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The Carter Center Notes Peaceful Elections in a Fragile Political and Social Context

Carter Center Election Observation Mission Preliminary Statement Côte d'Ivoire,
Legislative Election, December/2011

This statement is preliminary; a final report will be published after the end of the electoral period.

Executive Summary

Côte d'Ivoire's 2011 legislative elections represent an essential step in re-establishing the constitutional order in Cote d'Ivoire and achieving a key goal of the peace process laid out by the Political Accord of Ouagadougou. The Carter Center highlights the generally peaceful voting environment and the absence of major security incidents during the polls, which took place in the fragile political and social context of the post-electoral crisis of 2010-2011.

The question of participation in the electoral process was a central issue in negotiations between the opposition and the government. The government's efforts to fulfill the opposition's demands were unevenly appreciated. Certain political parties decided to take part in the elections, while others, most notably the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI), chose not to participate.

In this context, the Center welcomes not only the respectful attitude of the Ivorian people, but also political leaders during the polls, independent of their respective views and despite the rise in tensions observed on a local level in certain constituencies in the lead-up to the elections. While the voter turnout – which is not yet official – seemed relatively weak, it is likely because of several factors and interpretations in that regard should be nuanced.

The Carter Center encourages the government to pursue dialogue in a spirit of national reconciliation. The Center notes that important electoral reforms should be considered before a new electoral cycle begins. The Center calls on Ivorian actors to seize the opportunity presented by the municipal elections to pursue reconciliation. Authorities should prioritize the continuation of the identification process of the population and address the shortcomings of the voter registry.

The Carter Center continues its observation of the tabulation of results and calls upon the national institutions and authorities to maintain strict neutrality in the exercise of their duties.

The principal preliminary conclusions of the Center's assessment of the electoral process are the following:

- **An open process.** The Carter Center notes the openness of the nominations process and respect of the right to be elected, giving all eligible candidates and parties an opportunity to participate in the process. At the same time, it is the personal choice of individual actors whether to exercise their right to participate in the polls. The Center notes that the Dec. 11 elections are the third consecutive legislative elections characterized by the non-participation of one of the major political parties. This trend leads one to question the reasons why the political process is dysfunctional.
- **A significant drop in turnout.** The Carter Center notes that the legislative elections did not generate the same enthusiasm as the presidential elections. The reasons for this phenomenon are nuanced and should be attributed to multiple factors. The voter's choice to abstain from voting is a decision that could be motivated by numerous considerations, notably the disinterest often noted in legislative elections, in which the electoral dynamics appear to be less well understood, insufficient voter outreach, voter cynicism following the crisis after the presidential elections, the candidate nominations process within political parties, lower level of voter outreach, and a uneventful electoral campaign. FPI's abstention is an important element, however this alone is not the sole reason for lower voter turnout.
- **An ad hoc legal framework.** The legal framework that governs the legislative elections is based on a series of laws, political agreements and decisions that responded to focused specific considerations. The legal provisions related to the legislative polls contain important gaps, gray areas, and contradictions. The Carter Center strongly recommends comprehensive reform of the electoral law on the basis of lessons learned during the 2010 and 2011 electoral cycles, with particular emphasis on the constituency delimitations which should reflect the principle of equality of suffrage.
- **The impartiality of the election administration.** In spite of debates surrounding the composition of the IEC, the electoral authorities appeared to manage the elections in an impartial manner. The IEC was not always able to enforce legal provisions under its authority, but its actions were not discriminatory. The authority and structures of the electoral administration should be strengthened at the same time that reforms of the legal framework are considered. Without a doubt, the commission would benefit from increased professionalism and restructuring.
- **Gaps in the voter registry.** The technical and financial constraints, as well as a tight electoral timeline, did not allow for an update of the voter registry. Hundreds of thousands of potential voters were left off the registry prior to the presidential elections for a variety of reasons, mainly because of the conditions on which the registry was created. The Carter Center urges the Ivorian authorities to identify the most appropriate mechanisms to ensure that in the future, elections are conducted on the basis of an inclusive, reliable, and up-to-date voter registry.
- **A generally peaceful electoral campaign.** Candidates were generally free to campaign in an open and secure environment. The incidents reported did not affect this assessment. The Center deplors the laxity of the electoral authorities regarding the violations of the electoral code, particularly political activities before the official start of the campaign period, which favors candidates with significant financial resources, as well as the use of

state resources by candidates holding government office. Electoral authorities also allowed unabated the widespread practice of distributing cash or gifts during the campaign, although prohibited under the penal code.

- **Absence of regulation on campaign financing.** There are no campaign finance regulations governing the source, expenditures, or regulation of campaign funds. The absence of regulations favored candidates with large financial resources and stifled a transparent competition. The imbalance in financial resources was particularly visible between political party and independent candidates, and was not offset by public support. The Carter Center underscores the need to develop and implement campaign finance regulations in order to create a more level playing field.
- **A low participation of women in the electoral competition.** The limited number of female candidates running for the National Assembly illustrates the necessity to implement structural measures to help ensure the increased representation of women in public affairs. Although it is difficult to introduce effective measures to encourage gender balance within the constraints of a majoritarian system, incentives for political parties to integrate women in leadership positions, including as candidates, should be seriously considered.
- **Underestimated need for voter education.** The Carter Center regrets that this essential aspect of the electoral administration continues to be neglected. The IEC's information and messages were disseminated mainly through TV and radio, which are not necessarily accessible to a large majority of the population. While welcoming initiatives by civil society, The Carter Center underscores that these initiatives alone do not respond to existing needs. The State and electoral authorities have the primary responsibility for voter and civic education, and should ensure that long-term strategies are put in place to attain these goals.
- **Party agents and observer participation.** The Carter Center commends the significant presence of candidate representatives, including for independent candidates, in the polling stations during the polls and tabulation of results. Despite delays in the delivery of accreditation badges by the IEC, domestic observer also deployed across the national territory to observe the conduct of the elections.
- **Absence of coherent media regulations.** The electoral code does not regulate candidate access to the public media during the legislative elections campaign. The Carter Center notes that the High Authority of Audio Visual Communication, which is founded on the principle of equal access, took the initiative – although late in the process – to remind the media of the need to ensure equality between candidates in constituencies where the media covered campaign activities.

