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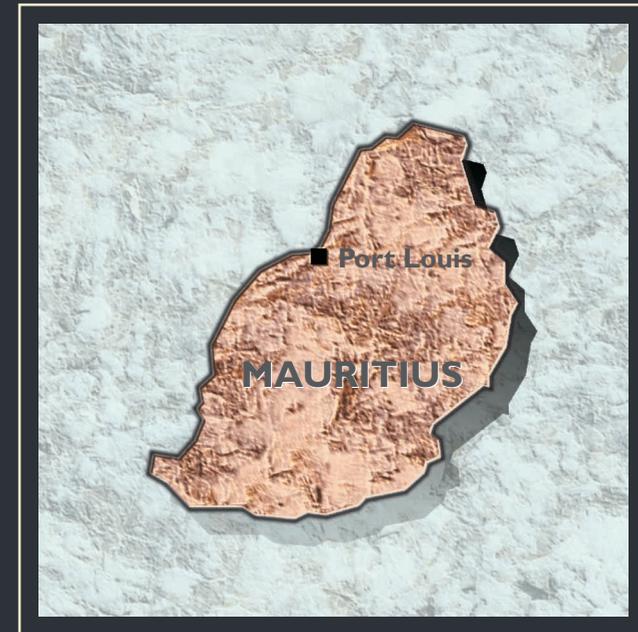
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## POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY IN MAURITIUS



Sheila Bunwaree  
and Roukaya Kasenally

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND  
DEMOCRACY IN MAURITIUS



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BY  
SHEILA BUNWAREE AND ROUKAYA KASENALLY



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P O Box 740  
Auckland Park  
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Tel: 27 11 482 5495  
Fax: 27 11 482 6163  
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www.eisa.org.za

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



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

DR SHEILA BUNWAREE holds a PhD in sociology and teaches sociology and political science at the University of Mauritius. She is currently a board member of the Association of African Political Scientists and the Southern African Regional Poverty Network. Bunwaree's research interests include governance, globalisation and poverty from a feminist perspective.

DR ROUKAYA KASENALLY holds a PhD in broadcasting, is a media and political communication specialist and teaches at the University of Mauritius. She has written and published on the state of the media and on the process of information democratisation within Southern African as well as on the Asian continent. Kasenally is currently chairperson of the Standards Committee of the Independent Broadcasting Authority in Mauritius, as well as regional chairperson of the SADC Media Award.

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## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is no gainsaying that political parties play a critical role in the democratisation process. It is also incontrovertible that political parties are key to the institutionalisation and consolidation of democracy. Thus, sustainable democracy is dependent upon well-functioning and effective political parties. Each *country context* suggests that vibrant and robust political parties are crucial actors in articulating and aggregating diverse interests, providing visionary political leadership, recruiting and presenting candidates, and developing competing political and policy programmes upon which the electorate base their choices during elections.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CLP	Constituency Labour Party
CSO	Civil society organisation
EBC	Electoral Boundary Commission
ESC	Electoral Supervisory Commission
FPTP	First-past-the-post
LP	Labour Party
MDN	<i>Mouvement Democratique Mauricien</i>
MMM	<i>Mouvement Militant Mauricien</i>
MMSM	<i>Mouvement Militant Socialiste Mauricien</i>
MP	Member of parliament
MR	<i>Mouvement Republican</i>
MSD	<i>Mouvement Socialiste Democrate</i>
MSM	<i>Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien</i>
NLEC	National Labour Executive Committee
NPF	National Policy Forum
PEMMO	Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation
PMSD	<i>Parti Mauricien Social Democrate</i>
PMXD	<i>Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval</i>
PSM	<i>Parti Socialiste Mauricien</i>
RMM	<i>Renouveau Militant Mauricien</i>
RTM	<i>Rassemblement des Travailleurs Mauriciens</i>
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UK	United Kingdom
Uneca	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the Southern African states, including Mauritius, step further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the people of this region are experiencing major changes in the political landscape. The wave of democratisation that has blown in this geographical zone shows that the political space is expanding, human rights and the rule of law are more widely respected, and the media and civil society are advancing in many countries. Mauritius – with a pluri-ethnic population of 1.3 million, lying off the east coast of Southern Africa – has become a beacon of development in the region; but whether this beacon can continue to provide light and to consolidate its democratic governance in the context of new challenges is a question that is posed here.

Mauritius has a record of achievements to its credit, such as a high gross national product per head, growth levels hitting double-digit figures during the late 1980s and early 1990s, high literacy rates, and a relatively strong welfare state. However, this picture-perfect track record is starting to erode with the dismantling of the multi-fibre agreement, the steady decline in foreign direct investment, the loss of protected markets and guaranteed prices, growing national and external debt, an inadequately trained human capital and a fragile environment. This state of affairs no doubt has a direct bearing on the livelihoods of large segments of society where poverty is growing at an alarming rate and where wealth remains concentrated in the hands of a few.

