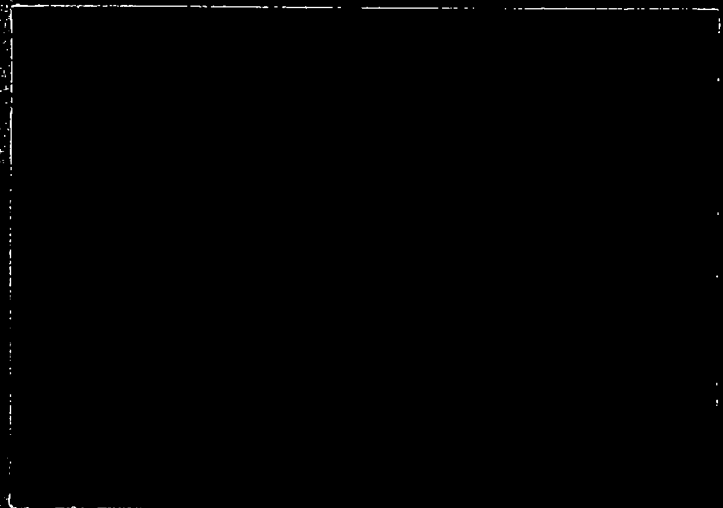
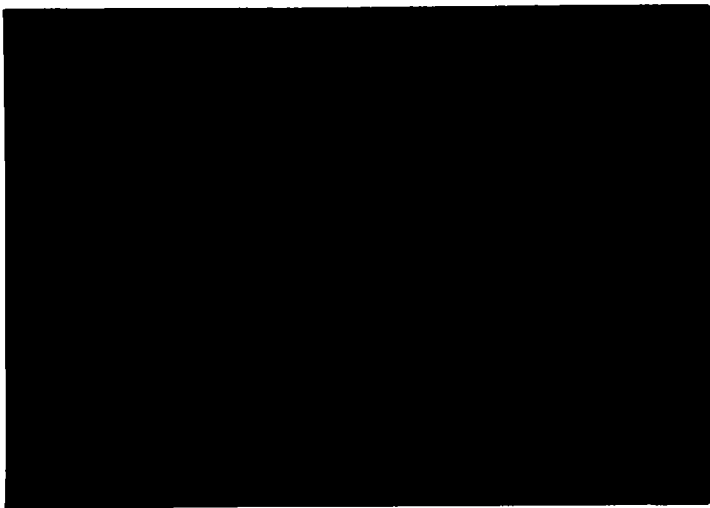


*National Democratic  
Institute for  
International  
Affairs*





# National Democratic Institute For International Affairs

conducting nonpartisan international programs to help promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions



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## NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) was established in 1983. By working with political parties and other institutions, NDI seeks to promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions in new and emerging democracies. The Institute is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and has a staff of 120 with field offices in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin American and the former Soviet Union.

NDI has supported the development of democratic institutions in more than 60 countries. Programs focus on six major areas:

**Political Party Training:** NDI conducts multipartisan training seminars in political development with a broad spectrum of democratic parties. NDI draws international experts to forums where members of fledgling parties learn first-hand the techniques of organization, communication and constituent contact.

**Election Processes:** NDI provides technical assistance for political parties and nonpartisan associations to conduct voter and civic education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. The Institute has also organized more than 25 major international observer delegations.

**Strengthen Legislatures:** NDI organizes seminars focusing on legislative procedures, staffing, research information, constituent services, committee structures and the function and role of party caucuses. NDI programs also seek to promote access to the legislative process by citizen groups and the public at large.

**Local Government:** NDI provides technical assistance on a range of topics related to the processes of local governance, including division of responsibility between mayors and municipal councils, and between local and national authorities. NDI program also promote enhanced communication between local officials and their constituents.

**Civic Organization:** NDI supports and advises nonpartisan groups and political parties engaged in civic and voter education programs. NDI programs work with civic organizations to enhance their organizational capabilities.

**Civil-Military Relations:** NDI brings together military and political leaders to promote dialogue and establish mechanisms for improving civil-military relations.