Background: The Carter Center received a letter of invitation from the IEC to observe the legislative elections. The Center deployed 18 medium-term observers three weeks before the polls and 12 short-term observers the week preceding the elections. The observers, deployed across the country, visited more than 140 polling stations. The diverse mission, composed of 19 nationalities, was led by Ms. Sarah Johnson, assistant director of the Democracy Program of The Carter Center. The Carter Center will stay in Cote d'Ivoire to observe the final phases of the tabulation process, the resolution of electoral disputes, and announcement of final results.

The Carter Center has been present in Côte d'Ivoire since 2008. The Center monitored the identification and voter registration process, the verification of the provisional voter list, and the 2010 presidential elections. The Carter Center mission in Côte d'Ivoire is supported by an office in Abidjan, led by Sabina Vigani.

The Center assesses Côte d'Ivoire's electoral process against the constitution and the electoral law, commitments made in the Ouagadougou Peace Accords, other agreements, and regional and international commitments. The Center conducts its election observation activities in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, which was adopted at the United Nations in 2005 and has been endorsed by 37 election observation groups. Carter Center public statements on the electoral process are available on its website:

www.cartercenter.org.

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Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Dec. 11 legislative elections were intended to bring closure to an extended period of crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. The polls were essential for renewing the mandate of the parliament in Côte d'Ivoire.¹ The elections are also an important step for the new Ivorian authorities to restore constitutional order and political stability after several years of conflict.

The presidential elections held at the end of 2010 were highly contested. After the Nov. 28 run-off, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced the preliminary results, which pronounced Alassane Ouattara, candidate of the *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR), the winner. However, the Constitutional Council cancelled the results of 13 northern administrative departments and declared that the incumbent president and candidate of *La majorité présidentielle* (LMP) Laurent Gbagbo, had won.

As noted in public statements, Carter Center observers saw no evidence of systematic irregularities that would have had a significant impact on the results. The Center's assessment concluded that the conduct of the run-off election had met international standards and that the Constitutional Council had misapplied the electoral law by annulling a portion of the results.

The results announced by the IEC were certified by the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations (SRSG) in Côte d'Ivoire and recognized by the international community. This situation plunged the country into a five-month period of intense violence that culminated in April when Abidjan fell to the newly created *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI) largely made up of former *Forces Nouvelles* troops. Former President Gbagbo was arrested on April 11, 2011.

The electoral and military defeat of the former presidential camp profoundly modified the Ivorian political landscape. The *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) and several small parties associated with Gbagbo – which coalesced in 2006 under the umbrella of the *Congrès National pour la Résistance et la Démocratie* (CNRD) – were destabilized with many party leaders in exile or prison. New political entities such as *Liberté et Démocratie pour la République* (LIDER) and *Cap-Unir pour la Démocratie et le Développement* (Cap-UDD) emerged in advance of the legislative elections. The CNRD parties conditioned their participation in the electoral process on specific demands, including the release of Gbagbo. Negotiations with the government stalled on this issue, and the FPI boycotted the 2011 legislative elections. The party suspended the membership of 38 FPI members who registered as independent candidates. Other CNRD parties oscillated between opting out and participating in the elections.²

On Nov. 29, less than two weeks before the elections, Gbagbo was transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to face four counts of crimes against humanity. Some CNRD-affiliated parties that had registered candidates withdrew from the electoral process briefly before

¹ The National Assembly's five-year term expired in 2005.

² This resulted in some parties registering candidates (e.g. UDCY, Cap-UDD and MNC-alternative), some party members participating under the banner of Cap-UDD (URD, UDCY, UNG, AIRD).

again confirming their participation after receiving government incentives, including the release of some of their party members. Conversely, 16 of the 38 independent candidates affiliated with the FPI withdrew from the process.

During the presidential election, Ouattara benefitted from the support of a coalition of parties, the *Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix* (RHDP), following the first round of the presidential election.³ The coalition intended to coordinate candidate nominations for the legislative elections.⁴ However, with the exception of two candidate lists, the parties were unable to come to an agreement, leading the RHDP to run essentially as separate entities. This created some tension as allies competed against one another within constituencies. Within the respective RHDP parties, the nomination process also created discontent and resulted in the independent candidacies of several members.

Through the 2005 Pretoria Agreement on the Peace Process in Cote d'Ivoire,⁵ the Ivorian parties invited the United Nations to play a role in the electoral process during the presidential and legislative elections. This confidence-building mechanism took the form of a certification mandate through which the SRSG would monitor and certify "that all stages of the electoral process provide all the necessary guarantees for holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in accordance with international standards"⁶ and other "agreed criteria."⁷ Working closely with the SRSG, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, the facilitator of the 2007 Ouagadougou Peace Agreement,⁸ also maintained contacts with various stakeholders and worked to create a constructive climate for political dialogue.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire guarantees basic human and political rights, including the right to vote for all citizens 18 years of age; the freedom of assembly, speech, and to demonstrate; and the right to form political parties among others. Political parties formed on regional, religious or ethnic basis are prohibited. Article 32 enshrines the obligation for an independent electoral commission to organize elections. Public authorities have a constitutional obligation to respect, protect and promote basic individual rights.

Côte d'Ivoire has also signed and ratified a series of international conventions pertaining to the conduct of elections. These treaties include: the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights (ICCPR);⁹ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention on the Political Rights of Women; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of

³ The coalition was composed of the RDR, PDCI, UDPCI, MFA, a faction of the PIT and the newly created UPCI.

⁴ The coalition members agreed to coordinate lists in those areas where RHDP did not gain more than 50 percent of the vote during the presidential elections.

⁵ Signed April 6, 2005.

⁶ SC 1765 (2007).

⁷ SC 2000 (2011). The additional criteria, previously elaborated in the 16th Report of the Secretary General on the UNOCI included: peace, inclusivity, state media, voters' list and results monitored via media monitoring, reports from field based monitoring teams, parallel tabulation of tally sheets, and the analyses of complaints.(S/2008/250, § 32).

⁸ Signed March 4, 2007.

⁹ Ratified on March 18, 1969.

Women in Africa; the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption; and the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.¹⁰

The national electoral framework has been regularly adapted to accommodate political considerations on an ad-hoc basis. The framework for the legislative elections is composed of several legal texts, primarily the constitution and the electoral code,¹¹ the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement,¹² and its subsequent components as well as amendments to the legal framework imposed by these agreements. The result is a fragmented framework, composed of various texts of unequal legal value, providing contradictory provisions and leaving several gaps.

