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ELECTIONS: PERSPECTIVES ON ESTABLISHING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

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NOTE

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FOREWORD

Member States are increasingly asking the United Nations to provide technical assistance to their electoral processes. In response, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Division for Governance, Public Administration and Finance of the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) have collaborated in providing technical assistance in such fields as electoral system design, election organization, budgetary planning, boundary definition, civic and voter education, informatics, logistics, procurement of election supplies and training of election administrators.

While such technical assistance has generally proven to be effective and useful, there continues to be a virtual absence of practical reference materials that could provide election officials with guidance on basic technical and managerial issues integral to election administration. In an effort to provide election administrators with some guidelines and perspectives, the United Nations commissioned the production of two papers: *African Elections in Comparative Perspective* and *Techniques for Effective Election Management.*

These papers were presented at an African Election Administrators Colloquium held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 15-18 November 1994. The colloquium was co-organized by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the African American Institute for International Affairs (AAI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

The revised papers are hereby made available to election administrators. *African Elections in Comparative Perspective* examines how the electoral process is viewed by the public at large. *Techniques for Effective Election Management* concentrates on the technical, logistical and managerial problems associated with efficient election administration. It is hoped that these papers will be useful to election officials as they address the challenges of administering elections in their respective countries.

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PART I

AFRICAN ELECTIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

by

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I. AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN ELECTIONS

Although multiparty elections have been held in nearly three dozen African countries since October 1990, elections in Africa — including multiparty elections — are not a new phenomenon. Indeed, elections have been held in Africa for over a century;[1] virtually every state experienced multiparty elections on one or more occasions during the run-up to independence; and elections continued to be held on a semi-competitive or non-competitive basis throughout the era of one-party rule.[2]

Four characteristics of the current resurgence of competitive electoral practice, however, are new. First, the volume and apparent regularity with which multiparty elections are being held are at an unprecedented level. Not since the late 1950s and early 1960s has the continent witnessed the continuous holding of competitive elections within so short a time frame. Some countries have already held more than one multiparty election if one includes elections for local or regional government assemblies, constituent assemblies and by-elections for the national legislature in addition to presidential elections or elections for the entire legislature. A few countries (e.g. Namibia) have held or will soon hold their second multiparty election at which voters will have the opportunity to renew or withhold the electoral mandate of the national government.

Second, these elections are an integral part of a process of political renewal following a long period of authoritarian rule and

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[1] Fred M. Hayward in his introduction to *Elections in Independent Africa* (Hayward, 1986: 1-8) notes that elections are reported to have been held in Freetown as early as 1787, and that Africans in the communes of Senegal voted in the elections for the French National Assembly in 1848. Electoral practice became a regular feature in some British colonies as early as the 1920s albeit on a restricted franchise. Competitive elections on the basis of universal franchise was rapidly phased into practice in all countries except those of Southern Africa between 1955 and 1964.

[2] "Semi-competitive" refers to elections where voters are provided with a choice between two or more candidates for legislative or local government office within the rubric of the one-party state or on a non-partisan basis, and where elections thus provide an opportunity for the electorate to change its representatives but not the regime which governs. "Non-competitive" refers to elections where voters are neither provided with alternatives of representation nor the opportunity to change their government (Hayward, 1986: 4; Hermet, Rose and Rouquie, 1978).

political failure. Like the elections of 30 and 40 years ago, the elections of what many have termed the "second liberation" of Africa are transitional elections that mark the end of one political era and the launching of another. Unlike the elections of the "first liberation" the present transition is strictly an intra-African exercise — from one indigenous regime to another rather than from a colonial regime to African rulers. As such, some of these elections are unique milestones in the political development of the countries in which they occur.[3]

Third, contemporary African elections occur in a continental and global context that is vastly different from the context of previous elections. Apartheid is over; the Cold War is over. Since 1972 more than 60 countries have made or are in the process of making the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule (McColm, 1993) — a process that culminates *but does not end* with the holding of "free and fair" competitive elections. Beginning in the mid-1970s in Southern Europe (Greece, Portugal and Spain), proceeding next in the early 1980s to Latin America (Argentina, Brazil and Chile) and then to East and Southeast Asia (Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand), and finally after 1989 to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Africa and Central America (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama), the process of democratic transitions has swept around the world like a wave.[4] As this process has gained momentum, each new occurrence of democratic elections has reinforced the norms as to what constitutes appropriate electoral procedure and what does not. Countries attempting to organize competitive elections for the first time or after a long hiatus look for guidance to those that have recently done so; those that have held such elections watch those beginning the process. Stated simply, the world is watching the unfolding of the democratic electoral process like never before. As a result, the

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[3] It should be noted that multiparty elections have resulted in a change of regime in only about a third of the cases. This is because in some cases the regime in power is genuinely popular (e.g. Botswana, Namibia), because the incumbent regime intimidated the opposition or otherwise prevented an election that was "free and fair" according to international standards (e.g. Cameroon, Ethiopia) or because the opposition to the incumbent government was badly split (e.g. Kenya, Senegal).

[4] This historical process has been labeled the "third wave" by Samuel Huntington (1991) to contrast the contemporary cycle of democratization with two earlier cycles that occurred between 1828 and 1926 and between 1943 and 1962.

present wave of electoral activity in Africa and elsewhere has been accompanied by a rapid increase in the number of international, governmental and non-governmental organizations — in established democracies and in new ones, in the North and in the South — that scrutinize elections and provide assistance to any country attempting to establish democratic electoral practice. Indeed, this colloquium is one manifestation of this *globalization of democratic electoral practice*.

Fourth, and most important, the current round of elections holds out the possibility for the *institutionalization of democratic electoral systems* to the extent that they are the first or second in *a series of regularly held contests* through which the citizens of a country choose between alternative groups of prospective rulers according to specified procedures that are regarded as appropriate or "fair" by both candidates and voters. Multiparty competitive elections are becoming the norm rather than the exception for Africa. Even in countries where the electoral process has been seriously flawed or where elections have not resulted in a change of regime (e.g. Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya), the holding of "free and fair" competitive elections has become the universal standard.

Notwithstanding this epic increase in electoral activity, relatively little attention has been paid to citizens' perceptions of elections, and especially how citizens decide for which individual or party they will cast their votes. Although surveys of voter opinion are common in most countries in the midst of democratic transitions,[5] surveys of public opinion in Africa have been extremely rare except for the surveys of South African voters conducted in the run-up to the elections in that country of April 1994.[6] One reason for this paucity of surveys is the undeveloped profession of market research for the private sector. A second is the legacy of

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[5] For example, there have been numerous surveys of public opinion in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union since the advent of multiparty elections after the end of the Cold War. Public opinion research, even if limited to market research, was also quite developed in Latin America, Southern Europe and in parts of East and Southeast Asia prior to the transitions to democracy in these regions.

[6] Given the international importance of the South Africa elections, numerous surveys of South African public opinion were conducted by South African and foreign specialists of public opinion research, NGOs and the press. Some of this research was directly financed by the international donor assistance community (e.g. USAID) which provided a variety of support services for the elections.

authoritarian rule which constrained and often blocked surveys of political opinion by local and especially foreign social scientists.[7] A third reason is the lack of a research tradition in this method of the social sciences.[8] Last but not least, public opinion surveys in Africa are expensive and time-consuming given the formidable logistical problems involved in conducting surveys of populations that are overwhelmingly rural in composition.[9]

[7] Many African countries require research permits to conduct research of any type, the issuance of which is controlled by a nominally "independent" research board or council. Such councils are often attached to the Office of the President or Ministry of Interior. While the stated purpose of these boards is to limit frivolous inquiries that are not in the national interest — especially research proposed by foreigners — their existence gives the state tremendous power to limit free and open inquiry. The practice has had a chilling effect on the development and sustainability of the social sciences in some countries because studies by members of these disciplines often touch on subjects that are regarded as politically sensitive by state authorities.

[8] Quantitatively oriented research in the social sciences, including survey research, was rarely promoted by the colonial powers which started Africa's universities. The few African scholars who have embarked on such exercises are usually American-trained (e.g. the members of the Department of Political Science at the University of Dar es Salaam).

[9] Although it is relatively easy to design random samples of rural populations, it is difficult to locate and interview individual respondents. Surveys of rural populations must be conducted on a face-to-face basis, because virtually none of the respondents can be interviewed by telephone — the standard practice of survey research in advanced industrialized societies. Interviews must also be conducted in local languages to ensure that the questions are understood and to secure the confidence of rural dwellers who are frequently suspicious of strangers asking questions about their lives and political beliefs. These requirements make it considerably more difficult from a logistical standpoint to conduct surveys in Africa or outside the principal urban areas than in developed countries.

Although survey data on voter opinions are extremely limited, and although non-survey field-based studies of electoral practice — especially recent practice — are also few,[10] it is important to consider what has been learned if progress towards institutionalizing democratic elections is to continue. During the initial and often rapid transitions towards multiparty elections, it was (and remains) important to focus heavily on the immediate technical requirements for administering these elections. However, it is also important that those responsible for election administration as well as those assisting the process gain a deeper understanding of how members of the voting public approach these contests. Institutionalizing an electoral system entails much more than registering voters, solving a myriad of logistical problems (e.g. the procurement of ballots, ballot boxes and other supplies, the recruitment and training of appropriate staff), the administration of voting on election day, counting and reporting the vote. These tasks rightly consume the bulk of an election administrator's time, but they are often performed without an awareness or an appreciation of *how the election is perceived through the eyes of ordinary citizens.* From the standpoint of election administrators and members of a typical electoral commission, the basic challenge is how to establish a large-scale organization that runs smoothly in a very short period of time and in an atmosphere that is politically (and hence emotionally) charged. The principal objective is simply to "get the job done" on time with the result that emphasis is placed almost exclusively on solving the technocratic problems of the moment. There is no time to reflect on the long-term implications of every move or how they may be perceived by the public. One might add that such exigencies bear most heavily on administrators who are firmly committed to conducting elections that are "free and fair", because they are most sensitive to the fact that any failure to hold a technically "perfect" election will be construed as a willful failure by those unhappy with the election results.