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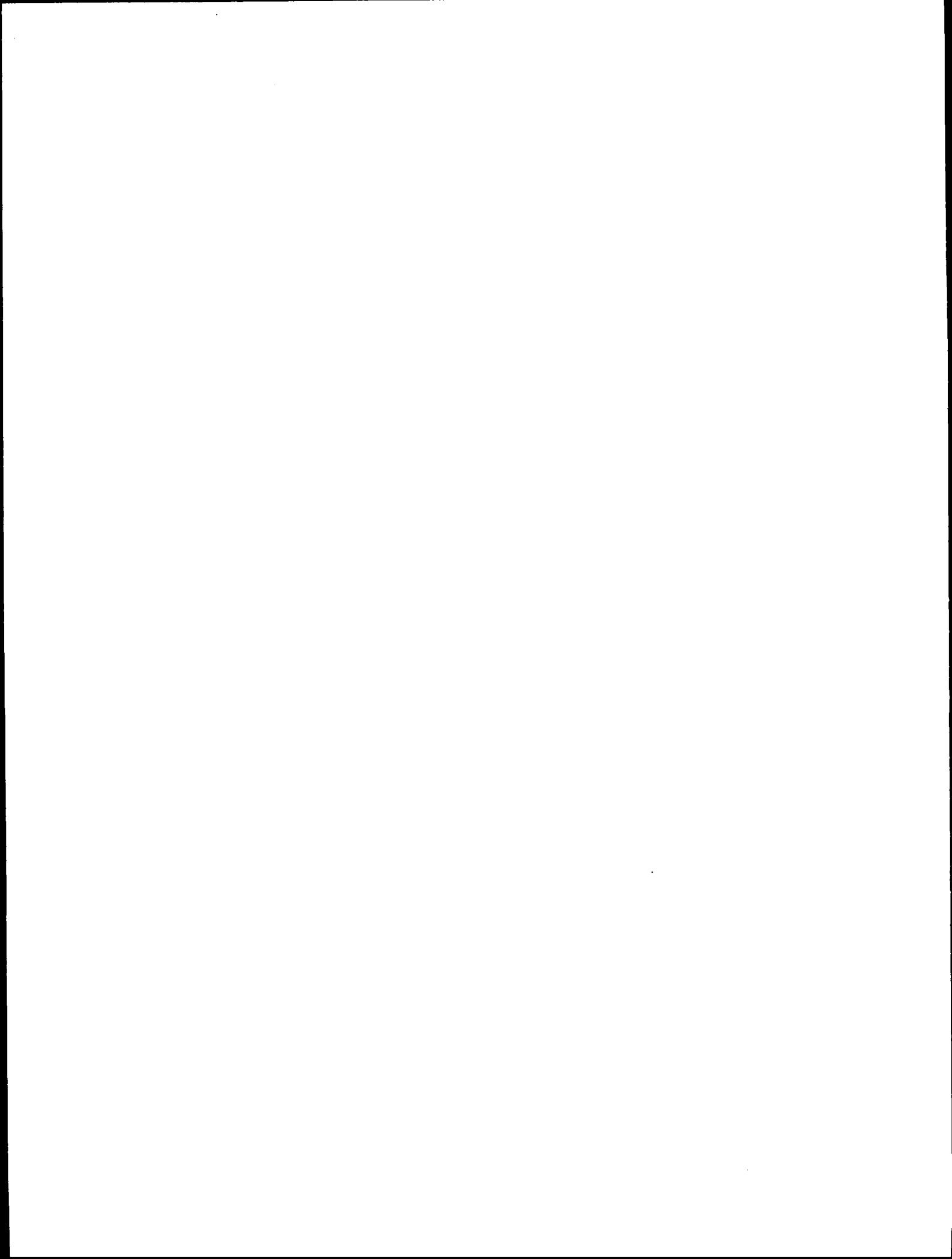
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# **Reaching Namibia's Voters Through Radio and Television**

The National Democratic Institute in cooperation with the Namibian  
Broadcasting Corporation

