot be said without doubt is the extent to which these rules and regulations are implemented to the letter and unselectively. In the region, it is not uncommon to come across incidences whereby political parties have not respected their own constitutions. How such kind of violations are challenged by the party cadres depends on the various factors, key among them being the space that the party leadership creates for the members to express themselves without risking unwritten consequences.

***Internal party structures: Decision making structures, how they are constituted and frequency of their meetings***

The highest body in terms of decision making in all the political parties is the National Conference/Congress/ Convention/ General Assembly (hereinafter referred to generally as party conventions). Because of the wide range of delegates that constitute these bodies and the powers they have, their meetings are crucial for the democratic life of the party. For instance, except in few cases, decisions taken by these national bodies are, in many political parties, binding. It is also these bodies that in many political parties have the powers to make critical policy or legal decisions like amending the party’s constitution. Furthermore, as it will soon be noted, it is also a common practice in many political parties that it is at meetings of these bodies that the top leadership (National Executive/ Central Committee) of the party is elected.

Composition of delegates for party conventions for many political parties in the region tend to be influenced by two considerations: geographical balance as outlined in the party’s structures (regional, district, constituency, ward/area/ branch) and societal strata to ensure representation of women, youths, professional affiliations etc. Among the parties reviewed, the South African Democratic Alliance (DA) makes another interesting consideration: the party’s electoral following across the provinces (Lodge and Scheidegger, 2005). In this regard, an attempt is made to ensure that number of delegates from the provinces during the party’s federal congress (the convention), is proportional to the party’s electoral strength in those provinces measured in terms of the number of votes won by the DA in the national elections preceding the party’s convention.

Frequency of meetings of these national bodies also varies, ranging from annually to every 4 years. This study noted however, that while the parties constitutions clearly lay down regularity of these meetings, some parties are not able to meet as regularly as their constitutions stipulate. As a matter of fact, some parties are founded and disbanded without having had a chance to hold a convention while others take years to do so. Admittedly, it is not that simple to hold these national meetings as they are costly exercises although they constitute the ideal democratic platform for the wider membership to shape the general direction of the party. This argument is, however, valid only to a point as the case of the South African ANC can demonstrate. This party has regularly and predictably held its national conferences partly owing to the fact that delegates to these meetings have had to be financially sponsored by their respective party structures (like branches). Tom Lodge and Ursula Schedegger (2005) found out in their study on the level of political activism within the ANC that in addition to the *letsame* (working together)

campaign (in 2002) that aimed at inculcating the spirit of volunteerism among the ANC cadre, local branches were also engaged in fundraising activities in most cases to support the expenses of delegates travelling to provincial and national conferences. Thus, it would appear that the question is not just the party not being able to hold meetings, but to make those meetings so meaningful to the extent that members see great value in them and are, consequently, willing to contribute to their taking place. In the case of the ANC, it appears that the democratic space that is provided to conference delegates and the powers that they may have in influencing policy and leadership positions of the party make national conferences to be extremely important to the ordinary member, hence his/her willingness to make a financial sacrifice.

### ***On party leadership positions***

Most party constitutions provide for elected leadership. This is particularly the case with regard to National Executive Committees or National Management Committees and other regional or district committees. Procedures for electing party leaders do differ among the parties but the most common system is the simple majority system. In it is only in a few parties where an absolute majority (50%+1) for the post of party president is required. As already observed above, in the case of national leadership positions, including the presidency, it is often the congress or convention that elects the leaders. It should however be pointed out that in some of the newly established parties, the tradition of electing people to senior positions as may have been outlined in their respective constitutions, is yet to be institutionalised. Part of the problem is their not holding of national conferences and/or conventions. In that case, vacancies created by defections or deaths are often filled in by appointment, which in the processes strengthens the positions of the party presidents/ chairpersons as they tend to fill in those vacancies with their own loyalists thereby promoting patrimonialism and clientism. Unfortunately, these tendencies make it difficult for the senior leadership of the party to be questioned by or accountable to the lower levels since those below are practically at the mercy of the very leader(s) they would wish to question.

### ***Inclusiveness in party structures***

Inclusiveness, as a democratic tenet within the party is often viewed in terms of the extent to which the party takes deliberate measures to ensure participation of the often less privileged groups like women and youths in party affairs. In this regard, this study noted that, despite the regional protocols particularly on Gender, to which all the States and Governments in the region are signatories, very few political parties in the region have established quotas for women and let alone the youths. The South African ANC Constitution for instance provides for at least 30% of positions in its National Executive Committee (NEC) and also its National Working Committee (NWC) to be reserved for women. The same quota is applied when preparing for party's list for parliamentary elections whereby every third position on the list is reserved for a woman candidate. This is contrary to the DA in the same country, that is generally not in favour of these kind of affirmative actions (Lodge and Scheidegger, 2005) although interestingly, its (DA) leader is a lady (Hellen Zille) and one (Anchen Dreyer) of its three Chairpersons is also a woman. Another party that has also quota for women in South Africa is the United Democratic Movement (UDM) at 50% although the party reports that it has difficulties in filling this quota (ibid). The 50% quota for women is also provided for in the case of the Zambian United Party for National Development (UPND). Frelimo in Mozambique does also have a quota for women (at 40%) but this is for its party list that is prepared for purposes of parliamentary elections. In addition to a quota for women, Frelimo has also quota for youths (20%) and former combatants (10%).

It should however be pointed out that while many parties do not have official quotas for women and/or youths, they have within their setups, structures like the Women's wing/ Women's League and Youth Wings/ Young Democrats/ Youth Leagues that partly takes care of participation of these groups in party affairs. Their influence within the party, however, varies from party to party. These structures, for instance, have an influential role in the ANC in South Africa to the extent that the Youth Wing there was regarded as having been key to the selection of Jacob Zuma, as president of the ANC. In other parties, the all women/ youth structures are largely symbolic as power remains with the senior male politicians, who paradoxically also hold positions of "Director of Youth" in some instances.

### ***Policy development***

With regard to policy development, almost all parties have either specialised committees or think tanks that take the lead in policy development. The committees have access to and make use of surveys and opinion polls among other sources of information and data. The difference is in the approving authority. In some political parties, the policy document requires the approval of the entire party congress for it to be adopted as a party document. This is, for instance, the case with the ANC whereby resolutions adopted by the policy conferences can only be binding upon being approved by the National Conference. In other parties, it is only the party's national executive or national board that has the final say.

Political parties in countries with high illiteracy levels like Malawi do, however, face a special challenge here when it comes to connecting with the masses as the policy documents are often in English, a language understood by few. In the end, policy documents remain elitist documents. This limitation also affects the extent to which the party leadership can be made accountable on key policy decisions.

### ***Membership***

#### *Existence of mechanisms for registration of party members and criteria for membership*

Members should in essence be the foundation of any party. Without them, there could be no such an organisation to be called a political party. As noted in our conceptual definition of internal party democracy, we regard members as proxies of citizens in a society. Thus, it is to these members that the party leadership is accountable as whatever the party does should in principle be done on behalf of its rank and file.

In this context, it is interesting to note that almost all the parties in the region claim to have national membership registers. Some parties do also have membership registers at a regional or district level. Membership is generally open. The most common restriction is age as many of the parties accept party membership applications only from adults (from 16 or 18 years and above).

Most accurate and possibly reliable statistics on actual members a party has are, however, hard to come by. Only parties in South Africa and to some extent in Tanzania and Mozambique do have some institutionalised membership scheme. The ANC for instance has a computerised membership data which classifies members in terms of being in 'good standing' meaning having paid the subscription and not being in good standing. Even more difficult, however, is to establish a percentage of women members a political party has. We will later return to this issue as it has significant implications on the question of internal party democracy.

### *Membership rights and obligations*

In all political parties, members are expected to make contributions. These are often fixed minimum annual monetary fees. In addition, members are expected to perform some voluntary work for the party and adhere to the party's statutes or rules. In return, some parties have clearly laid down members' rights in form of voting rights at party meetings, for instance. Like in the case of members of the various committees, this study found out that political parties do also have ways and means of disciplining members. However, what appears to be lacking are formal or written guidelines for ordinary party members to express their opinion on party matters other than through their elected representatives during normal meetings.

### *Internal communication*

The results on membership further show that political parties strive to establish possibilities for the various party structures (national, regional, and local) to communicate with their membership and vice versa. The most preferred or used methods are meetings (top-down) while individual correspondences (whereby the party leadership is writing the individual members or the other way round) are very rare. Use of electronic communication (website or e-newsletter) is also used but this is largely limited to parties in countries with well established required technology like in South Africa. The DA for instance publishes a weekly online "letter from the leader," the *SAToday*. On its part, the ANC publishes the *ANC Today* and *Umrabulo*, the journal whose mission is to encourage debate and rigorous discussions at all levels of the ANC.

### ***Electoral Activity: Candidate Selection***

#### *Formal requirements for candidature*

An equally important element of the party's internal democracy is the selection or election of its candidates for presidential, parliamentary, civic or indeed any other elections a party may be required to take part in the country. With regard to selection of candidates, this study shows that in all the parties, those interested to stand for any position would have to fulfil a number of requirements. This applies to all types of elections. Most demanding requirements concern candidates for presidential elections, mainly applicable in countries that follow presidential system of government. In this regard, most common requirements include age (often not less than 35years), education qualification and long standing party membership. In some parties like the Tanzanian CCM, those aspiring to contest in the country's presidential elections are further required to collect a certain amount of signatures (in the case of the CCM, at least 25 signatories from 10 regions in Tanzania including two regions from Zanzibar (Shayo, 2005). For the other positions (Candidacy for Member of Parliament, Senate or Local Government), similar requirements also apply but the threshold is reduced. Age limit is often set at a minimum of 21 years and signatures, where they are required are also reduced as compared to those contesting in presidential elections.

#### *Vetting or screening of candidates*

It would also appear that there is a tradition of vetting candidates in all the political parties. Even when a candidate has fulfilled all the requirements, many political parties have established 'screening' processes which are either done at the NEC or Congress level. This screening process may even include conducting

of interviews. What could not be deduced from the desk research undertaken is how transparent is this screening process and also what happens in situations whereby the decision of the vetting authorities differ with that of the aspirant and/or the membership. Experience in some countries shows that these incidences contribute to party splits or the rise in independent candidates, where this is possible. This was, for instance the case in Malawi's 2004 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections (PPE) whereby some party leaders imposed candidates on their membership and this resulted in a good number of independent candidates winning parliamentary seats in the constituencies which had 'imposed' party candidates. Similarly, the decision by the leader of the United Democratic Front to unilaterally appoint a presidential candidate and his running mate in the 2004 presidential elections resulted in some senior members of the party quitting the UDF and either formed their own parties or stood as independents.

#### *Other decisive factors*

It is worth pointing out here that in countries which follow the first-past-the-post single member constituency system, in addition to the basic requirements mentioned, candidate's wealth is also an important factor that determines one's candidature as they (aspirants) have to either pay a fee to the party or they also have to campaign as an individual. Furthermore, the position one has in the party is said to also increase the chances for one's candidature just as it is also important in some parties to be 'well known' to the senior party leaders. There are often no term limits for one to contest as a candidate for his or her party. The only exception here is in those countries where they have term limits for the country's president.

#### **Funding**

The main interest of in this section of the study was to establish the sources of funding that the various political parties have and how those funds are utilised and accounted for. This is against the understanding that the way a party is financed may have significant influence on the internal functioning of the party including the extent to which democracy within the party is practiced.

#### *Sources of funding*

With regard to actual sources of funding, the results of this study show that political parties have varied experiences. In some countries, political parties do have access to state funding as it is the case in Malawi, Tanzania, South Africa, Mozambique and (in future) in Kenya. Public financing of political parties is not applicable in Zambia. In countries where state funding occurs, parties acknowledge that this constitute a significant source of revenue.

Other than being financed from the state coffers, another important source of revenue for political parties is membership fees and donations. In some instances, however, the amount of membership fee being levied is so little as to warrant this (membership) to be a source of funding to reckon with. For instance, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in Zambia charges its members an annual fee of as low as an equivalent of 0.094EUR. The ANC on the other hand charges slightly over 1EUR in annual membership subscription. In that case, it can be said that the membership fee is more of a symbolic gesture on the part of the members to express their affiliation to that particular party than the intention of contributing to the survival of the party as such.

Thus, it would appear that besides state funding, it is mainly donations that constitute the main financial base of many political parties in this region. These donations come in different forms. Some of the

donations are voluntary contributions that individual members, often those in leadership positions, make either to a particular party function or to a party more generally. Some contributions, however, are mandatory. For instance, some parties require that those members who are serving as cabinet ministers or MPs do also make some financial contribution to the party. This is the tradition in the ANC and DA in South Africa. It is not clear, however, as to whether this contribution is a percentage of their monthly salary or not. In some parties, members are obliged to make donations if they have to be endorsed by the party to stand as a candidate. For instance, the aforementioned MMD, which charges only 0.094EUR as an annual membership fee, requires that those who wish to contest, on behalf of the party as an MP pay the party an equivalent of EUR28.55 while for those aspiring for local government positions (councillor) they would have to pay EUR9.52. In 2004, the UDM in South Africa asked its candidates for parliamentary elections to contribute to party funds an equivalent of 200EUR each.

Whilst the 'selling' of candidature may be considered a legitimate way of diversifying the party's financial base, it may, unfortunately, result in barring other equally deserving party members from contesting in elections on behalf of the party thereby defeating the very democratic tenet of equality that a party may be advancing. In addition, where legislative frameworks are weak, such tendencies may actually promote acts of fraud within the party.

#### *Expenditure pattern and financial accountability*

It would appear that much of the money that political parties raise or receive is spent on campaigns and salaries for the administrative staff and other salaried party positions as the case may be. However, specific information with regard to how parties account for their funds is very scanty except in some instances where political parties are required by law to submit financial returns to designated public institutions. These could be either to an electoral management body (as is the case in South Africa) or to the Ministry of the Interior (as in Tanzania). Other parties only submit financial reports to the party's annual congress or convention. In the cases where such conventions are not regularly held, it is not clear as to how the party membership gets to know the financial standing of their respective parties. Some party leaders claim that it is 'extremely difficult' to account for party funds given that part of the money is given to 'traditional dancers' as a token of gratitude and yet these traditional dancers cannot provide any receipt for accounting purposes.

#### **Internal party democracy: some caveats**

The foregoing discussion does suggest that much as political parties may claim to subscribe to and promote democracy, there are still areas that would need to be worked on if democracy is to be the only game not only 'in town' but also the only game within the parties. However, there are a number of caveats that any initiatives that aim at addressing the gaps would have to take into account given the nature and state of political parties in the region as the following discussion demonstrates.

