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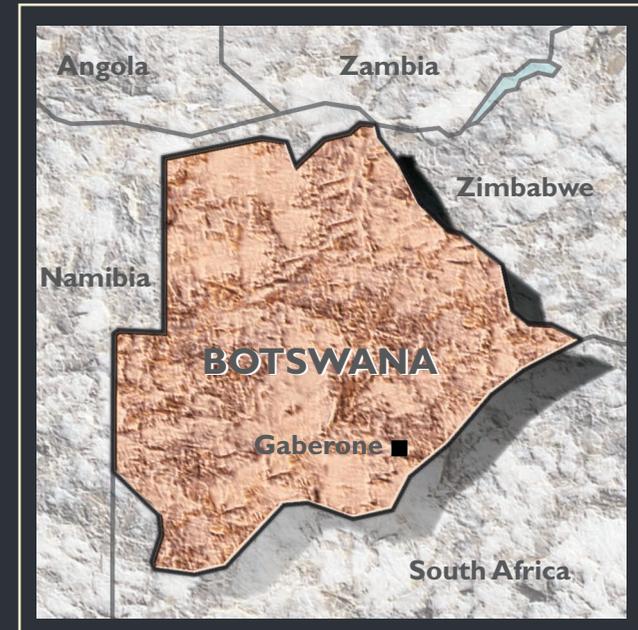


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## POLITICAL PARTIES IN BOTSWANA



Gloria Somolekae



EISA RESEARCH REPORT No 27

POLITICAL PARTIES IN  
BOTSWANA



# POLITICAL PARTIES IN BOTSWANA

BY  
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EISA is a non-partisan organisation which seeks to promote democratic principles, free and fair elections, a strong civil society and good governance at all levels of Southern African society.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR GLORIA SOMOLEKAE taught public administration at the University of Botswana for more than ten years. During the last four years, she served as the policy advisor for the WK Kellogg Foundation programme in Botswana, and as its national programme facilitator for the last two years. She is now the executive director of the Southern African Centre for Policy Development and Dialogue (SAPODD), based in Gaborone. SAPODD focuses on policy work in the areas of rural development and poverty reduction. She has also continued working on democracy promotion and support, both at the local and national levels. She has published extensively on issues of governance, elections and democracy in Botswana; foreign aid management; national development planning and management; local government; and civil society.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not have been completed without the patience and understanding of the various political parties interviewed. Even though our research instrument was rather too long, the various respondents displayed admirable patience and went out of their way to be truly cooperative. I sincerely thank them for this. I have no doubt in my mind that the good spirit displayed underscores the commitment of these respondents to the whole process of building and consolidating democracy in Botswana. Both EISA and the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) deserve thanks for creating this opportunity for both researchers and political parties to reflect on this key issue of how to develop a political party as an institution. Without strong, well-institutionalised political parties, Southern Africa will not be able to consolidate its democracies and ensure their sustainability.

## PREFACE

Multiparty democracy is becoming increasingly entrenched in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. A few SADC member states, including Botswana and Mauritius, boast long-enduring multiparty political systems implemented since their independence. Others have experienced a variety of mono-party systems (Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), military dictatorship (Lesotho), apartheid rule (Namibia and South Africa) or no-party dynastic regimes (Swaziland).

Since the 1990s, most SADC countries (bar Angola, the DRC and Swaziland) have undergone a phenomenal transition towards multiparty politics. Crucial as this political transition is, its exact impact on democracy remains a moot point. In both the academic and policy discourses today, a number of questions still require answers. For example:

- Has the current political transition enhanced democratic governance?
- Has the transition deepened democratic culture and practice?
- Has the transition improved the effectiveness of democratic institutions such as political parties?

EISA (formerly the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa) – under the theme ‘Consolidating democratic governance in the SADC region’ – is therefore undertaking a broad programme that attempts to answer these questions.

The first stage of the programme focused on political parties and attempted to answer whether the transition improved the effectiveness of democratic institutions, such as political parties. This component of the programme was undertaken jointly by EISA and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) between 2003 and 2004. It investigated the state of political parties in the democratisation process in the SADC region over the past decade. The main goal of the programme was to assess the role and effectiveness of political parties in the process of institutionalisation of democratic governance in each of the SADC countries. The specific objectives of the project were to:

- assess the general political and socio-economic context of each country and its possible impact on political parties;
- investigate the external regulatory and legislative environment in each country and its impact on the role and functions of political parties; and
- examine the internal functioning and structure of political parties and the impact of this on their institutional effectiveness.

There is no gainsaying that political parties play a critical role in the democratisation process. It is also incontrovertible that political parties are key to the institutionalisation and consolidation of democracy. Thus, sustainable democracy is dependent upon well-functioning and effective political parties.

Each *country context* suggests that vibrant and robust political parties are crucial actors in articulating and aggregating diverse interests, providing visionary political leadership, recruiting and presenting candidates, and developing competing political and policy programmes upon which the electorate base their choices during elections.

Democracy is unthinkable without political parties and, conversely, political parties cannot add value to a political system under conditions of authoritarianism. Parties everywhere have the potential to be effective and accountable, but they face enormous challenges. The political context and the legal environment in which they function, as well as their systems of internal organisation, management and operation, require attention and are often in need of reform.

Although little comparative research has been conducted, it is clear that the *external environment* – the regulatory, financial, political and electoral spheres in which political parties grow and function – influences parties' strategies and organisation. The external environment also has a fundamental impact on the capacity of parties to become more effective agents of democratisation.

The *internal functioning* of political parties determines how the social demands of different groups in society are represented in parliament. Candidates nominated for election are selected, supported and trained by their parties. In addition, parties put candidates in touch with voters and hold them

accountable. In many instances, the electoral and political culture and associated structures have allowed traditionally excluded groups – such as women, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples and youth – to have only limited access to the political realm.

To address these issues, EISA and IDEA developed three questionnaires on: the country context; the external regulations and environment; and the internal functioning and structure of political parties. Country studies were undertaken by experts commissioned by EISA and IDEA. One of the main outputs of this project is a series of research reports, and this report forms an integral part of the series.

We extend our profound gratitude to the Swedish International Development Agency in Harare, Zimbabwe, the Royal Danish Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa and the Embassy of Finland in Pretoria, South Africa for their generous financial support, without which this programme would not have been possible.

We are also grateful to the following people who have played a crucial role at various stages of the project: Denis Kadima, EISA executive director; Abdalla Hamdok, director, IDEA Africa Regional Office; Julie Ballington, IDEA programme officer; Roger Hallhag, IDEA head, political parties; Per Nordlund, IDEA senior programme officer; Francesca Binda, IDEA, senior advisor, political parties; Claude Kabemba, EISA programme manager, research; Jackie Kalley, EISA publications officer; Grant Masterson, EISA research fellow; Sydney Letsholo, EISA research assistant; Maureen Moloji, EISA research intern; Selby Matloga, EISA research intern; and Nkgakong Mokonyane, EISA assistant programme administrator. We acknowledge the sterling effort they invested in the project.

Thanks are also due to the political party leaders who were interviewed and gave generously of their time. Last but not least, we would like to thank Gloria Somolekae for her insightful contribution to this programme.

*Khabele Matlosa*  
*Project coordinator and series editor*  
EISA

## CONTENTS

List of Acronyms	x
Executive Summary	xi
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Research methodology	3
<b>2. The socio-economic context</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Contemporary history and performance of political parties in Botswana</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. The issue of political party unity</b>	<b>13</b>
Possible opposition cooperation options	16
<b>5. Factionalism in Botswana politics</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6. Research findings</b>	<b>20</b>
The legislative environment	20
Primary elections	21
Electoral system and party-political context	24
Party financing	25
Party structure and operations	27
<b>7. Gender and youth in party politics</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>8. Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>33</b>
Notes	36
References	37
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Country context questionnaire	41
Appendix 2: External regulations and environment questionnaire	43
Appendix 3: Internal functioning and structure questionnaire	47
About EISA	55
About IDEA	59
Other research reports in this series	60
<b>List of Tables</b>	
Table 1: Number of seats obtained, 1965-2004	10
Table 2: 2004 general election results for a select group of constituencies	15

**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ANC	African National Congress
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BIP	Botswana Independence Party
BOSELE	United Action Party
BNF	Botswana National Front
BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BPP	Botswana People's Party
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFP	Independence Freedom Party
MELS	Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Movement
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NDF	National Democratic Front
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PPF	People's Progressive Front
PUSO	United Socialist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPODD	Southern African Centre for Policy Development and Dialogue
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was commissioned by EISA in conjunction with its partner, the Swedish-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Its major purpose and thrust is to fill an existing gap in the study and understanding of the role and nature of political parties in the consolidation of democracy in the Southern African region. Although the majority of Southern African states have made major strides towards introducing and institutionalising multiparty democracy as a method of allocating power and approaching the governance imperative, attention has primarily been focused on the role of elections and their management. In most countries, not much attention has been paid to the role of the political party as an institution within the political environment.

The study is informed by the understanding that building strong and sustainable democracies depends on the existence of strong and effective political parties. Political parties play a crucial role in bringing together diverse interests, and providing alternative policy proposals from which voters can make an informed choice at the time of elections.

This study therefore examined the role, structure and functioning of political parties in Botswana. For the main part, four political parties were studied. These are the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), the official opposition Botswana National Front (BNF), the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and the Botswana People's Party (BPP). One of the youngest political parties, the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM), which is an amalgamation of other small opposition parties, was also studied. In addition to examining the structures and operation of these parties, we also examined the external environment, in particular the legislative environment. This is because the environment of any institution is of critical importance to its functioning. The environment sets limits, and provides constraints and opportunities for what the institution can or cannot achieve. This is true of any institution, and not confined to political parties.

We found that most parties in Botswana are weak and ineffective, but not because the legal environment is constraining. Indeed, we could not find

any evidence to suggest that the legal environment constrains the development and operations of political parties. We found it to be supportive, in the sense that it is quick and easy to register a party in Botswana. However, parties are weak, and for a number of reasons. Among these is an acute lack of infrastructure to run the affairs of some of the parties. Some, such as the BPP and BAM, do not even have an office. They do not even have staff to oversee and implement decisions reached at party meetings. The smaller opposition parties therefore rely on volunteers from the party in order to conduct their business. As is to be expected, volunteers are constrained by their own day-to-day survival issues, even if they might want to give more of their time.

Secondly, and partly related to this, party procedures and policy positions are not codified and publicised. As a result, it is doubtful whether some of the members even know the procedures governing various aspects of party operations. Another problem relates to the lack of institutionalisation, and therefore a failure to create institutions that can outlive individuals. This becomes even more of a problem when the founder is a charismatic person such as the former president of the BNF, Dr Kenneth Koma. This has weakened parties and entrenched a personality cult syndrome.

The parties are also bedevilled by factionalism, which has at times contributed to splits and the semi-paralysis of some of them. This inability to manage factionalism effectively remains one of the most serious challenges facing political party leadership in Botswana.

Partly as a consequence of the inability to institutionalise and the lack of an administrative infrastructure, some parties even lack guidelines and procedures for running party elections, including primary elections. Coupled with this problem has been the failure to develop effective machineries for managing party elections, even if such machinery is sourced from outside the party. Even though the lack of financial resources remains one of the impediments to the realisation of some management reforms, it is also obvious that parties have not given enough attention the notion of ensuring that, like national elections, party elections also need to be fair, free and efficiently run.

Given all these challenges, we conclude that the role of leadership is critical in building effective parties. The need is for leadership that has a vision for the party, and is able to articulate a strategy and roadmap of how this vision can be realised. It seems, therefore, that perhaps the role of money has been exaggerated. Parties are indeed struggling to generate the resources, and this makes their work very difficult. However, this study concludes that in order to build strong and effective parties, we need a comprehensive approach that looks beyond money as a solution. Financial resources are critical, but such resources may not take the party far if not complemented by a programme, and a roadmap of how to work towards realising it. Leadership remains critical in this regard.



## INTRODUCTION

Despite the availability of a reasonable amount of literature on Botswana's democracy, particularly chapters in books, very little has been written on the political party in Botswana as an institution. Most references to political parties in the literature on Botswana focus on their performance in specific elections.<sup>1</sup> These sources, and many others not cited here, also do a very good job of providing a historical account of the emergence of parties on Botswana's political scene.