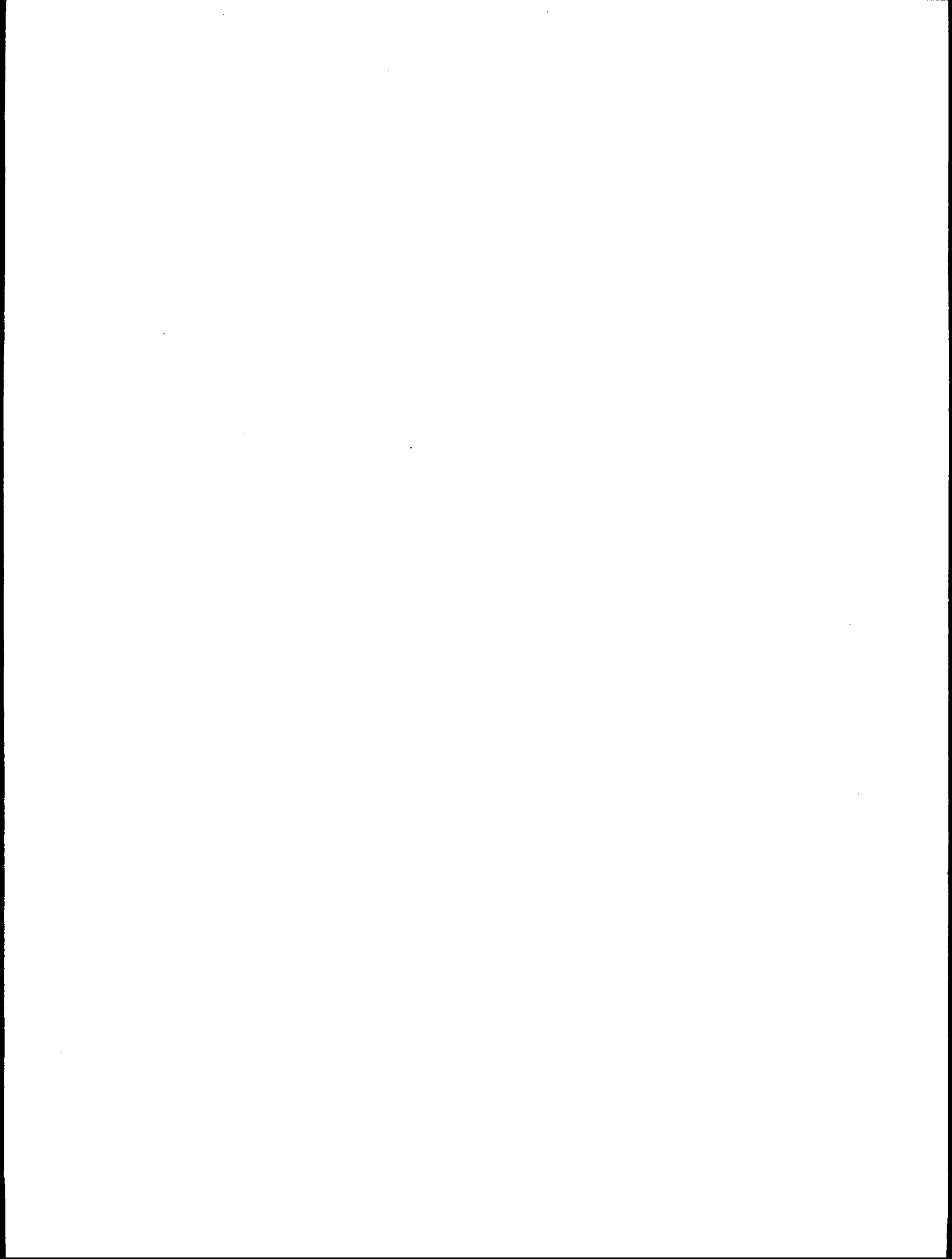
December 1994

*This report was prepared by Sean Kelly, NDI consultant in Namibia*



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## **I. SUMMARY**

From September 1 through December, 1994, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducted a voter education project in Namibia through a cooperative agreement with the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) funded by the U.S. Government AREAF grant. The project's aim was to promote greater involvement by the electorate and enable citizens to cast a more informed ballot during the presidential and parliamentary elections held December 7 and 8, 1994. In spite of widespread predictions of voter apathy, overall voter turnout nationally was more than 76 percent of the registered voters. In many regions it was greater. NBC called the project a success which it said would not have been possible without NDI's assistance.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

This was NDI's third election in Namibia and its seventh year of in-country program activity. Prior to the 1989 Namibian election for a pre-independence constituent assembly, NDI brought a five-nation team of election experts to Namibia to critique the proposed election system and recommend specific changes. The Institute subsequently carried out a voter education project leading up to the elections and ultimately served as an international observer during the actual balloting in November 1989.

During the campaign for the 1992 Regional and Local Elections in Namibia, NDI cooperated in a voter education project with the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). Using radio exclusively, but broadcasting in all nine NBC language services, the project included panel discussions, quiz programs, a radio play, and a "Town Meeting of the Air." NBC considered the project a success, limited only by the lack of fruitful cooperation between the broadcasting corporation and the political parties (See NDI's Final Report: The Namibia Voter Education Project, October 15-December 15, 1992, page 9).

## **III. THE ELECTION FORUM**

When a similar project was proposed for the 1994 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, NDI suggested involving the political parties more directly in the NBC voter education programming. "As a first step," stated the NDI project proposal, "NDI and the NBC will ask each political party to select two representatives each to serve on a party liaison committee to provide party input into programming and help bring agreement on the information to be broadcast."

This committee, which became known as the Election Forum, met weekly from

September 14 to November 29 under the chairmanship of Vitura Kavari (Senior Controller, NBC News and Current Affairs) with NDI attending as a participating observer. The major political parties (SWAPO, DTA, UDF, DCN, FCN) invariably sent senior representatives and the Forum meetings proved vital both to the NDI-NBC working relationship, as well as the actual voter education programming carried out by NBC with NDI's help.

