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## **NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE DELEGATION TO OBSERVE SIERRA LEONE'S 2007 ELECTIONS**

Freetown -- The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today announced the arrival of its observer delegation for Sierra Leone's August 11 national elections. Comprised of 42 observers, the delegation includes current and former elected officials, political and civic leaders, elections experts and regional specialists drawn from 16 countries in Africa, Europe and North America.

Through the observation mission, NDI seeks to demonstrate international support for, and interest in, a democratic electoral process in Sierra Leone. The delegation is part of the Institute's long-term program, launched in 2001, to support Sierra Leone's democratic institutions.

Leading the delegation are: **Nora Owen**, former Minister for Justice and former Member of Parliament (Ireland); **Ken Nnamani**, former Senate President (Nigeria); **Audrey McLaughlin**, former Member of Parliament and former Chairman of the New Democratic Party (Canada); **Carol Lancaster**, former Deputy Administrator of the US Agency for International Development and Director of the Mortara Center at Georgetown University (United States); and **Christopher Fomunyoh**, Senior Associate for Africa, NDI (Cameroon).

While in Freetown, the NDI delegation will meet with Sierra Leonean government and National Electoral Commission (NEC) officials and representatives of political parties, civil society, the media and diplomatic corps. The delegation will draw on the experience of NDI long-term observers, who have witnessed various phases of electoral preparations, including voter registration, candidate nominations, the campaign period and the general political environment in the lead up to the elections. It also will build on the findings of NDI-sponsored pre-election delegations in March and July 2007. (*Please visit [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org) for a copy of the NDI pre-election assessment missions' statements*).

Teams of NDI delegates will then deploy to all of the country's 14 districts for the August 11 elections. Upon reaching their deployment sites, each observer team will meet with NEC representatives, candidates, party leaders and domestic election monitors to assess the electoral environment.

On election day, NDI observers will visit polling places and counting centers in their respective districts. The NDI observer teams will regroup in Freetown for debriefing and to prepare a **preliminary statement, which will be released at a press conference at the Bintumani Hotel on Monday, August 13.**

The NDI observer mission will conduct its activities in a nonpartisan, professional manner, in accordance with Sierra Leonean law and the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. NDI also will remain in close contact with Sierra Leonean domestic monitoring groups and other international observer delegations throughout the electoral period.

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