Literature on the political party as an institution in Botswana should cover the internal structuring and functioning of political parties, including how they organise themselves, and how they are run or managed. This is because a political party as an organisation exists for the specific purpose of winning elections, and therefore, running a government. For it to accomplish this, it needs an appropriate structure and systems, in addition to sound policies and strategies. Such systems and policies come about if the right people hold the leadership positions in the party. Unless this situation prevails, at a minimum, a party could easily find itself in the political wilderness.

The present study by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and EISA (previously the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa) is intended to fill the literature gap by focusing on the political party as an institution in Botswana. It is part of a larger regional study looking at political parties within the democratic processes of the various Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, which is informed by the obvious fact that a strong and sustainable democracy is dependent on well-functioning political parties. Political parties play a crucial role in bringing together diverse interests, and providing alternative policy proposals from which people can make a choice at election time.

Building a strong and sustainable democracy therefore depends on the existence of strong political parties which are effective. This also requires that the external environment (financial, regulatory, etc.) within which they operate be conducive. The impact of the external environment on the capacity of political parties to become effective as agents of democratisation is fundamental.

The concept note and methodology guidelines prepared by IDEA for the political parties states: 'The internal functioning of political parties determines how the social demands of different groups in society are represented in parliament. Candidates nominated for election are selected, supported and trained by their parties. In addition, parties put candidates in touch with voters and hold them accountable.' This study will also contribute to filling an information gap by generating data on the internal environment of political parties, including their structuring.

The larger study of which this is part is on the theme of democracy consolidation in the SADC region. The primary objectives of the study have been identified as follows:

- to unveil the state of the art of the entire gamut of democracy in a given setting;
- unravelling progress made thus far, especially since the 1990s' transitions;
- identification of democracy deficits or problems that still exist and need attention;
- suggestion of necessary policy/institutional reform measures required to address and redress the democracy deficits; and
- a prognosis of possible future scenarios for democracy consolidation in each country and a regional comparative analysis of scenarios.<sup>2</sup>

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The focus of this study was political parties. As noted earlier, we are trying in this project to understand the state of political parties in Botswana, looking at their history, structure and functioning, internal democracy (primaries and nomination), leadership and succession, and gender representation. The parties studied are the four top parties in the country, namely, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), the Botswana National Front (BNF), the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and the Botswana People's Party (BPP). The first three are represented in parliament. The BNF is the official opposition, with 12 members of parliament, while the BCP has only one seat.

The research methodology involved a literature search, during which secondary sources of data in the form of reports as well as articles in books,

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journals and newspapers were examined. Interviews were conducted with representatives of key party structures, namely a number of central committee members. In order to facilitate comparison across parties within each country, as well as across countries, a standard questionnaire was used for the project. There was an additional standard questionnaire focusing on the external environment of the political parties within each country context (see appendices).

A few challenges were met during this research. In the first place, not all party leaders reside in Gaborone and in some cases we had to travel long distances to collect the data. In addition, party committee members are very busy people. It was at times very difficult to schedule appointments for interviews. Compounding the problem was the fact that the questionnaire on the structure and operations of parties was rather too long. Administering it was a challenge indeed, as some parties do not have the structures necessary for record-keeping and ensuring that there is a working party machinery. There is no doubt that we really tried the patience of our respondents, and we thank them profusely for their patience and commitment to the consolidation of democratic governance in Botswana.

## THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

In seeking to understand contemporary political developments in any country, one needs a full appreciation of the country's socio-economic context, including its history. This is because a country's politics and its political developments are informed to a large extent by its history.

Present-day Botswana is a former British protectorate. Botswana has never been a settler colony, like countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Malawi, Nigeria and other former British colonies, although pockets of white settlers were found in some parts of the country, including the Tuli Block, Ganzi, Francistown and Lobatse. Both Francistown and Lobatse were urban areas, while Tuli and Ganzi were basically farming areas. The lack of settler colonialism seen in other colonies was due to the fact that neither diamonds nor any key minerals had yet been discovered in Botswana. The country was so poor at that time that it could be described as a barren desert. The protectorate was administered from outside its borders, in Mafikeng (South Africa). It was envisaged that the country would eventually be annexed by South Africa and become one of its provinces.

The various ethnic groups within the country occupied their tribal territories, and remained under the direct authority of their traditional leaders. Because the country was supposed to pay for the 'protection' given by the British, chiefs had to collect hut and poll tax from their people which went into financing the modest colonial infrastructure. The British interest in the country was simply that it offered a buffer to block possible interference with British interests north of the Limpopo River by the Germans from present-day Namibia. The lack of settler colonialism explains why Botswana never fought for their independence. The lack of a violent struggle for independence has remained evident in the country's lack of radical politics, and could also be a key factor explaining the lack of radical ideological tendencies in mobilising people for development.

The country gained independence in 1966. It was one of the poorest countries in the world. Compounding its difficulties was the fact that independence coincided with a severe drought. Per capita income was only US\$60. Due to

the acute colonial neglect, and the fact that the country had been destined for annexation by South Africa, it did not inherit any infrastructure at independence as other colonies did. For example, Botswana had only 22 university graduates and eight kilometres of tarred roads at independence.

Botswana's fortunes changed drastically with the discovery of diamonds in the early 1970s. From having been one of the world's poorest countries, the country has flourished to the extent that its per capita income today stands at just over US\$3,000. Throughout most of the post-independence period, it has experienced one of the fastest economic growth rates in the world, estimated at around 10% per annum. Today, Botswana is classified as a medium-income country by the World Bank, and since 1998, most bilateral donors have discontinued their assistance to the country, preferring to go where they believe such assistance is most needed.

The cumulative result of the rapid growth enjoyed by the country has been evident in widespread gains in human welfare. In the words of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):

'For instance in the period from the time of independence to 1999, that is the period before HIV / AIDS began to reverse the earlier developmental gains:

- Life expectancy at birth rose from 46 years in 1966 to 67.5 years in 1999, thanks to an accelerated programme of expanding access to public health services and improvements in income distribution.
- Infant mortality fell from 71 per thousand live births in 1981 to 38 in 1999.
- The rate of income poverty fell from 59% of the population in 1985 to 47% in 1993.
- The Human Development Index rose from 0.63 in 1991 to 0.72 in 1997.'<sup>3</sup>

On the political front too, the country made major strides. While many African countries soon succumbed to military rule or one-party dictatorships after independence, Botswana has retained her multiparty democratic institutions to date. In fact, the country is one of the oldest democracies on the continent.

Elections are held every five years as prescribed by the constitution, and everyone aged 18 and above is entitled to vote. The country has never had political prisoners, and its human rights record has been regarded by many as one of the best on the continent.

However, despite these achievements, Botswana faces some challenges worth noting. Firstly, the country's democracy has been dominated by a single party, the ruling BDP, since independence. The opposition has remained weak and fragmented, often splitting votes and reducing its chances of winning more seats in parliament. Secondly, although elections in Botswana are conducted in a free environment devoid of violence, the opposition and civil society have consistently complained that the elections are not fair.

Compounding this situation has been the fact that the political playing field is not level. The BDP has more resources and enjoys the other benefits of being an incumbent party.

Even though the country has a good human rights record, the issue of minorities and their linguistic and cultural rights has been a sore point. It continues to be a matter of concern, particularly as an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), the London-based Survival International, has embarked on a bitter fight with the Botswana government on this matter. This is one issue which continues to give the country a lot of negative publicity, despite its efforts to counter such publicity.

Not everyone has benefited from Botswana's growth and prosperity. At 37%, Botswana's level of poverty is much higher than for countries with comparable levels of income. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning stated in the 2004 foreword of the *Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Report* that 'too many Batswana, an estimated 46.7% of the population in 1994 and a projected 36.7% in 2000, live below the poverty line.' But, he added, 'it is not for lack of effort, or even misdirected effort, that we have a high incidence of poverty than countries of comparable economic standing. On the contrary, it is because we face especially difficult structural bottlenecks – a small population, a narrow economic base, a poor natural resource endowment (apart from diamonds) that the return on our investment resources is relatively low.'<sup>4</sup>

It is correct, therefore, to say there are people who feel aggrieved in Botswana, who believe that the prosperity for which the international community hails Botswana has actually bypassed them. Some feel that because of the cultural and linguistic issues alluded to above, they have been denied their basic rights. However, despite these concerns, it cannot be denied that Botswana has an effective government which has demonstrated over the years a great capacity to hold the country together, and to address effectively the numerous challenges that have been encountered.

## CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN BOTSWANA

The history of political parties in Botswana is rooted in the broader history of the Southern African region, particularly developments in the then Southern Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa. Nationalist politics in South Africa, in particular the Sharpeville massacre, influenced the turn of events in Botswana's nationalist history. Following that massacre, about 1,400 people came into Botswana, some of them members of the African National Congress (ANC), some of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC).

These deportees and refugees acted as a catalyst for the nationalist movement in Bechuanaland. Thus in 1961 some of them, under the leadership of Kgalemang Motsepe, formed the BPP. This party soon split and the Botswana Independence Party (BIP) was formed. It is usually stated that the party's leadership disagreed on the use of party resources and money. However, in addition, Cambell and Tlou (1984) have asserted that the very feuds that led to the ANC-PAC split in South Africa also contributed to this split.<sup>5</sup>

The BPP was a pan-African party, and very radical in its messages calling for the abolition of chieftainship. It also called for an immediate end to colonial rule and an immediate granting of independence. The party launched an attack on racist policies, which were more pronounced in the two towns and in farm areas where pockets of whites were living. It also organised protests in towns, where its radical messages found fertile ground.

In a number of quarters, the BPP's messages were not particularly well accepted. Firstly, the peasants, who identified with chieftainship (and still very much do), did not welcome the BPP's call for an end to it. Europeans in the protectorate, too, felt uncomfortable, particularly because the party called for the takeover of land by the state, and an end to white rule and white supremacy. Botswana moderates such as the late Sir Seretse Khama and others also felt uncomfortable with the BPP. According to Campbell and Tlou, 'these moderate Botswana did not believe that the BPP could successfully lead the country. They also disliked the influence of the PAC and the ANC.'<sup>6</sup>

As a response to the radical politics propagated by the BPP, the moderates, who included Seretse Khama and Sir Ketumile (Quett) Masire (who were later to become the first and second presidents of the country respectively) and others, formed the BDP in 1962. Basing its political messages on the need for multiracialism, and building on the traditions of *bogosi* (chieftainship), the party enjoyed strong support from the rural people, as well as from the European settlers. Its first leader, Sir Seretse Khama, was himself a royal. Consequently, BDP won a sweeping victory in the 1965 elections, obtaining 28 seats while the BPP got three (see Table 1 over page).

The current official opposition, the BNF, was formed in 1966 by Soviet-educated Kenneth Koma. With socialist leanings, it was critical of the BDP for allowing private enterprise. It advocated state control of resources. In a move intended to neutralise Seretse Khama's traditional appeal, the BNF brought into its ranks the paramount chief of the Bangwaketse, Kgosi Bathoen Gaseitsewe. He subsequently defeated Quett Masire, the then vice president, in the 1969 Ngwaketse district elections where Kgosi Bathoen reigned. Up to today, the BNF remains strong in the southern part of Botswana.

The BNF's other interest was to unite the opposition. During most of the time he led this party, Dr Kenneth Koma worked to promote the unity of opposition parties in the country. Unfortunately, as we note later, this is the one party whose record of splinter parties is unmatched in Botswana, notwithstanding the role of its leadership in this attempt at unity. As Table 1 indicates, the new BNF managed to gain three seats in the 1969 parliament, while the BPP retained its three.

The dominance of the BDP was broken in 1994 when the opposition BNF won 13 seats in parliament (37.5% of the votes). The BNF had gone into the 1994 election divided, though, into factions whose formation has been traced to the 1989 election. Some people in the party had preferred that, following the 1989 elections, the BNF should boycott the 1994 poll. The major issue was that, according to some members, the ruling party had cheated in the 1989 election. The fact that the BNF won three seats instead of its expected 14 was viewed by its supporters as evidence of electoral manipulation and rigging. The ruling party was also accused of refusing to accede to demands that an independent electoral commission be set up, the voting age be lowered

**Table 1: Number of seats obtained, 1965–2004**

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
BDP	28	24	27	29	29	31	27	33	44
BNF	–	3	2	2	4	3	13	6	12
BPP	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	–	0
BIP	0	1	1	0	0	0	–	–	–
BAM	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
BCP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
MELS*	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
NDF	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>

– Party not in existence; \* Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Movement

from 21 to 18, and an absentee ballot system allowed. The BNF believed at the time that its support base was among young urban residents, including the mine workers in South Africa, and students. It saw the BDP's refusal to lower the voting age as a ploy to prevent the BNF from winning more seats, particularly in urban areas, where many young people reside.