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[10] Apart from the virtual treasure trove of data that was collected from the 1994 South African elections, this writer knows of no scholarly efforts to mount a study of voter perceptions and behaviour apart from a Ford Foundation-supported study of Tanzanian voters presently being conducted by the members of the Department of Political Science at the University of Dar es Salaam. No doubt there are one or two others, most likely of the aborted Nigerian elections of June 1993. Two small yet methodologically rigorous surveys were also conducted of Kenyan voters prior to the elections in that country in December 1992.

Given this reality, this paper seeks to take the reader a step or two back from the day-to-day mechanics of election administration to examine how the electoral process is perceived from the perspective of ordinary citizens, particularly those in the rural areas where most Africans live. By describing how citizens approach elections, one hopes to sketch out the societal context within which elections occur, and what must be done to institutionalize the electoral process from the standpoint of its principal participants, the voting public.[11] The institutionalization of democratic competitive elections — the repeated holding of such elections — depends ultimately on continued and high rates of citizen participation in these elections. When voter turnout falls, such a drop indicates that a portion of the public regards the electoral exercise as meaningless and devalues its results. The institutionalization of democratic electoral practice, in Africa as elsewhere, depends in large part on whether multiparty elections are administered in an efficient and fair manner. Efficiency and "fairness" alone, however, are insufficient for institutionalization. Institutionalization *also* depends on whether the elections in question were regarded as meaningful and worth the time of those who are intended to be its primary participants — the eligible electorate. Those responsible for administering elections may arrange "the perfect party", but if citizens do not vote and value the event, democratic electoral practice will never become a regular feature of African political life.

The institutionalization of multiparty competitive elections in Africa, like the institutionalization or consolidation of democracy itself, requires a broad commitment to democratic procedure on the part of key elites *and* broad participation in support of such procedures by ordinary citizens.[12] The existence of one without the other will greatly reduce the prospect for democratic governance in Africa. Election administrators must therefore be committed to not only running the best election possible, but also to nurturing broad

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[11] This discussion is based on survey research findings from my own and other studies of voting behaviour and political attitudes in East and Southern Africa, a review of the scholarly literature on African elections (both competitive and "semi-competitive"), and direct observation of the electoral process or pre-electoral process in four African countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda).

[12] For a comprehensive review of the literature which emphasizes the importance of both elite and citizen commitment for the consolidation of democracy see Doh Chull Shin, 1994:144-45.

support for the electoral process by the public at large. What then, does the public expect from elections? Why do most Africans vote the way they do?

II. THE NATURE OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN AFRICA: WHY AFRICANS VOTE THE WAY THEY DO

An important characteristic to remember about African voters is that most are rational actors in that they can define their individual self-interest and seek to maximize their self-interest when deciding for which candidate and/or party they should vote. This description applies to peasant farmers residing in the rural areas as much as it does to civil servants, business people and professionals living in Africa's major cities. It is significant because one of the myths about peasant populations around the world is that they are mired in traditional practice and unsophisticated, that they do not know what is in their best self-interest or how to maximize it. While it is true that rural populations typically have significantly less education than urban dwellers and that those living in remote areas have limited access to information about debates over government policy, it is a grave error to conclude from these disparities that small farmers approach politics in general and elections in particular in an irrational manner. Indeed, more than two decades of research on the nature of peasant behaviour in Africa and Asia has consistently demonstrated that rural dwellers are rational actors. They may be parochial in their outlook, and subject to moral codes or "traditions" established over many generations, but they are hardly unthinking or atavistic in their behaviour (Scott, 1976; Hyden, 1980; Popkin, 1980; Bates, 1981).

One reason why rural dwellers are often perceived as not being able to identify their self-interest is because urban-based elites, particularly educated elites and their agents in the rural areas, often view themselves as "experts" whose societal role is to "bring development" and "modernity" to the people. Elites such as senior civil servants, officials of ruling political parties, provincial and district commissioners, and even agricultural extension workers, frequently define their role in terms of penetrating a rural hinterland and transforming current local practice into something more desirable. Put differently, educated elites and others based at the centre of society view those residing on the rural periphery as incapable of achieving progress on their own.

This "top-down", "centre-out" perspective of the developmental process has often resulted in serious miscalculations by government officials about what the interests of rural dwellers truly are, and how peasants should be dealt with by the state and

other centrally based institutions. For example, throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s and early 1990s, most governments in Africa pursued policies of overvalued exchange rates and fixed producer prices for agricultural commodities on the assumption that rural dwellers would willingly continue to grow crops at their previous levels even though their earnings for their products declined and did not cover their costs of production. Yet as most readers know, the response by farmers in country after country was to cut back on supply. Farmers were not so naive as to not know a "bad deal" when confronted by one. Some responded by withdrawing from official markets when it was no longer profitable and began selling their goods illegally on the "black market" or through smuggling (MacGaffey, 1991; Emizet, 1994). Others switched to more profitable crops. Still others withdrew from the market entirely, producing mainly for their own subsistence (Hyden, 1980). Conversely, farmer response to the re-establishment of market determined exchange rates and producer prices — policies which have raised the earnings of farmers — has been to resume and/or increase production (Lofchie, 1994; World Bank, 1994). In each instance — cutting back supply, and its resumption — peasants understood their self-interest and made appropriate adjustments in their behaviour.

The same has been true in respect to peasant political behaviour. Where farmers believe that the state has maintained a modicum of accountability to their interests, they cooperate by paying their taxes, participating in elections, supporting government programmes, etc. Where, on the other hand, they believe that they have been mistreated or foolishly treated by their government, they have withdrawn support and by so doing lowered the legitimacy and authority of the state *vis-à-vis* its citizens. For example, peasants will withhold payment of taxes, engage in foot-dragging, feign ignorance, not vote in elections they suspect to be rigged, and generally refuse to cooperate with the authorities. At the same time, they might also organize on a self-help basis to provide an array of social welfare services for the members of their local communities. Harambee efforts to build primary and secondary schools, rural health centres, etc. in Kenya (Holmquist, 1984; Thomas, 1985; Barkan and Holmquist, 1989), "hometown" associations in Nigeria which do the same (Barkan, McNulty and Ayeni, 1991), "Sungusungu" (i.e. community police) societies in Tanzania, and "civics" in South Africa's urban townships — all are examples of ordinary citizens organizing at the local community level to provide needed services that the state failed to deliver. This type of community-based

response to state failure dates back to the colonial period, and remains common today. Just as rural dwellers will act in their own self-interest in respect to economic matters, so too will they do so in respect to their relationship with the state. When the state does not provide basic public services, when the state is no longer responsive or accountable to rural dwellers, rural dwellers will adopt strategies of behaviour appropriate for their needs.

Citizens approach the electoral process from a similar perspective when they evaluate and compare rival candidates and their respective political parties, and when they judge the performance of those administrating elections. To begin with the fundamental conditions which structure the electoral process in Africa, most rural dwellers are poor and live out their daily lives within the relatively limited confines of their local community. While many might travel out of the community to seek employment or to trade what they produce, most are concerned with meeting their basic needs and maintaining a stable economic, political and social environment in their areas of residence. Their needs reflect the fact that they face many uncertainties that can cause them great hardship. As for those who migrate from the local community, on either a temporary or permanent basis, most continue to identify with their home areas and define their political interests in terms of what serves the interests of the communities they come from.[13] For this reason, many urban residents, especially civil servants and professionals who have the means, regularly visit their home communities. These migrants likewise prefer to vote in their home communities rather than in the cities or towns, a preference that is reflected in election data from several countries. For example, the evidence from Kenya, both from before and after the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1992, indicates that voter registration and turnout are consistently higher in the rural areas than in the cities.[14]

For both rural dwellers and a significant proportion of urban dwellers, *the local community of one's origin is the natural*

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[13] An emergent literature on the extent to which migrants to urban areas continue to identify with their home areas and are active participants in associations committed to developing these areas describes the extent to which migrants will strive to maintain contact with their place of origin. See Barkan, McNulty and Ayeni, 1991; Trager, 1994; and Van Santen, 1994.

[14] This finding is just the opposite of what one might expect given the relatively higher educational and occupational backgrounds of urban dwellers compared to rural dwellers.

constituency or interest for which one seeks political representation, and to which one expects governmental accountability. Why is this so? What is the significance of this conception of representation? In brief, the agrarian character of all African countries save South Africa is the most significant determinant of a person's identity, and hence one's political and economic interests. In contrast to the members of industrial and highly urbanized societies who tend to define their interests in terms of their occupations or socio-economic position, most Africans define their interests on the basis of where they live. This is because most derive their livelihoods from the land, or from agriculture-related occupations. Since most members of society are engaged in the same or similar occupations, they differentiate themselves from one another on the basis of their geographic location rather than in terms of what they do. These geographic attachments are frequently reinforced by distinctions of ethnicity — the sharing of a common ancestry or kinship, language and/or cultural practice — because the inhabitants of different geographic regions in most African countries are usually people from different ethnic groups.