Electoral and political actors frequently disregarded legal requirements that did not meet political expectations or concerns. While this dynamic can be attributed to the complex political situation, it has weakened the law as a tool to guide the electoral process. Although the electoral code was amended in 2008 in preparation for the presidential elections, the sections related to the legislative elections were left unchanged.

The Carter Center encourages the newly elected National Assembly to review and reform the electoral framework to address legal gaps and inconsistencies well in advance of the next electoral cycle.

ELECTION SYSTEM

The National Assembly is elected under the simple majority system. There are 169 single seat constituencies and 36 multi-seat constituencies for a total of 255 seats. The government increased the number of seats from 225 to 255 in 2011.¹³ Seats are allocated to the candidate or lists that attain the highest number of valid votes.

In majoritarian systems, the establishment of constituency boundaries is particularly critical. According to international obligations as well as constitutional principles, the equality of the vote should be respected.¹⁴ In Côte d'Ivoire, the IEC proposes constituency boundaries, and the final decision is vested with the government. The initial IEC proposal on new constituent boundaries was never made public, preventing an assessment of the impact of the final decision made by the government. While there is no legal text to support it, the 2011 distribution of seats and the subsequent electoral map was allegedly based on the estimated population, the size of electoral districts, the number of localities as well as other factors related to the ability to guarantee one seat per district and avoid reducing the number of seats previously allocated to each district.¹⁵ A

¹⁰ Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance, Supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

¹¹ Law No. 2000-514 of the Aug. 1, 2000 Electoral Code was amended by Order No. 2000-133 of April 14, 2008.

¹² The Ouagadougou Political Agreement was signed on March 4, 2007.

¹³ Decree N° 2011-264 from Sept. 28 2011. Regarding the determination of the electoral constituencies for the 2011-2016 legislature.

¹⁴ UN, ICCPR, art. 25(B).

¹⁵ The formula for constituency delimitation was based on population density (55 percent), the size of districts (25 percent) and the number of localities (20 percent). Other political factors were taken into consideration, including the number of seats that had been previously allocated to that area, so that the number of seats would not be reduced.

national census was last conducted in 1998. Newly introduced administrative boundaries also affected the constituency delimitations.

The Carter Center expresses serious concern that Côte d'Ivoire's constituent boundaries perpetuate major distortions in the representative value of each seat. In the most extreme, a seat in constituency 122 in Kabadougou represents an electorate of 2207 eligible voters, while a seat in constituency 41 in Abidjan represents 106,834 eligible voters. As such, the variations in the relative weight of each vote range from 1 to 48. The distribution of seats also favors the northern regions that have a low population density and heavily discriminates against urban areas. This is particularly true in Abidjan, which represents almost 30 percent of the electorate but holds only 10 percent of the seats. While TCC recognizes that distributing seats among regions in a situation where a single major urban center dominates and the population density varies significantly is difficult, especially in a unicameral system, the State's obligations in terms of fair representation or constitutional rights to equal treatment should prevail.¹⁶ The government and future electoral bodies should also endeavor to make transparent decisions based on legal and objective criteria.¹⁷

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

An independent and impartial electoral authority that functions transparently and professionally is recognized internationally as an effective means of ensuring that citizens are able to participate in genuine democratic elections and that other international obligations related to the electoral process can be met.¹⁸

As an independent election management body, the IEC is responsible for implementing and supervising all electoral operations and has considerable legal authority. The current composition of the IEC was established in 2006, and consists of 31 members¹⁹ appointed based on the Pretoria Agreement formula which required two representatives of each of the ten party signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, as well as other members from governmental, ministerial, judicial, and presidential bodies.²⁰

In light of the 2010 change in government, the IEC was shuffled in August 2011,²¹ with the nomination of new members representing the president of the republic, relevant ministries, the Superior Council of Magistrates and bar association. The RDR, PIT and the ex-rebel movements also took this opportunity to designate new representatives. Representatives appointed by the former administration on regional, departmental and local commissions, save for a few exceptions, have not been systematically replaced.²²

¹⁶ The principle of the equality of the vote is at the base of all pertinent international legal treaties, starting with ICCPR, art. 25(b). Article 33 of the constitution stipulates that "Suffrage is universal, free, equal and secret."

¹⁷ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment, Art. 25.

¹⁸ *Idem.* Art. 25, para. 20.

¹⁹ The current number is 30, as the position entitled to the representative of the President of National Assembly is vacant, after the mandate of the National Assembly was terminated by President Ouattara.

²⁰ Twenty members for signatories, with the right to vote, and 11 for ministries and institutions with no right to vote.

²¹ Decree n. 2011 – 207, Aug. 10, 2011, Nomination and replacement of members of the IEC.

²² IEC officials informed TCC that reappointing election management officials on the local level would have been such a long process that it would have affected the election timeline.

Opposition parties, most notably the FPI, but also the CNRD parties and the recently created Lider, criticized the composition of the IEC and called for the appointment of a “more neutral” election management body. In response, a fifth vice-presidential position was created for the FPI, however that position remained vacant as the party deemed the measure insufficient to meet their demands.

In order to conduct its work, the IEC established lower level commissions, at each administrative level including 19 regional commissions, each placed under the direct supervision of an IEC commissioner, 75 departmental commissions, 45 district commissions and 263 local commissions.²³ These bodies essentially duplicate the composition of the central commission, and include over 10,000 commissioners. The current IEC structure corresponds to previous administrations and was left untouched in spite of successive redistricting. Considering the tight deadlines left to the IEC, it would have been impossible to reconfigure the lower level election administration structure, even to adapt it to the new constituent boundaries before the elections were held.

The commission addressed the inconsistencies between the structure of the electoral administration and the newly reconfigured constituency delimitations by appointing 150 locations as special “*commission de reference*.” These centers were in charge of receiving and tabulating the results on a local level before sending the results to the departmental and regional bodies. Unfortunately, the list of the 105 “reference commissions” was only transmitted the week preceding the polls, making it difficult for local commissioners to plan accordingly.

