DIALOGUE
ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOVERNANCE
IN THE SADC REGION:

ANGOLA, BOTSWANA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, MOZAMBIQUE, NAMIBIA, SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA

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EISA
Promoting Credible Elections and Democratic Governance in Africa

INTERNATIONAL IDEA
INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

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– CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS –

A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP
HELD AT THE INDABA HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA,
14 –15 APRIL 2005

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INTERNATIONAL IDEA
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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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREFACE

The workshop entitled 'Dialogue on political parties and governance in the SADC region' was organised by IDEA (the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) and EISA.

The two institutions are also partners in a research programme on political parties and governance in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The research programme covers all 13 SADC countries.

In this, the second of two workshops, eight countries are covered – Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.

The first workshop, held some months earlier, covered the remaining five countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

The workshops allowed researchers to present their findings and brought together leading members of ruling and opposition political parties from all the countries. Judging by the responses and comments from most political party representatives present, this workshop had an impact on two levels. First, it allowed parties with different origins and capacities, levels of development and political cultures to exchange experiences and to share the challenges they face in their respective countries. Put differently, the workshops allowed parties to look at similarities and differences. Second, the interaction between political parties and researchers helped to enhance the credibility of the research and its findings. The workshops confirmed the interest of high-level party representatives in discussions on the basis of systematic study and constructive dialogue. Indeed, the openness of political party members and their interaction with researchers will improve the quality of the final research product.

The workshops have put the two institutions, EISA and IDEA, in a good position to continue their work with political parties in the SADC countries.

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE SADC REGION

In 2004, IDEA and EISA decided to undertake research on political parties to contribute to the strengthening of the democratic process. The democratisation process in Africa to date has been extremely important in re-orienting African political systems away from authoritarian rule and towards multiparty and competitive political governance. But competitive politics can be sustained only if there are well-functioning political parties.

Political parties are crucial actors in the sustainability of democratisation. Despite the good progress on multiparty democratisation made in the SADC region, there has been very little, or scattered, information and knowledge on the functioning and structure of political parties in the different countries.

The principal objective of the study on – and dialogue with – political parties is to try to understand the functioning of these parties in an effort to identify their strengths and weaknesses. No comprehensive study has been done by African scholars in the area of political parties in the SADC region. This research study has therefore given Southern African researchers and academics an opportunity to reflect on the existence, functioning and challenges that face political parties in their respective countries.

The research is part of a larger research programme for both EISA and IDEA. For EISA it is part of its 'Democratic governance in the SADC region' programme, which is being funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), Harare; the Royal Danish Embassy, Pretoria; and the Embassy of Finland, Pretoria. For IDEA, it is part of a global research and dialogue programme with political parties (other regions include Central and Eastern Europe, South Asia, West Africa, East Africa and Latin America).

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

EISA Executive Director Denis Kadima and IDEA Africa Region Director Dr Abdalla Hamdok opened the workshop. They highlighted the importance of understanding how political parties function in the SADC region, considering the fact that they are key actors for the consolidation of democratic governance. IDEA and EISA had convened the workshop to introduce political parties to the project that both organisations are implementing. The workshop was also intended to create a forum for interaction between researchers and political parties. This process would further expose and help political parties to familiarise themselves with the research and contribute to its content. Through this process, IDEA aims to work with political parties to strengthen their overall functioning and improve democratic consolidation.

The workshop participants were informed that EISA and IDEA had a profound interest in the unfolding process of democratic governance in the SADC region, and this explained the importance of looking at political parties.

METHODOLOGY

The workshop was organised so as to allow enough time for discussion and interaction between political parties themselves on the one hand, and between political parties and researchers on the other. It was divided into different sessions, with each session focusing on one particular country.

The research information was collected mainly by means of three questionnaires developed by IDEA and EISA: the first on the national country context; the second on the external regulations governing political parties; and the third on the internal functioning of political parties. Country researchers reported on all the techniques being applied in the research: the methodology used in the study (all researchers said that the bulk of the material for their studies was obtained through face-to-face interviews with key leaders of political parties); the national context; the external environment (which looks into the legislation governing the functioning and existence of political parties); and the internal procedures of political parties (which draws largely on field interviews*). Researchers were encouraged to report on all these areas. After each presentation, time was given for political parties to respond to researchers' presentations.

WELCOME AND OPENING ADDRESS

Participants were welcomed and thanked for their attendance by Denis Kadima of EISA and Dr Abdalla Hamdok of International IDEA.

Kadima thanked the representatives and researchers for their participation in the workshop. He mentioned that the researchers' task was a difficult one, and that their work was appreciated. He also thanked the Swedish, Finnish and Danish governments for their financial support, and went on to say that the findings from the interviews and surveys could have been published as they were, but it was felt that it was important for the researchers to present their findings and engage in further discussion with the parties so that any potential misunderstandings could be cleared up. He expressed the hope that an open discussion would ensue.

Hamdok extended a welcome to participants on behalf of International IDEA. He said that the meeting was a timely one that was 'taking place at a time when Africans are asking and being asked to take leadership for the political, economic and social revival of the continent'. He spoke briefly about the work of IDEA, emphasising that the inter-governmental organisation focused on providing comparative but non-prescriptive information to both new and established democracies. IDEA operated at international, regional and national levels in collaboration with a range of institutions in order to provide support for sustainable democracy. He concluded by saying that the prime objective of the overall programme was to assist in the development and strengthening of political parties, so that they in turn would strengthen democracy in their respective countries.

The workshop was opened by President Cassam Uteem, former President of Mauritius. Uteem said that the purpose was to 'examine the findings on the external regulation and the internal functioning of political parties, and to assess the state of political parties and their role with respect to democratisation and the institutionalisation of governance'. He discussed the overall importance of political parties to democracy, and said that political parties were crucial to a democracy. Uteem linked their importance to that of an independent judiciary or free media.

Borrowing from the German Professor Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, he said that political parties played five main roles:

- *Mediation.* Parties mediate between a pluralistic society and government institutions.
- *Motivation*. Parties encourage participation in the political process through motivating civil society to vote.
- *Choosing leaders*. Parties select and nominate candidates for elections.
- *Aggregate interests*. Parties bring together a pluralism of interests into 'a reasonable number of political … options' and they 'channel conflicts between government and opposition'.
- *Policy.* Parties draw up policy options and translate theory and opinions into practice.

Countries without political parties are dictatorships. In the light of the imperative role that parties play in a democracy, President Uteem posed the following questions:

- How come that in … the vast majority of countries, so much distrust exists towards political parties?

- Why in some countries are parties at times merely tolerated or at best considered as a necessary evil?

To these questions, he offered two main explanations:

- Trust in political parties is declining partly due to their **internal governance**. They lack transparency. 'Few political parties … can be referred to as models for democracy.' It is often the case that too much power is concentrated in the leader and a core group of people around the leader of a party. Candidates are frequently selected using criteria other than merit or competence. One consequence of men's domination of political parties is that women 'are relegated to inferior positions'. Although it is a positive move that SADC countries are encouraging gender representation quotas, 'equality should first be reflected in parties' own hierarchies'.

- The declining trust has also to do with issues surrounding money and party funding. Cases of corruption in parties are regularly reported in the media, causing general mistrust. Parties deal in huge amounts of money and are secretive about the sources and the spending of this money. Political parties are accountable to no authority. They operate in a most obscure manner, have no obligation to submit audited accounts and owe no explanation to anyone, including their own members.

The presence of money in politics is as much a problem as the absence of it. Political parties generate massive expenses through office expenses, staff salaries and electoral campaigns. There has to be money to pay for all these expenses. When membership fees, return on investments, and activists' fundraising fall short of the required funds, parties look to other sources that might not be entirely compatible with democracy. Public funding and funding regulations are ways that political parties' reliance on money from interest groups can be reduced. He said that this issue would be further discussed in the course of the workshop.

Uteem concluded by saying that 'political parties are too important an institution for sustainable democracy to allow them to continue to lose credibility among the citizens of any country'. He said that best practices in terms of internal functioning and external regulations must be found in order for parties to play their roles fully and effectively.

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SUMMARY OF PANEL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr Abdalla Hamdok presented a paper titled 'The global context on issues of democracy-building: Perspective on recent trends'. His presentation placed the coming discussions in the global context by briefly reviewing the state of democracy and current challenges to democratisation around the world.

As a result of the events in Afghanistan and Iraq, the public has become more aware of the incredible difficulties involved in **building and strengthening democracy**. Part of the reason for the complexity is that democratic development does not evolve in a straight line. It is, rather, a non-linear process which requires many issues to be taken into consideration and subsequently addressed. For example, democratic development requires people to pay attention to issues of 'security, legitimacy, local ownership and the interplay of cultural, religious and democratic values'. Resolving the problems that arise from these issues is a process that necessitates complementary, supporting institutional structures as well as 'the need for a very long-term perspective'.

The **context** in which democratic development takes place is extremely important. The history of the country as well as the socio-political environment impacts on and shapes democratic institutions. The relative success or failure of institutions is dependent on the ability of the institutions to adapt to the local environment. Institutions cannot simply be transferred: 'you cannot copy and paste democratic institutions from one environment and hope they will succeed in a completely different environment'. Thus 'countries will necessarily be differently democratic'. Part of the value of comparative work on democracy is that it has shown that institutions need to be tailored to local contexts.

Comparative studies across various democratic settings highlight the socio-economic development that democracy brings. But in order for the socio-economic benefits of democracy to materialise, the **value of democracy** needs to be emphasised so that people embrace it:

> 'Democratic governance must … be seen as having an instrumental value and relevance to improving human development, in order for the stakeholders to buy into the culture of democracy. We need to make [it] clear [from comparisons] that the democratic dispensation and democratic regimes and systems help articulate clear alternatives in a democratic environment by the setting of priorities … . Democracy will not address issues of socio-economic development if people do not buy into it.

> 'Democracy has universal validity, though a warning in this regard is necessary. Since **democracy cannot be imported** "as is", it needs to be experimented with. Developing the type of democracy appropriate to a particular setting is a process. There are bound to be failures experienced during the process of democracy-building. It has taken established democracies hundreds of years to reach the kind

of entrenched democracy they now enjoy. In the case of the liberal western European democratic model, the process has taken over 300 years. With this in mind, there is not a single democracy model that African countries can emulate. To learn democracy, a country must practice democracy, and the warning is that mistakes will be made.'

Narrowing the attention to democratic development on the African continent, Hamdok said, 'the picture is not all gloom. … There are [bright] spots'. Despite the persisting obstacles of poverty, armed conflict and HIV, Africa 'has managed against great odds to move forward in many respects in the past few years'. What has emerged is that there is a real and popular demand from the people for stronger democracy. The establishment of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) has spurred 'a new sense of collective responsibility' in the public. Issues of responsible economic and political governance have come to the forefront in the minds of the leaders and civil society.

Democracy in Africa is deepening in a concrete sense as well as in an abstract sense. The authoritarian characteristics of regimes are beginning to fade and aspects of **pluralism** are increasingly incorporated into prevailing democratic dispensations. Provisions for periodic elections are being written into constitutions, resulting in more and more elections taking place. Constitutions are also increasingly guaranteeing civil and political liberties. Additionally, measures for the effective transfer of power are being written into constitutions. The renewal of leadership can be seen in the increasing number of former presidents who are now playing a role in developing democracy across the continent.

Other gains made for democracy in Africa are 'more **inclusive political systems** in which minorities and previously disadvantaged groups have gained access to elected and appointed offices'. This is significant because a more inclusive political space means that there is a greater chance that the democratic gains already achieved will remain. However, ways to further entrench democracy '[remain] a serious concern' due to the socio-political challenges that continue to face Africa.

As the process of building democracy plays out in Africa, some countries are having greater success than others. The disparity 'in the level and depths of democratic governance across countries may be in part due to the intractable nature of … challenges in the respective countries'. But some countries – for example, Ghana, Benin, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa – have shown remarkable resilience to the socio-political challenges that threaten to undermine democracy. Such countries can serve as examples by providing precedents to other states 'where the commitment to democratic governance may be a tenuous and grudging issue'.