Because one's local community is the natural constituency or interest for which one seeks political representation, most people approach the electoral process from the perspective of how to maximize benefits to the community. Although studies of voting behaviour in Africa are few, virtually all indicate one of two patterns of voting. In "semi-competitive" elections where the electorate is provided with a choice between two or more candidates from the same party, voters invariably choose the candidate who they believe offers the greatest prospect of obtaining government resources for their local community. Such resources usually take the form of social welfare services or infrastructure — central government assistance for schools and health clinics, the provision of water and electricity, telephones, and roads. In these elections, voters arrive at their decision by evaluating the past records of candidates (especially incumbents) at securing such resources, and by assessing their potential for securing such resources in the future. Semi-competitive elections are invariably referendums on the performance to date by incumbents (Barkan, 1976 and 1978) or, where there is no incumbent, the skills and influence candidates can bring to bear on this exercise. Given this calculus, it is not surprising that voters rarely choose people like themselves, but rather people with high educational qualifications, political and business connections in the capital city, etc. (Cliffe, 1967; Hyden and Leys, 1972).

In competitive or multiparty elections, voters likewise seek to maximize the flow of governmental resources to their communities but do so in this context by voting for the party that most community members believe represents the interests of the geographic region in which they reside. Because geographical attachments and considerations of ethnicity are the defining attributes of voters' interests, political parties invariably emerge that purposely appeal to the inhabitants of some regions more than others. The result is that voters in African multiparty elections tend to vote in geographic blocs. Voters from one electoral district or cluster of adjacent districts often vote overwhelmingly for one party while the inhabitants of another region vote overwhelmingly for the party that claims to represent their geographical interests. Except in urban areas where voters come from all over the country, most electoral districts are therefore one-party areas. African countries making the transition to multiparty democracy may therefore be "multiparty democracies" in terms of the number of parties contesting elections nationwide or having members in the national legislature, but at the local level close competition between parties is infrequent. Perhaps for this reason some political parties in some countries (e.g. Kenya) have decided to nominate their candidates by holding primary elections at which the public rather than party officials determine party standard bearers. Voting behaviour in primary elections in competitive systems is therefore similar to voting behaviour in semi-competitive elections, because in this context voters evaluate *the capacities of individuals* for obtaining resources for the local community. By contrast, voters in multiparty contests evaluate *the capacities of parties* for obtaining such resources.

The factor of ethnicity is therefore more significant in multiparty elections than in semi-competitive ones. While coalitions of diverse ethnic groups emerge periodically to form political parties that are nationwide in scope, such parties are usually the result of requirements in the election law that mandate that parties establish themselves in the homelands of more than one ethnic group. For example, only two parties were permitted to organize and nominate candidates for Nigeria's ill-fated presidential elections in June 1993, and both were required to establish organizations in all regions of the country. Where there are no such requirements, however, multiparty elections often give rise to ethnic conflicts because the parties which contest these elections tend to confine their activities to a single ethnic homeland. The results, as in Angola and Kenya, can be very divisive. In these cases, different parties represent different regions inhabited by different ethnic groups — a pattern that does not foster

tolerance, bargaining and compromise between rival parties. Yet without tolerance, bargaining and compromise, democracy is unlikely to survive.

The fact that most African countries are agrarian and multi-ethnic societies thus poses a special dilemma for their efforts to move from authoritarian to democratic rule. On the one hand, the full development of accountable and democratic systems of government cannot be achieved without providing the electorate with a meaningful choice between alternative groups of rulers, that is to say, two or more political parties. On the other, the demographic conditions present in most countries usually give rise to political parties that are regionally and hence ethnically based organizations. In other words, one cannot have democracy without parties; but parties in Africa, when left to their own devices, are unlikely to foster the degree of tolerance necessary for democracy to succeed. This is a painful dilemma which partially explains the inconclusive nature of many of Africa's current transitions to democracy.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR ELECTION ADMINISTRATORS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Election administrators in Africa face a very difficult and dual challenge in carrying out their assigned role in the birth and consolidation of democratic systems across the continent: not only must they design and run electoral systems that are technically sound and "fair" in terms of administration, they must also do so in a manner that fosters a level of tolerance, crucial for sustaining democratic politics. The burden of this challenge is compounded by the fact that in most countries election administrators are starting from scratch when it comes to mounting elections that are truly competitive in format, and must do so with inadequate resources, both human and financial. Although the international donor community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) stand ready to provide critical technical and material support, the demand for assistance exceeds the supply. Most importantly, the building of viable democratic electoral systems is, in the final analysis, an exercise *internal* to the countries concerned. As noted in the first section of this paper, the institutionalization of democratic electoral practice, like the institutionalization of democracy itself, will not occur without an appropriate commitment on the part of key elites and broad participation by ordinary citizens. How then might such a commitment be fostered given the conditions and the nature of political interests on the continent?

Four steps or clusters of procedures can be followed to build an atmosphere of trust to overcome or at least mitigate the divisive nature of African elections: (1) establishing an independent agency to oversee the electoral process; (2) making elections accessible to all voters; (3) authorizing and encouraging the observation of elections by domestic and international observers; (4) crafting an electoral law that guarantees a measure of representation and perhaps a share of power for all significant constituencies contesting the election. These procedures are listed in order of complexity, and shall be discussed in turn.

A. The appointment of an independent electoral commission

The first and most obvious requisite is that the public agency charged with administering elections (normally an electoral commission) be established as an independent legal entity with its own statutory authority, *and that it be perceived as independent* by all of the principal contestants for any forthcoming election as well as by the public at large. Independence and the perception of independence are essential if elites on the one hand and ordinary citizens on the other are to join in the process. A second and equally obvious requisite is that the commission must be, and perceived to be, a broad-based representative body that includes prominent members of all significant political factions and parties, and which can therefore define the rules of the electoral game so that they are accepted by all contestants. The electoral commission must also strive, and be perceived as striving, to scrupulously apply its rules of procedure in a manner that is even-handed and "fair" to all contestants.

Although fundamental to what has become the universal standard for democratic elections around the world, these requirements have often not been met during the recent round of multiparty elections across Africa. Indeed, their fulfilment has been the exception rather than the rule. In Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, elections have been, or been perceived to have been, manipulated by the incumbent government, because they failed to establish an independent agency of the type described. While the incumbent regimes maintained themselves or their supporters in power in each of these cases,[15] the failure to establish an independent electoral commission did not advance the prospects for democracy, and may have caused some harm. Indeed, opposition leaders in several of these countries have openly questioned whether they will participate in the next round of elections, thus reducing the prospects for institutionalizing democratic electoral practice. Voter turnout has also been low or declining, the clearest indication that members of the general public are not prepared to participate in elections that are not administered in an independent manner. By contrast, the experience of South Africa suggests that where the electoral commission is independent

[15] In Tanzania, the 1994 elections were to elect local government authorities, and thus were not elections for which a choice of government was at issue.

and transparent in its operations, and where it has both the authority and the resources to carry out its mandate, democratic electoral practice will flourish even if the technical soundness of the elections leaves much to be desired.[16] The UN-administered elections in Namibia in 1989 and Mozambique in 1994 suggest the same conclusion: that an independent electoral agency operating on a broad-based agreement on the rules of the game will do more to institutionalize democratic electoral practice than an agency whose rules of procedure are not accepted by major political factions or the general public.

B. Making elections accessible to all voters

In agrarian and plural societies where most citizens are rural dwellers who have difficulty moving even modest distances from their homes, it is essential that the election be made accessible if it is to be perceived as "free and fair". This is particularly true for the residents in regions which regard themselves in opposition to the government of the day. Special care must therefore be taken to assure that all eligible citizens have the opportunity to register to vote in or near their place of residence, and that an adequate number of polling stations be established and properly staffed on election day. Care must also be taken to assure a transparent counting of the vote.

Depending on the geographical dispersion of the population, topography and available transportation and communication facilities, a general rule of thumb is that polling stations be established for each 500 to 1,000 voters. Facilities for voter registration may be less numerous because registration generally takes place over an extended period, but such facilities must still both be physically accessible and employ procedures that are not perceived as intended to exclude any group of potential voters. Counting stations may also be less numerous than polling stations, but any movement of ballot boxes from the place of voting to the place of counting increases the risk and perception of election fraud. The agrarian nature of African society thus requires a logistical effort of near Herculean proportions to assure that all eligible voters can exercise their franchise. The cost

[16] For example, the absence of a voter registration role and the failure of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to provide a sufficient number of ballots at many polling stations were considered to be serious shortcomings, but not biased efforts, by the IEC.

and deployment of both human and material resources are tremendous, and must not be underestimated by those responsible for administering the election. Other presentations at this colloquium address these operational considerations which are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that conditions in Africa require that election administration be particularly sensitive to issues of voter accessibility, and that if they are not, the prospects for institutionalizing democratic elections are reduced. The issue is essentially technical and logistical in substance, but its impact is profoundly political. If large segments of the public and their political leaders believe they have been excluded from the process, the results of the elections will not be regarded as legitimate and the transition to democracy will be stalled.

C. International and/or domestic observers

The current wave of democratic transitional elections around the world has created a veritable "growth industry" in electoral assistance and observation. This is particularly true in Africa given the fragility of the transitions in progress and the underlying conditions on the continent. As elections have been held in more than three dozen African states, a combination of international agencies, bilateral donors, foreign and domestic NGOs has emerged to provide support to the electoral process and guarantee that it is "free and fair". While much technical, financial and material support has been provided to electoral commissions struggling with the logistics of election administration, substantial resources (often costing millions of dollars) have been devoted to what has become a highly controversial exercise — the observation of the electoral process by nominally independent organizations, both international and domestic.

