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## PRESS RELEASE

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### NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE SPONSORS INTERNATIONAL PRE-ELECTION DELEGATION TO NIGERIA

Abuja, Nigeria -- The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today announced it will send a high-level international delegation to Nigeria from April 29 to May 11 to assess preparations for the 2007 presidential, legislative and gubernatorial elections. This delegation is part of NDI's long term program to monitor Nigeria's elections process, and is the ninth NDI election observation mission to Nigeria since 1999.

The delegation will be led by: **Sir Ketumile Masire**, former President of Botswana; **Honorable Joe Clark**, former Prime Minister of Canada; **Honorable Karl Auguste Offman**, former President of Mauritius; **Honorable Jeanne Shaheen**, former Governor of New Hampshire; **Honorable Hage Geingob**, former Prime Minister of Namibia; **Honorable Raila Odinga**, former Minister of Public Works and Housing, Kenya; **Mr. Martin Luther King III**, human rights leader, U.S.; **Mr. Kenneth Wollack**, President of the National Democratic Institute; **Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh**, NDI Senior Associate for Africa and **Dr. Keith Jennings**, NDI/Nigeria Country Director. This delegation will be joining a team of election experts from Indonesia, Kenya, the United States and Zimbabwe who are visiting all six of Nigeria's geo-political zones.

The purposes of the pre-election mission are to express international support for and interest in a democratic electoral process in Nigeria and to examine the preparations for, and the electoral environment leading up to, the 2007 polls. The delegation will meet with Nigerians from the government, the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), political parties, the media, and civil society, as well as with representatives of the international community.

"The conduct of the upcoming elections will impact the future of Nigeria, its prospects for democratic consolidation and its place in the community of democratic nations," said Dr. Jennings, NDI/Nigeria Country Director. "NDI is fortunate that such a distinguished delegation will visit Abuja to demonstrate our support for an electoral process that enjoys the confidence of the people of Nigeria."

Leaders of previous NDI delegations to Nigeria have included former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Nigerian President Mahamane Ousmane, and former Tanzanian Prime Minister Justice Joseph Warioba

*NDI is a nonprofit organization that has supported people around the world to build more democratic societies. Responding to requests for assistance, NDI's international network of experts and practitioners provide people with tools to strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.*

*Since 1999, NDI has conducted programs in Nigeria to support the development of democratic elections, National Assembly, state government and civil society. For more information about NDI and its programs, visit [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org)*