#### **IV. NBC-NDI COOPERATION**

NDI's role in this effort fell into two broad areas: (a) supporting NBC financially in expanding voter education activities already scheduled by the radio and television services and (b) making possible totally new voter education programming in both radio and television. There was also a modest equipment component to the project: NDI helped fund the purchase of additional television camera recording cassettes to replace those used in NBC's expanded voter education programming.

NBC's radio staff had developed many of their own voter education program ideas during the 1989 and 1992 elections. In addition to expanded news coverage of election events, these included radio dramas, quiz shows and panel discussions. NDI funding made it possible to do substantially more of these than originally scheduled, including the commissioning of a new radio theater series entitled "The Silent Voice of the Ballot Paper" written by Moshe Baitsewe and produced in nine languages by NBC. Because of radio staff shortages, and to ensure the widest possible listenership, NDI's Windhoek team ended up writing the spot announcements used to promote the radio series in nine languages.

Television news coverage of the registration and the campaign was also expanded with NDI's help, making it possible for more political rallies and other election activities to be aired. But the major television project planned by NBC was an unprecedented political debate between the two presidential candidates, President Sam Nujoma of SWAPO and his challenger Mishake Muyongo from the opposition DTA. The debate was to be televised live and broadcast simultaneously on nation-wide radio.

#### **V. THE FAILED PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE**

With the help of NDI's Sarah Malm in Washington and Janet Brown of the U.S. Commission on Presidential Debates, NDI's team in Windhoek was able to obtain quick answers to specific questions posed by NBC on how to conduct a presidential debate, as well as transcripts from the 1992 U.S. presidential and vice-presidential debates.

When the debate proposal was first put to the Election Forum on November 7th, both SWAPO and DTA representatives greeted it enthusiastically, but then SWAPO, for reason best known to Sam Nujoma's immediate advisers, decided to withdraw. The SWAPO representative at the November 14th Election Forum meeting (according to the official NBC

minutes of the meeting) "expressed his regret towards the NBC for the (SWAPO) decision taken and said that although SWAPO was in favor of the original proposal, it will not allow its Presidential candidate, in his capacity as the Father of the nation, to participate in a debate with a candidate who seemed to be hitting at the lowest possible level."

It ultimately became clear that SWAPO had decided not to allow President Nujoma to appear on live television during a debate or press conference situation where he might be provoked into making statements that could prove detrimental to his candidacy. He was already being attacked by the opposition for having reportedly stated at a campaign rally that Namibian police should shoot, without question, anyone trying to cross the Kavango river to or from Angola. SWAPO continued trying to make it appear that its decision to withdraw from the Presidential debate was taken because of DTA tactics, but it was obvious to the Election Forum that other motives were involved.

Forum Chairperson Vitura Kavara expressed his disappointment that the debate would not take place because it would have been a history-making event for Namibia and the NBC. NDI's representative at the November 14th meeting was Mary Elizabeth Johnson who (again, according to the NBC minutes) "also expressed disappointment that the debate did not materialize. She said the NDI staff in Washington went out of their way to gather scripts from past Presidential debates, as well as instructions and rules for such debates. The Presidential debate in South Africa was a monumental success. It was a rarity in Africa and it would have been a tremendous step forward for Namibia if they could have the same event. She said such a debate would be of importance for the present election as well as for the future since it would set a precedent for Namibia as part of the country's democratic evolution."

## **VI. THE PANEL DISCUSSION ALTERNATIVE**

The loss of the presidential debate was discouraging, but SWAPO would not reconsider, preferring instead to have President Nujoma record all his television appearances in advance. In the interests of having at least some live election coverage on NBC, NDI's Sean Kelly suggested changing the format of an already scheduled election panel discussion into a live 90-minute "Town Meeting of the Air" with all political parties sending representatives to answer questions from a panel of local and international reporters. The program was broadcast live both radio and television December 1st, just a week before the actual voting, and it proved to be the highlight of NBC's scheduled election programming.

NBC's news coverage of the electoral process was of course unscheduled, but it remained a key element of the NBC-NDI voter education project. NDI's funding for transportation and overtime made it possible for NBC to cover more political rallies and other election events than would otherwise have been possible, including the actual voting on December 7th and 8th.

## **VII. NDI AS FACILITATOR**

NDI chartered several aircraft to take Namibian journalists to rallies in outlying areas during the final days of the campaigning. Three planes were chartered December 7th so that NBC and local press (on a space-available basis) could report the voting from polling stations throughout the country on the same day it took place. NDI made a point of assuring that radio reporters from the principal NBC language services (English, German, Nama/Damara, Oshivambo, and Otjiherero) were also included on the flights and given opportunity to report from the scene.