Turning to the global challenges to political parties, statistical indicators can provide an insight into the areas in which these challenges lie. This statistical information comes from surveys such as the Afrobarometer and the Global Barometer.

Worldwide, the statistics show that the **membership** of political parties is declining. For example, membership rates across 13 western European countries declined from about 10% in 1980 to 5.7% in the late 1990s. In Poland the percentage of political party membership is particularly

acute: only 1.5% of the electorate belongs to a political party. Of the 19 countries in western Europe, membership is declining in all but two.

Not only are parties losing members, but fewer people are voting (the exception being the recent United States [US] presidential election, although this can be explained by the current polarisation in the country). People are increasingly exercising their right *not* to participate, especially in eastern Europe. The growing **anti-party sentiment** is causing the mass-party model to become less and less applicable as fewer people join political parties and fewer people vote. Organisationally, parties are becoming weaker and weaker through:

- declining membership;
- fewer people going to the polls;
- weakening links with civil society, social groups and trade unions; and
- a decreasing capacity to create and win support for their policies.

The consequences of weaker political parties are numerous. For example:

- Weaker parties encourage a lack of leadership renewal. If civil society is alienated from political parties, it is not encouraging change, and therefore the tendency is to preserve the existing leadership. This has been the case in Latin America.

- The weaker that political parties are, the more challenging **fundraising** becomes. There is an increasing reliance on public funding, as is seen in the examples of Africa, Mexico and Europe. Parties are also more inclined to resort to selling their influence in order to raise funds. Political party **financing scandals** have broken out all over the world – for example, in France, Belgium and Germany. In the US, not only are these common but they are almost openly tolerated. The increasingly corrupt nature of political party financing is, in part, a result of the weakening of parties.

Political parties are adapting to the changing context in which they operate. Some of the new organisational innovations that have been adopted must be seen as positive steps. Parties are becoming **more professional** in their operations. Parties are now using paid consultants, while, in a sense, political party work has become a career on its own. The effect of this is to make parties more efficient, as much of the work is in the hands of political party career-professionals.

A challenge that persists all over the world is that of equal **gender** representation, and this is a problem for countries as a whole as well as for their political parties. 'Across the globe there are a lot of pronouncements, decrees, issues related to [gender] targets … yet we are [still] to get there'. The United Nations (UN) and SADC targets for women's representation are 30%. The AU target is 50%. However, only a very small number of legislatures have reached such targets. The average percentage of women in legislatures is only 15%.

Africa is close to the worldwide average, although one country in particular stands out: Rwanda has the most equally representative government in the world, with women making up 48.4% of the total. The Nordic countries come a close second. South Africa, with women representing 33% of the total, is 12th in terms of gender representation. Mozambique also scores higher than

the worldwide average, while, on the other hand, the number of women representatives in Mauritius is very low. Despite some countries having limited success, gender equality is an issue that remains a challenge throughout the world, and it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

The final indicator to be briefly looked at is the level of **satisfaction** with democracy. The level of satisfaction in the newly established democracies of Europe and Latin America is very low – only 35% and 36% respectively. In Africa and Asia, according to Afrobarometer, the level of satisfaction is higher (65% and 63% respectively).

Although these are relatively low figures that indicate much dissatisfaction with democracy, one must be careful not to make wild inferences from them. For example, despite a rather high level of dissatisfaction with democracy, the vast majority of all those polled internationally (61-74%) prefer democracy to any other political system.

In conclusion, the challenges to political parties, and thus to building and strengthening democracy, are numerous. Persisting problems such as poverty, HIV and armed conflict make this task all the more difficult. Perhaps as a result, the level of satisfaction with democracy and trust in political parties is low. However, there is no reliable formula for strengthening democracy, as what works well in one context will not necessarily work in another environment. Parties themselves are facing many problems, including declining membership rates, difficulty in securing 'democratic' funding and growing anti-party sentiment. These are some of the barriers to parties and democracy that are present all over the world, and these issues need to be addressed.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr Khabele Matlosa gave a presentation on the issues facing political parties and democracy in the SADC region. He spoke about how political parties are developing in Southern Africa, and the overall regional context in which they are operating. Matlosa reviewed the relationship between parties and democracy, and also looked at the main challenges to political parties in the region.

He began by restating the imperative role that political parties play in a democracy, and thus the importance of these workshops:

> 'We are here because we recognise the importance of political parties to any vibrant and thriving democracy. Political parties play a central role to democracy. Without political parties … I cannot imagine a working and vibrant democracy. … Parties are therefore central both to democratisation and to the institutionalisation of democratic governance.'

Matlosa said that President Uteem had noted reasons why political parties were crucial to democracy. To expand on this, there were four other reasons. Parties:

- endow regimes with **legitimacy**;
- act as a medium for **political recruitment**;
- provide opportunities for **coalitions**; and
- create **political stability**.

Civil society groups, although they are also political actors in a democratic state, cannot take the place of political parties. Parties not only lobby for and advocate policy changes; they also compete. Competing is the core business of parties. 'Parties compete for the control of states.' Although they are distinct from interest groups, parties also need to develop relationships with such groups. A pertinent question to ask, therefore, is: To what extent are parties interfacing with other interest groups?

The speaker highlighted the fact that **trust in political parties** was decreasing. Delving into this, one can see a specific trend emerging within the SADC region. That trend is interesting – public trust of opposition parties is declining faster than public trust of ruling parties. This has repercussions in terms of party membership, resources and the contest of power.

Referring to party systems, Matlosa said that the SADC region was dominated by many countries with similar party systems. From a worldwide perspective, there are essentially four different types of party systems:

- **Multiparty system.** Numerous parties compete for power, and many parties engage in the governance process – usually actively and effectively. This leads to many parties being able to contribute directly or indirectly to policy formation and implementation.
- **Two-party system.** A political system in which two parties dominate, even though many parties may be competing for power. In such a system, power alternates between the two dominating parties.
- *De jure* **one-party system.** Only one party is allowed to exist, as the law prohibits other parties from operating or competing for power.
- **Dominant-party system or** *de facto* **one-party system**. Numerous parties may compete, but one party dominates the governance process. Other parties do not pose a serious challenge to the dominant party.

In the SADC region, most countries have a dominant-party system, although there are exceptions. For example, Mauritius and Malawi have multiparty systems. In these countries, coalition and alliance-building is reinforcing the multiparty nature of the system.

Part of the reason for the prevalence of the dominant-party system in the SADC region can be found in the history of the countries and the political parties in the region. The party systems of the region have typically evolved in a similar fashion. There are identifiable stages of party-system development common to most SADC countries. Although sub-phases can be readily distinguished, a brief overview allows one to summarise the phases into three distinct periods.

The **first period** was the era immediately after independence, which was the 1960s for most countries. During this stage, a solid platform for a multiparty democracy existed. The first post-independence elections show many parties competing, and many parties obtaining a mandate for representation in government. No party dominated, and it appeared as if a multiparty system would remain.

The **second period** was the phase in which the multiparty system crumbled. Five or ten years after the first post-independence elections, one party was embraced and came to dominate in

government. The dominating party became entrenched in its power and institutionalised as 'the government', either through legislation (*de jure*) or in practice (*de facto*). This trend began with Nyerere, then Malibu in Tanzania, followed by Kaunda in Zambia, and so on. There are obvious as well as concealed problems with this trend:

> 'It not only affects democratic governance at the national level in terms of weakening the institutional foundations of democratic governance, but it also affects parties internally through the extent to which parties are able to embrace and institutionalise what we call within-party democracy. It retards efforts towards an enlargement of democratic governance at a broader macro level of a country, but it also retards democratic advances within parties at the micro level of the party.'

Except for Mauritius and Botswana, every other country in the SADC region has followed this pattern.

The **third period** of party-system development typically began in the 1990s. During this period, a wave of democratic transitions took root, and the way towards greater democracy was opened up. Many SADC countries are currently in this period, which is a hopeful period. At the macro level – i.e. the level of the state – the door for greater democracy has been opened.

However, the mere opening of opportunities to strengthen and enhance democracy does not necessarily mean that such opportunities are always taken. Worrisome trends are emerging, particularly trends revolving around the internal functioning of parties and issues related to party financing. Additionally, there seems to be a 'lingering authoritarian tendency' within parties. So although a democratic space has opened at the macro level, at the micro level (i.e. the party level) 'democracy has not been institutionalised and remains a big challenge'.

How are the challenges to enhancing intra-party democracy to be addressed? Before political parties become more democratic internally, the challenges that face parties in this regard need to be known. There are four areas which need to be looked at:

- Party leadership.
- Primary elections or selection of candidates.
- Party funding.
- Gender equality.

On the first point, some very specific issues are related to **party leadership**. Increasingly in SADC countries we have seen presidents step down from office when their terms expire only to retain leadership of the ruling party. Useful questions to ask are:

- What effect does this have on democracy?
- What are the consequences of having a president who is not even the leader of his own party?

Malawi is one case where the current president is facing difficulties because the former president has retained leadership of the ruling party.

The second point concerns **primary elections**. There are problems in political parties with the selection of candidates. It needs to be known how effective primary elections are in reality, and how they can be better handled. On this point, one could ask the question: To what extent are the parties able to run primary elections without being monitored by an independent body?

Primary elections often lead to unnecessary conflict, and intra-party disputes sometimes result in top-ranking party members leaving the party and standing for election as independents. A recent example of this occurred in Zimbabwe.

The third area which needs to be deeply examined is **political party financing**. Political parties are clearly very important for democracy, but 'parties are not a cheap machinery to run'. Like democracy, parties are very expensive, and 'for them to be effective they need a lot of money'. Questions to ask in this regard are:

- What are the best ways to ensure that parties have the necessary funding without compromising democracy?
- What is the most effective way to manage the public funding of parties?
- To what extent should private funding be regulated?

Discovering the best way for parties to acquire their resources and ensuring that parties have enough money to function effectively are challenges that require great attention.

The fourth and final point concerns **gender equality**. 'We are failing our countries in terms of enhancing democracy by not injecting gender equality within the party itself as well as government', and the various institutional bodies of democracy. Across the SADC region, real gender equality has not been achieved. Some countries – particularly those with proportional representation (PR) systems – are doing better than others. These PR countries include South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia. In general, however, the SADC region is failing in this regard.

In conclusion, from a regional point of view, SADC countries are 'on the right track in terms of democratisation … but are lagging behind in terms of democratising democrats'. It is clear that one of the impediments to deepening democracy within SADC countries is that parties themselves face democratic challenges of their own. Political parties need to become democratically run organisations in order for country-level democracy to be sustainable and further institutionalised.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Participants commented on the points raised by Hamdok and Matlosa. The challenges around **leadership** emerged as a key concern. One participant noted that African culture was prone to cultivating attitudes of obedience and leader-worship. People complained about the state of services and the government's failures, but these same people are reluctant to hold their leaders responsible and question them directly on such issues in public. A participant said:

> 'I have observed that leaders generally just want to be respected. They don't want to be bothered with accountability. To this extent, we breed authoritarian leaders by spending a lot of time worshipping them, embracing them and dancing before them.'

Participants agreed that **cultural norms** often engendered behaviour that worked against democracy by, for example, not demanding **accountability** from leaders. It was noted that the lack of accountability pervaded all levels of political leadership, from the very lowest level to the highest level. Hamdok said:

> 'It is more important for the leaders themselves to feel … accountable, and they should expect the populace at large – whether in an institutionalised manner or outside the institutions – to hold them accountable for their deeds. … We need to have a culture whereby the leaders should not just expect that they should always lead. They should expect that they will be held accountable.'

Matlosa implied that **unquestioning obedience** to leaders was manifested not only at the civil society–political leader level, but also within political parties themselves. To illustrate his point, he told the story of a politician at a SADC meeting who had not been paying attention to the proceedings. The man was asked for his opinion, and he simply said that he agreed with his minister. When it was pointed out that his minister had not yet spoken, the politician replied: 'I know. But even when he comes to talk, I'll agree with him anyway.' The story highlighted the fact that people do not like to question those with greater authority than themselves, and this is true whether one is talking about low levels of authority or high levels of authority. The problem was summarised in the question:

- How do we inject democratic mechanisms into a culture?