It is important to note here as well that one of the dramas of the 1989 elections had been the Tshiamo ballot box scandal,<sup>7</sup> which led to a by-election, and the subsequent victory in the constituency of the leader of the BNF, Kenneth Koma. According to the BNF, the discovery of the ballot box was confirmation that the ruling party had indeed cheated. This was despite the fact that administrative sloppiness on the part of the election officials concerned was also a possible explanation for the incident.

The party had sent mixed messages on its participation in the 1989 elections. Some members had threatened those among them who opposed the election boycott, saying that they should either resign from the party, follow the decision to participate, or face expulsion. Some members who were

subsequently expelled, such as Nehemiah Modubule, formed their own parties. This is how the United Socialist Party (PUSO) came to be formed by Modubule and his group. Modubule is now one of the 12 BNF members of parliament. He won the last two elections under a BNF ticket because his party is a member of the BNF under a group membership modality. The fallout from the 1989 election also saw the birth of the Independence Freedom Party (IFP).

Although the BNF had approached the 1994 elections divided, again sending mixed signals on whether or not to participate, it did relatively well in managing to get a third of the votes. Following this election, a party congress was held at Ledumang Secondary School to elect a new central committee. Some members who lost in that election refused to accept their losses, alleging massive irregularities. They then formed themselves into a 'concerned group'. A special congress to address this matter was held in April 1998. Unfortunately, Kenneth Koma (then leader of the party) had openly identified with the 'losing' faction, and in the process lost the credibility he needed, as the leader of the BNF, to bring the two sides together. Physical fights and open confrontation characterised this meeting. Windows were smashed. It was subsequently alleged in newspaper reports that Koma had challenged those who were outside the 'concerned group' to form their own party, if they so wished.

The formation of the BCP in June 1998 occurred in this context. Following the acrimonious Palapye meeting, 11 members of parliament defected from the BNF, with 100 councillors from the party, to form the BCP. This party performed badly in the 1999 elections. Only one parliamentarian was returned on the BCP ticket. The BNF also had its 1994 gains reversed, as only six of its members were returned. By the time the 2004 elections came, another splinter party from the BNF, the National Democratic Front (NDF), had been formed, and this time its key 'advisor' was the former leader of the BNF, Kenneth Koma. It is interesting to note that a leader of a party that had done so well in the previous election, could break away from his own party and form another one. The NDF failed to make any mark in the 2004 elections despite having behind it someone who had enjoyed popularity over a long period, and who is rightly regarded as a veteran of opposition politics in Botswana. Its future remains uncertain.

While the above political developments were unfolding following the 1994 elections, a group of predominantly urban-based professionals got together to form the United Action Party (BOSELE). This party was registered in 1997. Some of its founding members wanted to develop the party and to ensure that it had a sizable following before contesting elections. However, the leadership seemed to have a different perspective, and BOSELE thus contested the 1999 elections. Before these elections, BOSELE was part of the group of opposition parties which got together under the leadership of the major opposition party (the BNF) in an attempt at opposition unity. As we note in the section below, this initiative led to the formation of the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) which subsequently registered as a political party. BOSELE'S performance in the 1999 elections (as could have been expected), was dismal.

## THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL PARTY UNITY

The issue of political party unity has featured more actively in political debates since the 1989 elections. It has been suggested that the opposition BNF was formed in order to unite opposition parties. In 1991, unity talks were held by the BPP, BNF and BPU. Some members of the BPP interviewed for this study record that this was the vision of then BPP president Dr Knight Maripe, while BNF members claim that it was their party that initiated the unity talks. At this stage, also, there was an idea of merging the three parties.

It was decided that in order to take the project forward, an umbrella body was needed to facilitate movement towards unifying the three parties. The People's Progressive Front (PPF) was formed. A year or two later, the PPF collapsed, allegedly because a key member (the BNF) developed cold feet, saying that it had not been mandated by its general membership to enter into a merger with the other two. BNF interviewees however, state that the purpose of this process was to facilitate a 'working together' of these parties. As a result of the collapse of the talks, the opposition went to the 1994 elections still divided. Then, in 1997/8, the BNF initiated talks again on 'working together' with BOSELE and the BPP.

At a meeting of all the parties held in Palapye in early 1998, each party was required to present a paper setting out their position on the form that they thought opposition unity should take. This they did. The Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) was then formed to oversee the alliance. It was itself not a party. The formation of the BAM was followed by the establishment of a working committee mandated to establish how these parties could work together towards the elections.

The parties had already designed a disc/logo when the BNF pulled out of the BAM before the 1999 elections. The party felt that it did not want to use any symbol other than its own. BAM now consisted of the BIP, the BPP, BOSELE and the BPU. The BPP again performed badly in these elections, losing the majority of council seats which had come to be regarded as its strongholds. Some of its members reached the conclusion that the idea of working together with other parties, particularly in the form that it took

with the formation of the BAM, had been implemented too hurriedly, before the party's followers could come to understand it. It had not been sold to members in good time. Some members also felt very strongly about retaining their own party symbols.

Following the dismal performance of the BPP in the 1999 elections, some members found a good reason to get their party out of an arrangement that had hurt it. The BPP wrote to the BAM to withdraw its permission for the BAM to use the BPP symbol, and a court case ensued. As a result, the arrangement collapsed.

As the idea of opposition unity has stalled, the performance of these parties in elections, as measured by the number of seats obtained in the National Assembly, has remained low. BPP members felt that the alliance had brought confusion into the party to the extent that some of their members must have voted for the BDP instead. The BPP star that had been used in the BAM symbol had to be removed. This created bad publicity for the opposition, which must have further contributed to its failure at that election.

It would be misleading to attribute the performance of the opposition in elections purely to its fragmentation and lack of unity. It is true that its fragmentation has had the obvious effect of splitting votes. It is also true, however, that this is partly a function of the type of electoral system used in Botswana (namely 'first-past-the-post').

As Table 2 shows, this vote-splitting benefits the ruling party. The table shows those constituencies where the ruling party could not have won if the opposition vote had not been divided. It is understandable that, following the 2004 elections, the opposition has intensified its campaigns for unity, consistently claiming that fragmentation is the key reason for its failure to capture more seats in parliament.

The performance of the opposition in Kenya in that country's last elections has also given the opposition in Botswana more inspiration and reinforced its resolve to unite in order to unseat the ruling party. Some Botswana newspapers discussed that election in terms of its implication for Botswana opposition parties.

**Table 2: 2004 general election results for a select group of constituencies**

	<b>BDP</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Margin</b>
1. Kgatleng West	3 943	6 319	2 376
2. South East	3 769	5 363	1 594
3. Mogoditshane	2 375	3 649	1 274
4. Gaborone West	2 480	3 753	1 273
5. S/Pikwe West	3 100	4 291	1 191
6. S/Pikwe East	2 629	3 709	1 080
7. Ngami	5 291	6 283	992
8. F/Town South	2 843	3 432	589
9. Nkange	4 246	4 531	285
10. Kweneng	4 658	4 804	146

Opposition here refers to the BNF, BCP, BAM and NDF

The current discussions and opposition initiatives do not only flow from the experience of the 2004 elections. It is important to note that the current talks were given greater momentum in 2002 when discussions about party unity resumed again among the BNF, BPP and BAM. All parties were asked to select representatives to work out the modalities of how to take the issue of unity and collaboration forward. They agreed on a formula by which each party would retain its identity, and constituencies and wards would be allocated to parties on the basis of some formula. Table 1 indicates that not much has been gained from the BAM arrangement.

Almost a year after the 2004 elections, the various political parties held their national congresses in July 2005. Top of the agenda of the opposition parties was the issue of opposition unity. All the newly elected executive committees of the main opposition parties, namely the BNF, BCP and BAM, were given a mandate to push vigorously the agenda of opposition cooperation. The two major opposition parties, namely the BNF and the BCP, even resolved to support each other in all upcoming by-elections until the 2009 general elections.

As proposals on the exact format of opposition unity are being spelt out, three possibilities have been put on the table, as described below.

#### **POSSIBLE OPPOSITION COOPERATION OPTIONS**

- ***Umbrella party:*** Under this option, the various political parties would keep their identities. They would then be required to register under a new umbrella party, with one manifesto and one space on the ballot paper. Those who support this umbrella arrangement argue that an umbrella party would be a good option only if registered at least two years before the general elections in order to give it ample time to sell itself to the voters.
- ***Pact:*** With this formula, participating parties work under some loose arrangement used to determine which party contests elections and in which constituencies, etc. Each party maintains its own symbols and manifestos. This idea has already been tested by the BNF, BAM and BPP, but almost led to a major split in the BPP. In fact, since this arrangement, the BPP has been polarised into two camps – those opposing the Pact, and those supporting it. Both have conceded in interviews, however, that the arrangement is a good one, but that its implementation had been carried out poorly. It has been suggested that the leadership did not give itself time to sell the idea to party members. ‘Further there was no harmonisation of political activities, campaigns, election manifestos and others ... Some say this arrangement is rudimentary and lacking in cohesiveness, as it is generally loose.’<sup>8</sup>
- ***Complete merger:*** Under this model, all opposition parties seeking to cooperate would disband and a new opposition party would be formed. This is regarded as the ideal situation. However, the two key parties, namely the BNF and BCP, do not see it as feasible at this point in the country’s politics. In fact, there have been suggestions that the BNF would reject a merger outright. One newspaper reporter has cited the region of Selibe Pikwe as an example, noting that ‘Selibe Pikwe has rejected any form of relationship with the BNF’.<sup>9</sup> This reporter’s

comment is made with reference to the BCP, but it illustrates that even before this merger is tried out, there are already parties that seem not to entertain it. The journalist concluded, therefore, that 'it is apparent that this region is still haunted by the events of 1998 in Palapye that resulted in the birth of the BCP'.

BAM, on the other hand, sees total merger as the best way forward. There is a school of thought that considers this the most unlikely option because it would seem to gloss over the real reasons why the various parties were formed in the first place. It would also help if more clarity is given on whether parties are working on 'unity' or 'cooperation.' At this stage, it seems as though the two are used interchangeably, which causes confusion.

At this moment it is too early to say whether the opposition will score major successes next time around. What is clear though is that the various parties are forging ahead. Three opposition parties, the BNF, BAM and BCP, signed a memorandum of understanding on 15 August 2005 to guide their cooperation in all by-elections to be held before the 2009 elections. The BNF and BCP have already started to cooperate. The BCP, for example, will not contest the Gaborone West parliamentary by-election. It has chosen to support the BNF candidate. This level of cooperation has already started to emerge in council elections.

In a turn of events whose effect might not be immediately obvious, the secretary-general of the BCP and some party followers defected to the BNF in August 2005. In virtually all the interviews he gave to the media, he stated that they had decided on the drastic move because they believed the BCP was not committed to working with other parties. This followed the election of Gil Saleshando as party president in July 2005. Within the BCP, Saleshando has been rightly or wrongly associated with hardliners who oppose opposition party unity, particularly unity with the BNF. But in a move that could be read by some as seeking to prove his critics wrong about his party's commitment to working with others, the BCP president launched the BNF candidate, who also happens to be the BNF president, for the Gaborone West constituency. It is too early however, to say how and whether the departure of the secretary-general would affect the process of moving towards opposition unity.

## FACTIONALISM IN BOTSWANA POLITICS

One of the challenges that has increasingly faced all political parties in Botswana, including the ruling BDP, is factionalism. It has to be noted that factionalism as a phenomenon is not confined to parties in Botswana, nor is it new in politics. Factionalism is also not necessarily a bad thing in politics. It can have the positive effects of encouraging and providing opportunities for self-criticism, honest internal debate, and, indeed, self-renewal. The downside of factionalism is that it can destroy a political party, especially, as Maundeni rightly observes, when 'it combines with intolerance, factional fighting and factional suppression'.<sup>10</sup> Parties have demonstrated differing competencies in managing and containing it. For some, it has even led to splits and internal paralysis.