The idea of democracy has been actively promoted across sub-Saharan Africa, but democracy can be hardly sustained without the presence of an effective state.<sup>1</sup> State effectiveness connotes a set of mechanisms that deal with the state's scope, capacity and legitimacy. In fact, the state's legitimacy is fundamentally important in ensuring the quality, depth and representivity of democratic principles. This has become even more important in these globalising times when emphasis is placed on privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation.

This report argues that democratic governance is not only about having regular and peaceful alternation of political parties through elections that are efficiently and effectively administered, but it is also about the manner

in which political parties respond to the demands of people through the formulation of appropriate policies that reflect their needs and expectations.

The main objectives of this study were to analyse the internal functioning of political parties and to understand how the external regulatory framework impacts on democratic political culture in Mauritius. The methodology used was the administration of the EISA/IDEA questionnaire (see appendices) which took the form of a combination of structured and unstructured interviews with targeted respondents. Given the diverse realities of the field and the emerging body of data, the research team devised some mechanisms to ensure triangulation. A couple of focus group discussions with party members who do not occupy party positions were also carried out in a few constituencies. Views on the various issues and themes teased out converged with the views of those who managed and led the party. Given the complex nature of the study, the unstructured interviews combined with the focus group discussions allowed for a fair amount of probing to take place.

Political parties constitute the machinery for democratic control of political power as they articulate and aggregate the interests of diverse groups in society and form the basis of political pluralism. Seventy-two political parties registered for the July 2005 Mauritian general elections,<sup>2</sup> but the three largest and most dominant ones are the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM), the Labour Party (LP) and the *Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien* (MSM). Interestingly, each of these three parties has been in an alliance with one or the other at different times, leading to the quasi domination of these three parties within the Mauritian political landscape.

Findings from the external regulatory framework component of the study highlight the flexible nature of the Mauritian system and how the Electoral Commission and its ancillary bodies contribute to the good conduct of elections. While Mauritius has developed a strong ballot culture that is transparent and accountable, it still has a number of important democratic deficits. The first-past-the-post electoral system that is in place has important implications for party representation. The unfair nature of the system – as reflected by the disproportion between the percentage of popular votes cast and the number of seats obtained in parliament – has often been posited as an argument for change; but change seems difficult to bring about.

Another major democratic deficit is the under-representation of women in the political space, particularly in parliament. While Mauritius surpasses most other Southern African Development Community countries on a number of socio-economic indicators, the country is at the bottom of the list when it comes to women's representation; and the 2005 general election appears to be another missed opportunity to address this imbalance.

The study establishes the parameters of the parties' functioning and the extent to which they are connected to grassroots levels. The external regulation and environment in which the parties operate are also researched. In fact, the consolidation of democratic governance also depends largely on the political culture promulgated by the parties themselves.

The study demonstrates that the major political parties in Mauritius are well anchored and have important social roots, which are largely inspired by a socialist ideology. All major parties have a party constitution but not all party members have full knowledge of it.

Findings relating to internal party structure indicate that party membership is relatively well structured and that all parties have developed clear mechanisms to ensure a bottom-up approach towards party thinking and decision making. Although most parties do not have clear links with civil society, they do have internal think tanks and commissions on different themes.

The study demonstrates in a systematic manner the dominance of party leaders, be it at the level of selection/nomination of candidates, party funding or political strategy (coalition partners). However, consultations with party members are encouraged.

A relatively grey area that remains undocumented is the issue of funding. In fact, the parties that were researched demonstrate a high level of resistance to disclose any information pertaining to financial sources. Most interview respondents were of the opinion that there were a number of 'well-wishers' who made contributions, but that an informal practice was for individual candidates to make contributions as well. Detailed financial reporting is not part of any party practice and only very few people within the party were aware of the party's financial status.

Finally, the report makes a number of recommendations regarding the consolidation of democratic governance in Mauritius. Central to these recommendations is civic and voter education, as well as training for parliamentarians. While almost all Mauritian parliamentarians are well educated and professionals in their own fields, not all of them are sufficiently familiar with issues regarding the functioning of parliament and that of political parties. Reflective voter choices as well as professional politicians who are entrenched in a culture of transparency and accountability are necessary for the consolidation of democratic governance. It is only then that Mauritius will become a more capable and inclusive state.

## INTRODUCTION

Mauritius, like some other parts of the British empire, achieved its independence by concession from the parent country. While many countries can speak of their independence as being fuelled by nationalist sentiment, Mauritius experienced a different situation altogether: no nationalist sentiment existed in Mauritius. Anti-colonial feelings were expressed by the Hindu majority but large sections of the other ethno-religious groups preferred to maintain ties with the mother country. Mauritius was divided as it negotiated its way towards independence: 44% of the population voted against independence, but independence was finally granted to Mauritius in 1968.

In spite of the tensions and conflicts preceding independence and fear of the large 'Hindu hegemony', Mauritius has never developed a 'bullet' culture, adopting instead a culture of the 'ballot'. Post-independent Mauritius has had a relatively sound track record of holding free and fair general elections since independence without any major contestations. Elections have been held in 1976, 1982, 1993, 1987, 1991, 1995, 2000 and 2005. Procedures before, during and after elections are well respected by all political parties.