A researcher hinted that one of the problems in political leadership was that politicians often 'do not have a **vision**'; yet such people are allowed to become leaders. Leaders who lack vision fail to see that political leadership is about creating opportunities to accomplish goals and actually *do* something. In these cases, leadership focuses on the self, and not on achieving objectives. If such leaders are questioned about what they intend to accomplish, they respond that the question shows a lack of respect. This is obviously not a healthy way to build a democratic state.

The point about political parties interfacing with **civil society** was taken up in the discussion. A participant noted that while it was important for political parties to engage with civil society interest groups, doing so is not always conflict-free. Sometimes when there are attempts to establish relationships between interest groups and political parties, there is a backlash. Such attempts can be perceived as pursuance of a political agenda masquerading as social work. This problem can arise in another form: openly identifying with a political party can create hindrances to achieving social links.

However, the core reason why such a backlash arises is the lack of cooperation between cultures. In order to overcome such a backlash, one must actively create cooperation by encouraging and establishing more and more links between interest groups and political parties, and between political parties themselves. At the moment relationships of this nature are virtually non-existent, and very few institutional linkages exist. It was noted that the South African tripartite alliance was an exception in this regard.

Further topics that were discussed were the dominant-party systems in the SADC region, opposition parties in Mozambique and youth representation. On the issue of **dominant-party**

systems, a participant said that every country present was in fact practising the dominant-party system, 'despite … pretences towards multipartyism'.

Picking up on this issue in the context of **Mozambique**, a participant spoke of the Mozambican ruling party, saying that it dominated 'the whole of society', and that Mozambique lacked the common SADC history of multipartyism. Furthermore, 'in Mozambique the opposition parties are facing problems due to the activities of the ruling party, and not because the people are not interested in the opposition'.

On **youth representation**, a participant from South Africa commented that a great deal of attention was being given to gender representation, but very little was being given to youth representation. This was cited as one of the causes for political apathy. It was said that if the issue of youth representation were not addressed, then 'we are likely to reproduce ourselves and probably continue in the same vein'.

3
COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The country presentations were the result of fieldwork conducted by country researchers. Clear terms of reference and a structure for their reports were given to the researchers. The studies were to focus particularly on party development in the different countries.

The reports were to reflect:

- country context;
- external regulations governing parties; and
- internal functioning of parties.

These presentations were the report-backs of the research findings, and the researchers were encouraged to cover all the research aspects.

ANGOLA

Augusto Santana presented his findings on Angola. He began by telling a short narrative:

> 'A gentleman came to my office very cross. He was the president of a party, and he said: "Dr Santana … I have just disbanded the Central Committee." And I asked him: "How can a president have a mandate to dissolve the whole of the Central Committee?" He said: "This is my party. I created it. So I can do what I want." '

This story, Santana said, was a good illustration of the political climate in Angola.

For the study, five parties were interviewed. They included the ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), as well as the main opposition party, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita). Four of the five parties are represented in parliament. Five people per party were interviewed.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Gathering the information in Angola was difficult, as some of the information required was referred to as 'secret'. Requests were regarded with suspicion. This was possibly because this type of research had never been conducted in Angola before. Obtaining information on finances was especially difficult. In some cases financial information was not provided.

Current politics in Angola must be understood in the context of the recent history of the country. Conflict had lasted for four decades (although various agreements were signed during this time). The conflict finally ended in February 2002 when Savimbi, the president of Unita, was killed in combat.

Following this, in April 2002, a memorandum was concluded by which all parties committed themselves to ending the hostilities. Unita has been converted into a civilian party, and this has decreased the likelihood of war breaking out again.

However, with the end of the war new challenges have emerged – a lack of democracy and poverty. If the socio-economic and political challenges are not addressed, and if democracy is not consolidated, violence is bound to break out again. The peaceful coexistence of former enemies has brought hope for a sustainable peace in the long run. But if democracy fails to emerge and the lives of people remain unchanged, dissatisfaction may increase and the possibility of violent conflict re-emerging cannot be ruled out.

Angola is a rich county in terms of natural resources – including oil and diamonds. It is important that these resources are utilised in a manner that serves all the population. Today, unfortunately, corruption is rife in Angola and this is seen as one factor that will impede the redistribution of resources. Angola is considered the fifth most corrupt country in the world. Financial accountability to the public remains a problem, although the government as well as civil society has started to implement certain measures to combat this.

EXTERNAL REGULATIONS

Political parties are subject to regulations contained in the constitution. Political parties were only allowed to operate after 1992 following the adoption of a constitution that set Angola on the path to multiparty democracy. Along with other legislation, the constitution allowed for the development of a market economy, regulation of political party financing, and the rules governing political party campaigning.

An election was held in 1992. The results were disputed and the main opposition party, Unita, returned to war. In the meantime, the 1992 constitution spurred the creation of new political parties beside the two former belligerents – Unita and the MPLA. Until that time, the MPLA was the only party, while Unita was more of a militaristic liberation movement as opposed to a political party. Most of the new parties were formed out of the MPLA and Unita. The next election is planned for 2006.

Today there are 125 registered political parties in Angola. Parties have to be registered by the Supreme Court. The law dictates that 3,000 signatures are needed before a political party can be formed. Parties in Angola are defined as 'organisations made up of Angolan citizens in an orderly way, in order to participate in a democratic way in the life of the country … they [have] a permanent character … [and] compete for the expression of the voice of the people'. The Angolan constitution specifically mentions political parties and there is also a law that specifies the way that financing of parties has to take place. In fact, the laws that govern political parties are part of the constitution. But this, as well as the legislation that covers party financing, is currently under review.

INTERNAL REGULATIONS

Parties also draw up their own regulations. All the parties interviewed have their own internal regulations (although not all were willing to produce these documents). Many of the internally imposed regulations deal with discipline. For example, to become a member of a party a person must accept the party's internal statutes and programme unconditionally. Each party's programmes 'must be in accordance with the constitution and in accordance with the other laws existing in the country'.

At the moment 12 parties are represented in parliament. Parliament has 220 members of parliament (MPs), 90 of whom are from the provinces while 130 are elected at the national level. The ruling party, the MPLA, has 129 seats, Unita has 70 seats, and the other parties have six seats or fewer. Seats are allocated according on a PR basis.

The organisational structure of parties is similar. The congresses are the supreme authorities and generally meet every five years. They analyse the social and political conditions of the country and of the party itself. National executive organs 'deal with the life of the parties'. Political bureaus exist, but their authority and actions are limited; 'they act as secretariats in order to take decisions on the day-to-day activities of the parties'. Parties have provincial and local structures. Smaller party branches operating from the suburbs form the basic units of parties.

Angolan political parties face many challenges in order to consolidate democracy. But first, political parties need to become more efficient and democratic themselves.

There are several main challenges to political parties in Angola:

Internal democracy
All the parties lack internal democracy. Power in political parties needs to become more decentralised. Control in the parties concentrates around the leaders. The leaders have a large amount of influence in decision-making – even though party documents may claim that decisions are reached in a consensual manner through voting or otherwise. Issues are not fully discussed with all the relevant structures, and so sometimes the decisions of the leadership are difficult to comprehend.

The power of leaders extends beyond decision-making. Leaders can and do control candidate selection. 'There is a great obedience to the leadership because nobody wants to go against the will of the leadership.' Theoretically, all party members can become party leaders or representatives, but in reality the leader decides the political fortunes of party members. Members who challenge and question the leader will not be nominated for leadership roles, but those who are submissive towards the leader will. On paper, parties are democratic, but they are not so in practice. Obviously this is a problem for democracy. But on a more positive note, it must be mentioned that there is an increasing tendency within parties to overcome this problem.

Political parties, and especially the leaderships, need to be more open to constructive **criticism**. The role that criticism can play in addressing problems and improving situations is ignored. In response to criticism, the norm is not to improve the quality of your argument; but 'to increase the volume of your voice'. People need to pay attention to why they were criticised in the first place, and to see that criticism can have a constructive and not a destructive function.

Financing
The financing of political parties presents another major challenge. As of 1992, parties are entitled to public funding. This law was reviewed in 1997, and is yet again currently under review. Public funding has, in part, encouraged a proliferation of political parties. Funding 125 parties places a great strain on the state budget. The National Assembly is now discussing a law that would give only those parties with parliamentary representation access to public financing. At the moment, parties also obtain money from members' contributions, fundraising activities and other contributors. But the bulk of their funds come from the state, as the private sector is not very strong. If the new legislation is passed, it is likely both that the number of parties will decrease and that the activities of non-represented parties will also decrease.

Gender representation
Women's representation is very poor in Angola, with women making up only 1% of the total representatives in some political structures. There are parties with no women's representation in their central committees and political bureaus. Government and institutions of political power need to increase the number of **women** representatives. Related to this is the question of youth representation. But what makes a person part of the youth? Perhaps age should not be the criterion. Perhaps youth should rather be defined as a way of thinking, with 'youth' bringing new ideas to the party.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Hubert Kabungulu conducted the research on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He thanked EISA and IDEA and referred to the opportunity the workshop gave to political parties to begin a dialogue among themselves – which is an exercise 'that does not happen in the DRC'.

Four parties were selected for the study: the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), the *Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie* (PPRD), the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) and the Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR) *fait privé*. The parties were chosen based on their degree of representation, and the fact that they are legally acknowledged as political parties. The first three parties dominate parliament in terms of their representation by MPs. They share the biggest number of MPs in parliament. The MPR *fait privé* was also included in the study for several reasons: it is the only party led by a woman; it is the old one-party state transformed; and it is having a significant impact on the transition process.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The unique political dynamics of the DRC are tremendously difficult for foreigners to understand. When examining the DRC, one has to discard preconceived ideas about how political parties work. In approaching a study of Congolese politics, one should examine the situation and then produce concepts, rather than try to explain the Congolese situation through already-made concepts about political parties and political dynamics.

The DRC is resource-rich, but at the same time there is great poverty. At the moment, the country is in its 15th year of political transition. Since independence, the DRC's political history has been characterised by a struggle to gain power. The last time elections were held was in 1965. This means that there are Congolese people in their 50s who have never had the opportunity to vote in a democratic election. The DRC has gone through four generations of political parties since independence. The study focuses on the last generation. The major challenge to these political parties, and the country as a whole, 'is one that relates to peace and governance'.

There have been five distinct periods in the life of political parties in the DRC. The first period was from 1957-1975. Parties were organised and driven by trade unions, student organisations, tribal associations and intellectuals. The parties were primarily ethnic-based, but some were regionally based. The second period was from 1975-1990, when there was only one party. Mobutu consolidated the one-party state during this period. This period can best be summarised by the following quote: 'A father equals the state, the state is the nation, and the nation is equal to the founder of the party, Mobutu.' During this period, the state and the party became one, guided by the ideology of Mobutism.

The third period was from 1990-1997 and saw a 'multiplicity of parties that mushroomed all over' following the liberalisation of politics. More than 40 parties emerged, but many of these remained inefficient, had no ideology and existed only on paper. Despite the multiplicity of parties, Mobutu and his party retained much control over the affairs of the state. He manipulated

parties in order to prolong the transitional period. Many of the new parties were created and sponsored by Mobutu himself. The fourth period was from 1997-2001, with Laurent Kabila in power. During this period, political parties were not allowed to operate, and 'we returned to the Mobutu era'. In 2001, the fifth period started and has continued to this day. Once again, following the peace negotiations, a multiplicity of parties has arisen. Over 240 parties applied for registration; of these, 97 are now registered and therefore exist legally. Although there are 97 parties operating legally, in reality there are only 15 major, visible political parties in the DRC.

Parties that have a legal mandate to function represent:

- those that were registered between 1990 and 1999;
- those that were recognised by a global all-inclusive agreement; and
- those registered by a 2001 law.