Virtually all key parties in Botswana, including the ruling BDP, have had factional fights. As noted in the previous section, the BNF's can be traced to the 1989 general elections. The party resolved at its congress held in 1991 to boycott the 1994 elections. Some members ended up being expelled from the party. Members were accused of a number of misdeeds, including cheating in primary elections, insubordination and intolerance. For example, Ginger Ernest and his faction were expelled for having stood for election as mayor of Gaborone against the Paul Rantao faction. The party proved to be extremely intolerant and unaccommodating of dissenting voices.

Although the ruling party denied the existence of factions for many years, its factional wars nowadays are openly admitted by the leadership and, worse still, fought out through the media. They have been traced to the 1991 presidential commission of inquiry into illegal land transactions in peri-urban areas of Mogoditshane. The then vice-president, the national chairperson and the secretary-general, who happened to be Minister of Agriculture, resigned their cabinet posts following a presidential commission of enquiry which implicated them in the land scandals. They were also suspended from the central committee of their party, the BDP. In July 1993, at a party congress, two of them were voted by party delegates back into the central committee while the members who championed the anti-corruption course were voted out. Observers say this was the beginning of what has now come to be known

as the Merafe-Kwelagobe factional divide, the one faction being led (according to some) by secretary-general Daniel Kwelagobe, the other by Minister Mompoti Merafe. Initially, the existence of these factions was formally denied by the party. As they worsened over the years, the then president of the party, Sir Ketumile Masire, had to suspend central committee elections in order to avoid open confrontation and division in the party.

Factionalism has continued into the 2004 elections and beyond. There have been suggestions, following the BDP's performance in the 2004 elections, that it was because of factions that the party now only has 52% of the popular vote. This is particularly so since the 2004 party congress in Gantsi, at which members of a hitherto popular faction failed to win any central committee positions barring that of secretary-general.

President Festus Mogae, also president of the BDP, and Ian Khama, national vice-president and party chairman, have since focused their energies on tackling the factional wars. The first thing they did was to dissociate themselves from both factions, seeking to remain above factional politics as leaders. They then proposed a compromise deal that would ensure that the party would avoid open confrontation in electoral competition by agreeing beforehand how the various central committee positions ought to be allocated between the two factions. Not much came out of this compromise deal as the talks are said to have collapsed. The central committee elections took place in July 2005 and the party president exercised his prerogative to bring in some of the members of the losing faction.

Just before these elections, the party's women's wing had, at its annual meeting, publicly declared its support for the vice-president's compromise initiative. The chairperson of the women's wing commented that 'a party bedevilled by factionalism cannot satisfactorily lead the country'. But she also lamented the fact that the party had to resort to such measures, a move which she claimed compromised democracy. At this point, however, she said, the unity of the party was paramount.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately these factional wars have continued despite party leaders' efforts to contain them.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **THE LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT**

As we noted in the introduction, parties everywhere have the potential to be effective and accountable, but they face many challenges. The political context and the legal environment within which they function, as well as their internal organisation, and management and operation, require attention and are often in need of reform.

Our finding is that the legislative environment in Botswana is conducive to building effective political parties which can be accountable. The constitution guarantees freedom of expression, assembly and association. Neither the constitution nor the Electoral Act mention the words 'political party', however, part of the explanation being that the country follows what is called a free mandate system. According to this system, voters vote for candidates and not parties during elections. This is the rationale for candidates retaining their seats when they defect to another party.<sup>12</sup>

It is easy to register a party in Botswana. Once you have a party constitution, you simply get listed under the relevant schedule of the Societies Act. Some would cite the current proliferation of political parties as evidence of this.

The same constitution stipulates who may and who may not be a member of the National Assembly. According to the constitution, anyone can be a member of the National Assembly who:

- is a citizen of Botswana;
- has attained the age of 18;
- is qualified to register as a voter for the purposes of the election of the National Assembly and is so registered; and
- is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly.

Section 62 states that a person does not qualify to be elected to the National Assembly who:

- is, by virtue of his own act, under any acknowledgement of alliance, obedience or adherence to a foreign power or state;
- has been declared insolvent or adjudged or otherwise declared bankrupt under any law;
- is certified to be insane or otherwise adjudged or declared to be of unsound mind under any law;
- is the member of the House of Chiefs;
- is subject to such exceptions as may be prescribed by Parliament;
- is under sentence of death imposed on him by a court in any part of the Commonwealth, or is under a sentence of imprisonment (by whatever name called) exceeding six months; or
- holds or is acting in any office the functions of which involves any responsibility for, or in connection with, the conduct of any elections to the Assembly.

While the constitution spells out the criteria for being a candidate for National Assembly elections, the Electoral Act lays out the process through which the nomination of candidates takes place.

The Societies Act governs the registration of political parties and other associations. The process is described even by opposition politicians as fairly simple. Once people resolve to form a political party, they approach the Registrar of Societies with a constitution for the proposed party. If it passes scrutiny the party could be registered within just a few days or, at any rate, less than a week.

### **PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

The history of primary elections is the history of how political parties have over the years been able to select candidates to represent them in both national and local elections. The first party to introduce primary elections in Botswana was the ruling BDP, in 1984. The BNF followed suit in 1989. Prior to this, there was a loose system which depended very much on the party leadership, who had the responsibility of ensuring that the party was able to field candidates throughout the country.

The BDP used the electoral college system. This entailed that in every constituency, delegates selected those people who were authorised to cast

ballots in the election. The candidates elected by those delegates would then have to undergo scrutiny by the party's leaders. Over the years, as the party grew bigger, more and more complaints of factionalism and gross abuse of the electoral system were reported, some party members even alleging that candidates with resources were bribing the members of the electoral college. The role of the party leadership in Gaborone was also questioned and regarded as undemocratic by members.

For example, following a by-election in 1995, a candidate who was said to have won the primary election in Thamaga (Kabo Morwaeng) was not allowed to stand for the parliamentary election. The party instead fielded a woman who had contested the primary election against Morwaeng. She won the seat and went to parliament. Morwaeng left the party and joined the BNF. The party is said to have requested male candidates in that election not to stand, a request they ignored.<sup>13</sup> There were also newspaper reports of gross irregularities in the parliamentary election in Sebina Gweta.

As these complaints increased, there were calls for the introduction of democracy within the party. The BDP finally relented and introduced an open primary system in 2002, which has come to be known as '*bulela ditswe*', literally meaning 'open to all'.

Unfortunately the party does not seem to have done much in terms of preparing for the 2003 primary elections, as these were chaotic and highly controversial. In fact, it is now openly admitted by the party leadership that the fallout from these primary elections was responsible for the party's diminished support on the ground. Allegations of rigging, manipulation of voters' rolls, even by candidates, and voter trafficking were many. The situation was so bad that some of the results had to be annulled and elections conducted again as some aggrieved members openly threatened to vote for the opposition in the 2005 elections.

The problems were not confined to the primary elections. The national executive youth wing of the party also ended up with controversial elections, and the political, election and education committee of the party had to be called in to investigate, following petitions to the central committee by a faction of the youth wing seeking to have the election results nullified.<sup>14</sup> It

was clear that the party had not paid adequate attention to ensuring that an up-to-date voters' roll had been prepared for each constituency ahead of the primaries. There is a party structure dealing with election matters, including guidelines on how they should be held. The party remains with a major challenge to ensure that this situation does not recur in the 2009 elections, meaning that this party may have to step up efforts to ensure that these allegations do not arise again in future elections.

The BNF introduced primary elections in 1989. It opted from the start for the open primary election system in which all card-carrying members of the party cast a ballot. As with the BDP, the BNF primaries have always attracted their own controversies, and end up with their own causalities. As Keineetse Keineetse rightly observes, 'it would seem that primary elections have been responsible for major strife within political parties'.<sup>15</sup> Primaries have also been responsible for some of the splits experienced by the BNF.

They have also led to fierce legal battles in the party as losing candidates have sought recourse from the courts to have results nullified. For example, six members of the BNF in the Kanye South constituency filed a case at the Lobatse high court last year seeking to nullify the results of the November 2003 elections. They alleged major irregularities and the failure of the party to ensure that the rules and regulations governing the conduct of party elections are abided by. As a result, a re-run was held on June 12 for three wards. This confirmed that there was indeed substance to complaints from the area. It should be noted that not all disputed cases end up in court. In some cases complainants do not approach the court because of the high cost of litigation. There are no election tribunals in Botswana.

Both the BPP and BAM are small parties that struggle to find candidates to field around the country, hence they have not been known to face the challenges associated with primaries in the larger parties, namely the BNF and the ruling BDP. The BPP went to the 2004 elections with only two councillors. It had managed to increase its membership to four for the 1999 elections. The president of the party, Bernard Balikani, was quoted in January 2004 as having said they were intending to address the issue of inner-party democracy during the 2005 party congress, and to revive party structures such as the youth wing and the women's wing.<sup>16</sup> The lack of effectiveness of

party political structures is, in fact, one of the key challenges facing political parties in Botswana. It is a key reason why parties fail to run successful elections.

The formal organisation of the parties is such that each political party has various structures such as a youth wing, women's wing, central committee and others, as indicated earlier. Each party has a structure responsible for running elections. The reason given for these structures' lack of performance is usually lack of finance. However, it is also true that part of it has to do with a lack of a vision and strategy on the part of the leaders of the structures. It is also clear that until as recently as 2004, some of the parties did not even have written regulations on the conduct of their own elections. The BPP indicated at the time of the fieldwork for this study that it was still to finalise and circulate its election guidelines. For a party that has existed since the early 1960s, it is not clear how it managed over the years to conduct elections without them.

Despite the challenges that have come with the introduction of primary elections into Botswana politics, they are now established as an integral component of democracy in Botswana. It is not clear, though, whether parties fully appreciated the implications of primaries before introducing them. Most lack a well-designed system of election management to guarantee that party elections are conducted in a fair manner. This means that, just as in national elections, candidates should be barred from participating in managing the election, even if it is simply to register voters. Conflict of interest has been alleged time and again. As in national elections, those involved in the management of an election should not have a direct interest in the result. Although parties would claim that party people from different constituencies are always brought in to run the election, it is a fact that there have been allegations of sympathisers being involved, and some candidates having to doubt the legitimacy of the election result.

#### **ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND PARTY-POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Botswana uses a winner-takes-all electoral system, also known as the simple majority system. In this, the candidate who gets the most votes wins the election. The system does not allocate seats in accordance with the proportion of the popular vote gained by each party. Thus the opposition has complained

that it distorts electoral outcomes. In addition to the several other challenges they face, such as the uneven playing field, the current system disadvantages them even further.

In addition, the ruling party enjoys the advantage of the special nomination process. The President of Botswana is allowed to select four specially elected members of parliament. These nominations are not supposed to be reserved for a specific political party; they are to be used to bring more skills into parliament so as to ensure that whatever the electoral process failed to deliver can be delivered through the nomination process. In 2004, the Minister of Local Government and Lands nominated 101 councillors, three of whom were from the opposition. It is for this reason that the system has been under heavy attack and scrutiny following a motion passed by a BDP back-bencher, Ponatshego Kedikilwe, to the effect that the issue of special nominations had outlived its usefulness, was undemocratic, and as such should be discontinued.

Kedikilwe argued in parliament that the system has been abused and was failing to deliver what was intended. His other point was that in today's Botswana, councillors are sufficiently well educated for there to be no need to bring in so many extra people at a huge cost to the taxpayer. Discussion of the motion has been adjourned, perhaps until the next parliament.

There have been calls to reform the electoral system. Some have advocated a proportional representation system, arguing that it would have the added advantage of bringing more women into political leadership positions. This matter has been on the agenda of the opposition parties for many years. It has remained firmly on the agenda of the all-party meeting, which unfortunately was boycotted by virtually all viable opposition parties in July 2004. The debate continues.

### **PARTY FINANCING**

Political parties in Botswana do not receive funding from the state. This has been the case since independence, and funding has remained one of the key demands pushed by the opposition at every possible opportunity. In addition, there is no law requiring that parties disclose their sources of funds. Opposition parties and civil society have consistently argued that funding

of political parties by the state in Botswana would go a long way in addressing the problem of an uneven playing field in elections. This is seen as a necessary step if elections are to be fair to all contenders.

Because there is no legal requirement compelling parties to disclose their source of funding, it is difficult to obtain such information even for research purposes. However, no single party relies on a single source. The parties studied rely on a number of sources, as the following examples indicate.