This paper can only touch on the complexities of election observation.[17] The main point is that while both international and domestic observers are effective means for guaranteeing that an election is conducted in a manner that is "free and fair", the prospects for institutionalizing democratic electoral practice are most effectively raised by the establishment of a *permanent* domestic

[17] For an authoritative discussion of the many considerations that bear on election observation see Garber (1984) and Bjornlund, Bratton and Gibson (1992) as well as the country election reports by the National Democratic Institute, Washington, D.C.

organization of election monitors. Although observers from overseas may be more familiar with the intricacies of democratic electoral practice, and while some may be very effective as trainers of local people who have not previously observed elections, it must be remembered that international observers are short-term visitors to the countries holding elections and are frequently unfamiliar with the local society, its politics, the areas to which they are posted, and especially the local language. As such, their main purpose is to transmit what they observe to the outside world, and especially to the members of the international donor community which increasingly conditions aid programmes on whether democratic transitions are on track. Because multiparty elections are considered as the *sine qua non* of these transitions, a full reporting of what transpired is desirable. International observers also provide valuable "political cover" for organizations of domestic observers without which the latter might be harassed or otherwise denied the opportunity to monitor the proceedings.

Given their inherent limitations, however, international observers can rarely obtain a detailed understanding of the electoral process. With some notable exceptions (e.g. South Africa), most international observer missions are small in number (e.g. five to 50) and are in the country holding the election for only a few days before and after the event. They simply cannot cover the terrain, especially of an agrarian society, nor closely follow the run-up to the election during which the outcome is often determined; nor, given their limited language skills, do their members, no matter how experienced, comprehend all they witness and hear.[18] Indeed, international observers are most effective when they are complemented by the presence of an extensive network of domestic monitors. The effectiveness of international observer missions is also greatly enhanced when an advance party of a small number of observers is sent into the country at least two months before the elections to witness administrative preparations for the elections and the campaigns of those standing for office.

The relationship between international and domestic observers is highly symbiotic in countries where the issue of election

[18] The author's own experience as an international observer of the Ethiopian local government elections of June 1992 illustrates the problem. When he asked a question of voters standing in line to vote that evoked extensive murmuring in the local language (i.e. Amharic) that he did not understand, he knew he was missing something important but could do nothing about it.

observation is controversial and resisted by the regime in power. As previously noted, international observer missions provide a significant measure of political cover to domestic organizations. In return they receive a constant flow of valuable information from all corners of the country from the local organization. In this context, international and domestic observer organizations are dependent on each other.

The *modus operandi* of international and domestic observer missions reinforces this mutual dependence. International missions normally consist of a limited number of small teams of two or three that are constantly moving around an assigned region of the country. Depending on the distances to be traveled, such teams visit between a half-dozen and dozen polling stations on election day. By contrast, domestic organizations recruit and train thousands of volunteers so that they can deploy at least one to every polling station where they are to remain for the duration of the election. Without their domestic counterparts, international observers risk witnessing a "Potemkin village" to the extent that fraud or intimidation occurs before or after they "observe" a seemingly normal electoral process. Indeed without domestic observers, there can be no sustained surveillance of what occurs.

Most importantly, the establishment of domestic observer organizations holds out the greatest prospect for the institutionalization of democratic electoral practice. If, in the final analysis, institutionalization depends on the commitment to democratic procedure by key elites and ordinary citizens, then the establishment of domestic observer organizations does much to generate such commitment of both kinds. These organizations are usually led by professional elites and/or the clergy who are worried that election fraud will undermine the forthcoming election. By seeking to eliminate fraud, these individuals strive to maintain the process by assuring that the electoral game is one that all major contestants will play. They create a situation where other elites, in this case partisan leaders, are maintained in the process. Ordinary citizens are also drawn into the process, because they are given reason to believe that the rules of the game will be respected, and that they have a real opportunity to exercise a meaningful choice when they go to the polls.

All this is contingent, however, on whether the observer organization is regarded as a scrupulously neutral and non-partisan agency. Just as electoral commissions must be independent agencies,

so too must domestic monitoring organizations. While the former are often suspected of favouring the government of the day, the latter are suspected of favouring the opposition. On the other hand, to the extent that such perceptions are valid, a domestic observer organization may serve as a balancing force to the commission. This in itself can be highly desirable, for in such cases observer groups and commissions may ultimately come together to work out acceptable procedures for the election. In the context of an intensely contested election, they may be able to bargain and agree on procedures when leaders of rival political parties cannot.

Unlike international observer missions, domestic observer organizations have the possibility of becoming a long-term and continuous presence in the electoral process. For example, in Zambia and Kenya, the domestic observer organizations that emerged for the presidential and parliamentary elections of October 1991 and December 1992 have evolved into permanent bodies which have monitored subsequent elections at the local level or by-elections for vacant parliamentary seats. They have also mounted programmes of voter education. As a result, organizations which were highly controversial when they first emerged have become an accepted feature of political life. These organizations have also developed a productive working relationship with the electoral commissions of both countries, relationships that are far less contentious than those of a few years ago. There is a growing respect and recognition on the part of each that they play different and complementary roles in the establishment and institutionalization of democratic electoral practice.

D. Assuring broad-based representation and/or power sharing

The agrarian and plural nature of African societies further suggests that electoral officials must give more thought to the range of options that are available to achieve effective political representation in this type of polity. This paper has dwelled at some length on the manner in which most Africans define their political interests, seek political representation, and translate these calculations into the way they vote in both semi-competitive and competitive elections. Given these patterns, adherence to electoral systems based solely on single-member districts may not be an appropriate way to institutionalize democratic electoral practice on the continent. Because voting patterns tend to be concentrated in geographic

blocks, systems of single-member representation produce blocks of legislators whose primary allegiance is to the regions they represent. This assures accountability by those elected to the voters back home, but can be extremely divisive for the polity as a whole. This is particularly true for countries with parliamentary systems of government, because the representatives of minority groups or a minority coalition have no significant measure of power even though they may constitute a significant proportion of the population. Countries with presidential systems, where the president is elected by a simple majority or plurality of the vote, suffer the same fate. In both cases there is a risk that the minority may withdraw or seek to destablize the process.

The recent electoral experience of South Africa and Namibia, though atypical compared to the rest of Africa, has legitimatized the debate as to how, to what extent and by what mechanisms minorities are to be guaranteed a share of political power in order to establish a viable democratic order.[19] The choice of electoral systems of proportional representation (PR) in both countries and the establishment of a modified federal system and "Government of National Unity" in South Africa were explicit moves to insure that all major political factions would participate in the post-apartheid system. Given the unique history of these countries and the fact that South Africa is a highly urbanized society, the lessons from these experiences may not be fully applicable elsewhere across the continent. For example, proportional representation by itself would probably not significantly change the composition of most African legislatures in respect to the geographic and ethnic constituencies its members represent.[20] PR, however, may have other consequences that are both "positive" and "negative" for the emergent political order. To the extent that PR elects individuals who represent parties rather than specific geographical constituencies, it may reduce the degree of direct accountability that individual members of parliament feel towards specific local communities. In this context a legislator's

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[19] This debate was substantially informed by the social science literature on power-sharing and consociational democracy. See especially the work of Horowitz (1985 and 1991), Lijphart (1984, 1985 and 1994) and Grofman and Lijphart (1986).

[20] Because the geographic distribution of the vote for competing political parties tends to be highly concentrated in Africa, single member systems do not "waste" and hence magnify the number of seats won by the majority party. PR systems, therefore, are unlikely to yield a substantially different distribution of seats.

first obligation is to the party leadership which ranked one high enough on the party list to be elected. This in turn might result in a more "national" perspective of the political process and a greater willingness to accommodate rival parties if the leadership of one's own party is inclined to do the same. Such inclinations, however, have already generated a measure of frustration in both Namibia and South Africa where some voters doubt whether they can even communicate effectively with their representatives because they cannot identify a specific individual who is responsible for the communities in which they live. In the minds of these citizens, their representatives and the leadership of the parties they supported are "out of touch" with the needs of those at the grassroots.[21]

The problem of how to include geographically-based minorities in the governmental process, and to what extent, is basically a constitutional issue beyond the authority of election commissions or NGOs that support democratic electoral practice. Constitutional issues of this type can only be resolved through negotiations between the principal protagonists of a country seeking to establish a viable system of democratic representation that will survive over the long term. Electoral officials can nevertheless specify the alternatives available and provide the technical analysis required to illustrate how different methods of structuring the electoral process will impact on the polity. For example, because electoral outcomes vary with the spatial distribution of voting, officials can, based on a combination of past electoral performance and public opinion data, forecast the likely outcomes under single-member district systems, different variations of PR, or some combination of the two.[22]

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[21] These frustrations are sufficiently widespread to have provoked a questioning of PR by leading members of the majority parties in both countries. In South Africa, the Government announced in October 1994 that it would deal with the problem by providing every MP with an allowance of R 3,000 per month to maintain an office in a constituency that political parties would determine for their representatives.

[22] Few if any countries, save Israel, have implemented PR on the basis of a single nationwide constituency. Most, including both Namibia and South Africa, compute the proportion of the vote that determines the number of seats each party wins on the basis of some sub-national administrative entity. Still other countries such as Germany elect part of their national legislature on the basis of single-member districts and part by PR. Moreover, virtually all countries that employ PR require that a party must achieve some minimum percentage of the vote before it is awarded any seats in order to exclude "extremist" and "micro" parties from the process.