In the aftermath of the post-election crisis, the Carter Center encouraged key stakeholders to consider provisional adjustments to the election management body, so as to re-build confidence among all parties in preparation of the legislative elections. Although this was not undertaken, the commission appears to have exercised its duties in an impartial manner.

While the IEC originally suggested holding the legislative elections during the first trimester of 2012, the December 2011 date was ultimately driven by external considerations unrelated to the election administration. The Carter Center notes that the IEC had to prepare for these elections within a tight timeline, leaving little flexibility.

During the process of organizing presidential elections, the IEC had to take political circumstances into consideration. As a result, it generally avoided making politically sensitive decisions. This again happened during the 2011 legislative elections, when, for example, the window for candidate registration was twice extended for the benefit of political parties. The delays imposed by major political parties during the candidate nomination process also impacted the delivery of ballots, which put considerable pressure on the commission and its partners to pack and deliver sensitive materials to the local constituencies on time.²⁴ While it demonstrates the limits of the IEC autonomy and the difficulties to fully exercise its competencies in a

²³ *Commission Electoral Regional (CER), Commission Electoral Departemental (CED), Commission Electoral Sous-Prefectoral (CESP), and the Commission Electoral Locale (CEL).*

²⁴ In Bondoukou, Koun Fao and Bouna, sensitive material arrived at department level less than 48 hours before the elections, as opposed to the five days advance initially planned.

sensitive political context, the commission's efforts were intended to support an open electoral process without exacerbating political tensions.

Unfortunately, these efforts did not extend to effective external communication and the transparency of the commission and its work. Both electoral stakeholders and the public had difficulty to receive information from the commission about its work and decisions. Commission meetings were generally closed to the public and information was rarely shared through formal channels.

Although the IEC regularly communicated information about the process through press conferences and public statements, detailed information about decisions, instructions and procedures adopted by the IEC were not generally made available to the public. Internal communication and coordination between the IEC and their subsidiary bodies was also insufficient. At times, local commissioners received essential information through the telephone or during meetings with the regional supervisors, rather than official communications. According to observer reports, local commissioners were informed of electoral procedures, such as the deployment of sensitive electoral material and process for the tabulation of results only seven days before the polls during the trainings held by the regional supervisors.

A local commissioner also informed Carter Center observers that he learned about certain key procedural changes on television, rather than receiving an official notification from the IEC, such as the ability for an individual to vote with a "proof of identity" for voters who lost their ID and voter card. The Center's observers reported that the IEC failed to follow up on the announcement with an information campaign at the local level, undermining the opportunity for people to obtain information from local authorities that could have affected their ability to vote.²⁵

In contrast to other information, polling and counting procedures, which were quite similar to those applied during the presidential elections, were issued in a timely manner by the IEC. Local commissioners and polling staff were trained on polling and counting procedures in cascading levels in the week preceding the elections.

Procedures on the transmission and tabulation of results however remained unclear until the eve of the elections. The IEC issued a press release on Dec. 2 stating that, as in the presidential elections, officials would conduct both a manual as well as electronic tabulation of results. The Carter Center requested and obtained a document from the IEC outlining the procedures to be applied, which was identical to the protocol for transmission and tabulation of results drafted by the IEC between the two rounds of the presidential elections, with the date written in by hand. Carter Center observers reported that a majority of departmental and local commissions were still awaiting instructions less than a week before the elections about the transmission and tabulation of results.

²⁵ Local commissioners were also challenged to conduct their work due to a lack of material support. During the post-election crisis, many election administration offices were destroyed or ransacked. A number of them were relocated. Despite efforts by the IEC in cooperation with UNOCI to replace equipment damaged in the post-election violence, observers reported cases of local commissions still missing essential office equipment, such as computers and chairs in Gagnoa, Duekoue, Man, Bangolo, Agboville, Bouaké, Gboguhe, and Bonoua.

The timely issuing and communication of procedures by election authorities is essential to allow for adequate training of election officials and to inform stakeholders and the general public. The Carter Center strongly encourages future electoral management bodies to strengthen both internal and external communication, enhancing the capacity of electoral stakeholders to follow the process effectively. The Center also encourages the commission to publish its decisions and documents more systematically through a diversity of channels and to open meetings to public participation.

VOTER EDUCATION

Voter education efforts are necessary to ensure an informed electorate is able to effectively exercise their right to vote.²⁶ The fulfillment of the international obligation of universal suffrage is partially dependent on effective voter education.²⁷

The IEC produced little in terms of efforts to provide Ivorians with voter education. It produced some billboards in the two weeks prior to election day as well as posters, however, outreach materials were largely absent in the polling stations. With the support of international partners, the IEC also produced a short video simulating voting and counting operations. The video was broadcast on national TV four times after the evening news in the week prior to the elections. While this effort contributed to voter education efforts, the Carter Center notes that voter education disseminated mainly through the mass media is insufficient in addressing existing needs, especially given that populations who could have benefited the most from voter education did not necessarily have access to the mass media.²⁸

Carter Center observers met with civil society organizations engaged in voter education activities in several regions. However, significant discrepancies were discernable among regions.²⁹ As election day neared, several political parties reached out to their supporters to explain how to cast their ballot.

While political parties and civil society organizations can contribute to voter education efforts, internationally recognized good practice indicates that impartial and consistent voter education is the primary responsibility of state organs, chiefly the election management body.

Carter Center observers reported personal initiatives by local commissions to reach out to the electorate; however such activities were limited in scope and mainly relied on the motivation of individuals involved. The IEC should have made better use of lower level commissions throughout the country to increase voter education efforts, though these activities should have been budgeted and mobilized in a timely manner.

²⁶ ICCPR, Art. 25; United Nations Human Rights Committee, General Comment 25, paragraph 11

²⁷ Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Manual for Election Observation, sec. 5.5

²⁸ Statistics about invalid ballots established by the IEC after both rounds of the presidential elections highlighted significant regional differences, with the least developed regions recording four times the number of invalid ballots than in Abidjan. These statistics demonstrate the limits of voter education through the mass media and the need for increased grassroots outreach.

²⁹ Civil society organizations were especially active in voter education in Abidjan and other bigger cities such as Bouake, Daloa and San Pedro. Carter Center observers encountered little or no voter education activities in Aboisso or Bondoukou.

The post-presidential election crisis also demonstrated that voter education needed to go beyond the mobilization of voters and information on polling procedures. Increased communication to clarify the respective roles of institutions involved in the electoral process as a whole would have been useful, as well as efforts to enhance information about the role of the National Assembly.