Throughout the period of the project, NDI worked closely with NBC, offering proposals during the Election Forum and Election Task Force meetings for broadcasting the scope of the voter education effort and meeting frequently with NBC's budget staff to find areas where there could be more cooperation between the two organizations. NDI's insistence on close accountability for funding while the project was underway occasionally resulted in NBC's expressing its irritation, particularly when it became clear that NDI's requirements for accountability from NBC were often greater than those that NBC required of itself.

Some of this irritability becomes evident in the final recommendations made by Vitura Kavari, who served as chairperson of both the Election Forum and the NBC Task Force:

"That the NBC agrees well in advance about the nature, scope and implementation mechanisms and methods for any sponsoring/participating institutions. This may help to avoid a situation whereby NBC would be negotiating continuously about certain concessions as regards the utilization of funds 'right in the middle of the storm' as it happened at times with the NDI Fund during the 1994 Presidential and National Assembly Elections."

In short, NBC would simply prefer being granted the voter education funds in advance to use as it sees fit. Unfortunately, U.S. Government accounting procedures rarely allow such programming flexibility.

Kavari nonetheless took time out in his report to express NBC's gratitude to NDI and its Windhoek team, as well as NDI in Washington. "We want to take up this opportunity," he said, "to thank the National Democratic Institute for its most needed assistance. The success that the NBC boasts pertaining to the public information/education campaign would not have been possible without the financial and moral assistance from NDI."

## **VIII. NAMIBIA'S ALTERNATIVE RADIO**

Early in 1994, Radio 99 began offering news, music and features in FM stereo to English, Afrikaans and German-speaking listeners in Windhoek. The station began on a modest scale, but quickly picked up an enthusiastic following among urban whites dissatisfied

with NBC's increasingly Afrocentric programming. Commercial advertising poured in, much of it from South Africa. By September, Radio 99 had acquired a growing African audience and was launching repeater stations in Swakopmund and Walvis Bay.

Aware of Radio 99's growth and concerned over the exclusivity of its support to state-funded NBC, NDI began exploring the possibility of some form of voter education assistance to Namibia's only private enterprise radio station. Initial discussions centered on purchasing air time on Radio 99 for Namibian political parties to broadcast political announcements. NDI would also assure that Radio 99 news reporters were included on chartered flights with NBC staffers covering political rallies and other election events in outlying areas.

Four Namibian political parties took advantage of NDI's offer of Radio 99's facilities. The DTA, UDF, Swanu, and the FCN all prepared 60-second political announcements which were broadcast during the period shortly before voting began. These followed some of the suggestions made during NDI's media workshops, including the use of sound effects and clear, simple writing styles. Radio 99 also carried several public service announcements prepared by NDI. Several Radio 99 reporters were included in the chartered flights to political rallies and polling stations. Altogether, the level of voter education support provided by NDI to Radio 99 was probably about as much as the commercial station could absorb.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

As noted above, the NDI-NBC working relationship was occasionally strained by NBC's assumption that it had been granted voter education funds for use on an as-needed basis. When NDI asked how the money was being used, or suggested that more voters might be reached by NBC radio language services than NBC television (radio reaches 90 percent of the Namibian population, television only 45 percent -- by NBC's own estimates), there was an occasional note of resentment expressed by NBC.

It should be stated that NBC is going through a difficult period of intensified competition by commercial radio and television and that morale among news and programming staff is at a low point. Tension exists along racial and ethnic lines, as well as between employees hired prior to independence and since. In spite of these problems, NBC did a commendable job of educating voters how and why to participate in the 1994 electoral process. It also did outstandingly in its attempts to report this process to the Namibian people by radio and television. To the extent that NDI was able to expand these efforts through AREAF funding does credit both to the AREAF and to NDI. By any measure of the project, it was money well spent.

## THE SILENT VOICE OF THE BALLOT PAPER

Author: Moshe M. Baitsewe

Episode: 1

Character:

1. Alma.....
2. Thansti.....
3. Tjikuru.....
4. Tjikuume.....

**SIGGI UP AND FADE TO THE BACKGROUND...  
...OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESENTER...  
...SIGGI UP AGAIN THEN GRADUALLY FADE OUT.**

**FX : A RUNNING MINIBUS WITH TWO OF THE OCCUPANTS HAVING A CHAT. SOFT MUSIC AUDIBLE FROM RADIO.**

**Alma :** Driver...What time did you say, we are going to arrive in Windhoek? I don't want to arrive there during the night because I'm afraid of the botsotso's. I don't know Windhoek you know.

