

**SUMMARY ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARTNERSHIP DAYS: DOCUMENTING
DEMOCRATIC IMPACT**

DRAFT

10 - 13 June 2009

Nairobi, Kenya

1. At the invitation of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy representatives from 17 countries in African, Asia, Europe and Latin America met in Nairobi Kenya from 10-13th June 2009. Delegates represented both ruling and opposition parties in the following countries: Bolivia; Burundi (observers); Ecuador; Ghana; Guatemala; Indonesia; Kenya; Malawi; Mali; Mozambique; Netherlands; South Africa; Suriname; Tanzania; Uganda (observers), Zambia and Zimbabwe.
2. They convened for the third NIMD Partnership Days in Nairobi - the first to be held outside the Netherlands since its inception in 2005. Every two years the NIMD brings together partner representatives, politicians and NIMD staff in order to exchange experiences. The partnership days aim to strengthen the NIMD network of political parties around the world and collectively take stock of progress made, challenges faced and results achieved in strengthening the role of political parties in reforms.

The relationship between the partners arises from a commitment to work together in a co-operative spirit, and combine resources and efforts in order to strengthen democratic governance tolerance and pluralism. Central to the notion of democratic governance is the ability of citizens to participate in their own governance through expression of their interest and to hold government to account.

3. While recognising that the recent global recession had led to increased debate on international development cooperation, the conference emphasised the need for continued democracy support. Democracy not only ensures people-driven governance, it also provides a solid foundation for socio-economic development and increased domestic accountability.

People shape institutions and if these are not answerable to the law or responsive to the people they cannot provide trust. Political parties play a central role in providing this trust and making accountability work by its ability to articulate and aggregate citizens' interest.

4. The conference widely acknowledged that political parties are still faced with many challenges. In this regard, the following were discussed: 1. Democratic reform processes; 2. Political accountability and voice; and 3. Conflict prevention and resolution.
5. With regard to **Democratic Reform**, the conference discusses the drafting of shared national agendas and constitutional reform processes.
 - a. It resolved that credible reform can only be achieved through the crafting of an inclusive and shared national agenda which takes the needs of all sectors of society into account. Following years of civil war, the Secretaries General of political parties in Guatemala led a process that culminated in such an agenda. In Ghana the deliberations of the NIMD-supported Political Parties Platform formed the basis for wide societal

consultation which eventually led to the drafting of a national Democratic Consolidation Strategy Paper.

b. In several other countries constitution reform processes were undertaken. Often, existing tensions in society were mirrored within the constitutional reform processes. Setting up a process that enables a constructive consensus-building mechanism between the various interest groups is therefore crucial for any successful and legitimate reform. In order to facilitate lessons learned and share these experiences on constitutional reform, the NIMD Knowledge Centre launched the handbook *“Writing Autobiographies of Nations: a Comparative Analysis of Constitutional Reform Processes.”*

6. The conference recognised the need to increase **Political Accountability** of both governments and political parties as a key objective for democratic consolidation. Issues discussed included: the relation between media and politics; political education; and internal party democracy.

a. There is a mutual dependency between the media and political parties. The mass media provides a platform for politicians to communicate with the public, ensures an informed public and holds government to account. A programme in Latin America aimed at improving this relationship, and implemented by Radio Netherlands Training Centre in collaboration with NIMD, was discussed. Various country delegations expressed an interest in similar interventions. Another notable example was the Media and Politics Programme in Ecuador which focused on raising civic awareness about the constitution-making process.

b. Initiatives around political education were deemed important because the more informed citizens are, the more empowered they will be to intervene in their own governance. Democracy should not only be state-driven, but also citizen-driven. But this entails empowering the public with political skills and methods of engaging with decision makers. Programmes discussed included the democracy schools in Indonesia, the Train the Trainers Programme in Suriname and emergent schools for democracy in Mozambique.

c. The discussion on internal party democracy concluded that political parties play a pivotal role in aggregating the voices of citizens and advancing interests through government. But in order to effectively do so, they need to lead by example and ensure that they are democratic institutions that allow for inclusiveness and the space for open debate and discussion. It is important that they are answerable to their members and the public at large.

7. The final major theme centred around **Conflict Prevention and Resolution**. The Centres for Multi-Party Democracy in Bolivia, Malawi and Kenya proved to be crucial institutions in preventing and/or mediating the conflicts in their countries. Dialogue between the various political actors as facilitated by these centres helped to build trust between them. Moreover, these institutions have helped build trust between political parties and other key stakeholders such as the electoral commission, the media and civil society organisations.

8. The conference also took note of the results of the recently held African Regional Programme meeting which examined the role of political parties in deepening voice and accountability in order to strengthen multiparty democracy. The ARP meeting discussed various strategies for ensuring democratic reforms and the strengthening of key democratic institutions.

9. The conference undertook to continue to document the results achieved in the various programme countries in order to inform, encourage and empower other partners within the network.