### *Botswana Democratic Party*

The ruling party is the best resourced of all the parties in the country. This is because, unlike others, it has a fully functioning office which is relatively well staffed compared to those of other parties. In the run-up to the 2004 elections, the ruling party made one vehicle available to each constituency, to be used for their campaigns. No other political party has ever been able to afford such expenditure. The party has the following sources of funds:

- **Membership subscriptions:** The rate is P2 a year, or P10 every five years. The party prefers that members pay once every five years because it is easier to collect the fees, and to ensure that, in case by-elections are held within a given five-year period, members would not be denied primary voting rights on account of pending fees.
- **Constituency fees:** Each constituency is supposed to pay an annual fee of P1,000. In addition, for every annual conference, and for annual meetings as relevant, each constituency is supposed to contribute P500.
- **Subscriptions by representatives:** Each member of parliament has to contribute a P100 monthly fee to the party; councillors pay P40 monthly.
- **Private donations:** In addition to these sources, friends of the party can contribute any amount as and when they see fit. It is this kind of donation to the ruling party that has been a source of queries from other political players. For example, in the run-up to the 1999 elections, an undisclosed source gave the ruling party about P2 million. The BDP has insisted that other political parties have also received private donations, and continue to

receive them. This is true, but it is the scale of the donations to the party that has been labelled unfair. Because there is no requirement to disclose the source of donations, the identities of these generous donors remains unknown.

### *Botswana Congress Party*

The BCP relies on three sources of funds.

- **Membership subscriptions:** Each member is expected to pay an annual 'joining' fee of P5. Unfortunately payments tend to be irregular.
- **Contributions by representatives:** Each member of parliament is supposed to contribute P1,000 a month to the party; councillors are required to contribute P300. The adequacy of these sources depends on the number of representatives a party has. Because the BCP has only one member of parliament, he is the sole contributor of the P1,000 a month.
- **Private donations:** The party welcomes donations from anybody who would like to contribute. Party leaders interviewed indicated that they do not receive many donations. The party has a modest office run by an executive secretary, two assistants and a cleaner.

### *Botswana National Front*

The BNF also relies basically on three types of sources.

- **Constituency fees:** Each constituency is supposed to pay P200 a month, in spite of the fact that each may register as many people as it can. Unfortunately, this source is unreliable as many constituencies just don't pay.
- **Subscription fees:** Each member is supposed to pay an annual subscription fee of P5.
- **Contributions from representatives:** Members of parliament are required to pay P600 a month to the party, while councillors pay P200.

## **PARTY STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS**

A conducive legislative environment is critical to the efficient and effective functioning of political parties as it is this that provides a context, and the

limits and possibilities of what can be achieved by the party as an institution. We have also observed in the previous sections, particularly as we recorded the historical development and formation of the various political parties, that party processes and procedures are themselves also critical to the effective functioning and performance of any political party.

A key aspect of the latter is the need for the right kinds of structures, relevant to the party functions and capable of delivering its vision. This is one of the most interesting aspects of political parties in Botswana. All of them have an elaborate formal structural framework, fully decentralised to the ward level. There are structures at national, regional, ward and cell levels. Some include specialised committees for specific functions such as political education and elections. These are as follows (from the national and most senior to the lowest levels):

- **BDP:** national council, central committee, regional committees, constituency committees, branch committees and ward/cell committees.
- **BNF:** congress, central committee, regional committees, constituency committees, and ward and cell committees.
- **BAM:** annual delegates' conference, national executive council, central committee, regional committee, ward committees and cells.
- **BPP:** national executive council, central committee, regional committees, constituency committees, branch committees and cells.

For most of the parties, virtually all these structures lie dormant until elections draw near. The primary reason given for this state of affairs is a lack of funds. Except for the BDP, the majority of political parties in Botswana operate without a full-time secretariat to implement party decisions. Compared to the others, the ruling party has a relatively well-staffed office with a secretariat; the rest must each rely on a small secretariat with hardly any facilities to match the required functions. This also explains why, when internal disputes occur there are usually allegations that party procedures were not followed. The BDP has about eight workers in its office, paid by the party. The BCP has four employees. The BPP has no full-time workers,

and relies completely on volunteers. The official opposition, the BNF, has four employees. Except for the BDP, BNF and BCP, no other party has a party vehicle. Most party work is done with the help of members who can volunteer resources such as vehicles and money.

There is no doubt that without a fully fledged and highly efficient secretariat, the effectiveness of a party is compromised. Note, also, that we have not said anything about the calibre of people each party can afford, which is also a key issue.

## GENDER AND YOUTH IN PARTY POLITICS

Women have always played a pivotal role in Botswana politics, leading fundraising campaigns, recruiting party members, and taking care of virtually all the mobilisation at grass-roots level.<sup>17</sup> However, despite this, they continue to be marginalised in the party's management structures. This marginalisation is rooted in the patriarchal culture and structures of Tswana society which spell out that women are not supposed to lead. The youth face the same cultural bottleneck, as the same culture decrees that the young should be seen but not heard. For women, this cultural environment works in two complementary ways. Their society does not see women as leaders, and as a result many women also do not see themselves as leaders in their own right. This state of affairs always requires some external intervention to ensure that women are sensitised and helped to break out of the tendency to see themselves through culturally defined lenses. It is this task that women's groups such as Emang Basadi have been engaged in over the years.

The situation of women and the youth was summed up by the organising secretary of the BAM when he said during an interview with the author:

‘Women and youth face difficulties in trying to be active in politics. First of all, women are leaders within their homes. They have to take care of a number of domestic responsibilities which put a strain on them because of the time they have to devote to such responsibilities. Even though they are leaders, they have husbands and partners who control their time. The youth face huge economic challenges and can not simply afford to devote time to politics. Youth therefore tend to be used in party choirs, and this refers to youth who have no schooling’.

During the early 1990s, women's groups intensified their advocacy work to press for women's involvement in leadership even at party level, and later in the decade, various political formations made a thorough introspection of their party's situation with respect to the issue of women and leadership. These advocacy efforts went hand in hand with sensitisation efforts for women, especially the women's wings of political parties. Today, virtually

all have women's wings. Unfortunately, some of those structures, such as those of the BPP, are dormant most of the time. In addition, until fairly recently, women's wings saw their roles as confined to supporting party work, ensuring that their parties recruit members and mobilising the necessary resources to enable candidates to win elections. They did not promote the inclusion of women in party leadership positions. Following many years of sensitisation by women's groups, this has changed somewhat, and today these party organs are not shy to press for the inclusion of women in leadership. For example, the chairperson of the women's wing of the ruling BDP responded to a question of why the BDP did not subscribe to the 30% quota system suggested by SADC by saying that, in fact: 'We are fighting tooth and nail to convince the party that such a provision is a must-have. We have even discussed this issue ... at our caucus for women in politics. Men have long been occupying influential positions, and we want to prove that we too, are equally competent.'<sup>18</sup>

In order to speed up the inclusion of women in party structures and political leadership in general, some parties have adopted a quota system. The BNF and BCP, for example, have put mechanisms in place to ensure that women are involved at every level of the party structures, and not just at the level of national elections. Unfortunately, even with quotas, women's involvement is still below party expectations. The BCP has encouraged its various regions to ensure that they are represented by women. The names are still awaited, following the election of a new central committee in July 2005. An additional measure to attract women has been to change the rule that anyone contesting this election had to be nominated before the congress in order to be allowed to stand: women were given a special dispensation by the party to be nominated straight from the floor. Still, the party says that even with these measures, it is unhappy with progress made so far in getting women to occupy leadership positions within the party.

The ruling BDP has rejected the idea of quotas, preferring instead to subject women to the same competition as men. So far, it has fielded the highest number of women candidates for the national elections. For the 2004 elections, however, there were fewer women candidates. The BDP fielded eight, the BNF two, and the BCP two. The BNF now has a woman as its vice-president. This is a first for the country. Out of 16 members of the central committee of

the BDP, only four are women. The BPP has four women and 12 men in the central committee. Three of these were brought in through special dispensation by the president of the party. Only one was elected.

This situation makes it clear that much still needs to be done by political parties to ensure that women participate in leadership. Experience has shown that unless they are encouraged at this level, there is no hope that they will do so in the normal course of events. As we noted earlier, the role of women's wings in this effort is critical. This requires a vision, a programme and a roadmap of how to accomplish the goal. This is the only intervention, in the absence of changing the electoral system to proportional representation and use of party lists, that may work.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was primarily to shed light on the state of political parties in Botswana. The study looked at the broader environment within which parties operate. It also examined the structures of parties, and how they function on the ground, and established that there is an interesting gap between the formal structures as they exist in the party's constitution and ground-level reality.

It is difficult to get some kinds of information about parties, particularly information that may make them look bad or inefficient. Most respondents answer in a guarded manner, ensuring that they do not project a bad image of their party. This is why, most of the time, there is an obvious gap between the formal position and what happens on the ground. The case in point is the existence of party policy on the conduct of elections, contrasted with the chaos and lack of systems that underpins the actual conduct of some of the elections.

One is left wondering why, after being given the impression that systems and guidelines are in place, there has to be a chaotic election.

On paper, virtually all the parties have elaborate decentralised structures, but there is great variation in the capacity of these entities to function effectively. We therefore make the following conclusions and recommendations:

- ❑ The legal environment of political parties in Botswana is not constraining. In fact, it allows political parties to organise and function freely. The process of registering parties is quite simple and not even time-consuming.
- ❑ The history of political parties in Botswana is a history of break-ups and conflicts. We accept that this might at one level represent a natural progression and development of parties as the politics of the country matures. However, because of the implications of this situation for the democratic process, it has to be a matter for concern.

- Of all the old parties, it is only the BDP that has not experienced break-ups. An examination of the issues fuelling this situation suggests that the following problems exist in some of the parties:
- Failure to institutionalise party procedures and policy, and the tendency to rely on the charisma and authority of the party president to run the party. There is no doubt that prior to the break-up of the BNF and formation of the BCP, the BNF had institutionalised a personality cult. The leader of the party was the party himself. That is why it was difficult to undertake any activity that did not meet with his approval. He became synonymous with the party, as some members are known to have commented after this break-up. There is no doubt that there is a need to ensure that parties build institutions separate from the leaders, and to ensure that such institutions can survive leadership changes. This is particularly true of the founding leader.
  - One of the problems in Botswana's political parties is what some refer to as the life-presidency syndrome. This is very much related to the lack of proper institutionalisation. Term limits have now become fashionable in order to overcome this problem. The life-presidency syndrome should be addressed as a matter of urgency in each party so that succession plans can be prepared ahead of time.
  - There has been a tendency not to manage factionalism in parties effectively. It is important that each party's leaders take stock of what has led to factionalism, and create mechanisms for addressing it positively. It appears that, at least from the cases presented in this study, factionalism always has objective causes which can be addressed. Some represent problems that have to do with the way the party leadership exercises its powers. It is therefore necessary that political parties should address the issue of leadership itself, ensuring that the leaders selected are equipped with the necessary skills to understand the challenges and handle them effectively. This is because, most of the time, factionalism is seen as synonymous with dissent, whether or not it has reached that stage.

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- ❑ There is a need to address the issue of party primary elections. Each party needs to ensure that there are party guidelines, developed with input from all structures and widely disseminated within the party. It is also important to realise the following about party primary elections:
    - Just as for national elections, parties need to invest in the machinery to run fair internal elections. This machinery must be effective, and able to carry out the task.
    - The fairness of elections is not only a matter that is important when the contest is taking place among the various parties. It is also important when the elections are internal. Losers should not have legitimate grounds to dissociate themselves from the election results, thus contributing to instability in the party.
  - ❑ In order for political parties to be effective and strong actors within the political set up in Botswana, they need to move towards seriously institutionalising their structures and activities.
  - ❑ All party policies and procedures have to be documented and there is a need to ensure that the general membership understands them. This is the only way in which break-ups and proliferation of parties can be prevented. In addition, no one should be above the party constitution.
  - ❑ The state funding of political parties has to be seriously considered. It could go a long way towards strengthening democracy in Botswana by levelling the playing field.