**Thantsi :** Alma please... How many times must I tell you not to worry. I told you to relax. I know you don't trust me as yet. It is only eleven o'clock now. I expect us to be in Windhoek by lunch hour. And I promised to deliver you right at the front gate of your people.

**Alma :** I know you told me so and I'm very sorry if I sound as if I'm doubting you. I'm very tankful for your kindness.

**Thantsi :** It's enough just to say Mahenke because that man is a very successful businessman and also a very popular man. I'll deliver you right in front of his gate. And please call me Thantsi. I'm not denying that I'm a driver but that's but merely my means of earning a living. Jobs are difficult to come by.

**Alma :** (WORRIED) Please don't be impatient with me. If you leave me, what'll happen to me in a city full of botsotso's like Windhoek. They'll grab me.

**Thantsi :** (LAUGHS HEARTILY) You are so infatuated with this botsotso thing of your. Where did you hear about them?

**Alma :** What do you mean? The people are talking.

**Thantsi :** I agree, but then we must first consider the root cause of the evil.

**Alam :** What could be the...?

**Thantsi :** (MAKING HER SILENT) Hush!

**A CATCHY TUNE COMES OVER THE RADIO. IT'S AN ELECTION JINGLE, MUSIC FADES TO THE BACKGROUND. ANNOUNCER:** Remember that you did not register just in order for you to have a registration card. It's not a certificate for you to frame and hang up against the wall or to simply add to your pile of frame documents. Remember this... You must vote!!! Even if voting is optional. It is your civil responsibility to make your vote count. The silent voice of the ballot-paper speaks louder than a loudspeaker. **FADE UP MUSIC AND CROSSFADE INTO SOFT MUSIC AGAIN.**

**Thantsi :** I like to listen to these jingles. They are so beautiful.

**Alma :** I must be honest with you. I really don't like them. Not at all.

**Thantsi :** Why? You seem so disturbed. What's the matter?

**Alma :** No. The fault lies with Tjikuru...

**Thantsi :** (ASKANCE) Tjikuru?

Alma : Yes my grandmother.  
 Thantsi : What? Your granny...What did she do?  
 Alma : Oh Thantsi, forget it. It's rather a very long story.  
 Thantsi : Oh no, Alma. You are not going to shrug me that easily. I really want to know. I have made it my job to study the modern youth. They find fault with almost everything old people do or say. Maybe it's not even the oldtimer's fault at all. Let me hear the story. Please.  
 Alma : You can't back-off. Can you?  
 Thantsi : I insist.  
 Alma : Okay. If you say so but I'll give it to you in a nutshell.  
 Thantsi : I want the whole story. It's only then that I'll be bale to assess it.  
 Alma : (EXCLAIMS) Thantsi!  
 Thantsi : Please...  
 Alma : Okay then... It was late in the afternoon and one of those... What did you call them again...?  
 Thantsi : Jingles.  
 Alma : Yeh. One of them started to play over the radio and Tjikuume had just arrived home with the goats which had been missing for a couple of days.

**(REVERB AND GRADUALLY CROSSFADE INTO THE NEXT SCENE)**

**FX : LATE AFTERNOON SOUNDS AT A HOMESTEAD IN THE COUNTRY, FOR EXAMPLE THAT OF A HEN WITH CHICKS AND IN THE BACKGROUND A GOATBELL CAN BE HEARD AS THE SMALLSTOCKS APPROACH.**

Tjikuru : Am I hearing a goatbell approaching? has he really found them?  
 Alma : Yes Tjikuru. It's our goats. They're coming and Tjikuume is behind them.  
 Tjikuru : Then you must hurry up and add some more wood to the fire to get the water boiling. He must be very tired and only a big mug of hot tea will refresh him and give him his strength back. Hurry up now.  
 Alma : Okay Tjikuru.

**FX : SOUND OF WOOD BEING BROKEN: FIRE STARTS TO FLAME.**

Tjikuume: (APPROACHES) Hallo Tjikuru.  
 Tjikuru : Mbiri nawa mundu nansje. It must've been a tough day for you. Where did you find them?  
 Tjikuume: Quite a day, I'm telling you. My feet are killing me! I found them on the other side of the koppie. Alma, bring me my radio please.  
 Alma : Okay Tjikuume (WALKS AWAY ON GRAVEL).  
 Tjikuru : Are they still together?  
 Tjikuume: Fortunately yes. It's not the four-legged jackal one is always worried about but the two-legged one you know.  
 Tjikuru : I know.



Alma : (APPROACHES) Here is the radio Tjikuume.  
Tjikuume: Thank you my girl. (HE SWITCHED THE RADIO ON).