The Carter Center urges future electoral management bodies to seriously consider the need for comprehensive voter education, and for the state to provide funding for these activities.

VOTER REGISTRY

Voter registration is recognized as an important means to ensure every citizen the right to vote. Where registration of voters is required, it should be facilitated and obstacles to such registration should not be imposed.³⁰

The president of the IEC, Youssouf Bakayoko, declared in a Nov. 24 interview that the 2010 voter registry would be used for the legislative elections. This was the first time that the issue of the registry was discussed publicly. The IEC president argued that it was preferable to avoid reopening the existing registry, given the post-election crisis.

The voter registry for the presidential elections, which included 5,725,721 voters, was endorsed by the main political stakeholders in September 2010, and certified by the SRSG. Voter registration was carried out with an *ad hoc* identification process aimed at delivering new ID cards. This operation stretched over an exceptionally long period, almost two years from the launch of registration to the final voter list, and was marked by difficulties in practical implementation and recurrent political deadlocks.

In its preliminary statement following the run off of the presidential elections, the Carter Center acknowledged the political acceptance of the voter list, while expressing reservations with regard to the overall results of the voter registration process in light of the initial targets set by the Ivorian actors and international good practice. The Center also highlighted that some 800,000 persons who participated in the identification and voter registration process, were not included, for varying reasons, on the final voter list.³¹ The Carter Center also underlined that, due to the administrative requirements to be able to register and the difficulties the process faced, several hundred thousand registrants were likely to have not been able to register.³²

The voter register is thus far from as inclusive as it should be with regard to the right of citizens to effectively participate in public life, as entrenched in international law. The Ouagadougou agreement set April 1, 1990 as the static date for the youngest citizens to participate in the

³⁰ UN HRC, General Comment no. 25 “The right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to public service”, para. 11.

³¹ These persons can be grouped into four categories: some 500,000 persons on the “grey list” who could not provide evidence of their Ivorian nationality; 207,000 people that registered for the purposes of getting a new ID card, but turned 18 since Apr. 1, 2010; 55,000 people withdrawn from the provisional list after the administrative verification of the list against civil registries and 20,000 people rejected for technical reasons.

The Permanent Consultative Framework of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, including during the time of President Gbagbo, Prime Minister Soro, PDCI President Bédié and RDR President Ouattara, explicitly committed to address the situation of the third and fourth categories after the presidential elections.

³² Cote d’Ivoire Presidential Run-off Election: High Voter Turnout Amid Political Tension, Nov. 30, 2010.

election. As no adjustments were made, the register does not meet the constitutional right for citizens that are eighteen years of age and older to participate in the elections.

Still, considering the tight electoral timeline driven by political considerations, and the technical and financial implications of reopening registration, the Carter Center understands that it was effectively impossible for the IEC to update the voter register. Furthermore, the decision to not allow citizens the right to alter their principle address of registration, even if adopted prior to the presidential election, could effectively disenfranchise many who moved for personal reasons or because of the post-electoral crisis.

The Carter Centre urges the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the IEC to seriously consider how to include those who could not register as voters, as well as to explore how to set up a registration mechanism that would allow building upon the current voter register while guaranteeing inclusivity and sustainability of the State's investment in the register.

CANDIDATES, PARTIES AND THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

The right of individuals to participate in public affairs, including the establishment of political parties and freedom of association, expression and assembly are obligations under international law.³³

Nominations. In order to be eligible for the legislative assembly an Ivorian citizen must be between the age of 25 and 75 and enjoy the right to vote.³⁴ Additionally, continuous residency in Côte d'Ivoire for five years prior to election day is required as well as a relatively modest deposit of 100,000 FCFA (\$201 USD) and proof of financial solvency. Each candidate must present their nomination papers along with a replacement candidate, who must submit to the same conditions of eligibility, other than the deposit). The law requires certain classes of civil servants running for public office to offer a letter of resignation to avoid a potential conflict of interest if the candidate wins.³⁵ While the overall framework for candidacy complies with most commonly agreed principles, there are a few troubling aspects. First, the law does not allow for naturalized citizens to stand for public office.³⁶ Second, given the various categories of citizens who were excluded from the voter register, some of those who were eligible to stand for office were deprived of their right to candidacy.³⁷

The registration process, which opened on Oct. 17, was affected by several factors. According to law, the process should have closed on Oct. 26. However, the main political parties failed to submit their nominations papers by the deadline and thus the IEC extended registration to Oct. 31. RDR and PDCI both filed their candidates' nomination papers late on Oct. 31. These files were being processed by the IEC, when on Nov. 3, the IEC chairman made an announcement

³³ ICCPR, Article 25(a); ICCPR, art. 21, U.N.HRC General Comment no. 25, para. 26.

³⁴ The criteria to be registered, related to age, nationality and judicial status. However, in the current context, most are related to the negotiated conditions for establishing the register. The Carter Centre previously issued several documents specifically dealing with the issue of voter registration: Dec. 22, 2008, May 8, 2009 and Feb. 1, 2010.

³⁵ Professionals including civil servants, magistrates, army officers and others working in an official capacity for the state are required to present a resignation document confirming upon taking office.

³⁶ Article 71 and 72 contain apparent contradictions. Article 71 bans naturalized citizens to run while Article 72 allows candidates that have been citizens for at least 10 years.

³⁷ UN, ICCPR, art. 25(b).

that candidate registration would be reopened for one additional day on Nov. 4 ostensibly to accommodate candidates from three small CNRD parties. The RHDP also took advantage of this opportunity to reorganize their candidate lists and in particular for the PDCI to submit additional nominations following disagreements within the coalition. Two consecutive laws amending the Electoral Code were adopted to adjust the law regarding the registration deadlines. These extensions are illustrative of an atmosphere in which electoral participants failed to adhere to clear standing laws and procedures, placing the IEC in an unenviable political situation in order to enforce the law or accommodate important political actors.