Electoral officials are also in a position to forecast the impact of other mechanisms which might be employed to create a more inclusive and thus viable system of democratic representation. Such mechanisms are many, especially when several are combined into various permutations; for example, changing the boundaries and/or size of electoral districts, creating multi-member districts, requiring that a presidential candidate and/or political party receive some specified minimum percentage of the vote from some minimum proportion of electoral districts or larger administrative or political entities, etc.

There is much to be done in respect to these types of analysis across Africa, yet to the knowledge of this writer, the systematic exploration of these topics rarely occurs. This is a lamentable omission which the international donor community seeking to advance democratic transitions in Africa might address. As country after country embarks on constitutional reform, issues of representation are the crux of these efforts. It is critical that election administrators weigh in on this exercise and contribute the expertise to do so. Where an election commission is truly independent and respected, it can serve as a neutral presenter of what the various options are likely to produce and thereby facilitate the bargaining and eventual compromises on which a viable democratic order ultimately depends.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Africa faces a very difficult challenge in its quest for successful democratic transitions because of the inherent nature of African societies. In societies that are poor, agrarian, and plural in composition, political interests tend to be defined and concentrated geographically, a situation which often makes it very difficult to foster tolerance and facilitate compromise between competing groups. In this context, electoral administrators and domestic NGOs must do more than solve the myriad of technical and logistical problems associated with the efficient administration of the next election. Although the performance of these tasks is essential, it must be supplemented by a better understanding of the nature of the electoral process as viewed by the public at large, and proceed accordingly. In the short term leading up to the next election, election officials and NGOs can strive to make the process more accessible and legitimate in the eyes of the public by following procedures that have become the standard for "free and fair" elections around the world. Over the long term, election officials and NGOs can improve the design of the electoral system itself so that the process provides not only a measure of choice and political accountability in a single transitional election, but also in the elections that follow. Having returned to competitive electoral politics after a hiatus of more than two decades, this is the real test for those wishing to consolidate democratic reform on the continent.

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PART II

TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE ELECTION MANAGEMENT

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

The first thing an election commissioner or administrator learns upon assuming office is that elections are not created out of thin air. Administering an election is a highly complex task, involving hundreds of subtasks, complicated scheduling, and intricate monitoring of activities. It is also a political activity that must be above the political fray but remain sensitive to the political processes at work within the country.

How the administrative structure of an election system is organized and managed can have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the election administrator in carrying out the election mandate. The most honest and well-intentioned election administrator will ultimately fail in his or her mission if a sound administrative structure for effectively managing the conduct of the election is not put in place. Every election administrator has at least one horror story of how an administrative or procedural oversight (for example, ballots delivered to the wrong polling station or unauthorized person, an action by a poorly trained presiding officer) turned into a major political headache. Election management encompasses two overlapping processes: the administration of the election itself, i.e. the printing, logistics, training, etc., and the management of the public process, i.e. the press, NGOs, political parties, etc. This paper will discuss the role of the election administrator in managing these election processes and offer some concrete steps to manage the chaos that surrounds elections.

Election commissions fall into two basic types: (1) those that are organized as an oversight body where the commission acts as a policy-making/regulatory authority with a strong administrative staff, and (2) those where the election commissioners themselves take an active role in the day-to-day administration of an election. The first type of commission rarely becomes involved in the day-to-day operations of an election. It is usually characterized by a strong civil service component within the commission. The second type of commission plays a much more active role in the day-to-day operations, and commissioners take an active part in the management of the election system.

Whether organized as oversight bodies, or actively involved in the management of the system, all election commissions must strive to exhibit three fundamental characteristics. These are:

Independence

It is generally agreed that an election commission that is free to act in the interests of all voters and is not of any particular party or candidate is essential to build the trust needed so that political parties will respect the process and the results of the election.

Impartiality

Like independence, impartiality is an essential element in building trust. Generally, election commissions are made of individuals who are perceived by the major political parties and the public as impartial and who enjoy their confidence. If not made of individuals who are perceived to be impartial, election commissions are often composed of representatives of the major political parties or movements. This brings a balance to the commission that promotes impartiality and transparency. To gain the confidence of the major political parties and the public, election commissions must apply the laws and regulations in a consistent and even-handed manner.

Competence

The most independent and impartial election commission is ineffectual if it cannot register the voters, qualify the candidates, train the polling station officials, or deliver the ballots on time. The public and political parties must see that the commission is capable of fulfilling its mission. Missed deadlines, confused or undirected staff, poor communication and dialogue with political parties and the press, or a general sense of disorganization and lack of direction within the commission can severely diminish the effectiveness of the commission to do its job.

It is in the last area that election administrators make their most significant contribution. Competent administration of the election system can go a long way to contributing to its independence and impartiality. To be successful, however, an effective election commission must have an organizational structure that promotes these characteristics. Developing the structure is the primary responsibility of election administrators. Within the context of the two basic types of election commissions, the election administrator could be either a civil servant under a commission with

oversight authority, or an election commissioner that takes an active role in the day-to-day management of the election.

Whichever the case, few election administrators come to their positions fully prepared for the task at hand. This is true even when the administrator is drawn from a large private enterprise or cabinet ministry. Organizing and training thousands of employees, procuring hundreds of individual items in huge quantities, writing regulations, developing and implementing civic education plans, registering voters, training electoral officers, monitoring the electoral campaign, developing balloting and counting procedures, creating a public information strategy, or coping with the logistical nightmares that elections create, all within unforgiving time constraints, can test the management skills of the best of us. In addition, the entire process must be monitored closely since it must be accomplished in what is always a politically sensitive environment.

II. KEYS TO EFFECTIVE ELECTION MANAGEMENT

The first key to being a successful election administrator is to understand that you cannot do it all yourself, and should not even try. Because of the importance and political sensitivity of events, election administrators often become trapped in attending to routine tasks that find their way to their desks. This takes them away from the managerial role they need to play to make the overall system function effectively and smoothly. Because of the morass of detail in election management, the successful election administrator must build an effective management team and delegate tasks to its members. A management team is not effective, however, unless it has direction and organization. Some general techniques of establishing that direction and organization that have proven effective in managing complex systems that elections create are outlined below. These management techniques are not just for high-level election administrators. They can be applied throughout the election system at all supervisory levels down to the presiding officer in the polling station.

A. Establish a clear purpose

An effective election management team starts with a clear purpose. The first thing the election administrator must do is create a common cause or vision among the election commission staff. Establishing a common cause or vision inspires performance and commitment. It also ensures that the staff know what is expected of them. The vision must be concrete and understandable by every member of the election staff from the chairperson of the commission to the officials in the polling stations. A “free and fair” election may be a vision we all share; but an election where “every eligible citizen has the opportunity to participate, where political parties and candidates are free to campaign, where polling station officials are properly trained, supplies and ballots are delivered on time and the votes are counted accurately and timely reported” are much more solid concepts that each member of an election commission staff can easily identify with and understand.

Establishing a clear purpose is not only critical for the overall system but also for each department and its subdivisions. For example, a storage management staff whose goal is “to accurately maintain the supply records so that within one hour a complete

inventory of supplies and their location may be obtained", is likely to be more inspired than a staff whose only function is to "keep track of supplies". Establishing a clear purpose provides the staff with a goal to aim for. It inspires commitment, improves performance and builds a team spirit where everyone works to pull his or her own weight. Reaching goals can provide the administrator a clear opportunity to reward the staff. Failure to reach goals provides the administrator the opportunity to review the staff and, where necessary, make adjustments.

B. Identify major tasks

One aspect of effective election management is already built into the process — the election calendar. It is the most valuable tool of any election administrator. The ideal calendar will contain every major task that must be completed within the election process. In other words, the election calendar establishes the major tasks the election administrator must carry out and the deadlines he or she must meet. These tasks may vary from election to election or depend on the stage of development of the election system. That is, an election administrator in an already established system may not need to design a new voter registration form, but will still need to have a plan to order and distribute forms. If an election calendar does not detail what must be accomplished and when, the election administrator should create such a calendar as an internal management tool. Once a detailed election calendar that lists all the major tasks to be accomplished is established, the tasks can be assigned to a person, department or committee. Annex A shows a sample election calendar with major task assignments.

C. Identify subtasks

Each major task of putting an election together is made up of a series of subtasks that are assigned to various staff or departments. Before assignment of subtasks can happen, however, the tasks must be identified. The election commission staff can play an important role in developing the list of subtasks to be accomplished. As much detail as possible must be specified. This includes whether or not approval for an action must come from a higher authority. An election requires literally thousands of subtasks. Sitting with the staff and "walking through" each major task, listing the subtasks in no particular order, is the most effective way of ensuring they all are

identified. The next step is to organize the subtasks into related activities. Annex B shows a draft task sheet developed for voter registration in Ghana in 1995. Each major task has its subtasks grouped together. This task sheet would grow significantly as planning became more developed. Each of the subtasks would be assigned to one or more individuals or departments.

Besides making sure that all subtasks are identified, involving the staff in identifying them has a beneficial psychological effect. Enlisting the ideas of the staff in the exercise can make each staff member feel that he or she has contributed something to the planning of the task and the election. It also allows the staff to feel that they have not been overlooked and that their insights are valued. Getting the staff "on board" is important to successful election management and relates directly to "establishing a clear purpose" as noted above.

