

On the establishment of the NIMD-Eastern and Southern Africa Programme

Final Statement of a Conference of Political Parties from Eastern and Southern Africa

Representatives of 36 political parties from Eastern and Southern Africa, meeting on November 25th and 26th, 2004 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, agreed to further their cooperation. This cooperation will take shape through a regional programme aimed at enhancing the quality of democracy and the performance of the political parties.

This programme will be developed in tandem with the establishment of the country programmes and the multiparty democracy centers which are emerging at the country levels within the region.

The meeting resulted in an elaborated and comprehensive set of issues that need to be addressed through this emerging regional cooperation. A resource person shall be invited to compile these recommendations into a coherent framework for attention and implementation over the coming years.

This comprehensive programme shall be presented to the political parties present at the conference within four months for their reflection and response. The feedback of the political parties will subsequently be incorporated into a longer-term programme that shall be presented for discussions and decision-making at the next plenary meeting of this group of political parties. This meeting will be scheduled to take place in the course of 2005.

Meanwhile, the conference decided to constitute itself into a **Multiparty Regional Forum in Eastern and Southern Africa**.

The conference appointed an **interim steering committee** to guide the process until the next plenary meeting which shall decide about a more formalized and institutionalized regional inter-party cooperation.

The interim steering committee will take the process forward by initiating amongst others the following immediate functions and activities:

1. **organize regional bonding and capacity building workshops.** Plan a series of regional meetings that each will focus on one of the following subjects: the need for electoral systems reviews, the need for wider constitutional reviews, the funding of political parties and

related issues, and the development of a code of conduct to regulate inter-party relations during and beyond elections;

2. **share information and ensure communication within the Forum.** Establish a resource center in the region through which information is shared and best practices accessed. The center will establish an interactive Forum website.
3. **establish links with the AU and sub-regional governing institutions.** Establish contacts with the regional institutions and organize meetings for political parties with these institutions to provide opportunities for political parties to familiarize and to engage themselves with these new institutions and their work.
4. **prepare and organize the next Forum meeting.** The interim steering committee will submit in good time a comprehensive workprogramme and a proposal for an institutional framework for regional cooperation at the next plenary meeting of the Multiparty Regional Forum.

The interim steering committee shall be composed of two representatives per participating country, one from the governing party and one from the opposition parties.

The interim steering committee shall select its chair and deputy chairperson at its first meeting.

The interim steering committee shall work in a strictly multiparty and inclusive manner.

The interim steering committee will be able to assign specific tasks to resource persons or consultants.

The minutes of the meetings of the steering committee shall be shared with all the participating political parties of the Multiparty Regional Forum.

The steering committee will meet quarterly and shall be facilitated by the regional representative of IMD.

**White Sands Hotel
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
November 26th, 2004**