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**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO
OBSERVE NIGERIA'S 2003 ELECTIONS**

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today announced its delegations to observe Nigeria's April 12th and April 19th legislative and presidential elections. The first group of a 50-member multinational delegation including elected officials, electoral and human rights experts and civil society leaders from 11 countries in Africa, Europe and North America will begin its orientation program in Abuja on Tuesday April 8. Members of this delegation include: Kenneth Melley, member of the NDI Board of Directors; Sam Mpasu, Speaker of the Malawian parliament; Noah Wakesa, Member of Parliament from Kenya; Sally Shelton Colby, former Deputy Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Patrick Merloe, NDI's Director of Elections Processes; and others.

The delegation will draw upon the observations of the joint election monitoring project of NDI and The Carter Center which has been active in Nigeria since November 2002. During the period leading up to the April 2003 elections, NDI and The Carter Center organized two pre-election assessment missions that, along with a permanent staff presence in Abuja, have monitored and reported on pre-election conditions in Nigeria. (The reports of these two pre-election delegations and NDI's periodic Nigeria election reports are available on the NDI web site at www.ndi.org.)

NDI has also been working to support the efforts of Nigerian domestic monitoring groups that have trained and will deploy thousands of monitors around the country on election day. NDI will be in close communication with these groups and with international observer delegations.

From April 8-10, the NDI delegation will meet in Abuja with Nigerian government officials, civil society leaders, electoral authorities, candidates, political analysts, journalists and others. Teams of delegates will then deploy across the country for the National Assembly elections.

The day before the elections, each team will meet with local election officials and Independent National Election Commission (INEC) representatives, party representatives, domestic election monitors and long-term international observers to assess the election environment in their deployment sites. On election day, the teams will visit polling places and counting centers in their respective states.

Following the counting of results, the teams will reassemble in Abuja for debriefing and to prepare a preliminary delegation statement, which will be released at a press conference on Monday April 14.

The delegation will conduct its activities in a nonpartisan, professional manner in accordance with Nigerian law and international standards for election monitoring. NDI recognizes that the citizens of Nigeria will ultimately determine the credibility of the 2003 elections.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: A schedule of press availability, including election day photo opportunities and the release of the NDI delegation's final statement, will be made available shortly