D. Organize the subtasks in the order of progression

Once the subtasks have been identified, they must be placed in order of progression. Which comes first? Which comes next? Progression of the work depends on what the subtask is and where it fits in the task calendar. Some subtasks of a particular task are handled one at a time, completing one subtask before you move on to another. Other subtasks are handled simultaneously. Establishing the order of progression for tasks and subtasks is important. Election preparations are plagued with a "cascade" effect when things do not follow one another as they should. In other words, if one subtask is not completed on time, the next cannot be completed, and this continues until a major task deadline in the election calendar has been missed — which creates its own set of political problems. Close attention should also be paid to subtasks that have a direct bearing on various departments or units within the election commission. For example, ballot procurement may be handled by one department, while repairing of vehicles may be handled by another. However, if all vehicles are not up and running when they are needed for ballot distribution, the effect can be catastrophic. This is another example of how important it is to identify all the subtasks of a major task by including staff members from various departments in the exercise.

E. Set deadlines

Just as an election calendar sets the date when the election commission must accomplish its major tasks, the election administrator must set a deadline for completing each subtask. Setting deadlines and enforcing them establishes an expectation among the election commission staff. Deadlines also ensure that decisions are made promptly, assignments are completed as scheduled, and the election calendar schedule is maintained.

In setting a deadline, extra time should be factored in to cover delays and problems that always seem to arise. Allowing the staff member or department head to have a say in setting deadlines is also useful. Another useful tool in setting deadlines is to establish milestones. These are dates that the election administrator can use to evaluate the progress of the work, address problems before they become unmanageable, and modify the work plan if necessary. It is also important that those assigned to complete the subtask feel that the election administrator has confidence in their ability to perform their duties. Remember, the effective election administrator supervises, organizes and directs and does not try to micro-manage every detail. Three or four milestones should be enough for most subtasks. However, more importantly, complicated or politically sensitive tasks may require more frequent milestones, including weekly or biweekly briefings.

F. Monitor the progress

An assignment sheet that lists each task, subtask, and indicates who was delegated responsibility must be developed. As a management tool, it should be checked every day to see what is due from whom. As subtasks are completed, they should be deleted from the assignment sheet. Monitoring may also take place in weekly or biweekly staff meetings where general progress is reported on a variety of tasks. More detailed progress monitoring is then saved for the milestone reviews discussed in the previous section. It is important to establish monitoring as a regularly scheduled activity and to set aside enough time adequately to monitor the progress in completing a subtask or task and then move on to some other issue until the next monitoring or milestone session is due. Using this method provides the election administrator with the opportunity to give each task or subtask the attention it deserves rather than jumping from one thing to another as problems arise.

Annex C is a sample assignment sheet showing several subtasks from the Annex B list. The lists of subtasks are arranged in the order of progression, the name of the staff person assigned to complete the subtask, the monitoring dates when the assigned staff is expected to bring the election administrator up to date on the preparations, and the final date each subtask must be completed. As can readily be seen, keeping track of all the subtasks in an election can be an overwhelming task in itself. The assignment sheet is the key. It will permit the election administrator to organize his/her time effectively, organize meetings with individuals who are working on related subtasks, and learn of and address problems before they become major.

III. MANAGING THE ELECTION STAFF

Election management can be seen as a problem-solving process. It may be the problem of how to register several million voters in a few weeks or how to develop an election officer training programme. Effective problem solving involves identifying the problem, generating alternate solutions, analyzing the consequences of each solution, deciding a course of action, acting, and evaluating the action to see if it produced the desired result. A key for the successful election administrator in problem solving is to understand that no individual is as knowledgeable as the staff as a whole. Putting the collective knowledge of the staff to work in solving problems is an essential part of effective election management. Organizing the knowledge and skills of the people who work for the election administrator is an important test of his or her ability.

Most election administrators share one basic fear — delegation. Their work is plagued with taking on many tasks because they believe no one else can do them better; second guessing staff or overruling their decisions; and last minute bursts of activity as a deadline nears and action on a task has been postponed because the administrator has been busy on other issues. Those are typical examples of ineffective delegation of responsibility. Once the election administrator decides that a particular task should be delegated to a person, department or committee, selection of the delegate(s) is the next problem. An important rule to remember is always to delegate the tasks to the most junior staff member(s) with the skills and authority to successfully carry them out. In other words, do not tie up people who are capable of more responsibility with assignments that can just as effectively be carried out by another who is capable but more junior in the staff hierarchy. Below are three pointers to remember:

(a) One should know the staff's strengths and weaknesses, find out what each person can do and does best, and be ready to move staff from one position to another when a person is not suited to a task or displays skills in a particular area. Maintaining staff in positions for which they are unqualified or ill-suited or not assigning tasks to the best qualified people only serves to damage the election process. Being objective about a person’s strengths and weaknesses is also important. A well-organized person might work best in an operational position such as logistics. A calm, patient staff member might be best suited for training. A person who has an analytical

mind and can see how different parts of the election process fit together to make the whole would be excellent in a planning position.

(b) Once the election administrator knows what must be done and who or what department has been assigned to do it, his or her next responsibility is to manage the election staff and get them to work together toward the common goal. When assigning staff to committees or teams, it is advisable to bring together people with different strengths so that they can support and complement each other. For example, in developing an electoral officer training programme, the calm, patient staff member might be excellent for developing the training materials and actual training programme, but not for planning the overall process or coordinating the logistics. For those parts of the programme, one would need staff with analytical skills and who are well organized.

(c) One should consider drawing talent from various ministries and departments. Very few election administrators are lucky enough to have staff with the talent to develop and carry out all aspects of election administration. This talent, however, can usually be found in other government ministries. In a recent election in Ethiopia, where electoral official training was conducted by radio, the election commission staff developed the electoral official training material and manuals but lacked the expertise to develop the radio programmes to be used in training. The commission turned to the Ministry of Education that had, over the years, developed outstanding literacy programmes for radio broadcasts. Working alongside the commission staff, the Ministry of Education employees developed the radio programmes to train the electoral officials. This collaboration resulted in a successful electoral official training programme that earned the professional admiration of observers from the Australian Electoral Commission who were in Ethiopia at the time.

A. Let people know what is expected

In assigning a task to a staff member or committee it is important that they understand what is expected of them and that they in turn can expect cooperation and support. Staff almost always try to live up to the expectations of their superiors. If one expects mediocrity, mediocrity is exactly what one gets. However, if one expects excellence, excellence is what one receives. In delegating

tasks, it is essential to let the staff know precisely what you want and what you do not want, how you want it, when you want it and why you want it. If the task is complex, follow up on your verbal instructions with written ones. If you are assigning one of your own tasks to a subordinate, make sure the deadline assigned that individual is a few days before your completion deadline.

B. Let people do their job

As anyone who has worked for someone else knows, there is nothing more frustrating than to be given an assignment without the necessary authority or support to do the job. This is true whether it is buying typing paper for the office or developing a logistical plan for voter registration. In delegating a task, let the delegate know how much support he or she can expect, and what authority he or she has in making decisions and completing the assignment. This may involve:

(a) Giving the employee full authority to make a decision on the task without consulting with the administrator — only updating the latter and others on actions taken during the monitoring sessions or at the end of the assignment; or

(b) Requiring the staff to recommend alternative solutions or programmes and leaving the administrator with the final decision; or

(c) Requiring the staff to recommend one solution concerning a problem or task with the administrator approving or disapproving the recommendation.

The common thread running through delegation is the importance of setting firm standards and letting people know that they are responsible for meeting those standards. During monitoring sessions, the administrator should let the staff know about their performance (good and bad) and where they stand.

IV. MANAGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC PROCESS

Being a successful election administrator is more than effective organization of staff and resources. The election administrator must also manage the (for lack of a better term) public process of the election. That is, public relations and the press, political party relations, and relationships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Applying the foregoing principles of management to the public process of the election can go a long way in building the trust and confidence that free and fair elections require.

A. Public relations and the press

While one may wish otherwise, the press will always be around. Getting it to understand the complexity of administering an election is almost impossible. It is also important to understand that the press has its own agenda that is not necessarily compatible with that of the election administrator. This does not mean the press is the enemy but that an election administrator who believes that he or she can depend on the press to get their message across is naive. An election office has a mission and message that must be relayed to the people. Every election office, therefore, must develop a public relations strategy. This puts the election administrator in control. A successful public relations strategy demands a clear purpose, effective organization and implementation. If an election administrator is required to field questions from the press on a daily basis, he or she is acting in a passive mode — letting the press set the public agenda. Some effective ways to become pro-active are:

(a) Decide what you want your message to be and stick to it. Every press release, statement from an election official or interview given should focus on a few key points concerning the election.

(b) Develop standard answers to routine press inquiries on a day-to-day basis. Dealing with the press can then be delegated to a qualified staff member. The election administrator is then free to address only those issues that require his or her direct attention.

(c) Develop a press kit. A press kit should include as much information as possible about the election process. Maps, forms, booklets, posters, and training manuals are all good items to put in a

press kit. If past elections have been held or a prominent candidate ran for another office, include past election results as well. They are sure to be requested anyway.

(d) Pre-determine when press announcements of election activities will be issued and prepare the release well in advance, rather than waiting until the rush of the last minute. Make your press release direct and to the point. Include at least one quotation in the first or second paragraph from the chairperson or some other election official. Most reporters cover more than one story or event in a given day. The key is to write the story for the reporter so that he will put as much of the press release in his story as possible without asking additional questions.