As already pointed out, democracy is about accommodation of dissenting views. In the case of political parties, this would mean that the party is able to accommodate various factions that may represent the diverse interests within the party as an organisation for its members are not homogenous. In other words, democracy within the party would imply possibilities of having an 'opposition within the opposition or indeed an opposition within the ruling parties'. The problem here is that for emerging parties, this may not always be the ideal they may strive for at the early stages. Put it differently, factionalism within the party, particularly when it may not be well managed, may threaten the very survival of an emerging and fragile political party. Of course, the challenge is to know the right time

when the party can freely open up. This is the question that each party would have to settle individually but the general indicator would be when members who are genuinely interested in the survival and growth of the party start feeling that their leadership is losing touch with them. The onus, therefore, is on the party leadership to balance up the quest to maintain a united party but not at the expense of tolerance to and accommodation of constructive criticism.

Another challenge that some political parties in the region may face when it comes to efforts to develop a culture of democracy is that while they have supporters, it is difficult to identify actual party members beyond those who hold positions. In Malawi, for instance, after the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1993, no political party has party cards on the grounds that during the one party era, these cards were an instrument of exploitation and oppression as they were forcibly sold. As such there is completely no way that one could tell who a party member is. Some parties have tried to distribute T-shirts and party cloths, but in poverty stricken countries, who would refuse to have a free or highly subsidized cloth? In some countries like Tanzania and Kenya, political parties do have party cards that are sold or given to their members. However, there are no mechanisms that would check duo or multiple membership. As a matter of fact, therefore, data on membership hardly exists in many instances or, where it exists, it is not as reliable. It is, therefore, not surprising that in a survey on political parties in Malawi in 1998, the cumulative number of members that all political parties claimed to have was at 18,000,000 when the population in Malawi at that time was around 9,000,000 (Kadzamira, et al, 1999). In such a situation, it becomes difficult to know to what extent there is popular and equitable participation in party's affairs. In other words, a party without a clear membership scheme is like a country without a proper population census. Just as it would be almost impossible to have a clear picture of the number of voters in that country, it would equally be difficult for a party without any or reliable membership data to know who could be a bonafide delegate to its conventions.

In addition, where there are very weak legal instruments governing the operations of political parties, there are no effective or adequate safeguards that would ensure that parties abide by what they profess. Until recently, there was no party law in Kenya. In Zambia, political parties continue to be registered as clubs or societies. In the case of Malawi, the 1993 Political Parties Registration (and Regulations) Act is more concerned with matters of party registration than regulation. Of course, under the most egalitarian systems, parties are only loosely governed by law. This is the case for instance in France, Sweden and Ireland where there are no requirements for parties to register with official authorities if they want to take part in elections. However, it is also the case that in many democracies parties are regulated by law. How extensive such legislations are and which areas of political parties are subject to law varies from country to country. Often, relevant legal instruments define what a political is, what its functions are, how it can be (de)registered and how it can be funded. In addition, overall functioning of political parties may also be subjected to legislation. Given that democracy is just emerging in this region, and considering the important space that political parties occupy in these emerging democracies, it would be a mistake to adopt a *laissez-faire* approach to political parties. It is important that there exist legal instruments that would ensure that the democratic life of political parties is strengthened and that when need arise, those who feel that their parties are departing from the democratic norms have recourse to the courts of law.

Motives of party membership may also have an impact on the extent to which a party may be seen to be inclusive or not. Where individuals view parties as just a source of personal aggrandizement, political activism dwindles with the decrease in the likelihood that the party or party leadership will be able to provide the kind of material benefits that were expected. This is partly the reason why the trend in crossing of the floor, is often from opposition parties to the ruling parties for it is the latter that enjoy a

comparative advantage in the extent to which they can offer some 'dividends' to their members. In this regard, some party members may not actively participate in party affairs not necessarily because there are no mechanisms to facilitate their participation. Rather, they may have given up simply because for them, it is like the cow is no longer producing milk.

Furthermore, in some cases, lack of participation of certain groups like women in party affairs may not necessarily be an indication of an exclusive and hence internally not democratic party. It may actually be a reflection of cultural problems whereby in some cultural setups, women are generally discouraged to take up prominent roles in public life. Thus, just insisting on inclusion of women in political process without paying regard to the cultural dimension may therefore result in arriving at wrong conclusions.

Challenges also arise in situations where political parties revolve around dominant personalities who are either founders or financiers or –in worst case scenarios- both. In this case, it may be difficult to conceive of a possibility of the followers to demand accountability of such leaders. After all, these leaders are seen as the patrons of their followers for the latter depend on the former for favours or even the actual sustenance of the party itself. In other words, such 'parties' do not have members. Rather, they have 'subjects' and it is erroneous in the first place to expect subjects to demand accountability of their 'masters'. What is at stake in this case is not just the question of intra-party democracy but the very conceptual foundations of a party itself for unless the subjects turn into citizens (members), and the masters become democratically elected leaders, that which exists may not qualify to be called a political party. In other words, the nomenclature would have to change and we may not have to talk about or expect intra-party democracy for it is like looking for internal democracy in an absolute monarchy. From a practical standpoint, therefore, we would sequentially have to reform the absolute monarchy into a democracy (constitutional monarchy) in the first place so that we can then assess the progress being made in the internal democratization process.

## **Conclusion**

Considered from the formal perspective, it would appear that political parties in the region do have established systems, rules and regulation that would facilitate evolution of political parties that are not only professing democracy, but they are themselves democratic. However, the biggest challenge that parties face in enhancing internal party democracy is for them to go beyond the formal declarations. This calls for continued dialogue and further investigation for as building blocks of democracy, political parties cannot afford not to be democratic themselves for to do is a contradiction both in terms and in values.

## **Recommendations**

What the caveats discussed in the just preceding section foretell, however, is that we would have to be cautious in not only passing judgements when we examine data and information related to internal party democracy but also when we reflect on and consider the possible strategies to address the identified deficiencies. It is in this context that the following recommendations are made.

## **Context matters**

It is apparent that the old debate between *universalists* and *relativists* will resurface when dealing with internal party democracy. Without necessarily opening up a debate that we cannot settle here, it is obvious that like in the general democratic debate, there is or ought to be a certain basic threshold that

can be regarded as universal when talking about internal party democracy. Our conceptual definition has provided that 'minimum package'. However, the translation of that minimum package in reality would have to be context sensitive. This is particularly important given that political parties even within the same country will most likely be at different levels of political development. While others would be regarded as already established parties, some are just emerging. These parties will have different priorities within that 'internal democracy package' at different times. One size may therefore not fit all. Thus, there would be need for any party, having been convinced of the need to reform, to do its sequencing right. External facilitation and support may be appropriate here.

***What political parties can do: put in place certain basic 'internal democracy infrastructure'***

As the discussion on the state of internal party democracy has demonstrated, there are certain basics that political parties would need to consider putting in place if the discussion on internal party democracy would have to be meaningful in the first instance. Such basics include the following:

*Robust membership recruitment drive with an institutionalised membership scheme*

By definition, political parties are membership based organisation and they ought to be like that. Once established, a party cannot survive without having a vigorous membership recruitment campaign. More important, however, is the need to ensure that basic records for membership are in place and that a party is able to trace and connect with its members. A party also needs to ensure that it creates 'incentives' to retain its members as it looks for more. Ensuring members' meaningful participation in political party activities is one thing. Another is for the party to prove to be meaningful to its members by developing an identity that its members would be proud to be associated with. In the end, the more members will be participating in and contributing to the growth and survival of the party, the more likely they will be demanding accountability of their leaders to them (members).

*Diversify the party's revenue base*

As noted above, it is hard to demand accountability of the party leaders when it is these leaders who are actually sustaining the party financially. After all, you do not burn the finger that feeds you. The best way out is for the party to ensure that it does not rely on an individual but rather it has an established and sustainable financial base as an organisation. Some political parties like CCM and Frelimo for instance do have shares in companies or own property. This is more sustainable than having an individual to finance the party.

*Continuous transformative political education*

We have already observed that some of the problems that may hinder internal party democracy are related to culture. All the countries in the region share a common history that in itself was not supportive of emergence of democratic culture: colonialism and one party systems of government. While colonialism did not create citizens but subjects (Mamdani, 1996), the one party political systems in Africa, according to Anyang' Nyong'o "have perpetuated a culture which can not just be wished away<sup>7</sup>". This kind of political culture includes anti-democratic, egoistic, provincial, authority fearing,

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<sup>7</sup> Nyong'o, Anyang', P., *Institutionalisation of Democratic Governance in Sub Saharan Africa*, ECDPM Working Paper No. 36 (Maaschrit: ECDPM) 1997: 12.

quite often insular, ethnic-protective culture<sup>8</sup>. These challenges have ramifications on internal party democracy and cannot be dealt with unless there is change of mindset. The challenge, therefore, is that of developing a democratic political culture for democratisation, as Ronald Inglehart (1997) has observed, is not just a question of elite-level arrangements; rather, the basic cultural orientations of the citizens also play a crucial role in its survival.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, there is need for a continuous and transformative political education that addresses these cultural impediments. In this regard, a civil-society-political parties' partnership would be ideal.

### ***What external actors may do: create a package of incentives***

While the foregoing initiatives and/or reforms may be embarked on by political parties themselves, there are a number of other strategies that external actors may offer with the view of facilitating the institutionalisation of internal party democracy. These external actors are not only potential external donors and international cooperating partners, but also political parties own states, governments and local organisations. Such strategies may include the following creating some incentives.

B.F. Skinner's reinforcement theory may have been developed in psychology but its basic principles can be applied in internal party democracy. Certain incentives may be developed to reinforce political parties' adherence to basic tenets of internal party democracy. Such positive reinforcements may include the following:

*Conditioning a certain amount of state funding or external support to political parties on the basis the party's adherence with certain internal democratic elements* like the regular holding of conventions, submission of party's audited accounts to both its membership and other appropriate authorities, inclusion of a certain percentage of women and youths in the party's leadership structures, among others.

*Public recognition of good performers based on agreed upon ratings on internal party democracy.* Today, there a number of governance assessment initiatives that are looking at the macro-governance performance of countries. They include for instance the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International, the Freedom House Index, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance and the more country specific African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). In the same way, therefore, political parties and their collaborating partners could be encouraged to start reflecting on developing indices for internal party democracy which may be incorporated within the already existing initiatives like the Africa Peer Review Mechanisms (APRM) or could stand alone.

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> The necessity of culture in democratic consolidation or non consolidation has also been addressed at length in Diamond, Larry ed. (1994): *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries* Colorado and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

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**6.3 Money and Politics: the case of (Public) funding of political parties, pitfalls for sustainable democracy: A comparative analysis of applicable party funding regimes in Eastern and Southern Africa<sup>10</sup>**

By

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<sup>10</sup> Paper for NIMD/ESARP Regional Conference on 'Functioning and Management of Political Parties in Eastern and Southern Africa', Malawi 13-14 March 2008

## Introduction

### 1. Protocol observed

2. I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak at this high profile conference and am grateful to the sponsors for affording us all the opportunity to learn from one another in our quest to consolidate democracy on our continent.

3. my paper is divided into four parts



overview of (public) funding of political parties



A comparative discussion of the current funding regimes applicable in the ESARP region



Background note questions in perspective.



Party funding challenges(pitfalls) for sustainable democracy

4. This Paper introduces in the main, some of the issues raised(in respect to the ESARP region) in the following publications:



**“Money in Politics: A Study of Party Financing Practices in 22 Countries”**. Edited by Shari Bryan & Denise Baer. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, Washington: NDI.

*Acknowledgments: Amanda Smith and Bjarte Tora (Kenya); Lorato Banda, Amanda Smith and Luckson Chirwa (Malawi); Collette Hersenberg and Leo Spaans (Mozambique); Richard Klein, Susan Booyesen and Judith February (South Africa); Felix Odhiambo and Zanethemba Mkalipi (Tanzania); Lauren Paremoer and Adrian Muunga (Zambia).*



**“PARTY FINANCE REFORM IN AFRICA**. Sefakor Ashiagbor. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, Washington: NDI.

*Implementing Partners: Center for Governance and Development(Kenya), IDASA(South Africa)*



**“POLITICAL FINANCE POLICY, PARTIES, AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT”**

MICHAEL JOHNSTON. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, Washington: NDI. POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY IN THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES



**Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns Handbook Series**. Editors: Reginald Austin & Maja Tjernström. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance(IDEA) 2003

*Contributors: Julie Ballington, Peter Ferdinand, Karen Fogg, Patrick Molutsi, Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, Yaw Saffu, Maja Tjernström, Marcin Walecki, Daniel Zovatto*



**Effective Party Assistance: Stronger Parties for Better Democracy**. Mathias Caton. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance(IDEA) 2007



**Legislative framework in ESARP countries**<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Legislation may not be the most recent version

## Overview

Political parties are voluntary and informal associations and institutional arrangements of society and have become indispensable in modern representative democracies. Political parties play a unique role in society either as government or as part of the opposition and as instruments whereby people share commonly understood ideologies, norms, values, customs and attitudes that regulate their entry into competitive politics.

## Functions of political parties<sup>12</sup>

	Interest articulation	Interest aggregation	recruitment
Government	Implement policies	Sustain electoral support for government	Fill government positions
Opposition	Develop alternatives	Gain electoral support for change	Build pool of competent people

In parliamentary systems the function to oversee and control government rests with the opposition whilst in presidential systems the function falls on the legislature. Apart from the functions that a party should fulfill in order to sustain a working democracy, parties also have shared goals e.g. to maximize the share of their vote or differing goals e.g. lobby for specific policy agendas. Although the functions of political parties and goals of political party may overlap they are not always the same.

Multi-party systems have become the norm globally and also in the Eastern and Southern African region. Whereas Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia evolved from one party systems, South Africa and Kenya traditionally have had multiparty systems. Multiparty democracy functions optimally when there is a robust competition for political power between viable political parties. Political parties must therefore muster adequate resources to have the capacity to:

- develop their party policies and programmes;
- identify and communicate with their constituencies,
- run effective elections campaigns,
- monitor the electoral process; and
- administer and maintain their party structures.

In other words all political parties need to mobilise significant resources in order to mount election campaigns and to cover their running expenses. The greater support base of political parties in Africa is poor and indigent hence few political parties if any survive solely on membership subscriptions: they normally are required to raise large amounts of money from individual or businesses, foreign corporate, foreign governments or foreign agencies<sup>13</sup>, and public resources.

The focus of this paper is on the latter i.e. public funding of political parties in the Eastern and Southern African countries of Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.

