

Angola Elections Update

Issue 2 – August 10, 2012

On August 31, 2012, Angola will hold its second election since the end of the civil war and the first presidential election in peacetime. With funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), NDI or the Institute is providing financial and technical assistance to civil society organizations (CSOs) to conduct voter education and domestic election observation activities in the provinces of Luanda, Huambo, Huila and Benguela. Although the limited number of observers prevents a national assessment of the elections, nonpartisan domestic election observation is still an important component in building citizen confidence and strengthening transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

I. Political Context – August 1 to 9, 2012

Presidential candidates Isaias Samakuva of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, UNITA) party and Abel Chivukuvu of the Broad Convergence of National Salvation – Election Coalition (Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola, CASA-Coligação Eleitoral) challenged incumbent president and Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, MPLA) candidate Jose Eduardo dos Santos to a public debate. No presidential debates have been scheduled. NDI's CSO partners¹ have sought to reach out to party officials in their respective provinces of work in Luanda, Huambo, Huila and Benguela to help promote transparency of governance plans and campaign proposals that are available to Angolan citizens and encourage informed electoral decisions.

On August 1, an UNITA spokesman stated that if the National Electoral Committee (Comissão Nacional Eleitoral - CNE) does not address concerns over the transparency of the elections by August 15, his party would use all legal and peaceful means to stop the elections from going forward. Foremost amongst the opposition party's concern is the transportation of ballots from polling stations to counting centers, leading them to ask the CNE to install generators and internet access in polling stations to directly transmit the votes. In response, the CNE asked parties to be reasonable and take into account the country's limited resources. Delays in the transportation of ballots to counting centers were an issue in 2008 and fueled allegations by opposition parties of ballot stuffing.

All Angolan voters will exercise their right to vote on a single day, August 31, at a polling station in the national territory. The law requires voters to cast their ballot in the polling station that has their name in the voter list. While the electoral legislation allows Angolans living abroad the right to vote, the CNE argues that there are no logistical conditions to establish polls in Angolan consulates abroad. In addition, the CNE has decided to cancel the early special vote for members of the armed forces, police and

¹ NDI is providing technical and financial support to four CSO partners, Action for Solidarity and Development (*Acção de Solidariedade e Desenvolvimento*, ASD), Christian Association for Solidarity and Mutual Aid (*Associação Solidariedade Cristã e Ajuda Mútua*, ASCAM), Benguela Rastafari Circle (*Círculo Rastafári de Benguela*, CRB) and Development Workshop (DW).

fireman corps as well as election observers who are scheduled to work or be on call during the election day.

II. Election Updates

August 1 was the last day for domestic and international election monitors to submit requests to the CNE for accreditation.² The CNE has decided to accredit only 3,000 domestic observers, which would represent coverage of 12 percent of the 25,359 polling stations. The official accreditation guidelines divide the number of observers by type of organization, including a quota of 375 observers for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which is not a legally established concept in Angola (NGOs are defined and registered as associations). At the time of this publication, all of NDI's partners had sought accreditation for over 500 observers.

As for initiatives to increase the transparency of the electoral process, the CNE has not publically released the results of the voters' database audit, required by law and conducted in May, despite complaints from some opposition parties and civil society groups. In addition, the law requires election officials to provide a copy of the polling station minutes to the party delegates monitoring that voting station. A group of Angolan CSOs has recommended that the CNE extend this requirement and post the minutes outside the polling station for citizens as well.

To address concerns over claims that some voters had their voter cards taken away or stolen, the CNE asked the Ministry of Territorial Administration to issue a second copy of the voter card from July 25 to August 26. This provision does not apply to voters who failed to register or are unsure of their registration status.

On August 7, the CNE announced that it has received the logistical electoral material, including voting booths, ballot papers, ballot boxes and report forms for the polling stations. According to CNE spokesperson Júlia Ferreira, the Spanish firm *Indra*, which was hired to supply the electoral logistics, met the agreed deadline. The Commission has already started distributing the electoral material to the provinces.

III. Program Activities

a. Voter Education

The Institute's local partners are delivering civic and voter education messages in community meetings, forums and presentations organized by 371 activists trained with NDI's assistance. In August, the CSOs will focus their initiatives on the importance of the elections and the secrecy of the vote and specific questions regarding voting procedures at the polling stations. Since voters can only cast their ballots in the polling stations they are registered in, NDI and its CSO partners have spread messages to encourage

² The Council for Election Observation has been set up by the CNE to process observers' accreditation applications, although the final authorization for each application must come from the Chairman of the CNE.

citizens to check their voting locations ahead of time, so that citizens can exercise their democratic right freely.

On August 9 and 10, NDI's partner ASD organized a two-day workshop in the province of Huila to review the electoral code of conduct. The event brought together representatives from each of the nine contending political parties and coalitions, local authorities and religious leaders, media and CSOs and was facilitated by two members of the provincial electoral commissions,. Through this forum and other events, NDI and partners aimed to reduce the potential for election-related conflict or instances of irregularities and fraud.

b. Election Observation

NDI's four local partners have joined other Angolan CSOs to form a loose coalition called *Coalition for Election Observation 2012 (Coligação para Observação Eleitoral 2012, COE 2012)*. Together with the Council of Angolan Christian Churches funded by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), these CSOs have recruited over 500 domestic, nonpartisan short-term observers that will be deployed in 26 of Angola's 163 municipalities. In August, *COE 2012* member organizations started using the pre-election monitoring forms developed by NDI with input from the observer organizations to capture their observations and report on incidents during community meetings, political party campaigns events, and meetings with electoral administration. Each organization will aggregate their observation data at the provincial level and come together in Luanda following the polls to issue a joint statement.

On August 7, *COE 2012* organization leaders issued their first declaration after analyzing the political environment and state of the preparations for the elections in their provinces. The declaration notes that provincial electoral commissions have displayed a positive attitude and demonstrated openness and collaboration toward CSOs and religious bodies monitoring the elections. However, the statement also suggests that official information about the elections and the CNE's education messages have not reached rural areas effectively, undermining public confidence in the electoral process.

IV. Elections Calendar

With three weeks to go before election day, the electoral calendar has been followed and respected by election administration bodies and political parties.

Activity	Date	Time to Election Day
Elections called by President José Eduardo dos Santos	24-May	-99
Submission of candidatures to Constitutional Court	13-Jun	-79
Constitutional Court posts list of candidates	21-Jun	-71
Constitutional Court posts final candidates list	1-Jul	-61
Final list sent to CNE	8-Jul	-54



NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Activity	Date	Time to Election Day
CNE randomly draws order of candidates in ballots	10-Jul	-52
Release of funds to political parties	16-Jul	-46
CNE approves mapping of voting sites	27-Jul	-35
CNE discloses voters lists through local representatives	1-Aug	-30
Campaign starts	1-Aug	-30
Maximum time limit for presidential and vice president to withdraw	26-Aug	-5
Campaign ends	30-Aug	-1
Election day	31-Aug	0
CPE announce provisional results +7 days after e-day	7-Sep	+ 7
CNE announces official results up to +15 days after e-day	15-Sep	+ 15
Elected Candidates take office	15-Oct	+ 45

For more information and official updates on the Angolan Elections, visit the National Election Commission's website: www.cne.ao.

NDI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. NDI has worked in Angola since 1996. For more information on our programs in the country, please contact NDI Senior Resident Director Isabel Emerson (iemerson@ndi.org) or Program Manager Oge Onubogu (oonubogu@ndi.org)