(e) If staff are expected to address meetings and rallies, prepare a standard public relations kit containing sample speeches, forms, posters, etc. It should provide stock answers for just about any question anyone could ask. Insist that staff stick to the script and not ad lib. If a staff member is asked a question he or she is not sure of, require them to respond only after checking with the appropriate official.

(f) Set up lines of communication with your field employees. The press feeds on rumours. Being able to check out allegations or “happenings” is critical. Speak only when you know the facts. If a reporter calls before you have all the information, tell him or her that you are checking and will call back at a certain time. Then do it. Failure to call back is the same as admitting guilt in the reporter’s eyes.

The most important component of a public relations strategy is to be open and honest. Transparency in elections is essential. Dealing openly and honestly with the press throughout the process can serve you well when the going gets rough. If you have established a relationship of trust when all is going well, you are much more believable when things are not going smoothly.

B. Political parties

Political parties act, on a day-to-day basis, as the representatives of the people to the commission and its staff. Often, election administrators feel that the political parties should act in a particular way to demonstrate that they are responsible and can be

trusted as legitimate players in the political process. In most instances, this is a mistaken attitude. Rather, it is the obligation of the election commission and administrators to build the confidence and trust of political parties in its policies and actions. In other words, in a free society, political parties have little or nothing to prove to the election authority. The election authority has everything to prove to the political parties. This does not mean that it must yield to every whim or request but that it must establish a cooperative, working relationship with the parties and that their role in the political process is respected.

The most effective means to develop a constructive relationship with political parties is through the establishment and maintenance of a regular line of communication. Scheduling regular meetings with the parties where they are brought up to date on developments, developing a goal of cooperation, identifying areas that enhance cooperation, agreeing on deadlines for action, and scheduling follow-up meetings to keep each other informed about a particularly important aspect of the election are all elements of a plan for developing a good political party relationship.

Party agents often pose the biggest problem for election administrators. They are generally untrained and know little or nothing about the process. They frequently come to the registration or polling site looking for something to go wrong. An election administrator can do little to gain their trust but can contribute to making their participation as constructive as possible as follows.

(a) Training sessions on the registration or election process should be held. Where possible, permit party agents to be trained with election officials. Election administrators often profess no responsibility for training party agents and they are correct. However, in the long run, the administrator must decide whether it is better to have an untrained party agent in the polling station with all that entails or to have spent the time to help train them to the point that they at least know what the process is supposed to be.

(b) Develop standardized forms for reporting allegations of irregularity or failure to follow procedures. These forms should be completed by the party agents and filed with the commission with a copy to the party. They should detail exactly the allegation including the date and time of day the incident occurred. They should provide enough information for the commission or administrator to determine

the seriousness of the incident. When rumours begin, the commission can refer to the documentation and know what happened and when.

Another area where building trust and confidence is fundamental is the area of rule and regulation making. Election administrators often act as legislators. The regulations that most election commissions adopt have the force of law. However, the give and take that is essential to the process of writing legislation in a deliberative body such as a parliament is absent when rules are adopted by a regulatory authority such as an election commission. Election commissions, therefore, must be very sensitive to the concerns of parties, candidates, civic associations, and independent groups in developing its rules. To put it simply, election commissions should not make regulations in isolation. Because a commission is made up of just a few members, a way must be found to incorporate the views of outside groups into its deliberations. In the United States, for example, election commissions have procedures that must be followed before a rule or regulation can be considered effective. These include:

(a) Publication of any proposed rule in an official publication. This includes informing registered parties that a rule change is being proposed.

(b) Setting aside a reasonable period for public comment before final action can be taken on the proposed rule. This is usually 30 days, enough time for parties and interested groups to deliberate the rule internally and formulate a response or recommendations.

(c) Seriously taking the views and changes recommended by the political parties and interest groups into consideration and incorporating them into the rule when appropriate before final adoption.

This organized inclusion of political parties and interest groups in the rule-making process builds confidence and trust. This same organization can be brought to the adjudication of election disputes as well. An effective electoral system is not only dependent on performing the tasks of registering voters, qualifying candidates, printing and delivering ballots, etc., but also developing effective means to deal promptly with the complaints that always arise in an election. Two elements are fundamental for a commission to be seen as impartial in the process of adjudication of election disputes:

(a) Procedures must be known by the parties and public well in advance. Procedures for resolving complaints should not be made up on an ad hoc basis. They should be known well in advance of the election process and have a clearly defined timetable.

(b) The commission must act promptly to resolve the issues before they become divisive. “Justice delayed is justice denied” is a saying that rings true here. Developing a well organized system to investigate and resolve complaints quickly is key to building trust.

An effective technique in facilitating the adjudication of election dispute is the standardization of the process, meaning that the step-by-step process of adjudication is simplified and made consistent. This is accomplished by:

(a) Developing one form for use to file a complaint so that the commission will have the information it needs to make a decision. The form should include all the particulars of the complaint and cite the relevant rule or statute that was broken.

(b) Developing a list of evidence documents or standards. What evidence exists to support the allegation? Letting the challenger know what to produce to sustain an allegation not only helps the commission decide a challenge, but also prevents frivolous challenges from being filed and wasting its time.

(c) Developing clear lines of authority regarding who can decide on the type of challenge in the election commission hierarchy. Quite often every challenge, no matter how obscure or insignificant to the outcome of an election, must be decided by the commission itself. This often delays certification of results and wastes a great deal of time on minor matters. Many election codes, however, permit delegation of authority to administrative officials or at least allow an administrative official to first hear and decide a challenge before it reaches the commission. A dissatisfied party can appeal to the full commission, but the evidence and arguments would have been presented at a lower level. The commission need not start from scratch. Many challenges are minor and never make it to the commission level. The standardization of the forms used to file a challenge and developing standards for the presentation of evidence facilitates “administrative” adjudication of many challenges.

C. Non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be effective partners with the election commission in developing trust in the election system. They often bring a wealth of talent and resources to the election process that is not tainted by partisan politics. However, finding a mutually acceptable role for NGOs to play in the electoral process is often difficult. To the election administrator, NGOs often represent a resource that is needed but cannot be controlled. Assistance from NGOs is often rejected due to the fear that, because it is private, an NGO's actions may not be compatible with the election commission's goal or guidelines; the commission will still be held responsible if the NGO is made a formal part of the election process. Using basic election management techniques, however, a civic education plan can be developed that sets goals, guidelines and tasks to be accomplished. By developing a task list and detailing the subtasks within each task, a way can be found to reach an agreement that either assigns certain civic education components to various NGOs or includes them in the commission's plan. Agreements that include NGOs in a civic education programme should cover the following points:

(a) Details of specific tasks the NGO is to perform.

(b) The procedures to be followed.

(c) The number of days involved.

(d) The names and positions of senior staff.

(e) The need for backup and assistance, if any, by the commission should be stipulated.

(f) If there are any financial aspects to the agreement, proper record-keeping and reporting processes should be put in place as well as the stipulation that all financial records are available for public inspection.

The election commission should be prepared to withdraw cooperation and/or support if an NGO fails to live up to the agreement. In addition, setting up a regular monitoring process so that the election administrator can be informed about the NGO's activities and progress toward meeting goals can obviate many of the problems election administrators fear.

V. MANAGING YOURSELF

Thus far, this paper has discussed techniques in managing the electoral process or other people. However, how an election administrator manages his or her own time is an important indicator of how effective he or she is. As has already been stated, you cannot do it all and you should not even try. Election administrators often enter their position loving the challenge of their work. All too often, they become mired in the details of the job, leaving no time to accomplish what they would really like to do. Innovation, coming up with new ideas or ways of doing things, is stifled when you feel as if you are on a never-ending treadmill. Below are three techniques to break out of the rut.

A. Set a few objectives for yourself

Identify exactly what your job requires and break it down into six or seven major components where you will spend a significant amount of time. They should not include every minor detail of managing the election. Remember, other people have responsibilities too. Next, select two or three of these components that demand your full and undivided attention, that you enjoy doing, can do well, and that can make a significant contribution to the success of the election. They are the areas on which you should spend most of your time. They become your objectives.

B. Delegate responsibilities

Identify the components of your job that you do not do well or that do not match your area of expertise and seek to delegate, eliminate or reduce them. Is there any aspect of your work that you really dislike doing or feel you do not do well? This could be the intricacies of finance, the complexities of computer systems, settling disagreements between employees or writing reports that someone else could write in no time. Delegate those responsibilities to people you trust to carry them out. Focus on the things you do well. Do not hang on to tasks or responsibilities out of the misguided habit of “trying to do it all”. Eliminate what you can; what you cannot eliminate, delegate to others or reduce the amount of time you must spend on it personally.

C. Set goals for yourself in dealing with your objectives

You as the election administrator must direct everyone else, but who directs you and lets you know you are doing a good job? No matter how big or small, we all feel better when we have completed a job well. This could range from meeting the goal of writing a letter or memo by the end of the week to completing a budget or personnel analysis by a certain date. Keep your goals small and reachable. Because you are at the top of the organizational structure, no one is setting deadlines or milestones for you. You must do that yourself. By setting personal goals and deadlines you can do for yourself what you are doing for your staff.

The key is to move things off your desk and to concentrate on those aspects of your job that you do well. Spending time on tasks that you are ill suited to do, but perfectly suited to supervise someone in, means that you are taking time and resources away from those aspects of the election system that deserve your attention. Once you have moved things off your desk, you must set goals to meet the objectives you have set for yourself. These could be daily, weekly, or monthly. Giving yourself the psychological boost of getting things accomplished keeps you alert, interested and excited about your role as an administrator. Getting control of your own work habits may be the most important thing you can do to become a successful election administrator.