This means that since 1990 'a series of [external] laws … has enabled parties to exist and function'. But it is the most recent law, passed in March 2004, that is 'the backbone of political parties'. However, currently there are problems with the registration of political parties.

Discussions about a framework for the referendum on elections are under way. Ground rules have not yet been set, and there are no clear guidelines on campaigning. It is imperative that a code of conduct for elections be 'clear and categorical'. If it is not, or if there is confusion, then this could lead to conflict. It is not sufficient simply to have laws about this: the laws will have to be widely known, understood and accepted by the people.

A fundamental dilemma is to find ways to ensure that the campaigning and election periods are peaceful. In this respect, the support of the international community is of vital importance. The DRC cannot rely solely on its constitution and other legislation, even though such laws lay down the rules. In order for peaceful elections to produce credible results, external observers from bodies such as SADC, the European Union, and the UN are indispensable. While the electoral system itself is not likely to produce disputes, the acceptance of results by all parties could possibly prove to be problematical.

EXTERNAL REGULATIONS
The DRC is going through a transition. Political parties authorised to operate are regulated by the constitution of transition. The parliament of transition is drafting the laws and regulations that will govern the operation of parties in the third republic, with the holding of democratic elections expected in 2006.

INTERNAL REGULATIONS
Parties are still in an embryonic stage. They are still putting in place their internal structures and regulations. Most parties interviewed had written internal regulations but their implementation was very different from what is on paper. In fact, the drafting of clear internal rules remains the biggest challenge for political parties in the DRC. Other main challenges include:

Illiteracy
An issue that will impact on the elections is the high rate of illiteracy in the DRC, with more than 60% of the population being illiterate. 'How will they vote? Will they read or will they write?

Are they in a position to express their will? Will they be able to vote this time beyond the consideration of their political or regional allegiance, because experience in the past showed that one would only have to give a T-shirt or a salted fish to get the vote?'

Civic education is thus critically important, and should especially focus on women and youth so that they may advance. In addition to this, the various political actors need training themselves.

Lack of intra-party democracy

Looking at the internal functioning of political parties, it is apparent that thus far there is a lack of democracy within the parties. The leaders have an enormous amount of control over their parties: parties experience a situation that is akin to 'dictatorship by their own leaders'. The fact that parties are 'undergoing construction' needs to be taken into account. Generally, it seems that members do not participate in the 'daily life' of their parties.

Disorganised parties

Parties also face weak organisational capacity. Parties operate in a dysfunctional and disorganised fashion. One of the areas in which this disorganisation manifests itself is in ideology. The Congolese people as well as party members are 'not aware of the ideology or philosophy of the parties to which they belong', and this can easily be explained by the fact that 'even the constitutions of these parties are not easily accessible to their members'. Parties are struggling to get their messages out because, 'to a certain extent', the press has been 'hijacked' by the most powerful party. This adversely affects the smaller parties and impairs their functioning.

Political party financing

The main challenge to political parties' activities is the ever-present problem of party financing. Parties have to raise their own funds as they wait for regulations on pre-election financing. In the meantime, parties are finding it incredibly difficult in the Congolese context because members 'expect' parties to give to them, and 'cannot countenance' the situation where they are asked to contribute to their parties. The result has been that parties have become 'a kind of private business' of the founders. And when they get into power, they feel entitled to help themselves to state funds. The under-funding of political parties is reflected in the fact that only the top administrators in parties are paid, and the rest are volunteers.

Gender equality

The big challenge is gender equality. The National Assembly has only 12% women MPs. More broadly, only 9% of all political positions are filled by women. In some of 'the most prestigious bodies' there is not even one woman. So achieving gender equality in the DRC is a serious challenge both to parties and to government institutions. The constitution of the third republic has adopted gender parity for all government institutions.

To conclude, the future of the DRC is somewhat precarious. The DRC has yet to finalise appropriate legislation that will set the scene for peaceful and democratic elections. Help is needed from the international community. Political parties face a number of challenges internally. They need to become more democratic and better organised. They also need to find ways to become stronger, and to provide more opportunities for a greater number of women to participate

in political decision-making processes. Parties are hampered by a lack of finances, widespread illiteracy, and the 'weakness of the Congolese state, which is almost non-existent, without finances, and without a fully-fledged administration'. The DRC will have to combat these issues in order to build a stable, democratic state.

PLENARY DISCUSSION ON ANGOLA AND THE DRC

The discussion covered a range of issues. A number of topics were brought up, and participants often made comparisons between Angola and the DRC.

Representatives of the political parties raised specific points that they did not agree with in the papers. Such points were debated with the researchers. Most of the disagreements centred on a few claims made in the papers and not during the presentation, and as such they are not included in this summary of the ensuing discussion.

Matlosa pointed out that the political party research programme was a dialogue process, and that the contentions of the parties would be considered and discussed before publication of the final reports.

A general point was that countries in transition need their **citizens to play a greater role** in the democratisation process. In order to do this, civic education is of vital importance. Governments, their institutions and political parties need to provide citizens with 'a notion of civic obligation', so that they may play a part in institutionalising democracy.

The question of democracy is above all a question of culture, and it is absolutely necessary to make a considerable effort to create the new man in Africa; a man with a democratic mentality. '… Only then will we have the possibility of establishing democratic systems in Africa. … From what we heard here, there is no effective participation from the citizens in the building-up of the democratic systems in Angola and the DRC.'

Gender equality in the DRC was discussed. A participant from the DRC said that 'last year, we were able to introduce a new [regulation] to give 30% women's representation at all levels of decision-making'. It was suggested that the preamble of the DRC constitution should include a commitment to strive towards equal gender representation. Some parties in the DRC are trying to increase the number of women elected by including 50% of women in candidate lists. It was also suggested that quotas should be mandatory, and failure to achieve them should result in a penalty such as a fine.

The problem of **illiteracy** in the DRC specifically was debated. It was asserted that even though people may be illiterate, they still understand the political situation and their political choices.

Participants discussed the similarities in history between the DRC and Angola. Both countries suffered protracted civil wars; both countries need to embrace transparency and open dialogue; both countries have deep levels of poverty despite rich natural resources; and both countries face the possibility of widespread armed conflict breaking out if current socio-political issues are not appropriately addressed. However, the Angolan situation is different from the Congolese situation as Angola has already held successful democratic elections, while the DRC has not.

A question was asked about why Unita returned to war after having participated in elections. It was explained that there were many possible answers, but that ultimately the reasons were not important to Angolans. What is important to them is today's range of issues relating to poverty, democracy building, peace, education, health and food. The ending of the war has brought a new consciousness – people and parties 'have started looking in a different way at the country and at themselves', and this has allowed the country to advance.

Nevertheless, democracy has not been the panacea that people expected. Continuing poverty and other poor social conditions are dangerous, as there are still 'enormous numbers of arms' in the country that can be used by 'bandits and gangs'.

There is also the danger of not taking care of former soldiers, especially if they cannot find jobs or if they are not controlled in the event of a significant electoral defeat. Making Angola's democracy work is 'a national compromise' that requires 'the commitment of all the parties' working within the framework of a 'national policy of consensus'. The paramount importance of **reconciliation** in the DRC was put forward. '[Political] actors know very well that whatever the outcome of the elections, everything is going to be questioned…. [What is needed] is to establish some sort of national reconciliation … [otherwise] all the progress that we would have made will be thrown away if we do not start on the premise that we accept the outcome of elections.'

Thus far, dialogue in the DRC has not been open enough for reconciliation. A participant suggested that in order for the DRC to move forward in building a democratic state, open dialogue geared towards reconciliation is needed.

MOZAMBIQUE

Dr Eduardo Sitoe conducted the research on Mozambique. He noted that there were few precedents for a study such as this on Mozambique. Sitoe said that the interviews were conducted during an election campaigning period, and so it was politically a very sensitive time. The methodology used included desk research as well as interviews with representatives from the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo), the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo) and the Independent Party of Mozambique (Pimo).

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Mozambique was party to the wave of democratisation that hit the region in the early 1990s. In late November 1990 a pluralistic political constitution was adopted. This was followed up by the Rome peace accord signed by the Frelimo government and the Renamo guerrilla movement. The church played a crucial role in the signing of this agreement, and continues to be the most important civil society actor in politics today. The first post-war general election was held in 1994, and subsequent years have seen the introduction of local elections.

In terms of this context – much like Angola and the DRC – Mozambique has a history of civil conflict. After 1992, when peace returned to the country, Mozambique experienced 'one of the highest annual average growths in sub-Saharan Africa'. Various multi-billion dollar development projects boosted the economy of the country; and although the growth of the economy began to slow in 2002 in the face of international financial conditions as well as events in Zimbabwe, the growth rate was still above 7% annually.

Mozambique has a PR and a presidential system. Parties have to gain 5% of the vote in order to secure representation in parliament. MPs are allowed to break with their political parties and still retain their parliamentary seats.

Freedom House gives Mozambique scores of three for political rights and four on civil liberties. Despite expanding political rights in recent years, the score given by Freedom House remains unchanged. There is continuing violence in some areas of the country – such as Montepuez – as well as 'a certain degree of human rights abuse, which is well documented by both the US State Department and the Mozambican Human Rights League'.

EXTERNAL REGULATIONS

The constitution of 1990 was the supreme law governing political parties. However, in January 2005, a new constitution became effective, which made 'important changes' to the law. In additional to the constitution, the electoral law and the press law 'also have important dispositions governing [the conduct of] political parties, [such as their] access to the media during electoral campaigning periods'.

Following the general elections held in December 2004, Mozambique has a new president who replaced Chissano, who had served the maximum number of terms allowed. Chissano stepped

down as both the president and as the leader of Frelimo, which has been the ruling party since independence in 1975.

There are currently 42 officially registered political parties: Frelimo was the first to register in 1991. Frelimo was founded in 1962 as a liberation movement, and formalised as a political party in 1977. The party was traditionally Marxist-Leninist in political orientation, but became a social democratic party with the introduction of multipartyism.

Renamo was formed in 1976 'as a resistance movement against the prevailing political ideology in Mozambique, with the support of the Rhodesian forces'. Renamo's history is intimately bound up with other political regimes in the region. After Zanu-PF came to power in Zimbabwe, Renamo was backed by the security apparatus of the apartheid regime in South Africa. From 1989 to 1992, Renamo made a major internal transformation from a guerrilla movement to a political movement in a period where it was involved in negotiations with the Frelimo government to bring peace. Following these negotiations, Renamo was effectively formalised as a political party in August 1994. Renamo today has a centre-right orientation.

Frelimo and Renamo are the two dominating parties. Renamo contested the 1999 and the 2004 elections as part of a coalition with nine other smaller parties. The Worker's Party was the third biggest party in terms of representation gained in the 1999 election. For the smaller parties it seems that public opinion has shifted now towards the Party for Democracy and Development, founded by a breakaway faction from Renamo, and Pimo (which was formed and registered in 1992). Pimo is often perceived as an Islamic party, although it does not present itself as such. It presents itself as a party striving to bring morality to democracy.

Parties receive financial assistance from the state. But Frelimo and Renamo also raise funds from other sources, including membership fees and companies 'linked, run or created' by these parties. The funding provided by the state is allocated according to parties' parliamentary representation.

Pimo and the other small parties raise most of their funds from the private sector and individual contributions. It is clear that the two large parties have access to greater funding than do the smaller parties.

INTERNAL REGULATIONS
Membership
It is difficult to ascertain exactly how many members the parties have. Frelimo and Pimo keep records of membership numbers, but only Frelimo was able to offer a figure (one million members). Although Renamo does not keep a formal record, it is evident that the party has been relatively successful recently, with the surprise recruitment of young intellectuals and academics who have been elevated to senior positions in the party. In fact, therefore, Renamo represents, for these intellectuals and academics, a much faster opportunity for rising through the ranks than Frelimo can offer.