The IEC registered a total of 946 candidates or lists of candidates³⁸ and rejected 18 nominees, including 12 candidates who withdrew their candidacy prior to the registration deadline. The IEC made commendable efforts while considering candidate nominations in communicating with individual candidates to ensure they had the possibility of completing their nomination packages when supporting documents were missing. Twenty-two complaints were filed with the Constitutional Council regarding 17 registrants. Out of these, the Constitutional Council deemed three candidates ineligible, bringing the total number of candidates to 943.³⁹

Campaign Period. The official campaign period started on Dec. 3 at midnight and closed on Dec. 9. While a one-week campaign is prohibitively short, many political parties' candidates engaged in campaign activities before the official period. Two weeks ahead of the campaign opening, observers reported several political parties organizing public meetings to present their candidates.⁴⁰ Throughout the week before the official campaign period, many candidates canvassed door-to-door and held meetings with traditional chiefs and other influential personalities.

The election code explicitly forbids electoral propaganda before the officially prescribed period, and provides for sanctions against breaches. IEC Vice-President Yacouba Bamba spoke out specifically on the display of posters before the campaign opening, highlighting its prohibition under the electoral code. The IEC failed to sanction candidates who campaigned outside of the official campaign period. The Carter Center recognizes the constraints given the abbreviated campaign period, but notes that the commissions comment was the only acknowledgment by the IEC of systematic violations of the electoral code.

Campaign activities increased with the opening of the official period. The imbalance in financial and logistical resources between candidates, in particular between independents and those sponsored by political parties, were clear. This trend was accentuated by the blatant violation of the electoral code by several candidates holding official positions. Observers noted in particular government ministers who used state means, including cars, human resources and public security forces, to campaign.⁴¹

³⁸ In two constituencies, the PDCI candidate ran unopposed.

³⁹ Nov. 23, 2011 Press Release from the Constitutional Council. The Constitutional Council has not made the basis for their decision public.

⁴⁰ In one notable case, the RDR organized a tour of the country one week before the start of the campaign to present its candidates. Rallies had approximately 300 attendees in Gaguoa, 2000 in Man, and others in Divo and Bouaké.

⁴¹ These actions were observed in Man, Agboville, Koumassi, and Bondoukou.

Penal code provisions related to vote buying were also ignored throughout the electoral campaign. The media widely reported on candidates who distributed gifts⁴² and donations, including cash, to potential supporters.⁴³ Carter Center observers overheard candidates discussing how much money they planned to distribute to various villages and also reported a widespread practice of candidates distributing money during campaign events. The Carter Center encourages future electoral management bodies to sanction candidates who engage in vote buying and other activities that violate the penal code and impede a competitive electoral process.

Freedom of assembly was generally upheld throughout the campaign period. However, certain parties abused the use of public space, monopolizing prime public locations for the duration of the campaign. The government and IEC should take steps in future elections to ensure equal access to public areas to all political parties, particularly during an abbreviated campaign period.

Despite the overall peaceful environment, tension increased towards the end of the campaign. Campaign messages initially focused on reconciliation, peace and development made way, in certain areas, to personal attacks against contenders, references to ethnicity and calls to the electorate not to vote for candidates who were not of the same ethnic group. Observers deployed in the regions of Tonkpi (18-Montagnes), Agnéby-Tiassa and Haut Sassandra reported such instances. Observers also reported localized cases of violent election-related incidents in Man, Facobly, Gbeke, and Aboisso, as well as instances of intimidation and harassment of candidates in Abidjan, Gagnoa, Tanda, Daloa, and San Pedro. In some constituencies, tensions were palpable between RDR official candidates and the party's members running as independent candidates, especially in cases where the official candidate was an influential personality. The Carter Center deplores verbal attacks and threats by senior party officials, echoed by the press, against disgruntled members who decided to run independently of the party structures.

In the aftermath of the post electoral crisis, the FPI was destabilized as many of the party leaders were jailed or in exile. In that context, the party conditioned its participation in the electoral process on specific demands. Those included the release of Gbagbo and other party leaders, allowing for the safe return of exiled party leaders, removing a freeze on the assets of FPI leaders, guarantees regarding security, the restructuring of the IEC. The negotiations between the government and FPI and the larger CNRD coalition stalled, and on Nov. 23, the FPI announced it would boycott the 2011 legislative elections.

The Carter Center's observers also monitored the impact of the FPI's call to boycott the elections. In some areas, FPI actively campaigned for the boycott and in Daloa, the party succeeded in forcing an independent candidate close to the party to withdraw. In other areas, however, FPI instructed voters to support CNRD candidates.

Campaign financing There are no campaign finance regulations governing the source or expenditures of campaign funds. The Ivorian government however provides public funding to

⁴² Gifts distributed included sixty thousand school kits for Facoubly, cash, generators, lamps, medicine and payment of medical fees, meals and other items.

⁴³ The distribution of cash was reported at most rallies in Daloa, Agboville, Man, and others in Bouaké and Gagnoa.

political parties, groupings, and presidential candidates.⁴⁴ The law stipulates that parties in the National Assembly receive government financing proportionate to the number of seats held in parliament.⁴⁵ An exception was made for the 2000-2005 legislature to allow political parties who have elected representatives at local levels to benefit from this funding even if they are not represented in the assembly. This action was intended to even the playing level among the parties, most notably allowing the RDR which boycotted the 2000 National Assembly elections, to receive public funding. This approach continued from 2006 through 2010. After the presidential election, the FPI and the other parties did not receive their final installment due to the post-electoral crisis. The Carter Center regrets that the last installment for 2010 was finally paid to the FPI shortly before the elections.

Added to the lack of any provisions limiting and reporting on campaign financing, if the impunity observed in terms of the use of state resources or vote buying is not addressed, widespread political cynicism among voters will increase and may instill a climate of defiance among political competitors. The Carter Center stresses the need to establish, in view of future electoral cycles, a set of implementable regulations to enforce the principles enshrined in the International Convention against Corruption and to establish the means to enforce existing legal provisions effectively.⁴⁶

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

International human rights treaties foresee that women shall enjoy equal rights to men,⁴⁷ and that in some cases, states shall take special, temporary measures to achieve *de facto* equality for women.⁴⁸ State obligations to promote *de facto* equality for women derive, in part, from broader obligations regarding absence of discrimination⁴⁹ and the right of all citizens to participate in the public affairs of their country regardless of gender.⁵⁰

Following the 2000 legislative elections, women made up 8.9 percent of the National Assembly. Prospects for increased female representation are limited considering that only 128 female candidates contested the 2011 legislative elections.