**NOTES**

- 1 See, for example, Maundeni Z., 'Majority rule, life presidency and factional politics', in Edge W. and Lekorwe M. (eds), *Politics and Society in Botswana*. Pretoria: J. L. Van Schaik Publishers, 1998; Cohen and Parson (1974); Ramsay and Parsons (1998); etc.
- 2 *Political parties and democratic governance in the SADC region: challenges for intra party democracy*. Concept paper prepared for the EISA-IDEA regional study on political parties and democracy, 2005, p 14.
- 3 UNDP, *Botswana Human Development Report 2005*, p 15.
- 4 Botswana Government, *Botswana MDG Report, 2004*, p 5.
- 5 Cambell A. and Tlou T., *History of Botswana*. Gaborone: Macmillan Publishing, 1984.
- 6 Ibid, p 225.
- 7 After Koma of the BNF had lost to the late Peter Mmusi, an unopened ballot box was discovered at the storage centre for ballot boxes. This box was from the Tshiamo Primary School polling station in Gaborone South. The poll result was then nullified, and a by-election held which was won by the leader of the opposition.
- 8 *Mmegi*, 22 July 2005.
- 9 *Mmegi*, 8 April 2005.
- 10 Maundeni, op cit, p 379.
- 11 *Daily News* no 86, 9 May 2005, p 4.
- 12 This may change in future, though, because of a motion by the current deputy speaker and member of parliament for Thaamga that those members of parliament and councillors who cross the floor to other parties must first surrender their seat. Although the last parliament (not the current one) adopted her motion, nothing much has happened since.
- 13 *Mmegi* 11 (22), 3-9 June 1995.
- 14 See *The Botswana Guardian*, 6 August 2004, p 2; *Mmegi* 21 (112), 22 July 2004.
- 15 Keineetse Keineetse, *Election Update 2004*, Botswana number 1 (14). Johannesburg: EISA, October 2004.
- 16 *Mmegi*, 21 January 2005.
- 17 See, for example, Somolekae G, Widening the frontiers of democracy: towards a transformative agenda in Botswana politics, *Pula, Botswana Journal of African Studies* 14(1), 2000.
- 18 *Daily News*, op cit.

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**APPENDICES**  
RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE ON  
POLITICAL PARTIES PROGRAMME



**APPENDIX 1:  
COUNTRY CONTEXT QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What is the country's record of holding free and fair general elections?
2. What is the record of freedom of association as regards forming political parties?
3. What is the country's score on the Freedom House index for free and democratic countries? And thinking about changes over the past five years and reasons for the changes, please comment on the Freedom House score?
4. How free are parties to present candidates in national elections?
5. How, if at all, are political parties restricted in carrying out political or electoral activities?
6. What, if any, specific rules or code of conduct exist for the ruling party or ruling coalition? Provide copies.
7. What parties and independent candidates are represented in the national parliament (both chambers if applicable) according to the following model? (use Election Results Archive as one source) – % of votes; No. of seats in lower chamber; No. of seats in upper chamber; No. of seats held by women in lower chamber; No. of seats held by women in upper chamber
8. What, if any, reference do the policy documents of the ruling party/coalition and the biggest opposition party/coalition in parliament make to specific International Conventions on Human Rights? Provide examples of formulations where applicable.
9. What other significant – in size or otherwise important – political parties or political groups exist that are not represented in the national parliament? Indicate why they are significant (size, regional, exiled, influential diasporas, historical, non-parliamentary influence, armed, repressed group, etc.) and measurable national / regional strength (percentage of votes, opinion survey results etc.).
10. What is the total number of registered parties (if applicable)?

**BASIC MEDIA STRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

11. Briefly describe the media environment, including: whether political parties have equitable access to major media outlets; difference between paid and free media coverage for parties; access during an election campaign period and during normal times. Distinguish any differences between publicly and privately owned media.
12. What are the most important sources from which people say they access political information? Note source. If survey / poll data is available, if not – skip question.  
*Television; Radio; Newspaper; The Internet; Friends; Other (please specify)*
13. What is the level of literacy of the general population? Note source.
14. If survey/poll data is available, what is the percentage of the population which:  
*Read daily newspapers (combined readership); Read other news print media at least weekly (readership); Have mobile/cellular telephones; Use the Internet?*
15. If survey/poll data is available, what is the percentage of households which have access to:  
*Television; Radio; landline telephones?*

16. **Apart from the constitution and direct party laws, are there any legal instruments or other circumstances that strongly impact the existence or functioning of political parties?**
17. **Which, if any, are the politically influential groups seeking to influence or maintain power through other means than electoral politics?** (Mechanism used/ Intended influence/ Intended outcome)  
*Business groups; Ethnic groups; Media; Military; Other non-governmental organisations (specify); Organised crime syndicates; Religious; Unions; Other (specify)*
18. **Are there mechanisms for public participation in government decision-making other than elections?**  
*Parliamentary public hearings; Referenda; User committees; Other (please specify)*
19. **Attempt a country nutshell description, a few paragraphs long, as an easy-read entry. Format:**
  - a. Population, capital, head(s) of state/ government, term limit for president (if presidential system), are all seats in the national legislature elected or are some appointed – if so by whom, attempts to extend/ remove term limits, constitutional arrangements, balance of power between branches of government (executive – legislature – judiciary), type of electoral system, and (if appropriate) if inherited from colonial power.
  - b. Democracy since 19xx (and other recent years of great importance, like independence, system change, armed conflict, etc.). Last/ next elections with (maximum) x years mandate. Restrictions on political parties (if any). Degree of respect for human rights (civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights) and rule of law. Freedom House Index. TI Corruption Index, UNDP Human Development Index.
  - c. Governing party/ coalition and leading opposition, degree of dominance/ stability of political landscape. Important forces not standing in elections but shaping politics (business sectors, unions, religious, military, criminal, etc.). Any social or regional upheavals with political consequences. Relevant international/ regional relations and membership, level of trust in political parties and government institutions (use survey data and barometer data where available).
  - d. Economic and social level of development (\$ GNP/ capita, trade as % of GNP, Human Development Index, Income GINI Index, % of population in largest city (name if not capital)/ urban areas, rural:urban ratio.

## APPENDIX 2: EXTERNAL REGULATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

### LEGISLATION GOVERNING POLITICAL PARTIES

1. **What legal provisions govern political parties and/or individual candidates for election?**  
(Full Name/ Year/ Year of last amendment, if any/ Main monitoring body)  
Specify full name, year and year of last amendment. Provide copies of all relevant legislation. (Legal provisions might include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the ones mentioned below.)  
*Constitution; Political party law/Act that governs political parties; Electoral law/Code; Legislation governing Non-Governmental Organizations/societies; Legislation governing the access to media; Government decrees; Regulations with the force of law; Regulations without the force of law; Other laws or regulations that are important to how political parties and/or candidates operate (including financing, tax exemptions etc); Not applicable*
2. **How, if at all, are political parties defined in current legislation?**
3. **Which, if any, legal provisions govern the conditions for the founding of new political parties or coalitions?** Please provide copies.
4. **What are the requirements to register a political party at the national level?** (As an association, not in order to contest an election) check all which apply.  
*Establishment of (regional or local) party branches (specify); Monetary fee (specify in local currency); Registration with court (specify, including level of court); Signatures (specify); Other (specify); No specific registration requirements; Registration possible but not required*
5. **Which body (authority) decides on the registration of a political party?**
6. **What, if anything, can cause the de-registration of a political party?** (Check all that apply and specify the body or person who has the authority to deregister a political party.)  
*Anti-democratic policy; Bankruptcy or insolvency; Breach of Code of Conduct; Breach of Electoral law; Failure to meet gender quotas; Hate Speech; Inciteful activities; Non-payment of registration fee; Other (please write in and code '9'); Not applicable*
7. **What body/bodies are responsible for the administration, enforcement and sanctions of the legislation on political parties?** Please note all different bodies and, if possible, provide contact details. (Note: It is possible that different bodies will be responsible for different aspects of enforcing laws and regulations.)  
*Electoral Management Body; Regulatory body specially; Created for this purpose (specify); Government department(s) (specify); Normal courts/judicial system; Auditor; Other (please specify); Not applicable*
8. **Which sanctions, if any, have been applied to political parties in the last 10 years?** Provide two or three detailed examples.
9. **What legal rights and restrictions, if any, apply to political parties in relation to accessing media (include electronic and print)?** Provide details for both public and private media.
10. **In the absence of legal regulation, what if any, agreements between parties – or rules applied by the media – are upheld?** Provide details for both public and private media.

### INTERNAL PARTY FUNCTIONS

11. **Which legal provisions, if any, govern the internal functioning of political parties?**  
Provide copies.

12. **Which legal provisions, if any, govern how a political party s/elects candidates for local, regional, national elections or presidential elections?** Describe the provisions and specify the required role of party members, local branches, etc.
13. **Which public body, if any, has the authority to be involved in the process of internal party s/election of candidates?** Specify the role of the public body.
14. **Which non-governmental organizations, if any, have a role in political primaries or congresses during candidate s/election?** Provide name/s and describe the role of the NGO(s).
15. **What legal provisions, if any, require political parties to include a certain number (or percentage) of male or female candidates on party lists?** Describe what the requirement is, what level it is on, the possible sanctions and provide the reference and copies.
16. **What legal provisions, if any, exist to encourage or provide incentives for political parties to include a certain number (or percentage) of male or female candidates?** Describe the incentives, what level they are on and provide the reference and copies.
17. **What legal provisions, if any, require political parties to include a certain number (or percentage) of persons from other groups as candidates (e.g. ethnic or religious or linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities?)** Describe what the requirement is, what level it is on, the possible sanctions and provide the reference and copies.
18. **What legal provisions, if any, exist to encourage or provide incentives for political parties to include a certain number (or percentage) of persons from other groups as candidates (e.g. ethnic or religious or linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities)?** Describe the incentives, what level they are on and provide the reference and copies.
19. **What other legal provisions, if any, govern any other aspect of internal party functioning?** Describe and provide the reference and copies.

#### REGISTRATION OF PARTIES AND NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIONS

20. **What, if any, are the registration requirements for political parties which wish to contest elections?** (Presidential Elections/ Chamber 1/ Chamber 2/ Regional/ Local)  
Check all that apply, and specify amounts, numbers and percentages where applicable.  
*Deposit; Minimum number of candidates; Minimum number % of votes in previous election; Regional presence; Signatures; Others; No specific requirement for registration; Registration possible but not required*
21. **What are the requirements, if different from above, for political parties which wish to nominate candidates or lists of candidates for elections?** (Presidential Elections/ Chamber 1/ Chamber 2/ Regional/ Local)  
Check all that apply, and specify amounts, numbers and percentages where applicable.  
*Deposit; Minimum number of candidates; Minimum number % of votes in previous election; Regional presence; Signatures; Others; No specific requirement for registration; Registration possible but not required*
22. **What, if any, special requirements exist for the registration of new political parties to contest an election?**
23. **What are the legal qualifications to become a candidate in elections?** (Presidential Elections/ Chamber 1/ Chamber 2/ Regional/ Local)  
Please specify all that apply and note differences for chamber(s) of the legislature, president, regional and local elections.  
*Age; Bankruptcy or Insolvency; Citizenship; Citizenship of parents; Civil status; Country of birth;*

*Criminal record; Current criminal incarceration; Detention; Holding of government office; Holding of military office; Holding of other public offices or employment in public services (police etc); Language requirement; Membership of a political party; Mental health problems; Minimum level of education; Multiple citizenship; Nationality/ethnic group; Naturalization; Offences against electoral law; Physical health problems; Registration on voters' roll; Religion; Residence in constituency/ electoral district; Residence in country; Unpaid debt; Other; Not applicable*

24. **In which elections, if any, can candidates not affiliated with a political party (independent) stand for election?** Check all that apply.  
*Presidential; To chamber 1 of the national legislature; To chamber 2 of the national legislature; To regional councils; To local councils*
25. **What, if any, are the registration requirements for independent candidates who wish to stand for election?** (Presidential Elections / Chamber 1 / Chamber 2 / Regional / Local)  
Check all that apply and specify amounts, numbers and percentages where applicable.  
*Deposit; Minimum number of candidates; Minimum number % of votes in previous election; Regional presence; Signatures; Others; No specific requirement for registration; Registration possible but not required*
26. **If a candidate withdraws her/his candidacy or dies before election day, but after registration, can the party substitute with a new candidate?**  
*Yes, explain (include whether replacement candidate must be of the same sex and how late in the process a candidate can be replaced)/No/Not applicable/Other*
27. **Can a party remove a nominated and registered candidate without her/his consent?**  
*Yes/No*
28. **Can a political party remove or replace an elected representative?**  
*Yes (explain circumstances)/ No*
29. **Is it possible for a member of parliament to leave the party with which s/he was elected and join another party or become an independent MP (floor-crossing)? If so, what becomes of the mandate/seat?** (Yes/ No / Not applicable)  
*Possible to remain an MP – the mandate/seat remains with the individual until the next election/Not possible to remain an MP: the individual is replaced by a member of his/her former party (please specify how, including the replacement MP must be of the same sex ); a bi-election is held for the seat; the member of parliament leaves the legislature and the mandate/seat remains vacant; Other (explain)*
30. **How, if at all, are vacant mandate(s)/seats filled in between general elections?**  
*Replacement by candidates on the party list (describe and provide reference); Other (describe and provide reference); None*

## ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND OBSERVATION

31. **What, if any, additional rules of good conduct does the ruling party or coalition have to sign or adhere to? Is the ruling party required to observe rules of good conduct regarding incumbency?** Explain contents and possible sanctions. Provide copy.
32. **What, if any, rights do political parties have in relation to the Electoral Management Body?**  
*Representation in the Electoral Management Body; Right to participate in meetings; Advisory capacity; Right to observe the proceedings of the EMB; Other (please specify)*
33. **What, if any, rights do political parties have with regard to the activities in the polling station?**  
Describe, including if they form part of the polling station staff and / or if they are allowed to observe / witness the voting.