As is the case in many other countries, membership numbers grow during campaigning and election periods. Membership recruitment is ongoing and is decentralised: it is conducted from

the territorial unit or branch level. Frelimo seems particularly sophisticated in recruiting and retaining members. The party launches specific campaigns designed to capture more members, and each territorial unit is tasked with the permanent duty of recruiting members to the party and finding ways of retaining those who are already members of the party.

Internal party democracy

In terms of selecting candidate MPs, the process is generally the same in Renamo and Pimo. Candidates present themselves to their provincial committees for nomination. In Frelimo, potential candidates have to go through several stages in order to make the candidate list. District branches of the party choose candidates, who are put forward to provincial committees, which in turn put forward a shortlist for selection by the party's political commission. Candidates have to be 18 years or older. The political commission is allowed to directly nominate 10% of candidates. Only Frelimo employs quotas – 10% for ex-combatants; 20% for youth; and 40% for women.

In talking about democracy within parties, close attention must be paid to the way in which candidates become parliamentary representatives. The process is described above, but there are further considerations that need to be examined. In Frelimo one aspect that contradicts the philosophy of internal democracy is that the political commission is allowed to nominate 10% of representatives.

Renamo, as part of a coalition with nine smaller parties, was obliged by law 'to place the leaders of these small parties high enough in their provincial lists to guarantee them election as MPs, taking into account the number of seats won by Renamo in the previous election'. The democratic nature of this practice could be extensively debated, although in the final analysis one must remember that there is an act which requires that this be done. Perhaps a greater challenge to democracy within parties is presented by the fact that Renamo's president is allowed to nominate up to 30 candidates for representation. He therefore has the ability to ensure that candidates loyal and trustworthy to himself become MPs.

The process of selecting presidential nominees is similar in Frelimo and Renamo: there are several primary elections, each held at progressively higher levels in the party hierarchy. The party congress is where the final primary election is held, and thus it is this body which has the final say on the presidential candidate. The law dictates that presidential nominees must be 35 years or older.

International relations

Frelimo, Renamo and Pimo have well-developed links with external organisations. Frelimo has relationships with the former liberation movements of the SADC region, that is, the ANC, Swapo, the MPLA and Zanu-PF. They also have ties with the Social Democracy Network, which includes European social democratic parties such as the Labour Party in Britain. Renamo 'is affiliated to the International Christian Democratic group of parties' of which the Renamo leader is currently the vice-president. Renamo also has ties with the Republican Institute of the US as well as with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany. Pimo has fewer external contacts, although it does receive training and financial support from the Republican Institute of the US and Awepa.

In conclusion, there are a few characteristics about Mozambican political parties which hamper their strength and efficiency. There are 'a number of critical shortcomings in the institutionalisation of parties'. Since there was much information that parties would not freely provide, it is possible that the parties themselves do not know the answers to some of the questions that were asked. This is therefore an area that needs to be worked on.

TANZANIA

Brendan Salima gave a summary of the findings from the research on Tanzania. The research was conducted by Dr Rose Shayo, who was unable to attend the workshop. Salima was a research assistant on the study.

The study was based on interviews as well as secondary data sources. Party documents, such as the constitutions, party manifestos and the party policies and programmes, were also consulted. Four political parties participated, namely: the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM); the Civic United Front (CUF); Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema); and the Tanzania Labour Party (TLP). Of these parties, only Chadema has not contested a presidential election.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The history of parties in Tanzania is complicated. The United Republic of Tanzania consists of the mainland (formerly called Tanganyika) and the island of Zanzibar, which were united following the 1964 revolution. Zanzibar had a 'short-lived' period of independence from 1963 until 1964; while Tanganyika was granted independence in 1961.

Although the colonial powers had officially withdrawn from the country, they continued to exert their influence over the country through sponsoring selected parties. In addition to this, the multiparty system had basically been imposed on Tanzania. The multiparty system came from the centre – that is, the colonial power – under what was considered to be an institutional transfer of power, ostensibly to lay the foundation for good administration. This means that the multiparty system of the colonial period did not arise out of a local and internal process. It was rather imposed upon the respective societies by the outgoing colonial power.

This set the stage, especially psychologically, for one-party rule. The multiparty system, in addition to the fact that certain parties were being sponsored by the former colonial powers, was perceived as 'a mere mechanism of cheating the nationalists'. Multipartyism was viewed as a neo-colonial measure, and it paved the way for the introduction of single-party rule in 1965. In 1995 Tanzania reintroduced multiparty elections, followed by another set of multiparty elections in the year 2000. Tanzania is due to hold elections again this year (2005).

EXTERNAL REGULATIONS

Moving on to some of the political challenges facing parties and the country, there are many issues which are creating dissatisfaction.

Political party registration

The person in charge of registering political parties is appointed by the president, who of course represents the ruling party. This is a contentious issue.

Party financing

The financing of parties and elections is problematical. During Nyerere's presidency, 'the [corrupt] use of money in elections … was … a mortal sin'. However, this has changed. There is now a word for a specific type of funding – *takrema* or 'hospitality'. It is difficult to distinguish between what constitutes *takrema* and what constitutes corruption.

INTERNAL REGULATIONS

Tanzania's ruling party is guilty of many anti-democratic measures, yet perhaps the opposition parties do not offer anything different – 'some people remain in the CCM because they don't see an alternative'.

In general, politics in Tanzania is dominated by one party. The ruling party is selectively abandoning the provision of essential services in constituencies which vote for opposition parties. Despite its dominance, the ruling party has failed to address citizens' needs. Party members accuse party leaders of being uninterested in the real issue at hand – poverty – while focusing on increasing their personal wealth. Sometimes party leaders even announce this themselves: 'We have to get into the state house by hook or by crook.' This is clearly not conducive to strengthening democracy.

The weakness of the opposition has made it possible for the ruling party to continue to dominate. Opposition parties are unstable and hostile towards one another: 'They just quarrel like football players'. The ruling party leaders are increasingly enriching themselves, widening the economic gap between the political elite and citizens. Despite this, the ruling party still claims to be building 'socialism and self-reliance'.

PLENARY DISCUSSION ON MOZAMBIQUE AND TANZANIA

A great deal of the discussion on Mozambique and Tanzania revolved around how the historical context continues to have an impact on democracy in these countries today.

A participant raised the topic of the **separation of powers**. He noted that the paper on Mozambique indicated that the introduction of this represented 'a breakaway from the fascist colonial regime of Dr Antonio Salazar and Marcelo Caetano'. This, it was argued, was not correct. It was instead the rupture not with the colonial regime but with the one-party system. The rupture with the colonial regime happened in 1975 by Frelimo. After that, there was only a one-party system in Mozambique, but the new rupture is between old Frelimo and the new Frelimo.

Another participant added that, in his view, the separation of powers in Mozambique was purely theoretical. It was pointed out that the president appoints the head of the Supreme Court as well as the president of the National Assembly. This, it was argued, was contradictory to the separation of powers doctrine in democracy, as it results in a conflict of interest.

Barriers to entrenching democracy were also discussed. First, it was suggested that it was important for civil society to participate in democratisation. Second, democratisation is made extremely difficult when the ruling party has a tendency to create difficulties for opposition parties to operate. This particularly happens in countries with a history of civil conflict. Third,

ruling parties must refrain from using state resources as if they belong to the party. For example, in Mozambique, top jobs in parastatals are usually awarded to members of the ruling party. Another way this problem manifests itself in Mozambique is through the use of state media. There is a legal framework that is supposed to prevent this from happening, but the legislation has little effect.

When the one-party regimes in Africa ended, there was little substantive experience in democracy or elements of a **democratic culture** to fill the gap left by the demise of such regimes. There has been 'no recycling of parties'. A party that had a socialist ideology for 15 years when ruling a country, 'became democrats in less than a second. So … we immediately have a contradiction. These [new] regimes simulate democracy, so much so that while they practise political exclusion they still call themselves democratic parties.'

Such political exclusion has had devastating effects on democracy. In Mozambique, it is causing the opposition to crumble, and it seems as if this constitutes 'a preparation towards the [re-emergence] of the one-party system'.

Some very specific questions about Tanzania were asked. The topic of the next Tanzanian president engaged participants. The idea of the president rotating between the mainland and Zanzibar was broached. Salima explained that Zanzibar was a 'hotspot' of political conflict between the ruling CCM and the CUF, but that the president had proposed that a coalition government be formed after the next election. The issue of President Mkapa seeking a **third term** was dispelled – 'President Mkapa has, several times, refused and reiterated that he won't make [the] mistake [of seeking a constitutional amendment to allow a third term]'.

Under Tanzania's one-party rule regime, the party had **blurred the boundaries between the state and the party**. As a result, the party had undertaken 'many of the functions that in liberal democracies would normally be undertaken by a civil service', such as development functions. The ruling party had 'relinquished control' over some services, but problems remain.

NAMIBIA

Dr Victor Tonchi presented the research on Namibia. In introducing his paper, he referred to the difficulties he encountered in obtaining some of the information. He noted that parties seemed to be concerned about sensitive information being exposed, and thus the parties were reluctant to allow individuals to be questioned alone. Another obstacle was the fact that the interviews were conducted during an election period, as had been the case in Mozambique.

Dr Tonchi had used a combination of party interviews and desk research. Five parties participated in the study. An abundance of material and documents was collected from political parties. Part of the reason why documents such as party manifestos were so easy to obtain was because of the recent elections. In addition to this, political parties were required to submit their party constitutions and other documents about political programmes to the electoral commission.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In tracing the contemporary political development of Namibia, three periods were distinguishable. In the first period, from the 1950s to the mid 1960s, there were significant moves towards democracy. But after the mid 1960s, 'there was a [democratic] lull, a dormancy … you didn't see any vibrancy'. Democratic development was boosted again in the second period, which lasted from the mid-1970s to 1989. This was the independence period. Political parties mushroomed in the late 1970s. The third period started from 1990 and lasted until 1999. In summary: 'There were these gaps where you didn't see political parties emerging.… It was [as if] every 10 years everybody went to sleep.'

Following the elections held towards the end of 2004, Namibia has a new president, who replaced Nujoma. Nujoma had served the maximum period after a previous constitutional amendment had allowed him to serve three terms. The transition to a new leader has been smooth. The recent elections, however, were not entirely trouble-free. Although the election environment was free, there were a number of challenges to the results lodged by opposition parties. To resolve the disputes, the electoral commission conducted a recount of the votes, the first recount in the region. It was felt that a recount was important as it demonstrated that Namibia was committed to democracy and transparency.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

There is **external legislation** governing political parties and elections. The constitution sets out the electoral system and the process of electing members of the National Assembly. It also prescribes the requirements for the presidency. The electoral act is another major law governing political parties. It contains provisions about 'how political parties should be recognised in terms of their registration, and so on'.

An interesting point about external regulation is that elections and **campaigning** periods are not subject to a permanent code of conduct. New codes of conduct are compiled during every

national election, and even then they are not given legislative force. Rather, they are drawn up on a friendly and cooperative basis, and parties willingly abide by such agreements.

Namibia has few political parties – only 11 are registered. Various reasons can be put forward for the demise of numerous, smaller parties – although difficulty of **registration** is certainly not one of them. To register a party, a nominal fee must be paid. Additionally, just 500 signatures of support from registered voters are required. Although it may take some time to gather the required number of signatures, the mandatory requirement is slight by comparison with other countries, where usually thousands of signatures are needed. Therefore registering a political party is relatively easy.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

With reference to **democracy within parties**, the nomination of candidates has shown that this democracy is somewhat lacking. At least in the case of Swapo this is true. Parties tend to have a clear organisational structure, making use of political bureaus, regional and local structures, and party wings. Parties have rules stipulating how members are elected to office, but it seems that in reality these provisions are not always followed. For example, in the 2004 election it appears that at the national level of Swapo there were disputes about candidates whose names had been put forward by local and regional party bodies. The party body higher up in the hierarchy reversed the decisions of these lower party bodies. In some cases, the Swapo national leadership substituted candidates of their own choice for town council representatives who had been elected. In summary, the party leadership seems to have too much influence over how candidates for office are chosen. Entrenching democracy within parties is definitely a challenge to political parties in Namibia.