It is important to note, however, that there has been a 'problem' of incumbency whereby the ruling party has made use of its unfair access to the state media and other resources. Voter turnout during general elections tends to be relatively high – 81.5 % for the 2005 general election – but there is a dearth of research in the country regarding voting patterns and behaviour. Studies in the broad field of political science are lacking and research on the gender dimension of politics is even scantier.

There is freedom of association which allows political parties to operate freely. However, every political party must be registered with the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) at least 14 days prior to the nomination of its candidates at any general election.<sup>3</sup>

Mauritius scores 1 for political rights and 2 for civil liberties on the Freedom House Index, giving it an average of 1.5, and classifying the country in the

'free' category. The Freedom House Index of 1 for political rights reflects the general freedom of rights and association for all political parties as well as the unhindered general rights to vote afforded all Mauritian citizens irrespective of race, colour, creed and gender. The lower score for civil liberties indicates that there are some restrictions in the country, and more work needs to be done to enlarge the democratic space. For instance, trade unions do not have the right to go on strike; they are currently asking for the right to strike to be included in the constitution.

Democratic governance, this report argues, is not only about having regular and peaceful alternation of parties through elections that are administered by an efficient institutional framework accepted across a broad spectrum, it is also about political parties gauging and understanding the needs of the people and shaping and formulating policies that respond to those needs. In short, democratic governance is about economic and social engineering that provides for sustainable human development.

While it is true that good measures of legitimacy involve levels of voter participation, the predisposition and willingness of all stakeholders to accept results, and the commitment to participation by political parties, state legitimacy depends on the nature of state society relations, the kind of social contract that is in place, and the adequate representation of all groups in government.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This research report analyses the country context, the external legal environment as well as the internal functioning of political parties in Mauritius. The following methodology was used for the study.

Some 71 political parties registered for the 2005 general elections, but this study focuses on three main parties, namely the Labour Party (LP), the *Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien* (MSM) and the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM).

The questionnaire used to address different issues regarding the functioning of political parties was not designed with the intention of carrying out a large quantitative survey but rather to allow the researchers to administer

structured and unstructured interviews. A team of two researchers undertook the interviews so that note taking could be done when respondents expounded on certain issues and did not reply directly to the questions asked.

Some questions demanded a lot of probing and the ample note taking allowed the researchers to obtain a clearer view of the internal functioning of the parties, and to assess any differences and commonalities between parties.

The main stakeholders interviewed were the party secretary general, a representative of the youth wing, a women's league and/or women's wing representative, the campaign strategist, the treasurer, and a long-standing candidate of each of the three main political parties. In addition, the researchers interviewed the electoral commissioner, the commissioner of the ESC, the speaker of the National Assembly, the leader of the opposition, an ex-president of the Republic of Mauritius, trade union representatives, regional assembly members, and the assembly clerk.

For triangulation purposes, the researchers travelled to some party strongholds and organised a number of focus group discussions with constituents. This added richness to the study and confirmed various findings, while in other cases it showed how disconnected some people at grassroots level are regarding the realities of the functioning of political parties and their central role in the promotion of democracy.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In consolidated democracies, as Linz and Stepan put it, democratic processes are the 'only game in town'. Elections are not always won by the same party; conflicts are habitually resolved within the regulatory and institutional framework, the rule of law protects the freedom of civil society and democratic practices are 'deeply internalised' in the expectations of citizens and rulers and in the workings of society.<sup>4</sup>

Contrary to the relatively large amount of literature that exists on Mauritius's economic development, very little has been written on Mauritian politics and even less, if at all, on the functioning of political parties. This study therefore fills an important knowledge gap. More importantly, the little that has been written on Mauritian politics has tended to look at the broad contours of

Mauritian democracy and has paid little attention to the country's democratic deficits, such as the biased and aberrant nature of the present electoral system, the under-representation of women in parliament, the functioning of the parliamentary system, the persistence of oligarchic wealth and the growing asymmetry in the distribution of entitlements in such a context.

While some literature and scholarly work on different facets of Mauritian democracy and political development exist,<sup>5</sup> none of these works has actually undertaken a profound analysis of the functioning of political parties. Some aspects of the internal functioning of political parties were attempted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (Uneca)-commissioned study on good governance, but the report states that only a couple of respondents answered. While the Uneca report includes a number of interesting issues and elements regarding good governance, the detailed internal functioning of political parties has remained outside its purview.

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Mauritius is perhaps atypical of many other African countries since it alternates governments regularly through fair and free elections in a rather peaceful manner. All parties are free to present candidates in elections as long as they register with the Electoral Commission's ESC. But smaller parties and independent candidates have to compete in a playing field that is highly uneven. There are no official restrictions; however, the difficulty of raising the necessary resources acts as an important barrier and parties therefore find it difficult to present candidates in all constituencies. These subtle 'restrictions' highlight how unfair the competition can be and draw attention to the urgent need to address the problem of political party funding.