To date political party funding remains a contentious issue in mature democracies of the world. It is therefore no surprise that we in developing democracies are experiencing ongoing challenges in finding a suitable framework for the role that money should play in our political processes. Some countries on the continent have taken baby steps in

<sup>12</sup> Effective party Assistance "Stronger Parties for better democracy. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance(IDEA) 2007

<sup>13</sup> Party assistance is defined as any type of international assistance geared towards individual parties or the party system as a whole, with the purpose of strengthening democracy in a given country – reference as per preceding footnote

addressing the issue, others have done more whilst some have simply steered clear of it altogether. The background note to this conference states that 'the institutional development of political parties is also affected by the levels of funding that political parties may have, how they get such funding and whether/how they account for it and indeed experiences vary in this regard'.

A comparative review confirms that within Eastern and Southern Africa political parties, in addition to their own private means, are publicly financed in, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa. Kenya has recently passed party legislation which is still not operational whilst in Zambia, there is no legal provision for public/state funding and political parties have to fend for themselves.

Again we confirm the observation in the background note for this conference that even in those countries where parties are funded by the State, neither the criteria nor the actual administration, management and accountability mechanisms are the same. The general lack of regulation for disclosure of private funding to political parties and transparency in party financial matters strengthens the likelihood of undue influence in the political process and increases the dangers of political patronage.

The study by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)<sup>14</sup> has revealed that 'corruption related to political party financing poses a greatest risk to democratic development worldwide. In the process, this has led to the deepening of public mistrust of political parties as they (political parties) are increasingly viewed as self centred organisations whose aim (mistakenly) is self enrichment'. The following questions are responded to as follows:

*How does party funding impact on the internal functioning and management of political parties?*

Strong parties require money. Without adequate funding the party structures are unable to organize, mobilize, etc. Where adequate funding is not forthcoming from membership and/or public funds alternative sources are sought from wealthy patrons which opens the process up to undue influence. Accordingly in many instances political accountability becomes for sale and is indeed traded to the highest bidder. By accepting funds from business interests that intentionally support political campaigns as a way of ensuring lucrative contracts with the state or possibly worse yet for assurances that the state will turn a blind eye to their illegal business practices or from godfathers who will turn political parties into their proxies the independence and accountability of parties is compromised. Strong leaders and/or key persons within parties often become the strategic fundraisers albeit from private coffers or personal connections which can then establish personal monopoly over funding sometimes leading to enriching themselves and stifling intra-party debate. In some cases candidates are willing to forgo political competition or abandon their political parties in exchange for money.

*Is State funding desirable and (if so) has to be legally guaranteed (e.g. in the country's Constitution or in separate legislations)?*

Adequate state funding is necessary to level the playing field of political contention i.e. not just multiple parties and a choice on Election Day but also vigorous, sustained self-interested contestation where people put the political process to effective use through political parties. As stated above African societies have many challenges of personal survival and given the negative track record of most political parties and actors on the continent there is little encouragement for citizens to make monetary political contributions.

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<sup>14</sup> National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, *Money in Politics: A Study of Party Financing Practices in 22 Countries*. Washington: NDI.

State funding must be based on a well balanced policy framework and carefully legislated to emphasize the value of free, open political contention under the watchful eye of citizen-ownership and adequate disclosure, monitoring and punitive measures to negate abuse of funding e.g. patronage and incumbency violations. Entrenching the public funding principles in the constitution is a first price whilst national legislation should provide the framework for establishing the Fund, management, administration and accountability for monies of the public fund. In addition the Fund must be managed by an institution that is independent from government e.g. an EMB having the necessary legitimacy.

*What kind of accountability mechanisms are (or can be) put in place to ensure that political party financing is transparent and in line with democratic norms and practices?*

The rules affecting how money is contributed, raised, spent and disclosed or conversely a *laissez faire* policy will have serious implications for the quality and sustainability of the democratic process. More often than not the rules of public funding aim more at controlling corruption than at providing adequate resources for political competition. The view that government exist to provide technically sound administration allows governing parties to shape political finance systems in such a way to solidify their own advantage. On the other end of the scale they are violated with impunity by all contenders.

For political party funding policies to be in line with democratic norms a first step is for it to allow or provide for essential funding both during and between campaigns and to rally citizens<sup>15</sup> interest in financing politics so that in turn they can demand accountability. Whereas citizens may understand that public [used to enhance open political contention and strengthen political parties] belongs to the nation as a whole they do not necessarily act out that believe to make parties accountable to the nation.

The most compelling reasons why disclosure of funding to political parties is needed is to prevent abuses that may erode the consolidation of democracy e.g. parties with too many resources may silence competitors and become isolated from their own social bases, parties funded from few sources may fail to represent broad segments of the public. Although transparency is a force for open accountable politics caution is needed as it can also expose contributors and political activists to reprisal and drive new groups or weaker parties out of the political arena.

Legislation must incorporate all these elements and include provisions that parties must account for all monies received in a transparent manner, to their members, the broader public(audited statements) and to their donors/sponsors and severally liable punitive measures.

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<sup>15</sup> When members and supporters contribute money it generally signals the intensity of their views and this becomes an important form of political participation. Appealing to citizens for funds is a party-building opportunity which should spawn party accountability although this is not borne out by fact. Given that political parties in Africa operate in societies facing pervasive scarcity within a democracy(where applicable) which is either new or re-emerging from crisis, this source of funding is negligible hence the opportunities for this party-building opportunity cannot be used to cement real party accountability to its broad support base.

**TABLE 1: MAJOR TRADEOFFS IN POLITICAL FINANCE POLICY**

	Political Contention Approach	Anti-Corruption Approach
<i>Strategic (ends)</i>	Providing resources for political contention	Controlling corruption
	Parties as vehicles, agents for political contention	Parties as civic entities or “public utilities”
	Distributive policies (directly or indirectly providing resources)	Regulatory policies (setting limits on flows of funds; transparency and accountability)
	Civil society as active, self-interested political protagonists	Civil society as a check on political, financial excesses
<i>Tactical (means)</i>	Encouraging flow of private funds	Checking influence of private contributors
	Providing public funds	Developing parties with strong independent financial bases
	Internal party accountability, governance	Public accountability, transparency
	“Blind trusts” keeping contributions unverifiable, protecting citizens from reprisals	Transparency to encourage accountability, check excesses and shady deals
	Encouraging new parties and independent candidates	Creating a consistent and comprehensible range of choices for citizens
	Emphasis on parties	Emphasis on individual candidates
	Emphasis on national issues, candidates, coalitions	Emphasis on local issues, candidates, interests



Comparison View of Party Funding Database

**Regulations and Enforcement**

Country	<i>Is there a system of regulation for the financing of political parties?</i>	<i>What body is responsible for administration and enforcement of the regulations?</i>
<a href="#">Kenya</a>	-	-
<a href="#">Malawi</a>	Yes	National Electoral Management Body
<a href="#">Mozambique</a>	Yes	National Electoral Management Body
<a href="#">South Africa</a>	Yes	National Electoral Management Body
<a href="#">Tanzania, United Republic of</a>	Yes	National Electoral Management Body
<a href="#">Zambia</a>	No *	-

**Disclosure of Income**

Country	<i>Is there provision for disclosure of contributions to political parties?</i>	<i>Do donors have to disclose contributions made?</i>	<i>What is the threshold beyond which donors must disclose contributions made?</i>	<i>Do political parties have to disclose contributions received?</i>	<i>What is the threshold beyond which parties must disclose contributions received?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>Mozambique</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>South Africa</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b>	No	No	-	No	-

Zambia	No	No	-	No	-
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### Ceilings on Income

Country	<i>Is there a ceiling on contributions to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ceiling on how much a donor can contribute?</i>	<i>What is the ceiling for how much a donor can contribute?</i>	<i>Is there a ceiling on how much a party can raise?</i>	<i>What is the ceiling for how much a party can raise?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>Mozambique</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>South Africa</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b>	No	No	-	No	-
<b>Zambia</b>	No	No	-	No	-

### Bans on Sources of Income

Country	<i>Is there a ban on any type of donation to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on foreign donations to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on corporate donations to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on donations from government contractors to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on trade union donations to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on anonymous donations to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on in kind donations to political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ban on any other type of donation to political parties?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Mozambique</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>South Africa</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tanzania	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Zambia</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No





## Disclosure and Ceilings on Expenditure

Country	<i>Is there provision for public disclosure of expenditure by political parties?</i>	<i>Is there a ceiling on party election expenditure?</i>	<i>What is the ceiling on party election expenditure?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b>	No	No	-
<b>Mozambique</b>	No	No	-
<b>South Africa</b>	No *	No	-
<b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b>	No	No	-
<b>Zambia</b>	No	No	-



## Direct Public Funding

Country	<i>Do political parties receive direct public funding?</i>	<i>When do political parties receive direct public funding?</i>	<i>What is the purpose of the direct public funding?</i>	<i>What is the basis for direct public funding?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b>	Yes *	Election period only	Election campaign activities	Number of candidates put forward in present election
<b>Mozambique</b>	Yes	Election period and between elections	Election campaign activities	Current representation in the legislature/Number of candidates put forward in present election
<b>South Africa</b>	Yes	Election period and between elections	General party administration/Election campaign activities/Other (1. Public opinion-making; 2. Political education; 3. Promotion of active political participation; 4. Influencing political trends; 5. Providing links between the people and organs of the State.)	Equal funding/Current representation in the legislature *
<b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b>	Yes *	Election period only	Election campaign activities	Equal funding; Performance at current election
<b>Zambia</b>	No	-	-	-



## Indirect Public Funding: Media Access

Country	<i>Do political parties receive indirect public funding?</i>	<i>Are political parties entitled to free media access?</i>	<i>What are the criteria for allocating broadcast time?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b>	Yes	Yes	Equal time
<b>Mozambique</b>	Yes	Yes	Equal time
<b>South Africa</b>	Yes	Yes *	Equal time
<b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b>	Yes	Yes	Equal time
<b>Zambia</b>	No *	No	-

## Indirect Public Funding: Taxation Status

Country	<i>Are political parties entitled to special taxation status?</i>	<i>Are donors to parties entitled to any tax relief?</i>	<i>Are political parties entitled to any other form of indirect public funding?</i>
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	-
<b>Malawi</b> Mr Carl Dundas, Senior Legal Consultant	No	No	No
<b>Mozambique</b> Mr Carl Dundas, Senior Legal Consultant	No	No	No
<b>South Africa</b> Ms Heather Ford, Digital Information Manager, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)	No	No	No
<b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b> Mr Carl Dundas, Senior Legal Consultant	No	No	No
<b>Zambia</b> Mr Carl Dundas, Senior Legal Consultant	No	No	No



Country	Do political parties receive direct/indirect public funding?	What is the basis of the public funding?	Are political parties entitled to private funding?
<b>Kenya</b>	No Comments: parties sought own funding	-Not applicable	Yes
<b>Malawi</b>	b. Direct  Comments: The State shall provide funds so as to ensure that, during the life of any Parliament, any political party which has secured more than one-tenth of the national vote in elections to that Parliament has sufficient funds to continue to represent its constituency.  Source: Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, Article 40(2).	b. Based on result of previous election  Comments: The law does not specify how the funds are distributed and secondary sources are unclear on the subject, but it seems to be based on the proportion of votes received in the last National Assembly election.  Source: Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, Article 40(2). EISA 2006 "Malawi: Party funding", <a href="http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/malparties3.htm">http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/malparties3.htm</a>	Yes  Comments: Parties are free to receive any amounts of funds from any source whatsoever barring funds from state bodies and public owned corporations. There are no limits on expenditures and no requirements to disclose either sources or deployment of funds.  Source: Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act 1993, 66.

<p><b>Mozambique</b></p>	<p>Direct</p> <p>Indirect</p> <p>Comments: Public funding allocated by National Electoral Commission: One-third of to presidential candidates, one-third to political parties in parliament in proportion to the seats held and one-third to parties fielding candidates for parliament in proportion the number of candidates fielded.</p>	<p>based on current legislative representation</p> <p>Based on number of candidates put forward in present election</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Comments: Public funding allocated by National Electoral Commission: One-third to political parties in parliament in proportion to the seats held and one-third to parties fielding candidates for parliament in proportion the number of candidates fielded. e.One-third of to presidential candidates.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Comments: Parties and coalitions may not receive funds from foreign governments and institutions or companies owned by foreign governments. Within 60 days of the publication of the results of the election concerned all the parties, candidates and coalitions that participated in the election must give account of incomes received and expenses made to the National Electoral Commission</p>
<p><b>South Africa</b></p>	<p>Direct</p> <p>c. Indirect</p> <p>Comments: Parties represented in Parliament and provincial legislatures receive public funding on an on-going basis and not specifically for elections. Source: Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act 1997, 5(1),(2).</p>	<p>Based on current legislative representation</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Comments: Funds are allocated according a formula that takes into account the proportion of members a party has in the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures and a minimum threshold amount to ensure equity. Accordingly 90% of the allocation of the financial year is paid in proportion to each party's aggregate seat representation in the sum of the seats of the National Assembly and Provincial legislatures. The remaining 10% is divided among the provinces proportionately to the number of seats in each province and the provincial allocations are divided equally among the parties in each legislature. Source: Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act 1997, 5(1),(2). Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Regulations, 1998, 4.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Comments: The Electoral Act of 1998 and the Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act of 1997 are alike wholly silent on the subject of private funding. Source: LODGE, T &amp; SCHEIDEGGAR, U 2005, South Africa: Country Report based on Research and Dialogue with Political Parties, International IDEA/EISA</p>

<p><b>Tanzania, United Republic of</b></p>	<p>Direct. Indirect Comments: All registered political parties which fielded contestants for the 1995 elections received government funds. Party contributions from other sources are regulated by Political Parties Act (1992). Source: Country Profile: Tanzania Mainland, pp.15-16.</p>	<p>Equal funding, regardless of size and previous performance.</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Comments: Based on the result of the present election. Source: International IDEA (2003) "Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns"</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Source: The national Electoral Commission Report for the 1995 General Election.</p>
<p><b>Zambia</b></p>	<p>No Comments: No public funding of political parties, Zambia has never legally provided for the resourcing of political parties by the state.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>Comments: There is no public funding of political parties.</p> <p>Source: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL 2004, "Highlights from the Transparency International Global Corruption Report 2004".</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Comments: All political parties raise some of their funds internally through membership dues and levies on members of parliament. Source: KABEMBA, C &amp; EISEMAN, M 2004, "Multipartyism in Zambia", IN Kabemba, C (ed), Elections and Democracy in Zambia, EISA Research Report No 6; MOMBASA, J 2005, Political Parties and the Quest for Democratic Consolidation in Zambia [PDF document], EISA Research Report No 17, 13.</p>

### Conclusion

Public funding for political parties is an imperative for consolidation of democracy on the continent. The challenge is to find the right-fit policy framework and legislative balance per individual African country that will level the playing field and at the same time provide an adequate measure to overcome the challenges posed by negative party funding practices that are prevalent in modern as well as emerging democracies. However, enactment of laws that are disregarded or not enforced may in fact exacerbate the problem in developing democracies with few resources and competing priorities for government spending. Most of the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa have started the process of legislating aspects of funding of their political parties and one can just hope that the momentum of democratic consolidation will spawn continued debate and legislative reform also in the full ambit of political party funding.

