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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE DELEGATION ARRIVES IN FREETOWN**

Freetown, Sierra Leone -- The National Democratic Institute (NDI) announced today the arrival of an international delegation to assess the pre-election environment in Sierra Leone in advance of the August 11 presidential and legislative elections.

The multinational delegation is comprised of experienced political and civic leaders from Africa, Europe, and the Americas, including: Nora Schimming-Chase, Member of Parliament (Namibia); Arthur Agnos, former Mayor of San Francisco (United States); Paula Newberg, International Consultant and Senior Advisor (United States); Keith Jennings, NDI Senior Resident Country Director, Nigeria (United States); Costel Popa, President, European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (Romania); Bode Makinde, Financial Secretary, Nigerian Bar Association (Nigeria); and Noel Boxer, NDI Resident Country Director, Democratic Republic of Congo (United States).

Through this pre-election assessment mission, NDI seeks to express the international community's interest in, and support for, the democratic process in Sierra Leone and to provide an impartial and accurate report to the people of Sierra Leone and the international community on electoral preparations. Successful presidential and legislative elections would offer the people of Sierra Leone the best hope for attaining sustained peace and development in the country. Organizing credible national elections is also a critical benchmark for the country as it strives for stability and the consolidation of peace and democracy.

Members of NDI's pre-election assessment delegation will meet with representatives of political parties and officials from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and government, as well as journalists, members of civil society, and representatives of the international community. The delegation will pay due attention to the role of marginalized groups in the electoral process, including women and persons with disabilities.

The delegation will conduct its activities in a nonpartisan manner in accordance with Sierra Leonean law, the NEC's Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Observers, and international standards for election monitoring set forth in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

In March, NDI deployed a pre-election delegation to assess the voter registration process. In April, the Institute fielded a team of nine long-term election observers now based in Sierra Leone's four regional

centers of Freetown, Kenema, Bo, and Makeni. In addition, NDI will deploy approximately 40 short-term observers to monitor the elections in August. The Institute will coordinate its election observation activities with Sierra Leonean election monitoring organizations and other international delegations.

The members of the international delegation and NDI thank the people of Sierra Leone for their warm welcome.

*NDI is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices, and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations; safeguard elections; and promote citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government. In Sierra Leone, the Institute is providing assistance to civil society and political parties. NDI's programs in Sierra Leone are supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), British Department for International Development (DFID), and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). For more information, please visit [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).*

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