Political parties are free to hold public and private meetings anywhere but they must obtain the authorisation of the police in the case of the former. Political parties also have the possibility of challenging in court any decision taken by the commissioner not to authorise a public meeting. The state of emergency which was imposed from 1968 to 1976 when the first general elections were held meant that freedom was restricted to a certain extent. But the landscape changed significantly in the 1980s and 1990s. The high degree of participation in meetings as well as in elections highlights the sense of security and freedom that prevails in the country.

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More recently, however, there was an attempt in 1999 to pass the Public Security Act. Violence during the municipal election campaign of October 1996 and the riots of February 1999 prompted the government of the day to come up with the act. The bill was voted on 18 December 1999 in the absence of the MMM members of parliament (MPs) who walked out in protest. In addition to the MMM protest, there was a public outcry contesting the act, arguing that it infringed on civil liberties and would shrink democratic space in Mauritius. Owing to this civil society pressure, the act was never proclaimed. But the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States and their aftermath changed the scenario, allowing the Mauritian government to pass the Terrorism Act of 2001.

There are no specific rules or codes of conduct for either the ruling party or ruling coalition but there are various informal practices and unwritten rules by which parties have to abide. Failure to abide to a certain 'code of conduct' can lead to sanctions.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Mauritius is a small island in the Indian Ocean. According to a 2000 census, the republic has a multi-ethnic population of 1.3 million. Mauritius has no indigenous population. People were instead brought in from different parts of the world to work: Africans came as slaves, then Indians as indentured labourers, and in the early 1900s a small community of Chinese came as traders. The island became home to a number of ethno-religious groups, divided at present as follows: Hindus (52%); Muslims (16%); Creoles of African ancestry (27%); Chinese (3%); and Franco Mauritians of European ancestry (2%).

On an economic level, Mauritius is often cited as a model to be emulated in the region. Its successful transition in the 1970s from a monocrop economy to one based on an export processing zone is widely discussed and documented. By the mid 1990s, the country further diversified its economy with the launch of financial and banking services, and more recently that of information and communication technology services.

What was, and to a certain extent continues to be, interesting about Mauritius is that it is rather atypical of the rest of Africa. While the continent stagnated for almost four decades, in Mauritius unemployment was below 2%, the government deficit was only 2.2% of gross domestic product and average annual growth rates topped 6%. But by the end of the 1990s and early 2000, the economic situation had deteriorated enormously. The *Foresight and Competitiveness Report*<sup>6</sup> notes that Mauritius is 'emitting important signs of economic distress'.

Compared to many other developing countries, literacy levels in Mauritius are quite high reaching the 84.3% mark.<sup>7</sup> The government has always considered education a priority, so much so that, again contrary to many other African countries, Mauritius did not succumb to the pressures and conditionalities of the World Bank regarding education and health. It has continued to provide free education and health care, and it is this relatively strong welfare state that has contributed to such high literacy levels in the country.

It is also important to note that there is no educational gender gap; it is only at higher education levels, especially at tertiary level, that some gender gap can be discerned.

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRATISATION

Mauritius became independent in 1968 and has since developed into a relatively strong multiparty democracy based on the Westminster parliamentary model. The Constitution of Mauritius was amended in 1991, and the country became a republic with a president appointed for a term of office of not less than five years by a prime minister and ratified by parliament. The Mauritian parliament is unicameral and all seats in the national legislature are elected.

The island is usually presented as a model of civil and political rights. This situation has to a great extent been made possible by the existence of a number of institutions that ensure an operative and functioning democracy. In fact, the media in Mauritius has in more ways than one contributed to enhancing the democratic space.

The country has a strong tradition of press freedom. The amendments made to the 1984 Newspaper and Periodicals Act which brought about tighter control were repealed in the 1990s, thereby consolidating freedom of the press. The press can, however, be sued for defamation, libel and sedition. According to the world statistics pocket book, there is a newspaper circulation level of 74 for 1,000 inhabitants.

Although the press in Mauritius is largely controlled by two big groups belonging to a particular ethnic group, the print media has always been more open (and unregulated) allowing for a diversity of print media titles. Some newspapers are close to certain religious or socio-cultural groups. Others are close to some political parties. Only one newspaper declares itself as being an organ of a party, namely *Le Militant*, which is owned by the MMM.

The Mauritian broadcast media have undergone some changes in the past two years with the introduction of private commercial radio stations. Prior to that the broadcast landscape was dominated and monopolised by one public service broadcaster – the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. The Mauritius Broadcasting Act of 1982 provides for broadcasting by radio and television but the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, 2000 provides

for the liberalisation of the airwaves. A number of private radio stations have emerged and efforts are being made to liberalise the television networks.

In general, one can say that political parties have access to major media outlets, although the issue of 'equitable access' is more difficult to ascertain especially during electoral campaigns. The introduction of private commercial radio has to a certain extent enlarged the 'democratic' access to political parties and has provided an outlet for the public to express their views and opinions. Free media coverage is visible in terms of airtime given to the various political parties.

## CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS

The three major parties that have dominated and will no doubt continue to dominate post-independent Mauritius are the LP, the MMM and the MSM. An interesting feature of these parties is that for the past 30 years or so they have all undergone multiple splits. These splits have generated new parties, some of them short lived; other splits have been driven by communal / ethnic desires, while still others have essentially become one-person or one-issue parties.