The Ivorian government provided ad hoc funding to support female candidates in conducting their campaigns. President Ouattara allocated 1 million CFA for each female candidate. While the Center welcomes efforts to achieve greater representation of women in the National Assembly, this symbolic does not address the structural and social issues impeding women's participation.

⁴⁴ Decision No 2005-07/PR, July 15, 2005.

⁴⁵ Article 4 to 7 of Decision No 2005-07/PR. One one-thousandth of the budget of the states is distributed among political parties and groupings represented in the National Assembly using a formula that splits funding providing 40 percent to political entities based on the number of votes they received during Legislative elections, 40 percent based on the number of seats that political entities got in the national assembly and thirty percent based on the number of deputies registered within parliamentary groups.

⁴⁶ General Assembly resolution 58/4 Oct. 31 2003.

⁴⁷ ICCPR, art. 3.

⁴⁸ CEDAW, art. 3.

⁴⁹ ICCPR, art. 25; 2(1); 26

⁵⁰ UDHR, Art. 21(a); ICCPR, Art 25(9); ICERD, Art 5(c)

Considering the difficulties women face as candidates and the limited number of women who were endorsed by political parties (11.3 percent), the concept of introducing credible incentives should be seriously considered in the future. While measures guaranteeing minimum representation in the national assembly and effective integration into political life are difficult to implement within the limits of a majoritarian system, public support could act as a significant incentive to parties to integrate women into their decision-making bodies, field a significant percentage of women candidates or manage to elect women into parliament or executive positions.

MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

A previous formulation of the election law required equal access to state media during election campaigns.⁵¹ The current article was amended in 2008 with regards to public access for presidential candidates, but did not consider legislative races. Whether intentional or not, the amended law specifically restricted the equal treatment requirement in presidential elections. Consequently, there are no direct obligations in terms of coverage of the campaign on State television, radio or newspaper. In the case of RTI, the contract of service refers to obligations from Article 16 that are non-existent, leaving the remaining general obligations for pluralistic coverage to Article 3.⁵²

In spite of the legal vacuum, the IEC still had the authority to adopt measures providing equal access for all candidates to official electronic and written media.⁵³ Though difficult, considering the high number of candidates for the legislative elections, a specific framework on coverage for these legislative elections could have been established. Instead, the High Authority for the Audiovisual Communication (HACA) issued four decisions, adopted on Dec. 5, two days into the official campaign period. These decisions outlined the main principles to be followed by audiovisual media during the campaign period. It stated that: public radio and TV should ensure equal access to candidates and political parties running in the constituencies where media coverage is provided; that public media should aim to cover campaign activities in the most constituencies possible; and refrain from broadcasting hate and xenophobic speeches, speeches inciting violence and mocking candidates or their representatives. The HACA also noted that local radio stations (*radios de proximité*) were not allowed to cover campaign activities or broadcast debates related to the elections.

As well, the HACA continued to monitor state media during the campaign period. HACA officials explained to the Carter Center that the monitoring of local radio stations is difficult to implement as their broadcast radius is limited. Instead, the HACA acts on complaints and during the campaign period it investigated five cases of local radio broadcasters that allegedly covered campaign activities. The HACA summoned the managers of two local stations in Beoumi and Adzopé.

⁵¹ Article 30 of the 2005 election law.

⁵² Article 3 of the RTI contract of Service. An additional obstacle to the broadcasting of campaign programs on RTI is that the public media, although having public service obligations, request specifically allocated funds to do so, as stated in Article 16. It does not seem that funds were budgeted for this purpose.

⁵³ Law 2004/642.

The Carter Center welcomes the initiative taken by the HACA to provide for regulation of the media during the electoral period, and encourages review and reform of the media framework to include also legislative elections in addition those imposed during the presidential elections.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DOMESTIC OBSERVATION

Fifty domestic observer groups were accredited by the IEC. Several of them, among others the CSCI, COSOPCI, LIDHO, OFACI and COFEMCI had monitored the presidential elections. However, the relative short notice in the announcement of the election date made it difficult for domestic organizations to organize internally as well as raise funds for activities. The Carter Center regrets that although a new system was implemented by the IEC for the production of accreditation badges, important delays in the accreditation process complicated the task of national observers. Some elements of civil society were also involved in the voter education, but again had little resources to play a significant role.

ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Constitutional Council exercises jurisdiction over electoral disputes. The court is composed of seven members. The President of the Republic appoints three members and the president, while the other three members are selected by the President of the National Assembly.⁵⁴ In principle, the judges are appointed to an irrevocable six-year mandate. Due to the exceptional circumstances resulting from the reversal of the results of the presidential elections, President Ouattara took extraordinary action to remove several members of the court, appointing a new president and some of the judges.

The legal framework for electoral disputes resolution comprises provisions from the election law and elements of the law organizing the Constitutional Council. This framework leaves several uncertainties on the procedures to be followed and the timeframe in which disputes may be adjudicated. The Constitutional Council and the IEC discussed and agreed on common interpretation on some of the grey areas in the legal framework, including when various legal deadlines would be triggered and what happens as a consequence. However, little to no communication was provided to the public regarding the legal deadlines to file complaints which may restrict citizens' right to due process.

Some complaints were lodged at the IEC level, mostly by written communication, but as there are no administrative mechanisms to address complaints, the IEC likely did not process them. On the other hand, the Constitutional Council, which has jurisdiction to hear electoral complaints, generally only hears cases after election day. In this instance, the complainant must prove that the respondent caused a harm that altered the results in order to receive a favorable ruling.

The Election Law does not provide a clear deadline for the announcement of the provisional results. It only states that the IEC must transfer the polling stations protocols to the Constitutional Council within three days following the elections. According to the law, the only the "administrative constituency", which no longer exists, may announce the results. For the purpose of these elections, the Constitutional Council and the IEC agreed that an announcement

⁵⁴ Former Presidents of the Republic are in principle full members of the Council. President Bedié explicitly waived this right in order to run for the 2010 election. President Gbagbo's case obviously relates to his legal situation.

of provisional results would be done at the national level and that the announcement would initiate a five-day period for candidates, parties, coalitions of parties or voters to bring their complaints to the Constitution Council for consideration. In principle, this can be done directly at the Council, but may also be completed through the IEC or the Ministry of Interior (through the *préfets* and *sous-préfets*). The Council has 15 days to treat the complaints and issue decisions and has the authority to not only nullify results, but also redress them, unlike during the presidential elections. Considering the very limited existing experience in dealing with electoral challenges and the highly controversial role the Council had after the presidential election, the role of the current Constitutional Council may be regarded as critical for the future in establishing jurisprudence and restoring the Institutions standing.