ZAMBIA

Professor Jotham Momba conducted the research on Zambia. The parties which participated in his study were the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), which is the ruling party; the United Party for National Development (UPND); the United National Independence Party (Unip); and the Foundation for Democracy and Development (FDD). In addition to interviews with party leaders, there was a certain amount of desk research involved.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The following statistics about Zambia help to place this study in a socio-economic context:

- the population is some 10 million;
- 36% of the population lives in urban areas, but the trend is towards decreasing urbanisation;
- the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is just over US$4 billion a year;
- economic growth is between 4% and 5% a year;
- the country's foreign debt totals US$6.2 billion – or 141% of Zambia's annual GDP; and
- some 73% of the population is living below the poverty line.

Zambia has a multiparty system. Parliament is composed of 158 members, plus the speaker of the house. The president directly appoints eight representatives, while the other 150 are elected via a first-past-the-post system. MPs serve five-year terms. The president's term of office is also five years, with a maximum of two terms.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

A number of **external laws** govern political parties. The Societies Act is the law under which parties register, while the Electoral Act governs elections and election campaigns and the Public Order Act regulates public gatherings. The latter is somewhat restrictive and hampers democracy in the country.

Despite the plethora of laws governing parties and elections, **elections** are not always fair, although they are generally free. This opinion is supported by reports from international observers of the 1996 and 2001 elections. The view that elections are not fair stems from the ruling party's abuse of state resources during campaigns. For example, the media and the other state institutions are biased in favour of the ruling party.

A constitutional amendment in 1990 paved the way for a return to a multiparty system. The deepening democratisation of the early 1990s resulted in the formation of a number of political parties. At present, Zambia has 28 registered parties, while many others are not formally registered. Only four parties are 'serious contenders' for political power – the MDD, the UPND, Unip and the FDD – which are the four that participated in this study. After the most recent elections of 2001, the parties have the following statistics:

- MMD: 69 seats in the National Assembly: seven held by women (10%): Zambia's president is from the MMD.
- UPND: 49 seats: seven held by women (14%).
- Unip: 13 seats: two held by women (15%).
- FDD: 12 seats: two held by women (17%).
- Other parties: seven seats: the Zambia Republican Party has one representative, who is a woman.
- Presidential appointees: eight seats (none of these are held by women).

The law requires MPs to be at least 21 years old, have the support of nine registered voters, and pay a nomination fee. Presidential nominees must be 35 years or older, have the support of 200 registered voters, and have both parents who are Zambian by birth.

The democratisation of the 1990s extended into **civil society**, which became 'very active'. The widening of the political space spawned a number of civil society organisations which are 'involved in promoting democratic governance and culture by participating in election monitoring, and as advocates of good governance during and between election periods'. An example of such an organisation is the Oasis Forum, which has played 'a major role in constitutional debates' from 2001 until the present.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Democracy within parties appears to be generally well established, although there are a few anomalies. **Primary elections** are used extensively in all the parties, and occur at the national, provincial, district and grassroots levels. Parties are modelled on Unip's organisational structure (this was the only party in the one-party era), and thus they are structurally very similar. The elections that take place within the party structures seem to be genuinely democratic.

Internal democracy is somewhat debatable when it comes to **policy formation** and other important decision making. For example:

- There was a general feeling across all political parties that their national executive committees have great influence in initiating, debating and finally deciding on policy changes, although there was some recognition that this was perhaps more formal than otherwise.

- However, leaders of all the political parties insisted that delegates to the party congress exercised absolute power in deciding policy changes.

- While, in the interviews with party leaders, the message was that all members participated in important decision making as well as the debates within the party, it is possible that if the interviews had been conducted with lower-level members some 'slightly different' opinions might perhaps have been expressed.

- In any case, what was apparent was that think-tanks are used in preparing policy documents, which are subsequently passed on to the national executive committees for approval.

In terms of **membership**, the parties are well aware of the importance of maintaining and recruiting members. Thus they are 'heavily involved' in recruitment drives. Maintaining and recruiting members becomes even more important because parties are aware that membership of political parties is declining. Parties noted that there had been a decline in membership numbers, and opinions about why this was so were put forward. The MMD believed that the various schisms in the party had adversely affected their membership numbers. Unip suggested that 'at times the party suffers from rigidity' and this was alienating potential new members. The FDD cited poor economic conditions as a problem for opposition parties' membership numbers. The UPND was the only party which said that its membership numbers were not declining, although this is questionable.

The large parties generally have very well-developed **international links**, as well as relationships with other political parties in Africa (particularly in the SADC region), although the FDD could work to widen its network.

With regard to party **financing**, some of the information could not be obtained. Momba did not go into detail on the issue of party financing, but instead referred participants to his paper. However, some brief facts were provided:

- Party funding comes from several sources, including individuals' contributions, fundraising activities, international fundraising, contributions from MPs, and the sale of companies owned by parties.
- In some cases candidates for election are required to make financial contributions to their parties.
- Except for the FDD, parties compile financial reports on how funds are used. Campaign committees and individuals who receive money from the parties are required to account for their spending.

There are several important challenges to Zambian political parties:

- As the parliamentary figures cited above indicate, **gender equality** is lacking. None of the parties have gender quotas (neither do they have quotas for youth). They do not have any campaigns that focus on increasing the participation of women and youth in politics, although parties do provide money to their women's leagues. Since only about 12% of MPs are women, Zambian parties must find a way to make politics more representative of the gender make-up of the country.

- **Elections** need to be conducted in a fairer environment. One of the barriers to fair elections is the Public Order Act, which 'has been used greatly to the disadvantage of opposition political parties'. Solutions must be found to ensure that state institutions, particularly the police and the media, remain neutral during election periods. The ruling party should be forced to refrain from temporarily merging with the state during election campaigns.

- Declining **membership** is a problem. Parties must strive to engage with their constituents between elections. Related to declining membership is the fact that the Zambian parties are not ideologically very different: perhaps ways to merge or rely

more heavily on formal coalitions should be investigated in order to boost membership numbers.

- Party **funding** is an issue that presents problems. Specifically, financial accountability is weak, and clear answers to our questions were often not provided.

PLENARY DISCUSSION ON NAMIBIA AND ZAMBIA

The issue of **leaders clinging to power** was a central topic in the discussion. This was, of course, especially relevant to Namibia, where Nujoma has stepped down as president but retains the leadership of the ruling party, even after a third term as president. An issue that Namibia struggled with was whether Nujoma should be allowed a fourth term. But, 'as a matter of principle', this could not have been allowed. 'One of the most important challenges,' a participant said, 'is that political parties must be committed to the constitution.' This sentiment was further developed. It was suggested that even if a constitutional change is approved by a majority, it is not legitimate if it restricts democracy. Any constitutional change that is fundamentally against democracy can never be regarded as acceptable, legitimate, or even in itself constitutional.

The dominant **political culture** was cited as a cause of leaders' reluctance to relinquish power. To illustrate this point, the following example was provided. For example, if, according to one participant, you brought an American president to Zambia and made him president there, his reading of the political culture in an African country might lead him to want to hang on to power forever; whereas if you took a Zambian president and made him president of the US, the political culture there would not allow him to cling to power.

In Africa, the tendency for leaders to seek measures to allow them to hold on to power was perceived as 'normal'. This mentality only serves to support such anti-democratic measures, and 'it's one of the great obstacles that we have in Africa that prevents the changeover of power'.

Another key problem is the **merging of the party with the state**, especially at election times. Democracy prescribes that the institutions of the state should be distinctly different from those of the party. The institutions belong to all citizens and therefore to no party, whether it is the ruling party or otherwise. Across Africa there is a situation where the division between the ruling party and the state is not clear-cut. Part of the reason for this phenomenon is the 'lack of changeover culture': one party is continually elected, and because the party is always in power there is a confusion between the party and the state.

A further argument was put forward for the **youth** to participate in politics. In a previous discussion, it had been argued that the term 'youth' should not be defined by age, but rather qualified by the existence of new ideas. A Zambian party representative disagreed, contending that the reason why an emphasis on youth participation was necessary was not because of the need for new ideas, but rather due to the need to cultivate a new generation of political leaders who will be able to serve in the future. It was noted that 70% of the population in Zambia was under the age of 35, and it was simply not right that such a large demographic group should be largely excluded from decision making.

It was further argued that democratisation should necessarily be assessed on a continuous basis because it is a process and not an event. To evaluate how well a country is doing with

regard to democratisation, the country should not only be compared to peer countries, but also to themselves so as to see how far they have or have not progressed.

It was suggested that democracy is being weakened by the practice of ruling parties to **co-opt** members of opposition parties. When this is done without the consent of the opposition party involved, the democratic nature of the practice should be questioned. In some cases in Zambia, co-option of members did not bridge divides between the ruling party and the opposition party. The opposition party in the Zambian case simply expelled the members involved. Thus co-option did not lead to greater inclusiveness of the opposition, and it did not serve to create more amicable relationships between the parties.

The way in which **elections** are judged came under the spotlight. Declaring elections as 'free' or 'fair' is relative to the socio-political context in which the elections take place. In countries which are stable and where political violence is absent, elections are judged more critically. 'High expectations' often result in 'low evaluation'. Related to this is the question of the distinction between 'free' elections, and 'fair' elections. A participant argued that the terms are often erroneously used as if they were interchangeable, which they are not. Evaluating the success of elections should critically examine two aspects: 'how free' the elections were; and 'how fair' they were.

Namibia's recent **vote recount** was praised. Namibia proved by this exercise that it was committed to democracy. Despite Swapo's dominance, it was shown that the ruling party could 'be challenged through the courts of law, [and having been] ordered by the court of that country to have a recount … it [abided] by that decision'. This was an exceptional move in Africa, and other African countries would do well to 'emulate some of the examples from the Namibian experience'.

BOTSWANA

Dr Gloria Somolekae carried out the research on Botswana. In her introduction, she noted that this study would make a significant contribution to the literature on democracy in Botswana.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The following points summarise the socio-economic context of Botswana:

- Botswana experienced an economic boost in the 1970s when rich diamond deposits were discovered. This natural resource has been efficiently managed, and is a large part of the reason why per capita income rocketed from just US$60 to over US$3,000 a year.
- Since the mid-1980s, Botswana has been classified by the World Bank as a middle-income country.
- Corruption has been 'creeping into society, although the government has quickly brought in measures to try to deal with it'.
- Economic inequalities remain entrenched in society. The extent of the inequality is illustrated by the high Gini coefficient of the country, which is 0.52.
- Some 55% of the population lives in poverty.
- The issue of minority rights is contentious and topical. The fact that most Batswana speak a common language, Setswana, tends to conceal the reality that there are tribal and ethnic issues.
- Despite recognition as a country which has handled HIV / Aids relatively well, the high rate of infection is 'threatening to reverse the gains that the country has made since independence'.

The political history of Botswana is inextricably bound up with the history of neighbouring countries, especially South Africa and Zimbabwe. The oldest party in the country is the Botswana People's Party (BPP), which was formed in 1961 by a person who had been deported from apartheid South Africa. In 1962, the more moderate Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) was created. The first elections saw an overwhelming victory for the BDP, which won more than 80% of the vote.

The BDP has remained the ruling party ever since, although its majority has dwindled significantly since the first post-independence election. In the most recent election, the BDP obtained 52% of the vote, and for the first time there is a perception that the BDP's monopoly on power can be broken.

The history of political parties in Botswana is characterised by **factionalism** and the proliferation of parties resulting from party schisms. The opposition is divided, and intensely adversarial relationships exist between original parties and their breakaway elements. Antagonistic relationships are also found within parties, and in one instance these led to election boycott threats. The divided nature of opposition politics influences democracy in the country, and people are increasingly realising that one-party domination is not necessarily good for the country. However, there is new hope on the horizon:

- The newspapers in the past two months are full of stories of meetings and attempts and discussions at which opposition parties are trying to address this issue.