A general topography of the mainstream parties such as the LP, MSM and MMM denotes a particular group following, which constitutes a party's main ethno-electoral base. For example, the LP's pro-independence struggle allowed it at the time to rally most of the Indo-Mauritian groups (Hindus, Muslims, Tamils and others) behind it, while the *Parti Mauricien Social Democrate* (PMSD) essentially represented the Creole community and the minority group of people of European descent (the whites).

However, post-independence Mauritius saw the emergence of a new party – the MMM – that was to challenge the old LP guard and appeal to certain ethnic groups, namely the Muslims, a fair segment of the Creole community and certain minority strands within the Hindu majority group. The 'hegemony' that the LP had acquired vis-à-vis the Hindu community as an ensemble was eroding, and this was further exacerbated with the formation of the *Parti Socialiste Mauricien* (PSM) – a splinter party emanating from the LP which joined forces with the MMM for the 1982 general elections. The ethnic value of the PSM has been widely commented on, and to many political observers it allowed the MMM to move away from the established perception that it comprised only Muslims, Creoles and certain ethnic minority groups.

With the creation of the MSM in the early 1980s, the party recuperated and rallied a large section of the Hindus who had been staunch supporters of the LP prior to its 1982 decline. In fact, the period 1983-1989 saw the great reunion of the Hindu community, with the MSM taking on board for two successive elections (1983 and 1987) the LP as well as other minority parties. As for the

PMSD, the presence and clout that it had secured among the Creole community during the pre-independence period steadily dwindled with the creation of the MMM. The PMSD has also suffered from multiple splits which have further fragmented its electoral base.

Mention was made earlier of the several splits that the three main parties have undergone since their inception. Although these splinter parties have not really affected the electoral balance (as ascertained by several opinion polls), they have chipped away at the electoral capital of the three mainstream parties.

The LP has 'generated' splinter parties such as the PSM, *Rassemblement des Travaillistes Mauricien* (RTM) and the *Mouvement Travailliste Democrate* (MTD), which emanate from and represent the Hindu community.

The MMM has undergone three splits since its inception, in 1973, 1983 and 1993. The only split which resulted in the formation of a significant party was that of 1983 when the MSM was created. The *Renouveau Militant Mauricien* (RMM) formed in 1993 did not amount to much, and the MSM and RMM recorded the lowest percentage of the popular vote of any post-independent general elections when both parties garnered only 19.3% at the 1995 general election.

Since its inception the MSM has undergone several phases of turbulence, marked by the departure of senior party members. The party underwent its first official split in 1994 when a senior minister of Jugnauth's cabinet, Madan Dulloo, left to create the *Mouvement Militant Socialiste Mauricien* (MMSM). The MMSM remains a one-person party and is currently part of the *Alliance Sociale* led by Navin Ramgoolam's LP.

In the past decade or so the Mauritian political landscape has also been marked by the advent of ethically motivated parties such as Hizbullah, the *Mouvement Democratique Mauricien* (MDN) and *Les Verts*, who claim to represent the voices of a given section of the Muslims, Hindus and Creoles respectively. These three parties have not caused a major stir but their ethno-political claims have from time to time struck a sympathetic chord among some people belonging to certain ethnic groups.

When it comes to party structure and organisation, each party is bound to its constitution. A party's constitution offers the operative guidelines as well as the different sub-structures for the entry and dissemination of views, opinions and decisions at all levels of the party. The three parties have more or less similar structures and all pride themselves on operating an inclusive and bottom-up approach.

The main political parties, as well as some smaller ones, have a four-tier structure comprising a political bureau in charge of policy conceptualisation, a central committee responsible for decision making, a general assembly that meets at least once a year, and regional branches that gather the grassroots party members. Despite what seems like a well-oiled party machinery, a closer look at the actual operative setup of political parties demonstrates the overriding authority of the party leader. In fact, this authority often gains vetoing power when it comes to critical issues, such as the nomination of candidates, party funding and alliance formation or break-ups.

## EXTERNAL REGULATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

The functioning and management of political parties in Mauritius is affected by a range of macro and micro level factors. The macro level is usually linked to the constitutional and legal framework within which political parties have to operate, while the micro level is essentially concerned with the internal operative mechanisms that individual parties design and abide by.

Importantly, there is no electoral or political party law that governs the formation and maintenance of political parties in Mauritius. Legally, political parties are required to register with the ESC, as stipulated by the constitution. The National Assembly Elections Act, 1968 lays out the *modus operandi* of political party registration, which, according to section 7(2), should be recorded in

‘form 3 and shall be made and signed in the presence of the Electoral Commissioner, by the president, chairman or secretary of the party duly authorized to do so by a resolution passed by the executive committee of such party and such application shall be supported by a certified extract of the minutes of proceedings of the meeting at which the executive committee of such a party passed such resolution.’

These registration rules and regulations apply solely during election periods, outside of which political parties are completely unregulated and the only form of regulation emanates from within the party itself.