VOTING

The atmosphere on election day was calm and voting generally took place in an orderly and transparent manner throughout Côte d'Ivoire. The turnout figures, which are not yet official, appear low which could be attributed to the boycott encouraged by FPI, but could also be attributed to, among other considerations, having just completed the 2010 presidential elections which led to levels of violence that traumatized the electorate.⁵⁵

Unfortunately, five polling stations in Beoumi did not open at all, as village chiefs refused to release election materials they were charged with storing overnight as they did not want the election to go ahead. Most other polling stations in the country opened approximately 30 to 60 minutes late, which in many cases was due to an absence of polling staff but in other cases was a result of a lack of materials.⁵⁶ The delayed openings did not ultimately affect the integrity of the elections given the low turnout.

Carter Center observers assessed the voting process very positively in the 140 polling stations visited. However, electoral procedures were not consistently followed, in some cases leaving sensitive materials vulnerable, such as ballot boxes that were not correctly sealed.⁵⁷ As well, observers noted many cases of polling staff neglecting to check voters' hands for indelible ink.⁵⁸ In such procedural cases, no intent to harm the integrity of the election was observed, but rather reflects a lack of training and guidance. A further lack of guidance could be seen with the new concept of having two voter lists at polling stations, but what the staff did with these lists varied enormously. In some cases voters were required to sign both voter lists, while in others one list was either used as a reference or not at all.

Observers assessed that polling staff conducted their duties effectively, though were not always informing voters about voting procedures. Women were noted as holding nearly 10 percent of

⁵⁵ Other potential reasons for the low turnout may include a lack of interest for legislative elections as Ivorians have less knowledge of legislative powers and the many candidates seeking office compared to the presidential office.

⁵⁶ Carter Center observers noted 62 delays in opening of greater than 30 minutes out of 140 polling stations visited. However, in Bouake and Man, a few polling stations only opened at 16:00 due to a lack of materials and provided extended hours until 21:00 to attempt to compensate the late start.

⁵⁷ Carter Center observers reported that in 23 percent of polling stations visited, the ballot boxes were not effectively sealed. As well, 20 percent of stations did not receive nine or more seals to be able to effectively seal the ballot box both at the opening of election day and again for the transportation of materials to tabulation.

⁵⁸ Observers noted that 34 percent of polling stations staff did not check voters' hands for ink.

the president positions in polling stations, while serving as secretary in approximately 30 percent of the cases.

No specific procedures were provided for voters to cast a ballot outside of their registered constituency, this was particularly problematic for the many internally displaced persons (IDPs) that for a variety of reasons did not want to go back to their registered region to vote. In some cases, Carter Center observes noted that some would be voters were unable to cast their ballot because of a lack of identification, especially in the case of IDPs that may have lost their identification during the recent violence. One week prior to the election, the IEC decided to allow such voters to cast a ballot using a temporary proof of identity document (attestation d'identité), however attaining this document is not a simple process and requires both a birth certificate and court order.

Circumstances in and around polling stations were rated very positively by Carter Center observer and the high number of list representatives present contributed to greater transparency in the electoral process.⁵⁹ A total of 30 national observers were seen in the polling stations visited by the Carter Center throughout the day.

COUNTING

The general assessment of the count was positive in the polling stations observed. Procedures were generally followed and in situations where voter marks were not made in the marking area of the ballot, decisions were made using the template or procedures provided by the IEC. In some cases, materials were not packed in the prescribed manner, but again not out of malice, but simple poor training. During the transport of materials from the polling station level to tabulation, in the west of the country, armed individuals attacked polling station staff and stole materials, including ballots and protocols for 14 polling stations.⁶⁰

The tabulation of polling station results was completed relatively quickly, made possible by the fact that commissions were not verifying protocol results or processing them utilizing control checks to ensure figures were correct. This removes an important method of checking for mistakes in reporting and could create serious delays at the national level if polling numbers do not add up. Observers generally had access to all aspects of the tabulation process, though in one case the tabulation commission did not initially allow for Carter Center observers to view the tabulation process.⁶¹ Tabulation is ongoing, though results in some regions have begun to provide preliminary results.

BACKGROUND

The Carter Center received a letter of invitation from the IEC to observe the legislative elections. The Center deployed 18 medium-term observers three weeks before the polls and 12 short-term observers the week preceding the elections. The observers, deployed across the country, visited over 140 polling stations. The diverse mission, composed of 19 nationalities, was led by Ms. Sarah

⁵⁹ The two most represented lists observed with representatives in polling stations were RDR and PDCI with 122 and 119 representatives respectively in the 136 stations visited.

⁶⁰ In Bonon and Duekoue staff transporting materials from polling stations was attacked and all the election materials were stolen, while in Vavoua, a ballot box was burnt after closing.

⁶¹ Carter Center observers were initially requested to wait for tabulation results in a separate room from the tabulation process in Koumassi.

Johnson, Assistant Director of the Democracy Program of the Carter Center. The Carter Center will stay in Cote d'Ivoire to observe the final phases of the tabulation process, the resolution of electoral disputes and announcement of final results. This statement is preliminary; a final report will be published after the end of the electoral period.

The Carter Center has been present in Côte d'Ivoire since 2008. The Center monitored the identification and voter registration process, the verification of the provisional voter list, and the 2010 presidential elections. The Carter Center mission in Côte d'Ivoire is supported by an office in Abidjan, lead by Sabina Vigani.

The Center assesses Côte d'Ivoire's electoral process against the constitution and the electoral law, commitments made in the Ouagadougou Peace Accords, other agreements, and regional and international commitments. The Center conducts its election observation activities in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, which was adopted at the United Nations in 2005 and has been endorsed by 37 election observation groups. Carter Center public statements on the electoral process are available on its website: www.cartercenter.org.

The Carter Center conducts election observation in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observation adopted at the United Nations in 2005.

The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, the Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 65 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; improving mental health care; and teaching farmers to increase crop production. Visit: www.cartercenter.org to learn more about The Carter Center.