## Recommendations from the literature

**“PARTY FINANCE REFORM IN AFRICA.** Sefakor Ashiagbor. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, Washington: NDI.

*Implementing Partners: Center for Governance and Development( Kenya), IDASA(south Africa)*

*The results from the program confirm that party finance reform is well worth pursuing. But perhaps the most important lesson is the need for attention to general issues of party development and strengthening in Africa as well. Many of the party finance problems find their origin in undemocratic, secretive and unprofessional party organizing practices. The problems not only undermine public confidence in political processes but also engender governments more susceptible to corruption. More transparent, better organized and more democratic parties are required not only to restore public confidence but also to enhance prospects for the election of accountable government officials who better represent the interests of the public.*

Advocacy strategies for strengthening party finance reforms e.g. the need for increased understanding of political parties in Africa (how they operate and are perceived by the public), the importance of promoting broad-based debate on reforms i.e. moving beyond public funding as a possible solution, constructive engagement of political parties, business, and other allies in movement for reform; taking cognizance of the fact that the type and timing of action will be determined by the political context of the country

**“Money in Politics: A Study of Party Financing Practices in 22 Countries”.**

Edited by Shari Bryan & Denise Baer. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, Washington: NDI.

*Acknowledgments: Amanda Smith and Bjarte Tora (Kenya); Lorato Banda, Amanda Smith and Luckson Chirwa (Malawi); Collette Hersenberg and Leo Spaans (Mozambique); Richard Klein, Susan Booyesen and Judith February (South Africa); Felix Odhiambo and Zanethemba Mkalipi (Tanzania); Lauren Paremoer and Adrian Muunga (Zambia).*

To reduce the negative influence of money in politics, both in Africa and elsewhere, a variety of efforts must be undertaken simultaneously. Incentives to engage in political corruption must be understood and addressed at the same time that deterrence—punishment—is bolstered. If the recommendations here are followed, and systemic reforms are led by country-level leaders from all sectors who can tailor them to respond to country and region-specific issues, then this study provides considerable optimism for success in expanding democracy.

- Country specific solutions must be identified
- Political parties must be part of the solution
- Political parties must be stronger in order to perform their role in society
- Civil society should serve as a watchdog
- Laws and regulations must go beyond regulating finances
- Public funding must be considered but tied to party reform

**6.4 To cross or not cross the floor: A critical assessment of the rationale and impact of floor crossing on party systems and representative democracy**

By

Anthony Mawaya,

Prepared for the Regional Conference on Functioning and Management of Political Parties in  
Eastern and Southern Africa  
Mount Soche Hotel, Blantyre, Malawi, 13/03/08

## Presentation outline

- Definitions and rationale for floor-crossing (FC)
- The nature of the problem and its manifestations; reasons for floor crossing
- Consequences of floor crossing and attempted solutions to deal with these
- What's the way-forward on floor crossing in the region?

## Definitions

- What is floor-crossing (FC)?
  - FC is the act of elected members of parliament or local assembly moving from one political party to another "in the house" without losing their seats
  - This can also happen due to members becoming independents or being dismissed from their parties, or parties breaking up or forming coalitions etc.
  - The act of voting "with the other side" in the house on specific issues

## Rationale of FC

- My premise: *the concept of floor crossing (FC) is good for democracy and fits in very well with the fundamental principles of a truly democratic political system (e.g. freedoms of speech, association, movement, etc.)*
- FC gives opportunity for representatives to more appropriately represent the interests of their constituents without fear or hindrance by moving to spaces that allow them to do this
- FC frees the consciences of representatives and the chains that may bind them in doing their (representative) jobs more appropriately. It is a question of loyalty to constituents

## Rationale of FC

- The knowledge that members of one's party can cross to the other side may hold party leader's dictatorial tendencies in check
- Once members actually cross the floor, the party they left behind takes stock and tries to review the ways of doing things to prevent further departures (this can be good if indeed the corrective action does promote democracy in the party alternatively, undemocratic tendencies could actually worsen in the party); any regulatory framework should therefore take consideration of this larger picture of democratic development

## The nature of the problem and its manifestations

- In practice, the (theoretical) rationale for floor-crossing has been undermined by various factors in the African context e.g.
  - neo-patrimonial tendencies underlying the processes of distributing power and resources
  - personal interests of leaders and members,
  - parties without strong ideologies (what is ideology.. internalized fundamental un-abrogatable principles/ideals that shape the party's policy positions and the members orientation/behavior)
  - lack of democracy within political parties,
  - general poverty and underdevelopment in the country
  - Weak accountability systems and regulatory frameworks

## Reasons for crossing the floor

- Varied experiences with floor-crossing in the region:
  - few countries allow it by law/constitution e.g. South Africa where it was originally banned but later got allowed as long as it happens during a two week window during each term and 10% of the members cross at the same time;
  - whilst many others do not allow it e.g. Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, etc.

- some have mixed systems where those elected through first-past-the-post are allowed to cross whilst those chosen via proportional representation cannot cross (Lesotho?)

### **Reasons for crossing the floor**

- Being pushed by conditions obtainable in one's own party e.g.
- Lack of internal party democracy; excessive party control
- Party leadership running out of ideas and/or inducements
- Constituents themselves may ask the representative to cross
  - in which case the member should be eager to go back to his/her constituency to get a fresh mandate
- Personal gain
- VEEN...observes that frequent party crossings – as happen in some countries of the region – are an indicator of rudimentary party systems with underdeveloped party loyalties, underdeveloped cohesion among members and party officials, underdeveloped identification with the party, poor elite recruitment within the party, it could also be corruptibility of MPs – or all the above.

### **Consequences of floor-crossing**

#### ***Impact on political party systems:***

#### **Negative impacts on internal party politics:**

- Rising tensions within parties (good/bad) leading to decline or even breaking up of some
- Those who leave the party cite reasons which those left behind feel bitter about (e.g. the party has no vision; clashes with the leader). However, in many cases it is not the national interest (or that of constituents) that motivate defections but personal interests
- Once a member(s) defects from the party, weakness sets in and the party “is robbed..of an important internal debate, and one which potentially could have changed and renewed the party”
- Many prefer to “jump ship” than remain and engage colleagues in critical, sometimes acrimonious debates that could end up doing good for the party and the country if democratically resolved

#### **Positive impacts**

- Increased national awareness of the need for change and a more mature institutionalized democratic system (which would make irrelevant the need to cross)

### **Consequences of floor-crossing**

#### ***Negative impacts on relations between parties***

- Increased tensions and disagreements inside and outside of Parliament
- Sometimes parties which never won an election (or had small numbers in the “house”) somehow find themselves with increased numbers therefore power/influence (or even ruling the country in some cases)
- The absence of strong ideologically-driven political parties makes it easy for people to cross from one party to another
- Floor crossing benefits larger/dominant/ruling parties thereby shrinking numbers and influence of smaller parties and the opposition

### **Positive impacts**

- Increased national awareness of the need for change and a more mature, institutionalized democratic system (which would make irrelevant the need to cross)
- Growing realization of the need to form coalitions (though these could have their own problems)

### **Consequences of floor-crossing**

#### **Negative impacts on representative democracy:**

- distortion in the balance of representation as determined by the results of elections therefore
- *Major/dominant/ruling parties gaining at the expense of smaller ones*
- *Voter alienation*
- *Voter apathy*

#### **Positive impacts**

- Real chance for significant party policy change (especially if the law requires % of party members to cross, not just individuals), and therefore potential for overall benefit to the country's democratic development

### **Consequences of floor-crossing**

#### **On political mood of the country/population**

- Those against floor-crossing:
- Harbor feelings of betrayal, leading to loss of trust in the democratic system and politics/politicians (therefore apathy or outright hostility)

#### **Those supporting floor-crossing:**

- Applaud the spread of development (in the context of neo-patrimonial state; the ruling party/government is the only one that can dish out development)

### **Consequences of floor-crossing**

- Voter apathy/anger (*mundibwezere ma vote*);
- An example is given of people in Kwazulu Natal and Western Cape the most affected provinces of floor crossing where voter turnout the 2004 elections turned out to be the lowest
- In 2004 in SA each seat on average represented approx 39,032 votes therefore, if a member crossed no way would he/she carry all those voters across (therefore floor-crossing does not channel public opinion);
- An example is given of the NNP in SA which finished with 340 councilors at the end of the 2002 crossing window from a base of practically zero (yet the same party did dismally in 2004 elections) -why?
- Floor crossers don't usually consult their constituents; voter alienation results

### **Way-forward on floor-crossing**

- The growing trend of antipathy towards floor-crossing and therefore increased calls to have it banned could be re-examined. To do this conditions must be created that bring back the trust of the people in the concept of floor crossing, therefore:
- Members must cross for the benefit of their constituents and democratic development in their party and country in general, not for personal gain therefore:
- strengthen democracy and ideological character within political parties

- Review/develop and enforce regulatory frameworks making sure that these do not punish further affected communities/constituents (Zambia example,..)
- avoid constitutional changes based on imperatives of immediate political expedience, without focusing on the need for longer term political development

#### **Way-forward on floor-crossing**

##### ***Are there conditions under which floor crossing MUST be allowed in every country?***

- If a party is truly, genuinely and strongly democratic and there are open, transparent and democratic processes for nominating candidates for elections, shouldn't the candidate who want to cross go back to seek a fresh mandate? (unlike where party is un-democratic and elected representatives are held at ransom by political leadership alone)
- If when electing a candidate into the house the people are appointing the party to represent them in parliament (not necessarily the individual), then allowing floor-crossing tends to be problematic. We must therefore continue to search more creative ways of allowing FC under these conditions

#### **Way-forward on floor-crossing**

##### ***What to do in cases where the law bans floor-crossing but it's application seems to face all kinds of hitches (for whatever reasons)?***

- the Judiciary maybe the only hope
- Should members who are pushed to leave their parties (or whose parties break up and they join existing ones) forfeit their seats?
- Interesting case in Papua New Guinea where a leadership tribunal decides whether members' reasons for resigning from their parties are valid; this is possible only if the party has breached its own constitution or is insolvent (begs the need for good, detailed, clear, and democratic party constitutions)

#### **Way-forward on floor-crossing**

- Rather than seeking ways of banning FC couldn't we seek ways of making it irrelevant. In the long run this is in line with the enterprise of maturing our newly established democracies
  - e.g. making parties democratic; removing corrupt tendencies; improving representation; developing our economies/reducing poverty etc. (banning FC maybe taking an easy short-term route)
- If members have to forfeit their seats and seek fresh mandates through by-elections every time they cross the floor, can the system afford the expense?
- Some say cost should not be a consideration

## 6.5 Party coalitions, elections and representative democracy: a comparative analysis of recent experiences in the making, unmaking and remaking of party coalitions in Eastern and Southern Africa<sup>16</sup>

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### Abstract

*The formation of political party coalitions in Africa suggests the absence of a dominant party capable of winning majority of seats in the legislature or sufficient presidential votes to capture state power. It is often designed as a short-term strategy to unseat the party in power or to maintain power for the party already in government and implies reaching consensus on the modus operandi of sharing power as well as material benefits that goes with it between the largest party and its junior partners. Since democratic transition began in the early 1990s there have been few successful cases of political party coalitions that have led to the capture of state power or have endured over time. The reasons for this include: (i) attempts to make junior partners subservient to the dominant party in the alliance; (ii) failure to honour prior pledges contribute to mistrust and in-fighting; (iii) factional struggles within the ruling coalition for access to spoils of office and (iv) the nature of the presidential system which can override the President and alliance partners. The failure of party coalitions in East and Southern Africa in the last 18 years is itself a function of several factors, which include: (a) the manner of their formation (before or after elections); (b) coalition of unlike-minded parties, due to a preoccupation with capturing state power or retaining it at all cost; (c) instability of party alliances due to their short-term, opportunistic and individualistic nature; (d) lack of loyalty to the coalition but rather to personalities so as to ensure access to power, privilege and material benefits; (e) tendency by the executive to co-opt members of the opposition into government without going into formal coalition with their parties and (f) absence of a political culture and supportive institutions for coalition politics. The paper analyses the experience of party coalitions in three countries, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia in the last decade and concludes that the attempts have been a dismal failure. Ethno-regional factors, a culture of mistrust in party politics and reluctance to share power have been responsible for the failure of party coalitions leading to the 'unmaking' and sometimes 're-making' of coalitions mainly to achieve short-term political goals. Further, the nature of party coalitions in the sub-region while having potential to achieve short-term goals can be destabilizing to the party system and affect long-term democratic consolidation.*

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### Introduction

The formation of political party coalitions in Africa suggests the absence of a dominant party capable of winning majority of seats in the legislature or sufficient presidential votes to capture state power (Oyugi, 2006; Karume, 2003). It is often designed as a short-term strategy to unseat the party in power or to maintain power for the party already in government and implies reaching consensus on the *modus operandi* of sharing power as well as material benefits that goes with it between the largest

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party and its junior partners. However, conditions for coalition-building vary depending on the electoral system in operation and the nature of the party system. While it is much easier for coalitions to be formed and sustained in a Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system this is not the case for First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral systems. Further, the nature of the party system in Africa which is mass-based tends to mask social cleavages by aiming at building minimum winning coalitions often through a coalition of different ethno-regional groups.

The history of African political parties is replete with examples of coalitions, alliances, splits and realignments and more splits. Most major political parties in Africa came about as a result of alliances or coalitions with other political formations. For instance, the first political parties in the region came about as a result of the amalgamation of diverse welfare and civic organizations that championed the interests of marginalized Africans and other social groups at the time. In Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia, among others, political parties were formed as amalgamations of various associations. That was the first experience with coalition-building. At the eve of independence new coalitions were forged to facilitate independence, such as the coalition between the African National Congress (ANC) and the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia in 1962; Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya Democratic Union (KADU) in 1963 and similar developments were witnessed in Malawi with all opposition forces coalescing around the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Where outright coalitions did not occur, independence or liberation pacts dictated a power-sharing formula that often involved a government of national unity (GNU). In Zimbabwe the GNU involved Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front (RF) and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe People's Union-Patriotic Front (PF-ZAPU). Following the democratic elections in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) was compelled by a constitutional agreement to establish a transitional government of national unity comprising the ANC, the National Party (NP) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (Kadima, 2003). However, these experiments were transitory and short-lived. The power sharing arrangements in both Zimbabwe and South Africa barely lasted two years (1980-1982 and 1994-1996 respectively).

