



## Support to Electoral Processes

2014



Domestic election observer watches the voting process in Ekiti state, Nigeria 2014

Photo Credit: USAID Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society Project

### QUICK FACTS

- The People’s Democratic Party (PDP) is the current presiding political party.
- Main political parties include: PDP, All Progressives Congress (APC), Labor, All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).
- Goodluck Jonathan is Nigeria’s current President, sworn into office in May 2010.
- Presidential and National Assembly Elections will be held on February 14th, 2015
- Governorship and State House of Assembly will be held on February 28th, 2015

### OVERVIEW

As the 2015 electoral cycle begins, political competition has increased and Nigeria’s regional and ethnic tensions are on the rise. USAID<sup>1</sup> supports electoral and political processes through targeted assistance to Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), domestic election observation efforts, and political party development. Current USAID elections assistance includes a focus on non-violence acknowledging that the 2011 elections were the most violent in Nigeria’s history with 800 fatalities in three days and over 65,000 displaced<sup>2</sup>.

Peaceful and credible elections are a key to development in Nigeria. They provide a channel for Nigerians to choose candidates who will govern and ensure access to basic services for citizens. Support to electoral processes strengthens Nigerian efforts to professionalize electoral administration, increase participation in electoral matters, address electoral conflict and reduce violence, increase participation of marginalized voters<sup>3</sup>, and provide support to political party development.

### PROJECTS

#### SUPPORT TO ELECTORAL REFORMS

This Project assists Nigeria’s INEC to institutionalize reforms to ensure more credible and accountable electoral processes. The Project interventions improve the quality of the elections, the competence of INEC while cultivating public confidence in elections and their outcomes.

The Project supports INEC in implementing a nationwide voter education campaign focused on voter registration and participation to ensure that all citizens – including those living with disabilities and other disenfranchised groups, know, understand, and can exercise their right to vote. INEC is in the process of training an estimated 1.2 million ad-hoc staff necessary for the conduct of the General Elections in February of 2015. The Project assists INEC with their Election Management System, designed to enhance coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency of election management

<sup>1</sup> The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) co-funds both “Support for Electoral Reforms” and “Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society” Projects.

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed-800>

<sup>3</sup> Women, youth, non-indigenous populations and internally displaced.



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Moderator leads Radio Program “Manifesto Hour” with political party representatives. The topic of the discussion was the inclusion of women, youth and people with disabilities into the political process.

*Photo Credit: USAID Support to Political Party Development Project*

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Timeframe: 2014-2017  
Regions: Nationwide

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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processes, and with Election Operations Support Centers to monitor the deployment of materials and collection of ballots. The Project also strengthens INEC’s capacity to conduct peaceful elections through better coordinated security planning, a targeted communications strategy, and more effective election dispute resolution mechanisms.

#### **ELECTORAL EMPOWERMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

The Support for the Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society Project strengthens Nigerians’ capacity to administer, observe, and report out on their own elections. The Project enhances Nigerians’ capacity to conduct domestic election observation and record election vote totals. The Project is training and deploying 2,500 domestic observers for the February 2015 General Elections. These observers are trained in how to conduct a “quick count” otherwise known as Parallel Vote Tabulation, which is a systematic observation methodology that independently measures the quality of election-day processes and official voting results.

The Project also supports youth participation in political processes and the promotion of peaceful elections. The project has launched a get-out-the-vote and non-violence campaign for 2015 endorsed by Nigerian non-partisan celebrities. Working closely with INEC, the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency, and other relevant bodies, the Project is exploring ways to assist Internally Displaced Persons with voting and exercising their civic rights to choose Nigeria’s leadership.

#### **SUPPORT TO POLITICAL PARTY DEVELOPMENT**

Positive long-term democratic development also depends upon strong, inclusive political parties. Political parties in Nigeria currently lack strong internal mechanisms that promote effective representation, inclusive decision-making and responsiveness to constituent needs.

To address these issues, the Support to Political Party Development Project works with political parties to strengthen their internal democracy. The Project assists political parties in their efforts to develop and communicate issue-based platforms taking into account various constituencies, including women, youth, people living with disabilities and private sector advocacy coalitions in Nigeria. The project assists parties to participate in candidate debates over radio, women candidate campaign training and educational fora, party poll agent training, and the promotion of non-violence messaging into campaigns.