- Why? Because the 2004 election has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt to the opposition that unless it addresses the issue of disunity, the voters will lose faith in them. Disunity will continue to return the BDP to power, because Botswana has a winner-takes-all system.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

In looking at the **external regulations**, there are several laws which govern political parties and elections. The constitution guarantees freedom of speech, of assembly and of expression. It also stipulates requirements for candidate MPs. The constitution does not refer to political parties. The Electoral Act too does not make explicit mention of the term 'political party'. This is because Botswana uses a 'free mandate' system – people vote for individual candidates, and not parties.

Registering a political party is relatively easy, and is governed by the Societies Act. A party simply needs to draw up a constitution and ask the registrar to be registered as a political party. The ease of registration is perhaps a flaw in the system, because it has led to a proliferation of parties – an average of more than ten in a population of only 1.7 million. It is more difficult for a person to register as a candidate for election, as he or she has to take several supporters to a district commissioner's office in order to be registered as a candidate. It is 'a very long and tedious process', which can be frustrating.

The **electoral system** is first-past-the-post, or a simple majority system. This works in favour of the ruling party as the opposition is so divided. Since voters elect candidates and not parties, representatives are able to switch parties without losing their seats. Elections are generally peaceful and non-violent.

A 'contentious issue' in the electoral system is the **special nominations** that the president is allowed to make. He is able to nominate four MPs, and he has been accused of using this provision to 'reward party members who have lost elections … and to consolidate the [ruling] party's favourable position'. The Minister of Local Government and Land is also able to nominate local councillors. However, there have been some very recent developments in this matter. In response to a motion to abolish this provision, the president has indicated his support for its abolition.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The most significant challenges to political parties are found within their organisations. There is a contradiction between what parties do in practice and what they set down as rules.

- The **party structures** need to be used in practice as they are set out on paper. All the parties used the standard hierarchical structure (local party branches, regional bodies, national bodies, etc.), but admitted that the party structures were not always used in the most efficient and democratic ways.

- This leads to the second main challenge, which is that the '**personality cult**' trend

must be broken. 'The "founding member syndrome"… sometimes undermines the regulations and systems and structures of [the] parties'. The functioning and democratic status of political parties is hampered by this syndrome, because it tends to place too much control of party decisions in the hands of the leader. In order to 'truly professionalise and de-personalise' parties, steps must be taken to 'ensure that the development of a party does not go hand in hand with the entrenchment of one man'.

- **Democracy within parties** needs to be strengthened. 'Primary elections need to be guided by the same principles as those guiding the national elections, [including paying attention to] issues of transparency and accountability.' Good national governance needs to start at the political party level.

- **Factionalism**, as discussed above, obviously presents a challenge to the strengthening of democracy in Botswana.

- **Funding** sources should be required by law to be disclosed. Parties were not open about the sources of their finances, saying only that money was raised through 'friends'. Greater financial transparency will help solidify democracy.

- **Written guidelines**, party documents, and issues of party vision, mission and purpose need to be made clear so that they may serve their parties better.

In conclusion, parties need to work on internal issues. They must 'interrogate themselves … and, perhaps, in [this] way, they will build themselves accordingly' and therefore become stronger and help to create a more democratic country.

SOUTH AFRICA

Professor Tom Lodge conducted the research on South Africa. He presented his findings. South Africa's first democratic elections were held in 1994. Elections were again held in 1999, and more recently in 2004. Elections have generally been efficiently managed, and fairly administered, such that there have been relatively few complaints about 'unfairness or misbehaviour'.

The study examined five parties, which have the following representation in the National Assembly:

- African National Congress (ANC): 279 seats;
- Democratic Alliance (DA): 50 seats;
- Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP): 28 seats;
- United Democratic Movement (UDM): nine seats; and
- Independent Democrats: seven seats.

It must be noted that the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) also won seven seats in the 2004 election, and is thus an important opposition party in parliament.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

To place the South African experience in context, Lodge provided a brief overview of socio-economic realities in the country. South Africa is a relatively wealthy country. However, due to the political history of the country, this wealth is distributed very unevenly. Furthermore, the inequality divide coincides with racial divisions: most black people tend to be poor, while in general whites are relatively well-off economically. However, it is not whites exclusively who are wealthy; recent years have seen a 'rapid expansion' of the black middle class.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The **electoral system** makes use of PR. Voters vote for political parties, who, prior to the election, submit lists of ranked candidates. The use of PR effectually means that the system is very inclusive. There is an extremely low threshold in order to gain parliamentary representation, and parties that do not win seats evidently won a very small percentage of the overall vote. There are currently 12 parties with representation in parliament.

South Africa does not have many **external regulations** that govern political parties. Establishing a political party is very easy; however, presenting a party for election purposes is much more difficult. A large but refundable amount of money needs to be paid upfront in order for a party to be eligible to contest an election. Election campaigning is governed by an electoral code of conduct. In order to enforce the code of conduct, 'liaison committees … are established at local level, which also, apart from promoting good behaviour, facilitate cooperation between parties'. So although the code of conduct is enforced 'quite vigorously', this is not done via coercive means.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

If one examines the way in which the parties are **organised** according to their constitutions, it is apparent that there are significant differences, particularly in the various party rules and regulations.

The ANC holds a party congress every five years, and this body is the highest authority in the party. During such meetings, a national executive committee (NEC) and key party officials are elected. The process of voting is conducted via secret ballot. The NEC (which has 60 members) is charged with overseeing the party's general activities, managing the party's assets, 'and, most importantly, ensuring that policy determined at [congress] is implemented, and itself making policy decisions from time to time. It also oversees a series of subcommittees that are concerned with policy, and which are also concerned with the appointment and the deployment of parliamentarians'. The NEC also elects the national working committee, which is the party organ responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the party.

The ANC has further bodies which indicate how structurally solid the party is. The ANC has quite an elaborate internal set of **policy-making** structures. There are party structures which are coordinated by the ANC for policy, and there are also ANC caucus structures which are maintained separately, which are established for policy purposes that more or less parallel the portfolio committees in parliament.

In addition to this, the ANC has hundreds of full-time employees, including its treasurer and secretary-general. This information indicates that the ANC has an enormous capacity for policy making. Questions to ask, therefore, are:

- To what extent can ordinary members participate in this process?
- Are the elected and appointed bodies answerable to 'rank and file' membership?

It appears that not only do ordinary members have a significant say in policy, but also that the official structures are held accountable. When there is a strong feeling among a number of ordinary members, the party feels the pressure and responds by shifting policy.

In the DA the ability for non-ranking members to **influence policy** and party direction is far more restricted, but this is not to say that the leadership is not answerable to members. The leadership has a far greater scope of authority. In the IFP, the authority of the leadership is even greater.

Another important way in which the parties differ in this respect is in the actions of their parliamentarians. DA MPs have 'considerably greater authority and discretion over policy issues'; whereas in the ANC, the party's 'constitutional arrangements [prescribe that] the party supervises the work of parliamentarians'.

Membership figures obviously vary considerably. The ANC is extremely transparent about its numbers, making all figures (from provincial to national level) publicly available. This party has about half a million fee-paying members. The DA is currently compiling figures, and an educated guess would be that it has about 100,000 members. The ID claims a membership of

about 75,000. In general, most parties are not as transparent about membership numbers as the ANC is; parties claim a certain number of members, but do not provide good evidence to support their claims.

Membership numbers are probably not as relevant as what the members actually do. What matters is the extent to which members undertake activities on behalf of their parties. The ANC, the DA, and some of the other big parties use members to engage directly with voters. The ANC is really the only party with the capacity to do this on a national scale. In some cases, members are active in between election periods in community-based work, but most of this activity takes place during campaigning times.

Party financing remains an issue. Recently there were unsuccessful legal efforts to force parties to disclose their sources. The DA and the ANC vehemently opposed these efforts. Funding is granted to parties from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), and the amounts are based on the percentage of the vote gained in the previous election. Private local business, foreign governments, and foreign-based international agencies also provide significant amounts of money to political parties. In the context of the region, South African parties are well-funded. Sometimes parties do go public with the amounts of money spent on particular activities, but this is not the norm.

In conclusion, time has seen parties adapt to electoral activity, and become 'increasingly predisposed to accept the legitimacy of each other's activities'.

PLENARY DISCUSSION ON BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA

The issue of free and fair **elections** was discussed. Some of the obstacles that face opposition parties were noted as having a significant bearing on the degree to which elections are fair. For example, in Botswana, the president (who represents the ruling party) is the only person who knows the date of an election well in advance.

It was asserted by a South African representative that the **IEC** is not entirely independent. He said that when we focus on the whole structure of the IEC, from the municipal level up to the commission's national chairman, we see that they are all members of Umkhonto we Sizwe, they were all in exile, and they are all members of the ANC.

Although the same sentiment was expressed by more than one person, it did not go unchallenged. 'It's simply not true,' was another opinion, 'that all the commissioners belong to the ANC. … Generally speaking, the IEC people, in their requirements for office, have to be people who have been of low profile politically. And in two cases, in the cases of IEC commissioners, I simply don't know what their previous political affiliations were, and that's because they haven't made them obvious in the way that they've carried out their duties. I think South African elections are not simply free, I think generally speaking … they're run fairly.'

It was emphasised that whether or not IEC members have a strong political affiliation or not is irrelevant; what matters is whether such personal ties have an effect on their professional duties. **Financing** of parties is yet another barrier to the opposition in both Botswana and South Africa.

The ruling parties have a far greater capacity to raise funds and thus they have more money to spend on election campaigns. This had led to a situation where the inequalities between ruling and opposition parties are increasing. The natural progression of such a situation is that one party will increasingly become more and more dominant. Thus it should not be altogether surprising that *de facto* one-party systems are maintained.

There are other challenges facing opposition parties that do not make elections less fair, but they do make it harder for the **opposition** to mount a challenge – for example, the division in the opposition. **Divisions** within parties lead to a proliferation of parties, and divisions between opposition parties mean that they do not present a united front against the dominant ruling party (and therefore all opposition becomes weakened). Although this point was raised in relation to Botswana, it seems to ring true for many countries in the SADC region. However, against this must be weighed the fact that sometimes political and ideological differences are greater among opposition parties than they are between a particular opposition party and the ruling party. In other words, the only common ground opposition parties may have with one another may simply be that they are opposition parties.

Increasing the representation of **women** in government is a challenge in Botswana, and to a lesser extent in South Africa. An interesting irony in this matter was highlighted: Botswana's ruling BDP party does not have gender quotas written into its party constitution. But in spite of this, the BPD still has a greater percentage of women participating than those parties that do make use of gender quotas. Essentially, there is an important difference between what parties say on paper about gender representation, and what occurs in practice.

The **accountability** of elected representatives in South Africa was discussed. The PR system makes it easier for representatives to conduct their activities without having to answer to the people they serve (or do not serve). In response to this, an ANC member said that his party was designing measures to address this problem. 'Since the national election of last year, we've started a process of evaluating our MPs, MPLs and councillors.… [We are] evaluating their contribution made in the public forum, as well as evaluating their contribution made to the constituency office, and their contribution made to the party. And this then informs the National Committee as to which candidates are suitable to serve the ANC in those bodies.'

The South African researcher, Professor Lodge, noted that this is 'a critical process, and is being looked at … by observers very critically'. This was no doubt a positive step for democracy in South Africa.

Other issues raised were **voter apathy**, the extent of **political ignorance**, the role of the **youth** in Botswana and South Africa, and the possibility of **fixing election dates** and terms in Botswana. One participant expressed the view that Botswana's stable democracy was too highly praised, and shortcomings were therefore not exposed and critically examined. Another opinion was that civil society needs to become more involved and organised so that it can drive democratic reform.

4
COMPARATIVE LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Dr Khabele Matlosa provided a summary of the general findings of the workshop. This was followed by an open discussion, which served to reiterate some of the emerging key issues.

The research papers had covered three main sections:

- country context;
- external regulations; and
- internal functioning.