VI. SUMMARY

Supervising the lower echelons of an election administration, election law observance and elections preparations, appointing and training officials, investigating complaints, organizing voter registration and producing registration lists, purchasing thousands of items in huge quantities, and the many other duties of the election administrator make him or her essential to the work of a democratic governance. The value of an impartially administered, well organized and effectively managed election system is evident from the reports of a succession of observer missions all over the world. Every election administrator has had that uncomfortable feeling when there is not enough time to do it all, issues requiring your immediate attention pile up, problems appear from nowhere, the staff seem incapable of doing anything right, and confidence in the election process slowly ebbs as political parties sense an inability to organize the election environment; but the process of gaining (or re-gaining) control can begin with the principles outlined in this paper. They have a proven record of success.

SAMPLE ELECTION CALENDAR

Task	Start	Finish	Resource names
Design of voter registration/voting system	1/9/94	1/10/94	Administration/ Education
Development of overall logistic plan	3/10/94	27/10/94	Logistics
Development of security plan	10/10/94	27/10/94	Administration/ Logistics
Development of population survey	10/10/94	18/11/94	Administration
Preparation of plan for delivery of materials	10/10/94	18/11/94	Logistics/ Procurement
Period for party registration	10/10/94	16/6/95	Administration
Procurement of voter registration equipment and supplies	13/10/94	15/2/95	Procurement
Development of voter registration and polling officials training materials	13/10/94	4/1/95	Administration/ Training
Development of voter registration logistic plan	13/10/94	23/11/94	Administration/ Logistics
Development of voter registration security plan	13/10/94	1/11/94	Administration/ Logistics
Development of registration officers recruitment criteria	15/10/94	15/10/94	Administration/ Legal
Development of voter education programme	13/11/94	13/11/94	Education
Materials transfer forms	21/11/94	25/11/94	Procurement
Development of ballot counting procedures	24/11/94	2/12/94	Administration/ Operations
Arranging for security of materials	28/11/94	6/12/94	Logistics
Arranging for secure storage of materials	28/11/94	6/12/94	Logistics
Purchase of fuel for vehicles	1/3/95	11/4/95	Logistics/ Procurement
Hiring drivers for vehicles	1/3/95	20/3/95	Personnel/Logistics

Task	Start	Finish	Resource names
Procurement of voter registration materials	3/4/95	11/8/95	Procurement/ Printing
Recruitment of registration officials	3/6/95	3/7/95	Administration/ Training
Deadline for submission of candidate lists	19/6/95	19/6/95	Operations
Deadline for NEC to review party registration documents	20/6/95	8/9/95	Operations
Training of voter registration officials	1/8/95	1/8/95	Training
Period for procurement of election day commodities	1/8/95	11/9/95	Procurement
Deadline for delivery of registration materials to sites	1/9/95	3/9/95	Logistics
Voter registration period	4/9/95	12/10/95	Administration/ Operations
Deadline for appeal of NEC denial of party registration	11/9/95	11/9/95	Legal
Period for compilation of preliminary registration list	13/10/95	20/10/95	Data Processing
Period for printing absentee ballots	18/10/95	30/10/95	Operations/Printing
Period for final ballot printing	11/12/95	19/12/95	Operations/Printing
Period for public view of preliminary list	23/10/95	9/11/95	Administration
Deadline for compilation of final registration list	10/11/95	29/11/95	Data Processing
Period for absentee voting	30/11/95	18/12/95	Operations
Campaign period	18/10/95	18/12/95	Operations
Period for delivery of ballots to polling stations	18/12/95	20/12/95	Logistics

VARIOUS TASKS GROUPED TOGETHER IN THEIR ORDER OF PROGRESSION

Task	Days to complete	Start date	Finish date
REGISTRATION/ELECTION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT	232	7/11/94	14/9/95
Develop equipment/software specifications	25	7/11/94	7/12/94
Write equipment specifications	10	7/12/94	20/12/94
Publish specifications	0	23/12/94	23/12/94
Procurement period	51	23/12/94	28/2/95
Hardware & software installation and inspection	5	1/3/95	7/3/95
ELECTRICAL SURVEY OF COMMISSION'S OFFICES	60	1/12/94	17/2/95
Development of terms of reference for electrical engineer	4	1/12/94	5/12/94
Recruitment of electrical engineer	15	9/1/95	25/1/95
Performance of electrical survey of commission's offices	9	7/2/95	17/2/95
Deadline to file assessment report	0	17/2/95	17/2/95
VOTER REGISTRATION AUTOMATION	102	15/1/95	1/6/95
Recruitment of system design evaluation specialist	25	15/1/95	15/2/95
Requirement analysis	14	1/2/95	20/2/95
Recruitment of computer installation technician	11	1/2/95	15/2/95
Recruitment of Oracle RDBMS/CASE check list	11	1/2/95	15/2/95
Recruitment of inter-networking systems engineer	11	1/2/95	15/2/95

Task	Days to complete	Start date	Finish date
Recruitment of database design support specialist	11	1/2/95	15/2/95
Arrival of computer installation technician	0	1/3/95	1/3/95
Arrival of inter-networking system engineer	0	1/3/95	1/3/95
Create TCP/IP link between BULL and LAN	20	1/3/95	28/3/95
Departure of inter-networking system engineer	0	1/4/95	1/4/95
Arrival of Oracle RDBMS/CASE design specialist	0	10/4/95	10/4/95
Arrival of system design evaluation specialist	0	10/4/95	10/4/95
Tune-up Oracle VR table design	10	10/4/95	21/4/95
Evaluate system design	15	10/4/95	28/4/95
Arrival of database development support specialist	0	1/5/95	1/5/95
Complete VR database applications	20	5/5/95	1/6/95
Computer support systems	155	15/2/95	14/9/95
Recruit applications software trainer	11	15/2/95	1/3/95
Arrival of software trainer	0	1/6/95	1/6/95
PUBLIC RELATIONS/MEDIA PROGRAMME	20	1/2/95	28/2/95
Develop schedule of press releases and subjects	20	1/2/95	28/2/95
Write scheduled press releases	20	1/2/95	28/2/95
Develop schedule for radio/TV interviews	20	1/2/95	28/2/95
Develop schedule of press briefings	20	1/2/95	28/2/95
Develop NGO/interest group programme strategy	20	1/2/95	28/2/95

Task	Days to complete	Start date	Finish date
VOTER REGISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT	178	15/1/95	13/9/95
Review of training consultant's CV	5	15/1/95	19/1/95
Recruitment of consultant	10	1/2/95	14/2/95
Design of voter registration training programme	60	9/3/95	30/5/95
Procurement of voter registration forms and support materials	43	1/6/95	27/7/95
Development of voter registration materials distribution plan	11	1/6/95	15/6/95
Procurement of vehicles and fuel, hiring of drivers, etc.	55	21/6/95	1/9/95
Implementation of distribution plan	22	15/8/95	13/9/95
ELECTORAL FORMS DESIGN	12	21/1/95	6/2/95
Arrival of forms specialist	1	21/1/95	21/1/95
Period for form design testing	10	23/1/95	3/2/95
Finalization of form design	1	3/2/95	3/2/95
Departure of form specialist	1	6/2/95	6/2/95

Each major task is shown in bold, each subtask is listed below the major task. The task list was created by "brainstorming", that is, coming up with ideas on what must be done in no particular order. The ideas were then grouped by major task. The number of days to complete each subtask was estimated. The dates for completion of each subtask were then factored in to create the task calendar. As each major task is assigned to a department, that department would develop its own list of subtasks to be able to meet the deadlines established in the major task calendar.

Creating such a task list enables the election administrator to manage the work flow more efficiently. For example, the administrator knows by looking at the task calendar in January that he or she need not address the issue of data entry until July or August. However, development of an automated voter registration system must be acted on in the very short term.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT SHEET: VOTER REGISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

VOTER REGISTRAR TRAINING PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT	DUE DATE	MILESTONES					STAFF ASSIGNED
Review of voter education consultant CVs	19 Jan 95	20 Jan 95					Per/Ampomah
Recruitment of consultant	14 Feb 95	20 Jan 95	30 Jan 95	1 Feb 95	15 Feb 95		Per/Ampomah
Design of voter registrar training programme	30 May 95	15 Mar 95	30 Mar 95	15 Apr 95	30 Apr 95	1 May 95	Consultant
Procurement of voter registration forms and support materials	27 Jul 95	1 Jun 95	15 Jun 95	1 Jul 95	15 Jul 95	20 Jul 95	Proc/Konga
Development of voter registration materials distribution plan	15 Jun 95	1 Jun 95	15 Jun 95				Logistics
Procurement of vehicles and fuel, hiring of drivers, etc.	1 Sept 95	15 Aug 95	20 Aug 95	30 Aug 95			Proc/Logistics
Implementation of distribution plan	13 Sept 95	15 Aug 95	20 Aug 95	30 Aug 95	1 Sept 95	13 Sept 95	Logistics

This simple assignment sheet illustrates the point that the election administrator has regularly scheduled meetings to be updated about the progress in each category. The administrator need not concern himself or herself about those aspects of the planning process until the agreed milestone date. He or she can concentrate on other areas of the election process.

Note that related areas meet with the election administrator on the same day. For example, procurement and distribution, and procurement of vehicles, fuel, driver, etc. and implementation of distribution plan.