After a long period of one-party rule new parties that emerged in the early 1990s grappled with the question of coalition-making to unseat incumbents from power or to ensure they survived. The democratic movements that campaigned for political change were themselves broad coalitions of diverse interests. The Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in Zambia comprised a diverse range of interests that included disgruntled former UNIP politicians, businesspeople, workers, farmers, intellectuals, students and the unemployed all united in their opposition to former president Kenneth Kaunda and the one-party state. It mobilized and received support across ethnic lines. Others have referred to that kind of coalition as a 'maximum winning' coalition (Crook, 1989). By having all the opposition forces in one movement the opposition was almost certain of electoral success. But elsewhere there was less success in building maximum coalitions. Where this was attempted such as in Kenya (Forum for the Restoration of Democracy – FORD) and Malawi (United Democratic Front – UDF) ethno-regional claims soon led to splits into various fractions thus dissipating opposition efforts and providing the ruling party to either survive or lose marginally.

While indeed coalitions have been formed both before and after elections in the East and Southern African region in the last 18 years there have been few successful cases of political party coalitions that have led to either the capture of state power or that have endured over time. Kenya's 2002 coalition between Mwai Kibaki's National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) and the Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) forming the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was heralded as the most successful attempt at coalition-building in Africa as it was able to unseat KANU from power. However, it was not long before the squabbling started and the coalition disintegrated. In cases where no party won absolute majorities, such as was the case in Zambia in 2001 and Malawi in 1999 and 2004, attempts were made to co-opt opposition MPs into government to provide a working majority in parliament.

But even these were fraught with difficulties, either because there was no prior arrangement with the party concerned or due to policy differences resulting the 'unmaking or remaking' of the coalitions (Kadima and Lembani 2006). What really explains the failure of political party coalitions in East and Southern Africa?

This paper analyses the experience of party coalitions in three countries, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia in the last decade and concludes that the attempts have been a dismal failure. Ethno-regional factors, a culture of mistrust in party politics and reluctance to share power have been responsible for the failure of party coalitions leading to the 'unmaking' and sometimes 're-making' of coalitions mainly to achieve short-term political goals. Furthermore, the nature of party coalitions in the sub-region while having potential to achieve short-term goals can be destabilizing to the party system and affect long-term democratic consolidation.

### **Parties and Party system in Africa**

A political party can be defined as an organization whose main function is to aggregate and articulate specific interests for purposes of gaining political power. Other functions of political parties include representation of individual interests, channeling political demands to the legislature, lobbying government for specific interventions on behalf of their constituents, recruitment and training of political leadership, structuring of electoral choices and framing policy alternatives (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Erdmann, 2007). For opposition parties they hold those in power accountable and are expected provide choice to the citizenry (Lawson, 1993).

It should be recognized that the factors which led to the formation of political parties differ markedly between developed European societies and Africa. Whereas political parties in Western Europe were a logical progression of pressure and interest groups that saw the need to form parties to realize political objectives this was the case in Africa. In Western Europe trade unions sponsored labour and social democratic parties, business interests formed conservative or Christian democratic parties and environmentalist formed the green parties. There was often an organic link between interest groups and the parties they formed. The experience of Africa is different. The first generation of political parties were formed for purposes of gaining independence per se. many were formed just on the eve of independence specifically to contest elections. The second generation of parties which came in the wake of re-introduction of multi-partyism were by and large electoral machines designed to contest elections to replace incumbents regimes and often as vehicles to further the personal ambitions of their leaders to acquire power. Thus it is always important to consider the context in which African political parties came into being in appreciating their limitations.

The weakness of African political parties has been extensively dealt with in the literature (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Olukoshi, 1998; Salih, 2003; van de Walle and Butler, 2003 and Erdmann, 2007). These include: lack of institutionalization; highly fragmented; high degree of factionalism; lack of funding; weak links with society; dominance of individual personalities; absence of distinct policy or programmatic differences; lack of organizational presence throughout the country and no clear and identifiable membership base. Many observers come to the conclusion that African parties are nothing but a collection of urban-based elites held together by clientelism and the promise of access to state resources, who are ineffective at the grassroots, especially in the rural hinterland (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). Increasingly, African parties have come to be seen as electoral machines to further the individual interests of powerful and ambitious politicians, and not permanent membership-based institutions to aggregate and articulate societal interests. Most often than not, civil society groups are more representative of societal grievances and are much more vocal and better organised than political parties. Though arguments could be advanced that civil society organizations have better

access to foreign funding compared to political parties, it is rather political parties poor organizational capacity to raise funds which has privileged civil society groups.

An important feature of African political parties is that they are often based on ethno-regional loyalties, commonly leading to considerable party fragmentation. Ethno-regional mobilization takes the place of articulation of programmatic and policy alternative. This is a function of three factors. First, the fact that in many countries organizing around ethno-regional, religious and sectional basis is prohibited. But parties organize along these lines because they reflect objective conditions in their countries where specific ethnic groups and regions feel marginalized and consider government policies as inequitable. In this case, ethno-regionalism is an ideology used by political entrepreneurs to mobilize political support. Second, African parties tend to be mass or catch-all parties embracing a wide spectrum of societal interests. Under those conditions it is difficult to articulate and represent narrow calls interests such as labour, business or farmers. With very few exceptions, parties that have organized on class basis have had little public appeal. In Zambia, a party specifically organized to represent farmers in the 1996 elections, the National Lima Party (NLP) performed dismally in the elections. Another labeled the Social Democratic Party (SDP) purporting to promote the interests of workers and other marginalised groups in society was eclipsed in the 2001 elections obtaining less than one percent of the national vote. In Kenya and Malawi parties identifying with the left and purporting to represent narrow interests of workers and peasants have not performed well either.

Chabal and Daloz (1999) posit that power in Africa is weakly institutionalized and remains essentially personalized and particularistic. It is important to pay attention to the complexities of political representation and party system in understanding contemporary African politics. It should be recognized that the stability or proper functioning of a democratic political system depends to a large extent on the ability of parties to perform their tasks. But three challenges confront political parties during the transition to democracy: first, the nature of elites that run them and their motivation; second, the parties' organisational capacity and resource base and third, the nature and dynamics of the party system that has evolved since the transition. These factors are different in each country and reflect the degree of economic and social development obtaining in specific societies. I make the proposition that there will be a tendency that the less economically developed a country is the less developed its democratic culture and its party system.

In the Eastern and Southern African region it is observable that countries that are high up on the democracy ladder, such as Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa are also economically developed. Thus they tend to exhibit a highly developed democratic culture compared to those that are poor and least developed, such as Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It will be important to revisit earlier studies or carry out new studies to establish causal links between economic development and levels of democratic development in the sub-region. The Afrobarometer surveys suggest that there is a strong correlation between the level of economic development in a particular country and the state of democracy (Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi, 2005).

### **The Politics of Coalition-Building in East and Southern Africa**

Coalitions involve a process where two or more parties combine to pursue a specific objective through joint action (Karume, 2003; Oyugi, 2006). It is predicated on a realization that one party cannot on its own win power or form government. Politics of coalition-building involves the issues, negotiations and principles underlying coalitions. Who drives the coalition agenda and how equitable is it? Are the parties to the coalition equal partners or one is perceived as dominant and hegemonic as to disadvantage others? Do potential members of the coalition have resources, such as identifiable constituency bases, funds and electable leaders? To what extent are members to be consulted in deciding whether or not to enter into an alliance or coalition with other parties? To what extent are

party organs involved in the decision on coalition-building? To what extent are the dominant partners in the coalition committed to genuine power-sharing with their partners and how binding are pre-elections agreements? What are the pay-off of the coalition and how are they to be managed? These are all contested issues which ultimately characterize the politics of coalition-building anywhere in Africa. The problems in Kenya are partly a result of a poor handling of pre-election coalition agreements to which I will return later.

Karume (2003) defines coalition building as a 'process of organizing parties collectively in pursuit of a common goal. It entails pooling of resources in pursuit of this goal and an agreement on the distribution arrangement of the product of that may result from achieving that goal.' Political parties may represent both broad interests and a coalition of other parties. Coalitions may involve parties represented in parliament and those not in parliament that come together for the sake of forming a coalition or alliance for purposes of winning an election. When they do so they reconstitute into one party while simultaneously retaining their separate identities outside parliament. This is the case with the ANC of South Africa, was the case with NARC and now Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and Party for National Unity (PNU) in Kenya and United Democratic Alliance (UDA) in Zambia.

The main reason why parties seek to go into coalition or power-sharing arrangements is a realization that neither of the parties can manage to win an election or govern on its own. In ethnically divided societies where party affiliations tends to take ethno-regional patterns such as in Africa, no single party can expect to mobilize enough support in an election to win on its own. Due to social cleavages and the fact that parties tend to organize around ethnic or regional lines this has encouraged the building of minimum or maximum coalitions to accommodate ethno-regional interests. Minimum coalitions are often aimed at ensuring a working majority in parliament and agreement on a minimum policy platform. This is often after elections, where cooperation with smaller parties gives the party with a simple majority a greater degree of legitimacy.

But the history of democratic transition in Africa is predicated on the building of maximum coalitions (Crook, 1989). Starting from the struggle for national liberation to the democratic struggles of the early 1990s, there has been a growing tendency for mass parties that encompass a wide range of interests. In Zambia the pro-democracy movement, which later crystallized into the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was a broad-based coalition of diverse interests, that included business, farmers, workers, peasants, students, the clergy, intellectuals and disgruntled UNIP politicians. When this party won power in November 1991, there was no opposition to talk about as the erstwhile ruling party was decimated and other opposition groups were too small and lacked the legitimacy to mount any serious challenge to the MMD (Burnell, 2005). Unlike elsewhere, mass parties by definition tend to be a coalition of ethnic, religious and sometimes racial groups.

The failure of party coalitions in East and Southern Africa in the last 18 years could be said to be a function of several factors. These include: (i) the manner of their formation (before or after elections); (ii) coalition of unlike-minded parties due to a preoccupation of capturing state power or retaining it at all cost; (iii) instability of party alliances due to their short-term, opportunistic and individualistic nature; (iv) lack of loyalty to the coalition but rather to personalities so as to ensure access to power, privilege and material benefits; (v) tendency by the executive to co-opt members of the opposition into government without going into formal coalition with their parties and (v) absence of a political culture supportive institutions for coalition politics.

But when are coalitions formed, whether before or after elections remains a contested issue. If the purpose of coalition building is to create a credible governing majority in parliament, then the question is; how is such a coalition to be constituted and in what circumstances are different types of coalitions created? First, the nature of the electoral system whether proportional representation (PR) or first-

past-the-post (FPTP) has a bearing on coalition-building initiatives. In PR system governing is based on the principle of absolute majority. Which dictates that if a political party wins seats in parliament but lacks an absolute majority it has to reach a certain threshold or working majority to be able to constitute a government. This has meant that in PR systems parties with small majorities have had to seek coalition partners to enable them to govern. Thus often there is no need to go into a coalition before the election, since the outcome is unknown.

In FPTP electoral systems even a simple majority is sufficient for a party to govern. If it has to seek a coalition it is to ensure that it has a working majority in parliament to guarantee the passage of government bills. The predominance of presidential rule in most countries of East and Southern Africa has also meant that even if a party fails to win an absolute majority it can still govern as cabinet is constituted by the President who has no obligation whatsoever to form a coalition with any party. To avoid the imperatives of coalition governments Presidents have resorted to co-opting individual MPs to join government and sometimes even inducing them to defect or cross the floor. The failure by parties to win absolute majorities in Malawi and Zambia encouraged the President to co-opt opposition MPs into government to provide a working majority in the legislature. These experiments have also been fraught with difficulties. The arrangements often avoided formal coalitions opting instead to deal with individual MPs. The appointment of individual MPs disregarding their parties have attracted sanctions, include expelling members concerned triggering by-elections, which in many cases have been won by the party in government. It has also destabilised the party system with parties being persuaded to dissolve and join the government in return for political appointments. There are many examples of this in Malawi, Kenya and Zambia.

Following his election with less than 30 percent (29%) of the national vote, President Mwanawasa appointed seven opposition MPs into government as ministers and deputy ministers without having to go through their parties. He ignored their protestations and managed to on government benches without any formal coalition with their parties, while the Speaker of the National Assembly ignored calls for their seats to be declared vacant despite decisions made some of the parties to expel them. At the other extreme was the persuading of some party leaders to dissolve their parties as a condition to be appointed to government. Former leader of the National Citizens' Coalition (NCC) and losing presidential candidate, tele-evangelist Nevers Mumba was persuaded to dissolve his party to be appointed Republican Vice President to which he obliged.<sup>18</sup>

But it is now becoming increasingly difficult for parties to win power on their own. In Zambia the MMD which came to power with a huge majority of over 70 percent has not been able to more than 50 percent of the vote in the last two elections (2001 and 2006). However, it can be observed that the opposition in both elections split the vote to enable the MMD win. For example, in 2001 the combined opposition vote was 71 percent compared to MMD's 29 percent. In 2006 the combined opposition vote was 57 percent. This notwithstanding the FPTP system allowed the MMD to dominate the legislature with more seat share compared to the number of votes received. In the last parliament the MMD had 46 percent share of seats with only 29 percent of the votes, while in the current parliament the ruling party commands 48 percent of the votes with 43 percent of the votes.<sup>19</sup>

Coalition-building in Zambia has been an on-going process. Often parties have coming together in between elections by cooperating on elections to avoid vote-splitting and to forge common positions on certain issues such as the constitution and electoral reform. The character of the coalitions/alliances has been rather short-term often dominated by one major political party and the

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<sup>18</sup> Another losing presidential candidate Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika also dissolved her party to accept the position of Zambia's ambassador to the United States.

<sup>19</sup> This excludes the 8 nominated MPs which increases the seat share by at least 2 percentage points.

viability shaped by the internal dynamics of whether junior members feel comfortable with the leadership of the dominant partner or suspect being swallowed. In the early 1990s there was an alliance of 9 parties, the Patriotic Alliance which was organized around president Kenneth Kaunda and sought to have Kaunda return to power. It collapsed when Kaunda was barred from contesting the 1996 elections.