The post, roles and responsibilities of the electoral commissioner (section 40) and the two electoral commissions – the ESC and the Electoral Boundary Commission (EBC) (section 38) – are enshrined in the constitution of Mauritius, but their impact seems to be visible only during the short time preceding, during and after elections.

Regarding the nomination of candidates for election, potential candidates have to first be ‘nominated’ by their respective parties (if they are part of a given party) before they can proceed with their official nomination. It is

equally important to note that candidates can stand as independents and do not require any party affiliation or nomination.

The National Assembly Elections Act, 1968 in section 12 requires that the candidate fulfils a number of criteria, such as his/her nomination being supported by eight registered electors of the constituency for which the candidate is seeking to be elected (subsection 2), that s/he declares to be qualified to be elected a member of the Legislative Assembly<sup>8</sup> (subsection 4 (a)), declares the party to which s/he belongs (subsection 4 (b)) and declares the community to which s/he belongs.

The criterion dealing with community<sup>9</sup> is further reinforced in section 3 of the First Schedule of the constitution which deals with the official publication of the nominated candidate's community, and the subsequent bearing on the candidate if the validity of the claim is contested. In fact, the official requirement of nominated candidates having to disclose their community has been the subject of numerous contestations, as it is believed in certain quarters to reinforce the notion of ethnic politics bent on segregation and calculation. In fact, following a June 2005 ruling in the Supreme Court of Mauritius, candidates for general elections will no longer be bound to mention their ethnic community on their nomination papers.

Election campaigns are officially launched on nomination day, which is 30 days before polling day. Unofficially, no real timeline is allotted to the duration of campaigns and these can vary from a year to one month. In fact, certain politicians start re-campaigning the day after election results are announced!

During official election campaigns, registered parties that have fielded candidates and candidates themselves (from parties as well as independents) are expected to engage in dialogue with voters so as to inform and enlighten voters on their proposed policies and election manifestos. This is usually done through a series of consultative mechanisms such as public meetings (in terms of the Public Gathering Act, 1991 official request and permission should be sought from the police commissioner), private meetings and party political broadcasts.<sup>10</sup> There is no official code of conduct or practice that politicians must abide by, and very often the language and discourse politicians adopt are not civil or appropriate.

Mauritius has a rather interesting and rich election tradition, with streets and building facades in each constituency strewn with banners, posters and plastic ribbons popularising the symbols and colours of competing parties. This is no doubt an important part of the spin machine of parties and their respective leaders as Mauritius follows the logic of political marketing and advertising. In fact, this commodification of electoral campaigning has brought into sharp focus the issue of political party financing and the ceiling that parties are entitled to spend in a given election. At the moment, each party should not spend more than Rs150,000 on each candidate, while independent candidates should respect the ceiling of Rs250,000.<sup>11</sup> However, the October 2004 report of the Select Committee on Funding of Political Parties has recommended a series of measures, including the setting of a 'spending limit for a general election at Rs1,000,000 for individual candidates as well as candidates forming part of a political party'.<sup>12</sup>

At the operational level, election campaigns officially end 24 hours prior to polling day,<sup>13</sup> following which no public address or rallies can be organised by parties or independent candidates. The police are mandated as the official authority during any election campaign, and any matters or people that disturb public order are dealt by the police.

It is believed that the sharing and consolidation of best practices when it comes to electoral procedures is most desirable and should be actively encouraged. Being a member state of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Mauritius has and will continue to be invited to observe and monitor elections in the region.<sup>14</sup> Such invitations have been made by several institutions such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum, EISA and the African Union.

Mauritius's active involvement in the SADC region and its current presidency of this regional community requires it to bear a strong commitment to the Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation (PEMMO). A recurrent problem linked to election campaigns in Mauritius is the problem of incumbency, especially when it comes to the use (or abuse) of state resources. This no doubt has a direct impact on the issue of fairness vis-à-vis certain parties and candidates.

An amendment has been made to the Representation of the People Act to provide for the presence of international election observers in Mauritius. This amendment facilitated international observation of the July 2005 general election.

Mauritius uses the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system, which has been operational since 1886, together with the 'best loser' system. It is in fact a first-three-past-the-post system allowing for 60 elected members to be represented in the National Assembly, with each of the 20 constituencies returning three MPs and the island of Rodrigues two. In addition, use of the best loser (variable correctives) system provides for an extra eight seats that are awarded to non-elected candidates based on their ethno-religious affiliation.

For many political observers, the FPTP and best loser systems are the root cause of the proliferation, creation and ultimately the disbanding of political party alliances, and have created much political instability. Additionally, the electoral system has triggered the crude ethnicisation of political parties which have essentially focused on the electoral benefits of political party alliance formation.

Electoral reform has been part of the main parties' political pledges, even appearing in their election manifestos. As early as 2001, the government instituted the establishment of a commission on constitutional and electoral reform, presided over by retired South African Judge, Justice Albie Sachs. The committee completed its report a year later, where after a select committee of the National Assembly was appointed to take stock of the report, which select committee has only recently made public its recommendations.