34. **What rights, if any, do political parties have in the process of vote counting?** Describe, including if they form part of vote counting staff and/or are allowed to observe/witness the counting.
35. **What rights, if any, do political parties have in the process of tabulation of votes and the collation of results?** Describe, including if they form part of the tabulation staff/committee, and/or if they are allowed to observe/witness the tabulation.
36. **What, if any, is the official campaign period?** Specify number of days/weeks and describe what is permitted or restricted during that time.
37. **What, if any, is the official period of campaign silence before election day?** Specify number of days/weeks and describe what is permitted or restricted during that time.
38. **What political party activities, if any, are prohibited during election day?**

### **APPENDIX 3: INTERNAL FUNCTIONING AND STRUCTURE QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **FOUNDING OF PARTY**

1. When and where (date and place(s)) was the party first founded?
2. When, if applicable, was the party first officially registered as a party?
3. What, if any, subsequent changes or party splits have taken place?
4. What was the original name of the party? If this name differs from the party's current name, what were the circumstances of any changes in name?
5. How, in a few key words, does your party describes itself (right, left, pragmatic, conservative, liberal, socialist, green, religious, nationalist, social group, ethnic group etc.)?
6. Why was the party founded?
7. How was the party founded? Describe.
8. Which constituency or socio-economic group does/did the party's founders claim(ed) to represent?
9. What was the initial participation or support of additional organisations to the party (i.e. ethnic, religious, military, business, civic groups, trade unions)?
10. Which, if any, of the above has changed since the party was founded?

#### **INTERNAL STRUCTURE/ELECTION OF LEADERSHIP**

11. What, if any, written organisational rules exist to guide the functioning and organization of the party? Provide copies.  
*Constitution; Operational guidelines; Party Rulebook; Statutes; Other (please write in); No formal rules exist*
12. What is the name of the *national executive* body in the party?
  - a. Are there written rules and procedures for the regular s/election of members of this body? If yes provide copies. If no describe.
  - b. By whom are they elected or appointed? (Elected/ Appointed)  
*The party leaders; The parliamentary party (ie the group/caucus of the party's members of the national legislature); Regional or state party branches; Local party branches; Delegates to a party congress; All or some party members; Auxiliary party groups; Affiliated party organizations; Other (please write in)*
  - c. If elected, how? Describe procedure.
  - d. Are there formal internal party quotas for women on this body? If yes describe how applied, including number or proportion.
  - e. Are there formal internal party quotas for youth, ethnic minorities or any other group on this body? If yes describe how applied, including number or proportion.
  - f. Are the members in this body paid by the party?  
*All paid; Some paid (explain); Unpaid (Voluntary)*

13. **Is there a written mandate (duties) for the national executive body above and/or distribution of power/tasks within the party leadership?**  
*Yes (provide copies); No, but informal practices (describe); No mandate*
14. **What is the name of the next highest permanent body in this party?**
- a. **By whom are they elected or appointed?**  
*The national executive body described above; The party leader(s); The members of parliament/parliamentary caucus; Regional or state party branches; Local party branches; Delegates to a party congress; All or some party members; Auxiliary party groups; Affiliated party organizations; Other (please write in)*
  - b. **If elected, how? Describe procedure.**
  - c. **Are the members in this body paid by the party?**  
*All paid; Some paid (explain); Unpaid (Voluntary)*
15. **What is the name of the most local branches in this party?**
- a. **What is the normal geographic or other area of operation of the most local branch?**
  - b. **How is it formed and by whom is its leadership elected? Describe.**
16. **How often, if at all, does the party have a national conference/convention/congress?**  
*Less often than once a year; Once a year; Twice a year; More than twice a year; Never (go to Q20)*
17. **Who attends the national party conference/convention, check all that apply?**  
*The party leader(s); The parliamentary party (i.e. the group/caucus of the party's members of the national legislature); Regional party delegates; Local party delegates; All or some party members; Auxiliary groups (youth wing, women's wing etc); Affiliated party organizations (trade unions, employers' federations etc); Other (please write in)*
18. **Are decisions by the national party conference/convention/congress ...**  
*Binding on the party executive; Advisory to the party executive; Other (please write in)?*
19. **Is this body the highest decision-making body of the political party?**  
*Yes/No (specify which body is).*
20. **What, if any, written rules govern the s/election of the party president? Describe type of system used and provide copies of rules.**
21. **What, if any, formal process exists to monitor and regulate the ethical behaviour of political party officials? If board of ethics, explain structure, mandate and examples of activities and/or decisions.**  
*Board of Ethics; Other formal process (specify); No formal processes, but informal norms and practices (specify); No process*
22. **Provide a description of the structure of sub-national/regional/ local party units, women's wings/ associations, youth branches and other party groups.**  
*How many branches; In all of the country; Autonomous; To whom do they report; How are leaders chosen; Main functions*

**Internal structure/election of leadership – additional comments**

#### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

23. **How does the party decide on its policy programme document, if it has one? Describe the process and provide copy of document.**

24. **Which of the following opinion-related resources, if any, does the party have access to?** (Party has access / Check if party pays for resource) Check all that apply.  
*Resources specific to the party:* Surveys among members, Opinion polling (not restricted to members);  
*Public domain resources:* Public domain polling results, Surveys/barometers issued by other organisations; *Other resources.*
25. **To what extent does the party use any of the following opinion-related resources when developing policy?** (Uses a large extent/ Uses a fair amount/ Does not use very much/ Does not use at all/ Don't know) Check all that apply.  
*Resources specific to the party:* Surveys among members, Opinion polling (not restricted to members);  
*Public domain resources:* Public domain polling results, Surveys/barometers issued by other organisations; *Other resources*
26. **How, if at all, can the party leadership be held accountable for not following party policy decisions?** Describe the process, including to whom it is accountable and possible sanctions.

#### Policy development – additional comments

#### MEMBERSHIP

27. **Is there a national membership register?** If yes provide details of how it is maintained and what the role of local/ regional branches is for maintaining their own registers.
28. **How much, if anything, does the party charge as membership fee?** If fixed amount please specify – per year – in local currency?  
*A fixed amount; Amount dependent on member's position in the party (EXPLAIN); Amount dependent on party branch (explain); Other (specify); Voluntary contribution; No membership fee*
29. **How many members does the party have?** (No. of individual party members/ No. or % of women party members) Provide year and source of figures and indicate if real figures or estimates.  
*Earliest available estimate; Latest available estimate; Year of maximum members*
30. **How much has the party membership increased or declined over the past ten years, in percentage and total numbers?** If ten-year figures do not exist, describe the general trends in membership, if possible with other figures.
31. **What, if any, criteria/requirements exist to be eligible for membership?** Describe, including the body/person who decides on admission as a member.
32. **What, if any, formal rights come with membership?**  
*Discounts with merchants; Voting rights at party meetings; Other (please specify).*
33. **What, if any, responsibilities come with membership?**  
*Adherence to party statutes; Unpaid work; Other (please specify).*
34. **What process, if any, exists to discipline members who breach party rules?** Describe the process and identify who takes the final decision.
35. **How often, if at all, does the party communicate with its members?** (From National Party/ From Regional branches/ From local branches)  
*Electronic Newsletter; Paper Newsletter; Party Paper; Meetings; Public website; Membership restricted website; Other (write in)*
36. **How often, if at all, do members communicate with the party?** (To National Party/ To Regional branches/ To local branches)  
*Individual postal correspondence; Individual email correspondence; Petitions; Meetings; Other (please specify)*

37. **Which, if any, formal and written guidelines provide party members with an opportunity to express their opinions on party matters?**  
*Guidelines (provide copies); No formal guidelines, although informal practices exist (describe including recent examples); No guidelines or practices*
38. **To whom does the party provide training?** Check all that apply and describe type of training and at what level.  
*Campaign volunteers; Candidates; Elected members; General members; Party officials; Other (please write in); No training provided*
39. **How, if at all, does the party seek to recruit members between elections?**
40. **What efforts, if any, are made to engage activists/members in party activities between elections?** Describe and provide examples.

#### Membership – additional comments

#### ELECTORAL ACTIVITY – CANDIDATES

41. **What are the eligibility requirements established by the party rules to become s/elected as a presidential candidate?** Check all that apply and specify each requirement.  
*Age; Belonging to a certain ethnic group; Certain position in the party; Coming from a certain geographical area; Membership in the party; Qualifications; Signatures; Other (please write in)*
42. **What is the process for s/election of party candidates for presidential elections?** Describe the process, including who can propose and vote.

#### S/election of other candidates for election

43. **What are the eligibility requirements established by the party rules to be selected as a party candidate for elections other than presidential?** (Chamber 1 of national legislature/ Chamber 2 of national legislature/ Regional council/ assembly/ Local council/ assembly)  
 Check all that apply and specify each requirement.  
*Age; Belonging to a certain ethnic group; Certain position in the party; Coming from a certain geographical area; Membership in the party; Qualifications; Signatures; Other (please write in)*
44. **What are the party rules for the process by which candidates to chamber 1 of the national legislature are recruited and then s/elected to stand for election?**  
 Describe, including how candidates put their names forward, who/ which party bodies are involved.
45. **What, if different from above, are the party rules for the process by which candidates to chamber 2 of the national legislature are recruited and then s/elected to stand for election?**  
 Describe, including how candidates put their names forward, who/ which party bodies are involved.
46. **What, if different from above, are the party rules for the process by which candidates to regional councils/assemblies are recruited and then s/elected to stand for election?**  
 Describe, including how candidates put their names forward, who/ which party bodies are involved, and if the national party can decide on sub-national lists.
47. **What, if different from above, are the party rules for the process by which candidates to local councils/assemblies are recruited and then s/elected to stand for election?**  
 Describe, including how candidates put their names forward, who/ which party bodies are involved, and if the national party can decide on sub-national lists.