There were many other on and off alliances, or kind of marriages of convenience between 1999 and 2005, which included the Zambia Alliance for Progress (ZAP). However, it was the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) which captured the imagination of Zambians. The UDA comprise three major opposition parties represented in parliament at that time (UPND, UNIP and Forum for Democracy and Development – FDD). For the first time there was a coalition that seemed viable to unseat the MMD from power. But as things turned it was never to be. The UDA did not spend time working out the modalities for power-sharing after the elections. The focus was on the immediate, winning the elections. There was even lack of consensus on the presidential candidate and how such a person was to be chosen. Further, the involvement of the rank and file membership in alliance decisions was minimal, if not non-existent. Decisions were taken at the national level without consulting the broad membership. It was apparent that Anderson Mazoka would automatically be adopted presidential candidate having come second in the 2001 elections. But when he unexpectedly died it threw the UDA into disarray. Internal wrangling within the UPND for Mazoka's successor and latent disagreements on the shape of the alliance robbed the UDA of electoral appeal and it performed dismally to the disappointment of the electorate. The UPDA simply failed to penetrate new ground that was captured by the Patriotic Front (PF) and the overall share of parliamentary seats dropped with UPND only managing 22 seats against 49 in 2001 and UNIP and FDD sharing 2 each. With that disastrous performance the alliance collapsed immediately after the 2006 elections.

Kenya is the most celebrated case of coalition-building in Africa. After losing twice to KANU in 1992 and 1997, the Kenyan opposition built a coalition comprising NAK and LDP in 2002 and successfully defeated KANU presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta and obtained the largest number of parliamentary seats. That was the easy part, the challenge was to keep the coalition together. In Kenya, the NARC alliance envisaged a power-sharing formula where important positions would be equally shared between NAK and LDP and the position of prime minister would be created. But that was not done. Consequently, the alliance collapsed when there was open disagreements on the constitutional changes, which made some members of the alliance publicly organize the 'No' vote against the Constitutional Referendum which was won by the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) precipitating their dismissal from government and drawing the battle lines for the 2007 elections.

By the time of the 2007 elections NARC had virtually collapsed with a number of splinters, such as NARC-Kenya and ODM having come on the scene. To ensure their political survival some parties crafted the PNU to enable Mwai Kibaki continue in office justifying his indispensability in steering the country to economic prosperity (Kibwana, 2007). But it should be recalled that Kibaki had undertaken two things at the beginning of his term. He would only serve one term of office given his health condition and that he would ensure that government positions were shared equally between NAK and LDP. Neither of these commitments were honoured.

In Malawi, coalition-building has been an ever present political practice. Unlike Zambia, Malawi and Kenya to a great extent illustrate the fact that ethno-regional political mobilization partly structure the nature of political representation. Thus starting from the founding elections in 1994 Malawi's electorate seems to have been divided along ethnic/regional lines with major parties drawing support from the North, Central and Southern Provinces. While this may have slightly changed after the 2004 elections, there is still a noticeable polarity in regional support bases which has been responsible for no party having been able to command a majority in the Malawi parliament since 1999. In the second

Malawi parliament following the return to multiparty democracy the United Democratic Front (UDF) did not have a majority and had to forge a coalition with the Alliance for Progress (Aford). However, this coalition collapsed due to policy differences. But several Aford MPs chose to remain in the government against the wishes of their party. The result is that Aford performed poorly in 2004 election.

In order to enhance their chances of defeating the UDF a seven-party coalition called Mgwirizano Coalition was formed ahead of the Republican Party (RP) leader Gwanda Chakuamba. Members of the Coalition went on to join the government after President Mbingu Wa Mutharika resigned from the UDF in February 2005 to form the Democratic People's Party (DPP). The resignation of President wa Mutharika from UDF and forming his own party does not only raise questions of political morality, but dealt a blow to coalition politics. Having formed the DPP MPs from other parties, including UDF, MCP and RP among others decided to defect to the new party without having to resign their seats. There is now a court case to determine whether those that have crossed the floor should keep their seats. Further, there is the uncomfortable fact that President wa Mutharika ditched a party that sponsored him to the presidency and is governing with a party that was never elected by the Malawian people. It would appear that there is a lacuna in the Malawi constitution that has allowed that state of affairs.

Having provided a background and context to party coalitions in Eastern and Southern Africa as illustrated by the three cases of Kenya, Malawi and Zambia we now turn to the questions posed by the organizers which are supposed to form the basis of the discussion.

### **Necessity of party coalitions**

Under what conditions are party coalitions necessary or unnecessary? It has already been shown that coalitions are necessary to enhance political parties' chances of winning power or retaining it where going it alone does not guarantee them success. It has also been observed that given the demographic profile of countries of Eastern and Southern Africa where parties mostly draw on ethnic and regional support chances of one party winning on its own are minimal. Thus it would be important to forge minimum winning coalitions with other parties to increase the chance of success.

Such coalitions should be arrived at after an honest negotiations and agreements should be binding on either party. They should not simply be 'marriages of convenience' (Kadima, 2003), there should be a genuine willingness in power-sharing. However, it should also be anticipated that there is a possibility of losing the elections and the future of the alliance defining in advance what happens in that eventuality. It is not difficult to see that where coalitions are made specifically to fight elections they tend to collapse immediately afterwards, either because the coalition loses or dominant partners in the coalition fail to honour their pre-election commitments. This was the case in Kenya with NARC and I would like to believe that this has been the experience in Malawi and even South Africa, where the other members of the tripartite alliance (Congress of South African Trade Unions and South Africa Communist Party) have begun complaining that the ANC has gone against the pre-1994 agreement.

Coalitions may be unnecessary where dominant party either in government or opposition simply wants numbers to bolster its legitimacy. In that situation the relationship with coalition partners will tend to be unequal and others meant to be subservient. It is not uncommon in such coalitions for other junior partners to be expected to endorse the presidential candidacy of the most dominant partner and subordinate their interests to that of the dominant partner. In the case of Zambia, the coopting of opposition MPs into government was meant to enhance the legitimacy of government and increase the numbers supporting government legislation without the need to form a coalition. In such a situation the relationship between the President and opposition MPs coopted into government was one of domination where they depended on him for their sustenance and had no allegiance to the parties on whose ticket they were elected to parliament in the first place.

It also not necessary to have a coalition where the parties have no agreement on a minimum policy programme. Ideally, coalitions should be between like-minded parties that broadly share similar ideological or policy platforms. Simply going into a coalition to win power for its own sake is bound to lead to factional struggles after such power is won. Those elected to central positions, such as those of President, Vice President and ministers may feel no obligation to honour the pre-election pledges. This is because there may just be too many people requiring access to power, privileges and wealth. So the spoils of office may simply not go around and the notion of equitable distribution may not be found attractive as it will go against the logic of sharing with one's own.

### **Pre- and Post Elections Coalitions**

When should coalitions take place before or after elections? Coalitions can take place either before or after elections depending on the prevailing circumstances. In a country with a FPTP system where no party commands a nation-wide appeal pre-election coalitions may be advisable. However, these should be based on a minimum policy platform, a well-thought strategy of power sharing and specific tasks in an event of not winning power. To join a coalition as a free rider to ensure access to power is dishonest and will surely lead to frustration, factional fighting and eventual collapse of such an initiative.

But where parties go it alone and discover they cannot form government on their own they should be encouraged to form coalition governments. As it is many constitutions do not have explicit provisions for coalition governments which leave it to the President to exercise his discretion to co-opt opposition groups. Therefore it would be important to have formal rules on coalition-building and coalition government to guide parties and political practice and minimize the practice of President poaching MPs without having to form formal alliances with their parties (Lembani, 2006). The absence of formal rules both in political parties and in national constitutions that explicitly recognize the possibility of and encourage coalition-building has undermined party systems. There should be formal incentives and sanctions to inform the conduct of political parties in the making and unmaking of coalitions. For example, it is possible for coalition partners to withdraw from a coalition without any risk to the government losing power, cases of Kenya and Malawi are instructive in this respect. The withdrawal of UDF from the Mbingu wa Mutharika's government in Malawi and the LDP from the NARC in Kenya did not in any way affect the stability of the government in those countries.

### **Coalitions and representation**

Does coalition building promote democratic representation, political stability and party system consolidation? Kadima (2003) argues that one of the effects of party coalitions is that coalition partners benefit from a gradual ideological and policy harmonization. In the case of South Africa this has been in the form of the dominance of the neo-liberal ideology, which has come to be accepted though reluctantly even by left-oriented partners such as COSATU and SACP.

Secondly, political party coalitions may gravely harm the party system by building grand coalitions which undermine opposition's role as a check and balance of government excesses. Where major parties are part of a governing coalition the public is left with little or no voice and public accountability diminishes. While there are advantages of party coalitions there is also a downside. The impending grand coalition in Kenya will just achieve that elimination of opposition and reduction of effective checks and balances. Elsewhere, I have argued that Kenya's power sharing deal while indeed welcome in reducing political tension and violence in the country it is based on very weak premises and will not further the cause of democratic consolidation (Simutanyi, 2008). A situation where a winner (ODM with 100 parliamentary seats) is made to share power with a loser PNU (with about 46

seats) defies political logic. What would have made sense as a power-sharing formula was for PNU to keep the presidency and ODM to run the government as it has a majority. But to share the portfolios 50-50 and for Kibaki to retain his executive power is a recipe for conflict as the two are bound to clash and the distribution of portfolios and powers may provoke resentment triggering the collapse of the coalition.

Coalitions affect the opposition by reducing size and dividing it, thus weakening the party system and going against the principles of representation. Parties rarely consult the rank and file before they engage in coalition negotiations. I know for a fact that the UPND, FDD and UNIP in Zambia did not consult their members to enter into a coalition for purposes of the 2006 elections. As a result members were confused and in some cases not persuaded to support candidates who did not come from their own party. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that coalition decisions are often unilaterally taken at the top with little or no consultation with the general membership. Lembani (2006) notes that in Malawi, leaders decide when and how to form coalitions and when to terminate them. The experience of Eastern and Southern Africa suggests that coalition decisions many times are not a product of public debate and broad-based internal consultation process to build consensus.

The architects of party coalitions tend to be the party leaders often motivated by the desire to maximize their chances to win power. In Kenya Raila Odinga was instrumental in both the formation of NARC and ODM to position himself for the presidency. His ambition was unambiguous and everyone knew that he staked his ethnic group's right to govern after Kibaki and was robbed of victory. Because the coalition decisions are meant to promote individual interests they are not subjected to intense debate lest the proposals are defeated in party congresses. However, if the principle of internal democracy is to be applied to parties and to enhance the acceptability of national-level decision a modicum of consultation is necessary so that members are part of the decision.

### **Dilemmas of coalitions**

- Lack consensus on why coalitions should come into being
- Temporal and not based on prior arrangement by cooperating parties
- Opportunistic and short-term intended to achieve a given objective at a given time without enduring commitment (Kenya, Malawi and Zambia);
- Rarely based on the desire to cooperate on policy issues, but rather on the idea of sharing power for its own sake;
- Coalitions often elite-led and reflect elite consensus and not popular support;
- Tendency by dominant party to be hegemonic and ignoring the contributions of junior partners in the alliance and resisting policy proposals of other members of the coalition;
- Lack of experience with coalition-building and absence of a culture of give-and-take, especially where ethnic grievances lead to polarized positions on power-sharing. In Kenya I heard and saw on BBC television a Raila Odinga supporter say he would rather die than not see Raila become Kenya's president. He said it is now the time for the Luo's to rule this country. For this man, the very fact that a Luo leads a party provided an opportunity for Luos to partake in leadership. I have also heard in Zambia people say that there is no way that Tongas should continue playing second best. Following the death of former UPND president Anderson

Mazoka, this position was unambiguously put thus: only a Tonga could succeed Mazoka because it was Tonga's turn to rule the country'.

- Junior alliance partners have little room to manoeuvre and often unable to influence policy. Coalitions which swallow small parties, or coopt small parties to participate in government even where they lack a discernable constituency base. Requirements to have parties dissolve themselves to join a governing coalition undermine party system.

## Conclusion

The making, unmaking and remaking of coalitions reflect political volatility and the opportunism of political elites in the East and Southern African region. Coming together and eventual coalition splits occurs as political leaders pursued their desire to access or maintain political power at national level. In the context of personalized politics and clientelism party membership counts for nothing. What really matters are the interests of the elites who use political parties as vehicles go further their political ambitions. This why it is not difficult for party officials to resign from their parties to join the government and to return to opposition ranks when their lose favour with government.

While indeed party and electoral systems have an influence on the nature of coalition politics that emerge, the role of political actors and their behaviour says a lot of the nature of coalitions in the sub-region. This is because parties that are organized around individuals and devoid of programmatic platforms find it difficult to forge close relationship with others, if such coalition will deny them the opportunity to access power, wealth and privilege. Party leaders are preoccupied with winning power for themselves not for their party. However, those that are organized around core principles and represent broad constituencies are likely to be receptive to or even invite cooperation with other parties. However, coalitions or party alliances are themselves transitory, lacking cohesion and designed to further the personal ambitions of some leaders. The dominance of the alliances initiatives by certain parties, or individuals or where coalitions have become an arena of factional struggle are serious impediments to coalition building. Most importantly, there is a lack a culture of coalition government, and this is not helped by the absence of a legal framework for inter-party cooperation both before and after elections. The winner-takes-all electoral system will need to be reformed if parties are to play their role of representation based on majoritarian principles.