Conspicuous in the two reports is that they both recognise the deviant and disproportionate distortion caused by the prevailing FPTP system whereby:

'the three member constituencies frequently produced results which were grossly disproportionate to the share of votes obtained by the different parties. At times, although obtaining a substantial percentage of the popular vote, the Opposition was completely or nearly completely eliminated.'<sup>15</sup>

The main aim of the two reports was to ensure an electoral system where fairness and representivity were not forsaken, especially when it came to ‘correcting the over-representation of the leading party or alliance’.<sup>16</sup>

Despite investing much time and resources in these two committees, nothing seems to have come of them and all hopes that a dose of proportional representation would be introduced during the July 2005 general elections were dashed.

Electoral reform is one element that is expected to consolidate the fabric of Mauritian democracy. The absence of any electoral or political party law is to be lamented as the mere registration of political parties – and more so, this only during election times – is far from sufficient. In fact, a more pronounced and proactive role for the Electoral Commission should be envisaged, providing it with the necessary power and responsibility to give operational and regulatory guidelines to political parties, individual candidates and even to voters during and between elections.

Political representation in Mauritius is ensured through a fully competitive electoral process that is based on universal adult suffrage expressed through secret ballot. The voting age is 18 years and over. Post-independent elections, and more specifically general elections, in Mauritius have seen a high voter turnout – as much as 81.5% for the 2005 general elections.<sup>17</sup> This is usually matched by the interest of parties to field candidates, as well as the interest of independent candidates, to contest elections.

Data compiled by the Electoral Commission indicates that for the 2005 general elections some 71 political parties and 645 candidates contested the 60 National Assembly seats; however, despite this surge of interest the electoral landscape continues to be dominated by three parties – the LP, MMM and MSM.

Elected MPs may remain in office for a maximum of five years, unless parliament is dissolved by a vote of no confidence or an act of the prime minister. It is important to note that there is no term limit to re-election for MPs.

The president of the Republic of Mauritius appoints the prime minister and his deputy.<sup>18</sup> The prime minister and his cabinet of ministers are accountable

to parliament as the latter has the possibility of filing a 'resolution of no confidence in the Government'.<sup>19</sup>

The leader of the opposition is appointed by the republican president and the post is enshrined in the constitution.<sup>20</sup> The leader of the opposition is chosen from among the members of the National Assembly whose number includes a leader who commands sufficient support in opposition to the government. It is also interesting to note that two offices of the legislature may be held by non-elected members, namely the positions of speaker and that of attorney general.

As expected, parliament offers space for different forms of exchange and engagement for and by parliamentarians. In fact, sitting MPs have a number of instruments by which they can engage the executive and give parliament the dynamic role it should have for parliamentary oversight in a parliamentary regime. The range of questioning and inquiry mechanisms includes parliamentary questions, motions and matters of adjournment. Parliament also sets up a number of statutory committees to facilitate the undertaking of its various functions, including legislative committees, standing order committees<sup>21</sup> and the Public Accounts Committee,<sup>22</sup> among others. Select committees are also important as they are ad hoc committees of parliament set up to examine and make recommendations to parliament and to the executive on any matter where it is considered important to initiate appropriate study, debate and consultation among the parties in parliament. In fact, the most recent select committees were those set up to examine the Sachs report and the Funding of Political Parties.

Flowing from the logic of the electoral system, party representation in the post-independent Mauritian parliament has been varied. On numerous occasions the numerical dominance of the executive in the legislature, together with the often low representation of the opposition, has resulted in a highly skewed house that is unable to provoke constructive and engaging debates. This distorted aspect of parliament is exacerbated because MPs have to bear absolute party allegiance. It is not surprising to find MPs being asked to toe the party line, and anyone who dares venture to support an opposing party opinion is branded as too sympathetic to the other clan and consequently reprimanded.

Earlier mention was made of the absence of a code of conduct and practice for political parties and/or politicians. A similar absence is noted when it comes to the conduct of MPs. In fact, parliament in Mauritius has been the site of vulgar verbal exchanges and at times physical confrontations between members of opposing parties. There is therefore an urgent need for parliament to provide especially first time MPs with the necessary framework and techniques to ensure proper procedure and decorum.

## INTERNAL FUNCTIONING AND STRUCTURE

### **FOUNDING OF PARTIES**

Preceding sections have demonstrated that there is a multitude of parties on the Mauritian political landscape and that these political parties become more visible during election time.

The LP was founded in 1936 at a public meeting in Champ de Mars. The party was forged with the spirit of bringing independence and autonomy to the then British colony that was Mauritius. There was an urgent need to address the exploitative conditions in which the working class found itself and to fight for workers' rights. Shortly after independence the LP put in place a fully-fledged and comprehensive welfare system and instituted a culture of government subsidy that exists until today. The party has more recently seen support from all section of the Mauritian population, but its strongest support still comes from rural areas.

The MMM was founded in 1969 and was essentially created to foster people-powered and human-centred development. The MMM is a socialist party; but the party acknowledges that its ideological alignment has been pragmatic since the termination of the international ideological divide.