Since Matlosa's summary aimed to highlight comparative lessons and crucial contemporary issues, only the second and third points (external regulations and internal functioning) were covered.

EXTERNAL REGULATIONS

Registration and deregistration of political parties
The countries require political parties to be registered. This is usually done under a Societies Act, but in some cases parties are registered with an electoral commission (as is the case in South Africa). It is not clear how or even if parties officially deregister, and more information about this is needed.

Regulations governing their internal functioning
There are no external laws governing how political parties must function internally. Parties are left to their own devices about how they are run internally. Parties construct their own constitutions, rules and regulations and codes of conduct about the required behaviour of members.

Nomination of candidates
Candidate nominations are based on both external legislation and internal regulations. External regulation generally covers aspects such as age and citizenship requirements of candidates, while internal regulations govern nomination processes. The external laws are covered by electoral acts or a country's constitution.

Election campaigns
Election campaigns are governed by different acts or regulations. In some countries, the electoral act covers campaigns; and this may or may not include an electoral code of conduct. Sometimes an electoral code of conduct is the only regulation in place.

Campaigning 'often leads to conflict among parties, and this has to be dealt with'. Some countries have instituted electoral courts to deal with such disputes. Others make use of party liaison committees or conflict management panels. Some countries discussed at this workshop do not have any mechanisms specifically designed to deal with campaigning and election disputes.

Electoral system and political contests
There is a mixture of 'the British style' first-past-the-post system and the proportional representation system. The type of electoral model used has a significant impact on political parties. It affects the amount of parliamentary representation a party gains, and it also impacts on how parties function and their effectiveness. In the case of Botswana, electoral reform could have a major impact on political parties.

Development of party systems
In the eight countries discussed, the overwhelming party system is the dominant-party system. 'In each country there has to be an interrogation of the specific implications and impact of such a system on democratic governance and effectiveness of political parties.'

Parliament and party representation
The eight countries reviewed use either unicameral or a bicameral legislature. However, 'irrespective of the nature of the legislative form', what seems to be the important issues are the nature of representation and the effectiveness of parties in the legislatures.

The practice of a certain number of representatives being appointed (by the president) was discussed, as a few of the countries have laws that allow for this action. Although the number of representatives in the cases discussed at this workshop is small, there are still questions about the democratic nature of this practice. The countries need to look into this issue and draw conclusions about whether this practice strengthens or weakens democracy.

Funding of political parties
The issue of money in politics is always contentious, problematical and multifaceted. What emerged at this workshop was the controversial nature of the sources of party funding and the lack of transparency in the financial accounting of how money was spent.

Some countries have public financing mechanisms in place, but even these can be controversial as it becomes difficult to know how to distribute funds fairly between parties. Should this be done according to the percentage of representation? Should parties outside parliament be granted access to public funding? A more difficult aspect of political funding is that of private funding to parties, and how to regulate it. Many of these issues remain unresolved.

INTERNAL FUNCTIONING

Founding of political parties
Perhaps because of comparable colonial backgrounds, the ways in which parties in the region were founded and how they developed follow similar paths. Thus it is possible to categorise the parties of the region into one of the following:

- Pre-independence parties.
- Post-independence parties (i.e. those that emerged at the time of the first multiparty elections).
- Democratic transition parties (i.e. parties which were created with the strengthening of democracy in the 1990s).

- Post-democratic transition parties (e.g., parties that have emerged since the 1990s, usually as a result of breakaways or third-term debates).

Party structure
Looking from a broad perspective, the basic structure of parties in the region is similar. The different levels of organisation in the hierarchy from the bottom up are: branches – districts – provinces – national level.

Policy development
Policy development in the parties is weak. 'Parties have not yet grappled with this problem', and they lack internal structures dedicated to policy formation. The ANC in South Africa is a clear exception to this. Although policy development is weak throughout all other parties, the ruling parties seem to be doing slightly better in this regard than their opposition.

Leadership selection and succession
'Leadership selection and succession remains a serious problem … that our parties still have to deal with internally.' The trend of a former president (having served the maximum number of terms) stepping down as leader of the country but retaining leadership of the ruling party was discussed. This has happened in Malawi as well as in Namibia. There was speculation that it could have happened in Mozambique, but it did not. It is still too early to say what the impact of this trend will be on democracy. In the case of Namibia, we do not yet know how or even if Nujoma's successor will be able to 'come out as his own man', as Dr Tonchi put it.

Primary elections
This topic ultimately turns on the issue of democracy within parties and the extent to which non-ranking party members can participate and have their voices heard in the party. In some cases, primary elections seem to be quite fair. But it is also common that the leadership has a large degree of influence over which candidates get elected.

Civic and voter education
The problem with civic and voter education is that it is periodic. It occurs only during election periods. Parties, especially opposition parties, would benefit if such activities were ongoing and not sporadic. It is politically costly for parties not to undertake civic and voter education on a continuous basis.

National alliances and coalitions
'This is a neglected area among our political parties in terms of the way they are supposed to develop by [working towards] cooperation agreements [and] arrangements with other parties, since they have the same kind of mission … although they may differ in terms of how they achieve their mission.'

Looking at the region, coalitions occur in Mauritius, Malawi and Mozambique, but in other countries coalitions are uncommon. Coalitions can serve to strengthen opposition, and with the predominance of the dominant-party system in the region, coalitions seemingly have something to offer. Parties should therefore look for ways in which they can work with one another, or ways in which elections can be jointly contested.

International relations of political parties

Parties lack mutually beneficial relationships with other parties in their own countries as well as with parties and organisations internationally. International links can serve to 'share experiences, to share ideas, and also to mobilise resources. In the region, the only existing inter-party forum is that of former liberation movements – [involving the] ANC, Swapo, the MPLA, Frelimo, Zanu-PF, etc'. The lack of external relations is 'a serious weakness' that requires attention.

Party relations with civil society

Yet another area of weakness is parties' relationships with civil society. Again, an exception to this is the ANC in South Africa, where the party is engaged with labour unions, the NGO Sangoco, Sasco (a student movement), charity work, developmental activities and other volunteer activities. In some countries, such as Mozambique, the church plays a role in politics, but perhaps this is an example of neutral civil society reaching out to parties instead of parties reaching out to civil society.

Relations between parties and electoral commissions

The relationships between parties and their relevant electoral commissions are 'working relationships. … They even have committees that allow the relationship to thrive and be beneficial'.

Gender equality

As could be expected, gender equality remains a challenge in the region. Some countries are more representative than others, but even the countries that are doing relatively well in this regard still need to increase the number of women in political decision-making. Political parties, too, need to incorporate more women into their decision-making structures.

It is also important that qualitative issues as well as quantitative issues should be addressed. To clarify, what this means is that it is useless simply to increase the number of women in government or political leadership positions if such women do not have the requisite authority to make an impact. Therefore quantitative representation is not enough; there needs to be a qualitative force behind the numbers.

Membership and recruitment

In terms of recruitment drives, 'there's a sense of laxity' in the parties. In general, parties do not place enough emphasis on retaining existing members and recruiting new members. These activities need to be undertaken, given the trend of declining party membership. Parties should not just simply rely on their reputation to attract new members. 'There's no concerted effort, deliberate effort' on the part of the parties.

Parties also tend to lack reliable, up-to-date records of membership numbers. Without these, how can they know for a concrete fact when they are losing or gaining support?

Parties need to examine ways to increase their membership base. For example, market research tools and opinion surveys could prove helpful in this regard, as they can give a party a better indication of what the political opinions are. At the moment, not many parties use such tools. Again, South Africa is one exception to this; Mauritius is another.

Youth representation

The arguments for increasing youth representation parallel those for increasing the number of women. Just as there is a failure in gender representation, parties 'fail to integrate the youth into the larger political [direction] of the parties'. The point was made that the youth constitute a huge portion of the population, and that more effort should therefore be made to provide a space for the inclusion of this constituency in the political decision-making processes.

Additional emerging key issues include:

- barriers to opposition parties;
- merging of the party with the state;
- elements of political culture that hamper democratisation – 'we are creating dictators' through leadership worship;
- corruption and accountability issues;
- democratisation as a process;
- the use of communication tools; and
- civil society leaders and MPs must engage with people; civil society has a large role to play in entrenching democracy.

5
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The workshop was formally closed by Dr Abdalla Hamdok of IDEA and Denis Kadima of EISA. They both thanked the researchers and the members of the political parties who had travelled to South Africa to participate in the discussion. They expressed satisfaction both on the organisation and on the results of the workshop.

They said that both of their organisations were anxious to bring researchers, political party activists and leaders together in one venue. The fear was that the objectivity of the research that is being conducted, using rigorous research instruments and tested globally, risked being watered down by bringing in politicians, whose main concern would perhaps be to push their own party interests and be very defensive about criticism of their deficiencies.

This exercise pointed to one thing, which was that Africa was finally getting on to the right track. Indeed, it was encouraging to see ruling and opposition parties not only on the same platform but sitting next to one another.

A critical observation, however, was that while it was very good to have an exercise such as this at a sub-regional level, issues at such a level tended to be addressed in an abstract manner. This was because the recommendations and issues which had been made were practical only in a national setting.

IDEA and EISA would therefore find ways of taking this debate to the national level in all the countries concerned. It was possible that such a move could be relevant in policy development and legislation.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

DIALOGUE ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOVERNANCE
IN THE SADC REGION

DATE: 14-15 APRIL 2005
VENUE: INDABA HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

Wednesday, 13 April 2005
Arrival of participants in Johannesburg

Thursday, 14 April 2005
08h00   Registration

Session 1:   Introduction and programme overviews

CHAIRPERSON: Cassan Uteem, IDEA Board Member and former President of Mauritius

09h00   **Welcome and introductory remarks**
               Mr Denis Kadima, Executive Director, EISA
               Dr Abdalla Hamdok, Africa Director, IDEA

Session 2:   Overview on global and regional context

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Denis Kadima

09h30   **International perspectives on political parties and democracy**
               Dr Abdalla Hamdok, Africa Director, IDEA

10h00   **Regional perspectives on political parties and democracy**
               Dr Khabele Matlosa, Research Director, EISA

10h30   **Discussion**

11h00   COFFEE

Session 3:   Country reports

CHAIRPERSON: Dr Gloria Somolekae

11h15   **Angola**
11h45   Discussion

12h15	**DRC**
12h45	Discussion
13h15	LUNCH

Session 4: **Country reports (continued)**

CHAIRPERSON: Professor Tom Lodge

14h00	**Mozambique**
14h30	Discussion
15h00	**Botswana**
15h30	Discussion
16h00	TEA

Session 4 **(continued)**

16h15	**Zambia**
16h45	Discussion

Friday, 15 April 2005
Session 5: **Country reports (continued)**

CHAIRPERSON: Professor Joham Momba

09h00	**Namibia**
09h30	Discussion
10h00	COFFEE
10h30	**South Africa**
11h00	Discussion
11h30	**Tanzania**
12h00	Discussion
12h30	LUNCH

Session 6: **Summary of proceedings**

14h00	**Comparative lessons and emerging key issues**
	Dr Khabele Matlosa
15h30	**Closing remarks**
	Dr Abdalla Hamdok, Africa Director, IDEA
	Mr Denis Kadima, Executive Director, EISA

WORKSHOP ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOVERNANCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Johannesburg , South Africa
14-15 April 2005

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EISA is a not for profit Section 21 company, established in 1996 and based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Its mission is to strengthen electoral processes, good governance, human rights and democratic values through research, capacity building, advocacy and other targeted interventions. The organisation services governments, electoral commissions, political parties, civil society organisations and other institutions operating in the democracy and governance fields throughout Africa. EISA has field offices in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Mozambique and Burundi.

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ABOUT IDEA

Founded in 1995, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance is an international organisation based in Stockholm. It seeks to promote and develop sustainable democracy worldwide. IDEA's current areas of activity include:

- electoral systems and management;
- political participation, including women in politics;
- political parties, management and financing;
- post-conflict democracy building and dialogue; and
- democracy indicators and assessment.

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