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## **6.6 The process, mechanics and challenges of coalition making: The Experiences of Dutch Political parties with coalition governments**

By

Sharon Dijksma,  
State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science

and

Sherlo Esajas,  
Senior Political Adviser to the State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science

### **Building a Coalition**

- The Dutch political system
- Dealing with political minorities
- How to prepare for the coalition deliberations
- The making of a coalition
- Maintaining the coalition

### **The Dutch political system**

- Proportional democracy
- Coalition government
- House of representatives vs Senate
- Campaigning in the Netherlands
- Forming a government

### **Dealing with political minorities**

- Not always just a majority
- Role of unions, employers and other lobby organisations
- Aim to broad consensus on important issues
- Military missions
- Changing the Constitution

### **How to prepare for the coalition deliberations**

- Take the time
- Knowledge is power
- The team
- Define the goals/ minimum outcome

### **The making of a coalition**

- Ground rules for a successful coalition building
- Time
- Common ground

- Respect and trust
- Chemistry between the leaders
- A good negotiator
- Be prepared to make concessions
- Closed sessions

### **The making of a coalition**

- Arguments
- Power
- Exchange

### **Maintaining the coalition**

- Stand by an agreement
- Invest in your coalition partners
- Give the partner the chance to enhance their profile
- Threat the political problems of your partner as your own
- Role of the coalition fractions in parliament
- Dealing with the opposition
- Alternate majorities/ Occasional coalitions

## **Part VII**

### **Appendices**

## 7.1 JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE: FUNCTIONING & MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ESARP

**13 & 14 March 2008**  
**Mount Soche Hotel**  
**Blantyre - Malawi**

1. At the invitation of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy Malawi in partnership with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, some 50 delegates representing more than 42 political parties hailing from six African states, met in Blantyre, Malawi, from 13-14<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Delegates represented both ruling parties and opposition parties in all of these countries and came from Kenya; Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique. Members of civil society were also in attendance.
2. The Keynote address was delivered by the head of the Malawi Electoral Commission, Justice Anastazia Msosa, who observed that democracy makes any country better off than one that is an autocracy. She pointed out that alongside a vibrant civil society and independent media, judiciary and legislature, political parties were, in contemporary society, one of the most instrumental institutions for a democracy to function. Yet parties have been given very little attention for such a long time; this needed to be addressed. Importantly, she concluded that the political parties at the conference needed to address the general distrust that the public has in them.
3. The uniqueness of this conference lay in the fact that it was devoted largely to introspection by political parties of their own internal processes and practices, judging these against the precepts of democracy. Other issues discussed which impact directly upon parties' abilities to function as democratic institutions were: *Floor Crossing* and *Party Financing*. Lastly, the conference dissected the post 2007 general elections crisis in Kenya and its causes, and briefly examined the prospects for a peaceful and open election in the forthcoming 2008 General Election in Zimbabwe.
4. The conference agreed with the research which pointed to major discrepancies in the internal democratic functioning of parties. It resolved that it was not good enough for political parties merely to advocate for democracy in the country but that they need to lead by example in ensuring that their intra-party machineries and processes function democratically in a manner that ensures inclusiveness and the space for open debate and discussion aimed at influencing party policy. This includes holding regular elections of party officials, routine internal consultations, provision for vulnerable groups such as women and youth and transparency of all processes. Parties should become more responsive to the needs and choices of their membership. Democratic processes for filling leadership and other positions should be developed and adhered to. Access to independent public resources influences the ability of parties to develop democratic internal practices and procedures. In the absence of this, there is a great danger that those bankrolling the party might be able to control it as personal property.
5. On the models of funding for political parties the salient issues upon which the conference found agreement were:
  - That access to finance affects the outcome of elections. Accordingly, that public financing of political parties is important as it enhances the level playing field and the outcome of elections and thus the vibrancy and welfare of democracy;
  - The financing of parties from the public purse will minimise the perpetuation of the tradition of the patronising, perpetual founder syndrome;

- That where public and private financing of parties is provided for, parties should be required to reveal sources and account for the expenditure of this money. This provision needs to be extended to private funding where such provisions are already in place for public funding.
6. The conference acknowledged the growing importance of political coalitions and alliances in whatever form, but noted however, that these coalitions need to be issue-oriented with long-term goals consistent with basic democratic tenets, including equity and power sharing. The coalition agreement should be reduced to writing and deposited with Parliament or the Independent Electoral Commission.
  7. On floor crossing, the conference resolved that the particular conditions prevailing in a country (eg. electoral system) will determine whether floor crossing is appropriate. It also resolved that this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency as it can negatively impact upon the quality of democracy and alienate sections of the voting public. Systems must be created to ensure that where the practice is retained, it must be done ethically, consultatively, morally and transparently to restore voter and public confidence.
  8. The conference resolved that:
    - the next meeting will be held in Kenya in 2009;
    - the chair of ESARP for the year 2008 is Malawi and the deputy chair is Zambia; and
    - the chair for 2009 will be Zambia and the deputy chair will be South Africa.

## **7.2 Background note to the Regional Conference on Functioning and Management of Political Parties in Eastern and Southern Africa: 13-14 March 2008, Malawi**

### **The Context**

Contemporary democratic systems require intermediary actors between state and society as well as institutional mechanisms for the articulation and advocacy of diverse views and policy preferences. While civil society organisations have for some time claimed to be the rightful and legitimate ‘middlemen,’ it is now becoming self evident that in essence, political parties have a fundamental and indispensable role in contemporary democracies. As a matter of fact, today’s democracy is inconceivable without political parties, hence we talk of ‘multiparty democracy’. What distinguishes political parties from any other political interest group is that it is only the former whose primary goal is that of contesting and capturing state power through peaceful means. It is also this very distinctive feature of political parties that makes them important institutions to reckon with in any democratic society. Because of what they are or what they are meant to be, they become the main vehicle for political representation, the main mechanism for the organization of government and the channels for maintaining democratic accountability.

Paradoxically, an interest in a close examination of the state of political parties in Africa is only a recent phenomenon in both public and academic discourse. It has coincided or has been driven by the attention that the international community is paying to this otherwise ‘forgotten’ part of the democratic equation. Whatever the case, there has been a ‘common lament’ in almost all the analyses that have focused on political parties: They (political parties) are hardly distinguishable in terms of well articulated ideological or programmatic foundations, they have weak and often temporal bureaucratic organisation, they lack internal party democracy, they have unreliable membership data, they have weak funding base, weak formal linkages with civil society, high degree of factionalism, among others.

In many cases, however, both the political parties themselves and their collaborators do not give adequate attention to a critical understanding of and reflection on the said challenges that beset political parties. Often, there is just ‘no time for these things’ and yet they affect the very basis for an effective and efficient organization that would have to be called a political party. They are also not often debated because some of these things are ‘household’ matters as they touch on the internal workings of the parties. This perception further poses a formidable challenge to well intended external actors that would wish to contribute to the democratization process as they are forced to delimit the scope of their support for fear of being red-carded on the grounds of ‘interference’. The sensitivity that characterizes matters relating to political parties may also explain why for so long, the trend within the international community was that of ‘treading carefully’ on this dangerous political terrain. Unsurprisingly, political parties have been the late entrants in the democratization aid catalogue and this is after a stark realization that much as they are indispensable, they have for so long been the ‘weakest link’ in this democratization processes.

### **The Conference**

It is within this context that the forthcoming regional conference is organised. This conference follows a series of other regional conferences that NIMD has supported in the past under the ESARP programme. The last one was held in December 2006 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

### **Conference objectives**

The overall goal of this regional conference is **to offer political parties and their collaborating partners an opportunity to critically reflect on some of the challenges that political parties face and jointly explore ways on how best these challenges can be addressed.** In this regard the conference will harness the various experiences in the region with the hope of allowing participants to learn from each

other and learn together. In reflecting on and examining the functioning and management of political parties, the conference will pay special attention to the following themes: internal party democracy, (public) funding of political parties, the 'making and unmaking' of party coalitions, and 'floor crossing'. Admittedly, the themes to be covered are in no way exhaustive. However, these themes are a reflection of some of the key issues that keep on resonating in the region and were endorsed by a preparatory meeting of party representatives from the region that was held in November 2007 in Nairobi. In the subsequent sections, a brief explanation on each of the selected themes is given.

### **Internal party democracy**

Intra-party democracy is simply democracy within the party. What this means is that we can possibly better understand what intra-party democracy is, or what it entails if we were to explicate the term 'democracy' as it is commonly applied in contemporary literature. Democracy is commonly viewed as a political system in which those who govern are continuously responsive to the preferences and aspirations of those who are governed. In other words, it is a 'government of the people, for the people and by the people'. Some of the basic democratic fundamentals include popular participation, regular free and fair elections of the leadership, transparency, accountability, tolerance and respect for human rights. Of course, this understanding may be said to largely refer to democracy in a polity as a whole. However, this basic notion of democracy is still applicable to aiding our understanding of intra-party democracy particularly if we were to consider that the party leadership or executive is in a way analogous of government while the rank and file (the party membership at large) are an approximation of the citizens or the electorate.

Thus, to talk about internal party democracy is to refer to the extent to which a party subscribes to and abides by the basic and universal democratic tenets. Consistent with our conceptual framework, it means we are concerned for instance with the extent to which a political party has put in place and follows mechanisms that allow for the party executive to be responsive and accountable to its membership. It also means that in such a party, there is internal political contestation or competition and participation of the members in the affairs of the party. In addition, a democratic political party, like a democratic polity, should be able to be tolerant to and accommodative of divergent views within it. Thus, party discipline would not necessarily mean absence of dissenting views or critical voices from within the party.

Of course, internal party democracy comes with its own challenges and dilemmas. For instance, uncontrolled factionalism, in the name of intra-party democracy may threaten the very survival of an emerging and fragile political party.

Against this background, key question to be addressed at the forthcoming conference in this regard include the following:

- a) What are the key dimensions for internal party democracy?
- b) What is the state of internal party democracy in Eastern and Southern Africa?
- c) Should political parties participating in a democratic system themselves be democratic?
- d) If the answer to this question is affirmative the next question is how to guarantee that political parties are (or: become) democratic? In other words,
- e) What challenges do political parties face in trying to institutionalise intra-party democracy?
- f) Which are the best practices that can be showcased in the region?

g) How best can external actors play a role in addressing this challenge?

### **(Public) funding of political parties,**

The institutional development of political parties is also affected by the levels of funding that political parties may have, how they get such funding and they account for it. Experiences vary in this regard. Within Eastern and Southern Africa, political parties, in addition to their own private means, are publicly financed in South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania and Mozambique. The recently passed party law in Kenya also provides for public funding of political parties. In Zambia, on the other hand, political parties have to fend for themselves as there are no provisions for state funding of political parties. Even in those countries where parties are funded by the State, neither the criteria nor the actual administration, management and accountability mechanisms are the same. Disclosure of and the extent to which private funding is regulated is also another sticky issue in the region. More importantly, the recently published seminal study by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)<sup>20</sup> has revealed that corruption related to political party financing poses a greatest risk to democratic development worldwide. In the process, this has led to the deepening of public mistrust of political parties as they (political parties are increasingly viewed as self centred organisations whose aim (mistakenly) is self enrichment. Building on these varied practices and experiences, the conference will closely address the following questions:

- a) How does party funding impact on the internal functioning and management of political parties?
- b) Is State funding desirable and (if so) has to be legally guaranteed ( eg. in the country's Constitution or in separate legislations)?
- c) What are the different criteria, administration and management of public funding of political parties in the region and what lessons can be drawn from these differences?
- d) How private funding of political parties is regulated in the various ESARP countries and what are the key lessons that can be drawn from the various experiences?
- e) What kind of accountability mechanisms are (or can be) put in place to ensure that political party financing is transparent and in line with democratic norms and practices?

### **The making and unmaking of party coalitions**

As political pluralism takes its root in the region, we have also witnessed that political party coalitions are increasingly becoming a feature worth reckoning with in contemporary politics in Africa regardless of the political or electoral system that a country has adopted. In one way, this practice may signal the need for a much more consensus oriented politics that could be an answer to the often ethnically or regionally based politics that characterise Africa's contemporary politics. At the same time, experience has also shown that when not carefully conceived, coalitions break up just after elections and this leads to more political instability generally as much as it may also affect the institutional strength of political parties. For instance, the 'making, unmaking and remaking of political party coalitions', which have been at the centre of Malawi's political landscape since the 1993 referendum may have partly contributed to the unstable party politics in this country. Similarly in Kenya, the historic victory of the opposition in the December 2002 elections could not have been conceivable without the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). However, the great deal of factionalism barely weeks after the electoral victory, left ordinary Kenyans feeling betrayed if not politically confused. The just abolished 5% minimum electoral threshold that had been part of Mozambique's proportional representation electoral system made it apparent for small parties to consider pre-election coalitions if they were to meaningfully participate in elections. It is not clear as to how the removal of this minimum threshold

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<sup>20</sup> National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2005, *Money in Politics: A Study of Party Financing Practices in 22 Countries*. Washington: NDI.

will impact on the quest for coalitions there. This brief overview of the ‘making, unmaking and remaking’ of party coalitions only underscore the necessity for a critical reflection on this now established practice in African politics. To this end, the conference in March is to reflect on the following central question:

- a) What are the important lessons (with regard to the institutional development of political parties) that can be drawn from the experiences with party coalitions in the Eastern and Southern Africa region and possibly beyond? Among other important lessons, the following will be considered:
  - i. Under what conditions are party coalitions (un)necessary?
  - ii. Pre-and post elections coalitions, any fundamental differences?
  - iii. The architect of party coalitions: what role can the party membership play?

### **‘Floor crossing’**

The last theme of this conference, ‘floor crossing’ is equally important. In a number of countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, institutional development of political parties has been affected in one way or the other by this practice: the process whereby a Member of Parliament leaves his or her party and joins another or declares him/herself independent. Country experiences are varied. While in other countries like South Africa this is allowed (on specific times and under specific conditions), floor crossing is constitutionally prohibited in Malawi. In both countries, however, there is no consensus as to how best this particular practice can be addressed. The conference may not necessarily come up with a standard policy/ solution, the debate may help in shedding more light on how this practice relates to the other themes like internal party democracy, coalition formation and party financing. Specifically, this session will pay attention to the following related questions:

- a) Why has floor crossing become such an important and controversial issue in contemporary democracies in Africa?
- b) What has been the impact of floor crossing on the institutional development of political parties in the sub region?
- c) How is the issue of floor crossing been addressed in the various ESARP countries?

### **Conference format**

This regional conference is designed in such a way that it offers participants a maximum opportunity to share their own experiences from the praxis while at the same time benefiting from the input of the thematic specialised experts. For this reason, a proper balance between expert presentations and the hands-on practical experiences will be achieved in two important ways:

- a) Every session (except the opening) will be kick-started by an expert presentation (of maximum 30 minutes) which will not only be theory based but also –and more importantly- informed by some empirically researched evidence related to the questions being addressed in the presentation. This expert presentation will be responded to by a seasoned politician chosen by the respective country delegations as will be reflected in the conference programme. The input from the practitioner (politician) is expected to offer some insights with regard to the kind of practical experiences the political parties in general or him/herself in particular (has) have gone through or may be shared in respect of the topic/theme in question. For instance, a response to an expert presentation on intra-party democracy is expected to provide participants with some concrete case studies or examples on some of the specific questions that are to be addressed under this theme.

While the resource person will be identified by the ESARP team in consultation with CMD-Malawi and based on the previous recommendations made at the November 2007 Nairobi preparatory

conference, the respondent will have to be chosen in advance by the respective country delegations in their home countries. This may mean that where necessary, the CMD Secretariats or the respective NIMD 'technical' partners like the Centre for Policy Studies in South Africa may be requested by the chosen politician to prepare some notes in advance for his or her response. The NIMD-ESARP team would be very appreciate of this kind of support so that we should have well thought through responses other than impromptu remarks that may not serve the intended purpose.

- b) In addition to the responses by already identified politicians, more cross-pollination of ideas and experiences is also expected from the floor during plenary/open discussions. At this point, it will be the competencies of the session chairs that will determine the success of this exchange of experiences on the theme under discussion. To ensure that the plenary discussions are fruitful and well moderated, it is, like in the case of respondents, important that the Country Delegations, aided by their respective technical teams (CMD-Directors) do already identify in advance (on the basis of competencies) a person among themselves who would be better placed to act as a session chair on behalf of their country delegation.