FX : **ANNOUNCER ON RADIO: Vote! Vote for the party of your choice. Remember, the cross you make speaks for you. Whatever you do, please do vote. It's important! Remember that democracy is a baby that needs to be nurtured in order for it to grow strong.**

Tjikuume: (SWITCHING OFF THE RADIO) What is this democracy thing they are talking about these days?

Tjikuru : What do you expect me to tell you? You know that we have been to the same school decades ago and they did not talk about things like democracy then. There is your granddaughter Alma. Why don't you ask her? At least she is also of the modern material she's supposed to know these things.

Tjikuume: You're right you know. Alma, please explain to me this democracy thing is all about. What is it?

Alma : (FROM A DISTANCE) I also don't know what that really is, Tjikuume. I never learned about it when I was at school.

Tjikuru : How could you not be knowing. You have a matric and we sold all our cattle to pay for your schooling. How is that really possible.

Alma : Tjikuru, please. Why don't you try and understand my side of the matter also. I mean this is a newly found independence we are having and all the things that came along with it are as new to me as they are to you. The teachers did not teach us about democracy and neither did they tell us about votes and rights.

Tjikuru : But you've dragged us here so that we can go and register. Why did you force us to go and register if you do not even know what is was all about?

Alma : The announcement came over the radio that everyone who did not register in 1992 must go and register.

Tjikuru : But how could you just blindly walk into something without knowing where is leads? And above all drag us along. Maybe it's something only for young people.

Alma : Tjikuru... I don't know. I did not drag you along. You could have refused if you did not want to go and register. Why didn't you just say no?!

Tjikuume: (STERN) Child, I don't like that kind of a tone when you're speaking to adults!

Alma : But you're unreasonable because you expect me to know things I was not taught at school. Having a matric certificate does not make me a know-it-all.

Tjikuume: What's got into you child?!

Tjikuru : That's what I've been trying to tell you all the time but you would not listen to me. She's getting out of hand. It's because she is just hanging around here and doing absolutely nothing! Her equals are there in the cities. They've gone to look for work.

Alma : (RUDE) It's okay! If that's what you want. I'll be gone first thing tomorrow morning.

**REVERB AD GRADUALLY CROSSFADE BACK TO PREVIOUS SCENE**

FX : **RUNNING VEHICLE WITH OCCUPANTS CHATTING.**  
Thantsi : (SURPRISED) And that is your reason for leaving home?!  
Alma : Yes.  
Thantsi : Even if you don't know Windhoek like you claim? I think you were unreasonable. They surely did not mean what they said. I mean you know how old people are.  
Alma : I know what you mean but there are limits. I could not take it anymore. I had no choice.  
Thantsi : How could one be angered by a little thing like that?  
Alma : (ASKANCE) Little thing?! What are you talking about? Since the registration I have been under constant attack from them. They for example want to know from me, why do we need to keep voting if we already have a president and a government that has been elected by the people, in place or can they as old people also vote or who can vote and who can be voted for? I don't know all these things. All I know is that one should be older than eighteen years if he or she wants to register to vote. That's all I know.  
Thantsi : I'm sorry if I should too harsh but I still think you were unreasonable. You should have sought information about voting. What it's all about and what democracy means from party representatives in your area. Better sill you could have contacted the election directorate's training and voter education section for information.  
Alma : I don't have their number, Thantsi. You make it sound so easy.  
Thantsi : The NBC's election desk would also have helped you had you contacted them and if you did not have their number you could have phoned the chatshow. They would've helped.  
Alma : you're right you know. I did not think about all the possibilities then. I just wanted to get away. Don't you think I should gather all the information about voting, the whole election process and why it is necessary to vote.  
Thantsi : (ELATED) Are you serious?!  
Alma : Yep! Dead serious.  
Thantsi : Okay then. First of all I'll take you to your people and then I'll pick you up at seven-thirty this evening so that we can go and attend a workshop on voter education.  
Alma : I would really love that. (PAUSE) Oh my goodness!!!  
Thantsi : What's the matter now Alma?  
Alma : (EXCLAIM) Windhoek is so big!

Thantsi : Oh yes, of course. It's the big bowl.  
Alma : You can say that again. It's really contained within the mountains and it resembles one gigantic bowl. Look at the multitude of people. Are the houses really enough to house them all? The streets are thronged with people!  
Thantsi : Wait till you get to the heart of Windhoek and then you'll tell me. And no, all the people can be housed at this moment, because the resources of this country does not allow it. On the other hand our independence is only four years old.

**SIGGI TUNE UP AND FADE TO B.G.**

Closing announcement.....