48. **What electoral system, if any, is used within the party to select its candidates?** Describe and identify which type of system is used, including possible differences between levels.  
*Plurality/majority; Proportional; Other (please write in); Not applicable – no election of candidates*
49. **What, if any, is the quota voluntarily (not required by law) adopted by the party that a certain number or percentage of candidates for nomination will be women?**  
*Quota – explain year introduced, percentage, placement on list or in constituency, women only shortlists; No quota; Previously – please explain year introduced and rescinded, percentage, placement on list or in constituency, women only shortlists; Other, including informal practices (please describe)*
50. **What, if any other, special measures have been adopted by the party to ensure that women are nominated in elections?**  
*Training for aspiring candidates; Financial incentives; Other (please specify); No other measures*
51. **What, if any, is the quota voluntarily (not required by law) adopted by the party that a certain percentage of candidates for nomination will be young people?**  
*Quota (please explain year introduced, percentage, placement on list or in constituency); No quota; Previously (please explain year introduced and rescinded, percentage, placement on list or in constituency); Other, including informal practices (please specify)*
52. **What, if any other, special measures have been adopted by the party to ensure that young people are nominated in elections?**  
*Training for aspiring candidates; Financial incentives; Other (please specify); No other measures*
53. **What, if any, is the quota voluntarily (not required by law) adopted by the party that a certain number or percentage of candidates for nomination be from any other group (not mentioned above)?**  
*Quota (please explain which groups, year introduced, percentage, placement on list or in constituency); No quota; Previously (please explain year introduced and rescinded, percentage, placement on list or in constituency); Other, including informal practices (please specify)*
54. **What, if any, are the limits on the number of times a candidate can hold an elected office on behalf of the political party?** Please specify in number of terms and years.
55. **If there are reserved seats for women, national minorities or other groups in the legislature, how are candidates selected by the party to fill them?**  
*A list of candidates is compiled (explain); Appointed (if so, by whom); Other (please specify); Not applicable*

#### Electoral activities – candidates – additional comments

#### ELECTORAL ACTIVITY – CAMPAIGNS

56. **Does the party produce election manifestos for election campaigns?**  
*Yes (provide copy)/ No*
57. **What is the process of development of party election manifestos?**
58. **What is the process of development of campaign strategy/operational plan?**  
*Yes (provide examples from recent campaigns)/ No*
59. **Are candidates (at all levels) expected to campaign on behalf of the party?** Specify what is expected of the candidates.  
*Yes, only on behalf of the party/ Yes, in addition to personal campaign/ No, only personal campaign*
60. **What presidential elections or elections to the national legislature, if any, has your party boycotted over the last 10-year period?**  
*Specify what national election, year and the reasons for boycott/ No*

61. **Has your party recognised, as legitimate, the officially declared winners of presidential elections or elections to the national legislature during the last 10 year period?**  
*Yes/No specify which winners (presidential or party) and the reason for not recognising them as legitimate*
62. **What if any, non-partisan voter education or other civic training activities has the party undertaken during the last five years?**

Electoral activities – campaigns – additional comments

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE PARTY

### International contacts

63. **Which, if any, Party Internationals or other international network of parties is the party affiliated with? (specify)**  
*Party international. (The Christian Democrat-People's Parties International, The International Democrat Union, The Liberal International, The Socialist International or other); Regional party organisation; Other (including non-partisan international organisations); No international affiliation*
64. **Which, if any, sister parties from other countries does the party have contact with?**
65. **What is the nature of the relationship, if any, with sister parties from other countries (eg policy support, campaign support, training, public relations, funding)?**
66. **What regular contacts, if any, does the party have with international organisations or party foundations?**

### National contacts

67. **What, if any, formal alliances/cooperation does the party have with other political parties in the country? (Eg common election platform)**  
*Yes – specify/ No, but informal – specify/No*
68. **What, if any, formal relationships does the party have with the Election Management Body?**  
*Represented as voting members of the EMB; Official observers on the EMB; Other formal relationship; Informal relationship; No relationship*
69. **What, if any, formal relations does the party have with national civil society organizations? (Name of organization/ Type of relationship/ Key issues)**  
Describe the relationships including name of organization, type of cooperation, funding relationships etc.  
*Business interests; Corporations – specify; Trade Unions – specify; NGOs, movements, civil society organisations – specify; Religious groups – specify; Other – specify*
70. **What, if any, media outlets are owned by the party or party leadership, nationally or locally?**

External relations of the party – additional comments

## FUNDING

71. **What, if any, are the spending limits for s/election contests or primaries established by the political party or in legal provisions? Please specify whether party rules or law and give amount in local currency.**
72. **What amount of funding, if any, are party candidates required to bring to the party in order to secure their candidacy? Specify amount in local currency.**

73. **How is funding for campaign purposes distributed within the party?** Describe the distribution and who takes the decisions.
74. **What amount of funding, if any, do candidates receive from the party for their personal election campaigns once they are nominated?** Specify amount in local currency.
75. **What amount of campaign funds, if any, are individual candidates expected to raise for the campaign?** Please provide details.
- a. Are the candidates expected to raise a specified amount?
  - b. How are those funds dispersed?
76. **Do local and regional branches raise funds for their own campaign activities?**
77. **What was the total income of the political party in the last election and non-election year respectively?** Specify in local currency.
78. **How much funding, if any, does the party provide to the women's wing, youth wing, etc and do they have their own sources of income and budgets?** Specify in local currency.
79. **Which are the party's main sources of income (amount and percentage)** (In last non- election year/ Amount as % of total party income/ In the last election year/ Amount as % of total party income) Specify in local currency.  
*Public funding from the state; Membership fees; Income from fundraising activities and events; Individual donations; Trade union donations; Donations from associations (list principal donors); Other (please specify)*
80. **What, if any, strategies and methods for fundraising are used by the party?**
81. **What, if any, assets are held by the party (ie. businesses, buildings, etc)?** Specify which ones and if they generate income.
82. **Which are the main expenditures of the party?** (In last non- election year/ Amount as % of total party income/ In the last election year/ Amount as % of total party income)  
Specify in local currency.  
*Publicity/propaganda; Salaries; Transportation; Public opinion research (polling/ policy development); National and regional meetings/ congresses; Voter education; Election campaign; Other (please specify)*
83. **How, if at all, are regular financial reports of the party (and/or individual candidates) made public?**
84. **How, if at all, are campaign finance reports of the party (and individual candidates) made public?**

**Funding – additional comments**

#### **QUESTIONS FOR ALL INTERVIEWEES**

85. **What are the most important reasons for change (or lack of changes) in membership, in your opinion?** Please refer to Q30 on membership.
86. **How much influence, in your opinion, do the following bodies have in initiating policy changes or development?** (Great deal of influence/ Fair amount of influence/ Not very much influence/ No influence at all/ Don't know) Please check that all apply.  
*Affiliated external organisations (trade unions etc); Auxiliary internal party organisations (women, youth etc); Delegates to party congress; Local party; National executive; Parliamentary party caucus/club; Party leader; Party members; Regional party; Significant party donors; Other (please specify)*

87. **How much, in your opinion, do the following bodies participate in debating major policy changes?** (Great deal of participation / Fair amount of participation / Not very much participation / No participation at all / Don't know) Please check that all apply.  
*Affiliated external organisations (trade unions etc); Auxiliary internal party organisations (women, youth etc); Delegates to party congress; Local party; National executive; Parliamentary party caucus/club; Party leader; Party members; Regional party; Significant party donors; Other (please specify)*
88. **How much influence, in your opinion, do the following bodies have in finally deciding major policy changes?** (Absolute approval or veto power / Great deal of influence / Fair amount of influence / Not very much influence / No influence at all / Don't know)  
*Affiliated external organisations (trade unions etc); Auxiliary internal party organisations (women, youth etc); Cabinet ministers (if ruling party); Delegates to party congress; Local party; National executive; Parliamentary party caucus/club; Party leader; Party members; Regional party; Significant party donors; Other ((please specify)*

#### S/election of candidate

89. **How much influence, in your opinion, do the following bodies have in finally deciding major policy changes?** (Absolute approval or veto power / Great deal of influence / Fair amount of influence / Not very much influence / No influence at all / Don't know)  
*Affiliated external organisations (trade unions etc); All party members; Auxiliary internal party organisations (women, youth etc); Delegates to party congress; Local party; National executive; Parliamentary party caucus/club; Party Leader; Party members; Regional party; Significant party donors; Other (please specify)*
90. **To what extent do the following factors, in your opinion, affect positively the chances of candidates to get s/elected by the party?** (Very important / Fairly important / Not very important / Not at all important / Don't know)  
*Ability at public speaking; Closeness to party leader or senior party officials; Commitment to the campaign; Educational qualifications; Experience of holding party office; Local/regional connections with the community; Name recognition; Personal wealth; Business experience; Trade union experience; Many years of membership; Other (please specify)*

#### Additional comments

## ABOUT EISA



EISA is a not-for-profit and non-partisan non-governmental organisation which was established in 1996. Its core business is to provide technical assistance for capacity building of relevant government departments, electoral management bodies, political parties and civil society organisations operating in the democracy and governance field throughout the SADC region and beyond. Inspired by the various positive developments towards democratic governance in Africa as a whole and the SADC region in particular since the early 1990s, EISA aims to advance democratic values, practices and enhance the credibility of electoral processes. The ultimate goal is to assist countries in Africa and the SADC region to nurture and consolidate democratic governance. SADC countries have received enormous technical assistance and advice from EISA in building solid institutional foundations for democracy. This includes electoral system reforms; election monitoring and observation; constructive conflict management; strengthening of parliament and other democratic institutions; strengthening of political parties; capacity building for civil society organisations; deepening democratic local governance; and enhancing the institutional capacity of the election management bodies. EISA is currently the secretariat of the Electoral Commissions Forum (ECF) composed of electoral commissions in the SADC region and established in 1998. EISA is also the secretariat of the SADC Election Support Network (ESN) comprising election-related civil society organisations established in 1997.

### **VISION**

Realisation of effective and sustainable democratic governance in Southern Africa and beyond.

### **MISSION**

To strengthen electoral processes, democratic governance, human rights and democratic values through research, capacity building, advocacy and other strategically targeted interventions.

**VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

Key values and principles of governance that EISA believes in include:

- Regular free and fair elections
- Promoting democratic values
- Respect for fundamental human rights
- Due process of law / rule of law
- Constructive management of conflict
- Political tolerance
- Inclusive multiparty democracy
- Popular participation
- Transparency
- Gender equality
- Accountability
- Promoting electoral norms and standards

**OBJECTIVES**

- To nurture and consolidate democratic governance
- To build institutional capacity of regional and local actors through research, education, training, information and technical advice
- To ensure representation and participation of minorities in the governance process
- To strive for gender equality in the governance process
- To strengthen civil society organisations in the interest of sustainable democratic practice, and
- To build collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the governance process.

**CORE ACTIVITIES**

- Research
- Conferences, seminars and workshops
- Publishing
- Conducting elections and ballots

- Technical advice
- Capacity building
- Election observation
- Election evaluation
- Networking
- Voter / civic education
- Conflict management
- Educator and learner resource packs

## **PROGRAMMES**

EISA's core business revolves around three main programmes namely: Conflict Management, Democracy and Electoral Education; Electoral and Political Processes; and Balloting and Electoral Services.

### **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL EDUCATION**

This programme comprises various projects including voter education, democracy and human rights education; electoral observation; electoral staff training; electoral conflict management; capacity building; course design and citizen participation.

### **ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES**

This programme addresses areas such as technical assistance for electoral commissions, civil society organisations and political parties; coordination of election observation and monitoring missions; working towards the establishment of electoral norms and standards for the SADC region and providing technical support to both the SADC-ECF and the SADC-ESN.

### **BALLOTING AND ELECTORAL SERVICES**

The programme enhances the credibility and legitimacy of organisational elections by providing independent and impartial electoral administration, management and consultancy services. The key activities include managing elections for political parties, trade unions, pension funds, medical aid societies, etc.

**EISA'S SPECIAL PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- Rule of Law, which examines issues related to justice and human rights;
- Local Government, which aims to promote community participation in governance; and
- Political Parties, which aims to promote party development at strategic, organisational and structural levels through youth empowerment, leadership development and development of party coalitions.

**EISA'S SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE:**

- Research
- Publications
- Library
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

**EISA PRODUCTS**

- Books
- CD-ROMS
- Conference proceedings
- Election handbooks
- Occasional papers
- Election observer reports
- Research reports
- Country profiles
- Election updates
- Newsletters
- Voter education manuals
- Journal of African Elections
- Election database

## ABOUT IDEA



The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) was set up in 1995 as an intergovernmental body located at the interface between researchers, practitioners and the donor community to promote dialogue, analyses and networking for the purpose of strengthening democratic processes and institutions. IDEA's current programmes cover three thematic areas: Electoral Processes, Democracy and Conflict Management, and Political Participation. IDEA's work in the area of electoral processes is the most developed and entails, among other things, the production of global knowledge and tools which cover issues such as electoral systems, representation and participation, and election administration. In 1997 IDEA produced a handbook on electoral systems which has been widely circulated and discussed and which informed electoral system reform processes in several countries. Recently, IDEA published the *New IDEA Handbook on Electoral Design*, adding material on the political context of electoral systems and the process of electoral system change to the explanation of different electoral systems and their effects contained in the original book.

This year (2005), IDEA is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary both at its headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden, and also at select venues around the world.

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