#### **Documentation of conference proceedings: Role of rapporteurs**

To ensure that a proper record of conference proceedings is kept, rapporteurs will be appointed for each day of the conference. These will take note of the major highlights of the discussions and produce a fair summary of the day's proceedings. An overview of the first day's discussions will be presented at the beginning of the second day's discussions. The rapporteurs of the second (and last) day of the conference will be tasked with production of the two day's summary which will then be presented at the end of the second day's discussions which will be presented in form of a communiqué.

#### **The post conference publication**

As the regional conference is the climax of the NIMD's regional programme, conclusions arrived at during this conference will inform the future planning of ESARP. As part of knowledge management, NIMD-ESARP plans to have summary of proceedings and all papers presented in form of an edited publication. This publication will be made available both online and in print form.

## 7.3 PROGRAMME

### DAY 1                      **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

ARRIVAL OF PARTICIPANTS

6:00pm -7:00pm                      Registration of participants

7:00pm - 10:00pm                      Dinner  
Introduction of country delegations  
Meeting of all Session Chairs, Rapporteurs and the ESARP team

### DAY 2                      **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

***Chief Rapporteur: Mr Shaun Mackay***

***Rapporteurs for the day:***

*Mr.Horrance Chilando, Programme Officer for Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue (ZCID) and Mr. Daniel Loya, Executive Director of Tanzania Centre for Democracy (TCD)*

8:00am - 9:00am                      Registration of Participants

**OPENING SESSION**

**Chaired by Mr. Kwauli Msisya - Malawi**

9:00am - 9:20am                      Welcome & Introductions  
Mr. Humphrey Mvula, Chairperson of CMD-Malawi

9:20am – 9:40am                      Remarks by Prof. Lawrence Gumbe, Chairperson of the Centre for  
Multiparty Democracy- Kenya and Chair of the NIMD-Eastern and  
Southern Africa Programme (2007)

9:40am – 10:00am                      Remarks by - Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt, Executive Director, Netherlands  
Institute for Multiparty Democracy (confirmed)

10:00am – 10:30am                      Keynote Address  
**Her Lordship Justice Anastazia Msosa, Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral  
Commission (confirmed)**

10:30am – 10:40am                      Session Chairman’s Closing Remarks followed by group photograph

10:40am – 11:00am                      Group Photograph

10:00am – 11:30am                      Coffee/Tea Break

**SESSION TWO**

**Chaired by Mr. Cypriano Orina Nyamwamu - Kenya**

**Setting the Context: The State and Functioning of Political Parties in the Region**

11:30am – 12:00pm Political parties as a pillar for contemporary democracies: A critical analysis of the state of affairs and perspectives for the future

**Victor Shale, Head of Political Parties Programme, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (confirmed)**

12:00pm – 12:15pm Response to the presentation- **Mr. Richard Kapita, Vice President of the UPND- Zambian**

12:15pm – 1:00pm Open Discussion

1:00pm – 2:00pm LUNCH

**SESSION THREE**

**Chaired by Ms. Sharon Phiri, Chairperson Religious Affairs – Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD)- Zambia**

**SUB-THEME: Internal Functioning and Structure of Political Parties**

2:00pm – 2:30pm Democracy within political parties: A comparative analysis of the state of affairs in Eastern and Southern Africa, its challenges and how it may be institutionalised

**Dr. Augustine Titani Magolowondo, NIMD- ESARP Coordinator (confirmed)**

2:30pm – 2:45pm Response to the presentation- **Hon. Magdallena Sakya, MP - Tanzanian**

2:45pm – 3:30pm Open discussion

3:30pm – 4:00pm Coffee Break

4:00pm – 6:00pm Free (Informal exchange of experiences between and among political parties)

6:30pm – 7:45pm Dinner

8:00pm – 10:00pm Panel discussion/ Public debate on **“The December 2007 elections in Kenya and the aftermath: An assessment of lessons for the region”**

Moderated by **Prof. Lars Svasand, University of Bergen, Norway**

**Panellists:**

- One party representative from the CMD-Kenya,
- Executive Director of CMD-Kenya and
- Mr. Victor Shale, Head of Political Parties Programme, Electoral Institute for Southern Africa -EISA

**DAY 3**

**FRIDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2008**

***Rapporteurs for the day:***

*Ms. Njeri Kabeberi, Executive Director for the Centre for Democracy –Kenya (CMD-K) and*

*Mr. Shaun Mackay, Chief Rapporteur*

8:30am – 8:50am Recap of day one’s conference proceedings –Mr. Horrance Chilando and Mr. Daniel Loya

**SESSION FOUR**

**Chaired by Mozambique, Mrs. Maria Angelina Dique Enoque**

Sub Theme: **Money and Politics: The case of Political Party financing**

8:50am – 9:20am Different models for financing of political parties: A regional comparative analysis on sources of funding, administration, management and accountability mechanisms

**Ms Geraldene Chaplog-Louw, Head of Internal Audit, Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (confirmed)**

9:20am – 9:35m Response to the presentation- **Mrs Alice Wahome, SAFINA Party- Kenya**

9:35am – 10:30am Open Discussions

10:30am – 11:00am Coffee and Tea Break

**SESSION FIVE**

**Chaired by Tanzania, Hon. D.J. Mwanri, M.P., National Executive Committee Member, Chama cha Mapinduzi**

SUB THEME: **FLOOR CROSSING AND THE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

11:00am – 11:30am To cross or not to cross the floor: a critical assessment of the rationale and the impact of floor crossing on party systems and representative democracy

**Dr. Anthony Mawaya, Assistant Resident Representative and Governance Cluster Leader, United Nations Development Programme (Malawi)- (confirmed)**

11:30am – 11:45am Response to the presentation- **Hon. Annelizie van Wyk, MP, African National Congress- South Africa**

11:45am – 12:30pm Open discussion

12:30pm – 1:30pm LUNCH

#### **SESSION SIX**

**Chaired by Hon. Haniff Hoosen, MP, Secretary General, Independent Democrats- South Africa**

#### **THE POLITICS OF PARTY COALITIONS AND ALLIANCES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

1:30pm – 2:00pm Party coalitions, elections and representative democracy: A comparative analysis of the recent experiences of the making, unmaking and remaking of party coalitions in the sub-region

**Dr. Neo Simutanyi, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Lusaka (confirmed)**

2:00pm- 2:20pm The process, mechanics and challenges of coalition making: The Experiences of Dutch Political

**Mrs Sharon Dijksma- The Netherlands' State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science and Mr. Sherlo Esajas, Assistant to the Leader of the Labour Party of The Netherlands (confirmed)**

2:20pm – 3:00pm Open discussion

3:00pm- 3:30pm Coffee/Tea Break

#### **SESSION SEVEN**

**Chaired by Hon. Raspicious Dzanjalimodzi, MP- Malawi**

#### **WRAPPING UP**

3:30pm- 4:00pm Presentation of a draft of a Draft Communiqué

**Mr. Shaun Mackay and Ms Njeri Kabeberi**

4:00pm – 5:00pm Consideration and Adoption of Joint Communiqué

5:00pm – 6:00pm Closing Session  
Remarks by Prof. Laurence Gumbe, Chair -, CMD-Kenya

Remarks by Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt, NIMD Executive Director  
Remarks by Mr. Humphrey Mvula, Chair- CMD-Malawi

7:30pm

Closing Dinner followed by a cultural entertainment

## **7.4 CONFERENCE DELEGATES**

### **KENYA**

1. Prof. Gumbe Lawrence Otweyo Migire, Chairman CMD K
2. Mr. Awadh Abubakar Ahmed Mohamed - Social Democratic Party
3. Mr. Cyprian Orina Nyamwamu - Social Democratic Party
4. Ms. Muli Faith Wangui – ODM Kenya
5. Mrs. Ngaru Agness Mumbi - LDP-ODM
6. Mrs. Ngayu Alice Muthoni Wahome - SAFINA-PNU
7. Mr. Nyambati Walter Enock - National Labour Party
8. Ms. Kabeberi Njeri – CMD - K

### **ZAMBIA**

9. Ms. Credah Mweupe – Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) [ruling party]
10. Mr. Richard Kapita, Vice President – United Party for National Development (UPND)
11. Mr. Clifford Mwaba, National Secretary – National Democratic Focus (NDF)
12. Mrs Jemima Banda – United National Independence Party (UNIP)
13. Mrs. Phelisters Mwansa Musonda– United Liberal Party (ULP)
14. Ms. Sharon Phiri, Chairperson Religious Affairs – Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD)
15. Mr. Horrance Chilando, Programmes Officer, Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue (ZCID)

### **TANZANIA**

16. Mr. Mwanri Aggrey Daisile - Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM)
17. Mr. Shaaban Ranadhan Abdulla - Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM)
18. Miss Mtema Regia Estelatus - (CHADEMA)
19. Mr. Sakaya Magadallena Hamis - Civic United Front
20. Ms. Mrikaria Nancy - Tanzania Labour Party(TLP)
21. Mr. Cheyo Isaac Manjomba - United Democratic Party (UDP)
22. Mr. Loya Daniel Paul - TCD

### **MOZAMBIQUE**

23. Mr. Joao Alexandre - RENAMO
24. Ms Angelina Dique Enoque - RENAMO
25. Mr. Ismael Jamu Mussa - RENAMO
26. Mr. Bonifacio Gruveta- Frelimo
27. Mr. Edumundo Galiza Matos Jr- Frelimo
28. Itelvina Rita Joaquim Fevereiro- Frelimo
29. Mr. Manuel Cabinda- Translator
30. Mr. Adriano Malache, NIMD Country Coordinator

### **SOUTH AFRICA**

31. Mr. Obed Bapela - ANC
32. Ms Mmakwena Mapelong – AZAPO
33. Mrs. Sandy Kalyan M. P- Demprcratic Alliance

- 34. Mr. Hanniff Hoosein M. P- Independent Democrats
- 35. Ms. Annelise van Wyk. M. P – African National Congress
- 36. Mr. Strike Thokoane, AZAPO
- 37. Mr. Ebrahim Fakir (CPS)

#### **THE NETHERLANDS**

- 38. Mrs Sharon Dijkma- State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science
- 39. Mr Sherlo Esajas, Senior Political Advisor to the State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science

#### **MALAWI**

- 40. Mr. H. Makande- United Democratic Front (UDF)
- 41. Mr. H. Mvula- United Democratic Front (UDF)
- 42. Mr. J. M. Chirwa – Peoples Progressive Movement (PPM)
- 43. Emily Chintu- Peoples Progressive Movement (PPM)
- 44. Sakina Chingomanje-DPP
- 45. Francis Mphepo- DPP
- 46. Langton Chasowa- REPUBLICAN PARTY
- 47. Khwauli Msiska- Alliance for Democracy (AFORD)
- 48. Kennedy Matundu-Peoples Transformation Party (PETRA)
- 49. Hon. R. P. Dzanjalimodzi, Malawi Congress Party (MCP)
- 50. Mr. Kizito Tenthani, Executive Director, CMD Malawi
- 51. Ms Chikondi Chibweya, Administrative Officer, CMD Malawi
- 52. Mrs Anne Maganga, Programmes Officer, CMD-Malawi

#### **NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY - NIMD**

- 53. Mr. Roel von Meijenfheldt- Executive Director,
- 54. Mr. Jasper Veen, Director for Africa
- 55. Mrs. Ellen van Koppen, Party Coordinator
- 56. Dr. Augustine Titani Magolowondo, NIMD-ESARP Coordinator

#### **EXTERNAL RESOURCE PERSONS**

- 57. Mr. Victor Shale, Head of Political Parties Programme, Electoral Institute for Southern Africa
- 58. Ms. Geraldene Chaplog-louw, Head of Audit, Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa
- 59. Dr. Neo Richard Simutanyi, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Lusaka, Zambia
- 60. Dr. Anthony Mawaya, Assistant Resident Representative (Governance), United Nations Development Programme, Malawi
- 61. Prof. Lars Svåsand, University of Bergen, Norway

#### **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 62. Ms Emma Njoka, Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), Malawi Office
- 63. Mrs Linda Kabwato-Ziyendammanja, Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa, IDASA, South Africa

#### **CHIEF RAPPORTEUR**

- 64. Shaun Mackay, Independent Consultant

**MALAWI BASED EMBASSIES AND HIGH COMMISSIONS REPRESENTED**

- 65. South Africa
- 66. Tanzania
- 67. Zimbabwe
- 68. Mozambique

## 7.5 ESARP in Brief

The NIMD East and Southern Africa Regional Programme (NIMD-ESARP) brings together governing and opposition political parties from the six countries in the region which have an NIMD programme (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia). The aim of the NIMD regional programme is to support inter-party cooperation, and to strengthen institutional development of the parties. By sharing best practices and lessons learned, or by addressing difficulties together, the political parties in East and Southern Africa learn from each other, and learn together.

ESARP is thus both a forum for exchange and regional lesson learning, and a tool to strengthen the institutional capacity of individual political parties. In this regard, **key components of ESARP** include the following:

a) **Regional conferences:** Holding of regional conferences remains characteristic of ESARP. They are the climax of that forum for parties where they come together, interact, share experiences and address common challenges jointly.

b) **Bilateral (country to country) exchange programmes.** As part of enriching the regional programme, political parties had recommended strongly that the regional conferences should be complimented by tailor-made and carefully planned country to country visits whereby representatives of political parties from one country would visit political parties in another country with the view of deepening their cooperation and also share experiences on specific issues of interest.

c) **The Regional 'Knowledge Centre'.** The regional programme also acts as a regional 'knowledge centre' through the offering of comparative information and lessons within the region for both political parties and other interested actors on themes that are of relevance to the institutional strengthening of political parties in particular and democratisation in general. This is done by, among other ways, conducting of research and analyses on selected themes and sharing the findings with political parties themselves and their partners. In this way, the regional programme is also key to the development of the NIMD Knowledge Centre at the NIMD headquarters;

### *Ownership of the regional programme*

Ownership of the regional programme, like all other NIMD programmes, remains with participating political parties. **To ensure that the regional programme continues to add value to the initiatives that are taking place in the various NIMD programme countries,** the various activities being undertaken are done either based on requests from or in close cooperation with NIMD country programmes. As such, the established Centres for Multiparty Democracy (CMDs), NIMD field offices (as is the case in Mozambique) or NIMD key partner organization like the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) in South Africa are playing an active role in shaping the concrete/specific priorities of ESARP and also in following up regional initiatives and debates in their respective countries.

For more information about the regional programme, contact: Dr. Augustine Titani Magolowondo, Regional Programme Coordinator- ESARP on [augustinemagolowondo@nimd.org](mailto:augustinemagolowondo@nimd.org)