**SIGGI UP AND OUT.**

NBC ELECTION DRAMA PROMOS BY SEAN KELLY

"THE SILENT VOICE OF THE BALLOT PAPER"

EPISODE #1, PROMO #1:

(Take from Page 1)

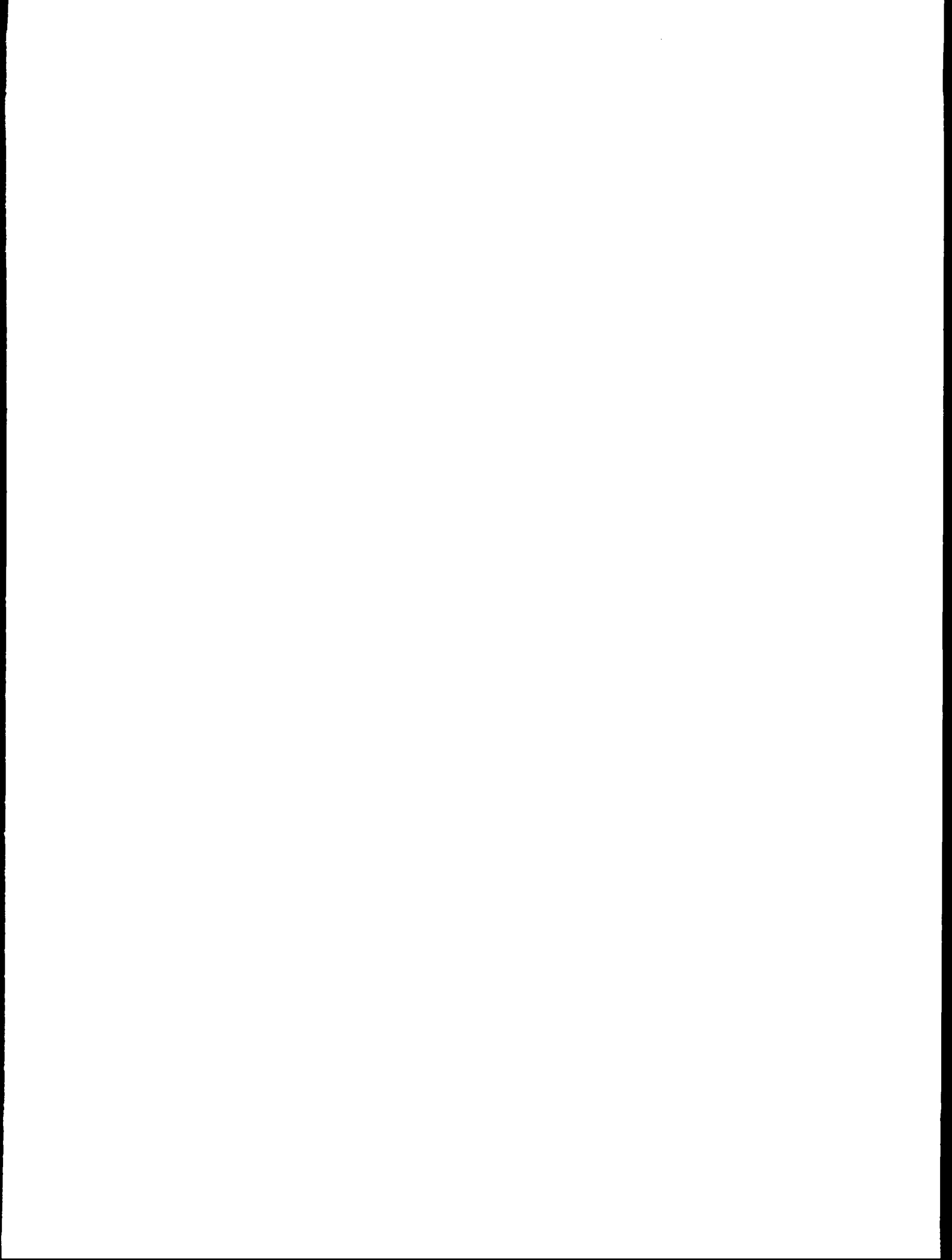
THE CATCHY TUNE COMES OVER THE RADIO. IT'S AN ELECTION JINGLE.  
MUSIC FADES TO THE BACKGROUND.

ANNOUNCER: Remember that you did not register just in order to have a registration card. It's not a certificate for you to frame and hang up against the wall or to simply add to your pile of documents. Remember this... You must vote!!! Even if voting is optional. It is your civil responsibility to make your vote count. The silent voice of the ballot paper speaks louder than a loudspeaker.

FADE UP MUSIC AND HOLD BRIEFLY THEN FADE AGAIN.

(New material)

2ND ANNOUNCER: NBC presents the first episode of its new election radio theater "The Silent Voice of the Ballot Paper" Be sure to be listening at (hour) on (day) to hear how one Namibian family comes to terms with the 1994 elections!





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