The MSM was founded in 1983 following a split that occurred in the MMM. The MSM – and more specifically its leader Sir Aneerood Jugnauth – is often credited as being the 'father' of the Mauritian economic success. Despite the party's call to the various ethnic groups, it has often been seen as the rallier of the Hindu community by astutely appealing to certain voters' sense of ethnic belonging, as it did in the 1983 and 1987 general elections. At a more general level, the MSM describes itself as socialist, blended with a sense of pragmatism.

### **INTERNAL STRUCTURES AND ELECTION LEADERSHIP**

All three parties are shaped and directed by their respective constitutions which provide the necessary rules of engagement. In addition to the party's constitution a series of operational guidelines also exist.

Well-defined structures and sub-structures exist across all three parties to

ensure a top-down and bottom-up approach when it comes to party matters and decisions. It was interesting to note that all three parties promote a grassroots approach and have established mechanisms and structures to provide the necessary entry points for potential, as well as existing, party members to be involved in matters relating to the promotion of the party. In fact, all three parties have branches in the 20 Mauritian constituencies. There are clear structures and designations as one graduates through the party from grassroots level, to middle and high 'management' structures.

In the case of the MMM, the central committee is considered as the national executive body of the party. Its members are elected by the delegates of the party's general assembly as well as by members of the different regional branches. The LPs national executive body is the National Labour Executive Committee (NLEC) and it is constituted through a combined method of election and selection. Each Constituency Labour Party (CLP) (and there are 20) elects three members, of which one should be a woman. The party leader and a small caucus then make their selections out of this core group of 60 'proposed' candidates. All elected MPs automatically become members of the NLEC. The MSM's national executive body is its political bureau. When the party is in power, its political bureau is made up of all the elected MPs, plus an additional five members from the regional branches. However, when the party is in opposition, the composition of the political bureau is left to the discretion of the party leader who attributes shadow cabinet responsibilities to its members.

As mentioned earlier, strong emphasis is put on the local or grassroots aspect of the party. Each party has established regional and sub-regional clusters, and the number of clusters varies depending on the size of a constituency. Each of the 20 branches of the MMM is managed by an elected executive committee comprising a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer who hold office for two years. As for the LP's different CLPs, their base structure emanates from the number of polling stations in a given constituency, and the leadership of each CLP is chosen through an election. The MSM follows a similar pattern to the MMM when it comes to the setting up of its branches. The major difference, however, is that the leader of the MSM has discretionary power over the appointments of the branch leadership.

An important point to bear in mind is that the various structures which exist do not have formal quotas when it comes to the inclusion of women or young people. However, the MMM and LP have a deliberate process of inclusion when it comes to these groups.

The various structures and sub-structures put in place by each of the parties provide party members with the necessary working framework. It is clear, however, that the party leader is given much leeway, and in most instances s/he is given the right to select those who s/he 'wishes' to see within these different party structures. In fact, it is interesting to point out that party loyalty is an important criterion, and party members are often rewarded if they have 'exhibited' sufficient loyalty.

All members across the different party structures and sub-structures are not paid and are expected to volunteer their time and skills to their respective parties.

### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Policy development is an important feature of all political parties as it allows the general public to be informed of the important initiatives and decisions that a party promises to implement if it is elected into power. There are, no doubt, important overlaps between policy and political manifesto development, as most of the interviewees emphasised that policies have to be coated with the necessary political 'icing' in order to attract both membership and votes.

All three parties have committees working on thematic issues, however the LP has recently constituted a formal National Policy Forum (NPF), while the MMM and MSM continue to develop ad hoc committees. The LP's NPF is to examine the main challenges confronting the country and how these can be addressed in the context of a rapidly changing socio-economic and political landscape. The objective is to produce better and more innovative policies and to achieve some form of consensus among the different stakeholders. The NPF has ten sub-committees working on a variety of societal and economic issues.

The different parties do not invest in any specific information resources, be

they surveys or opinion polls; however, the various party structures promote the exchange and diffusion of views and opinions among party members. The party officials interviewed also said that people who were not officially party members but who were sympathetic to the party's ideals regularly contributed to policy development and formulation. It was obvious that all three parties had excellent networking capacity and that this aided them significantly when it came to policy and political manifesto development and diffusion.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT**

Membership and recruitment procedures differ across the three parties. The LP has a national register and all its members are paid-up and party card holders. Although there is no official membership figure, a senior party member estimated that there were some 200 active members per constituency.

Membership fees vary depending on a member's position in the party, and range from 5% of monthly salary for current MPs, to an annual fee of Rs100 for ordinary members.

The MMM does not have a national membership register. This practice dates back to the early 1970s when the party was founded and when it was viewed with much suspicion by the ruling party as a radical party with communist tendencies. In fact, senior MMM officials said that maintaining a party membership register at that time would have put members in a position of vulnerability. Unlike the LP, the MMM does not have membership fees, however, government ministers and MPs contribute Rs5,000 and Rs2,000 a month respectively.

There is no official membership register for the MSM, but the different structures of the party keep account of the party members. As with the MMM, no fees are required for party membership but voluntary financial contributions are encouraged among members.

Members of all three parties have voting rights at the parties' general assembly meetings. All three parties mentioned that their membership criteria were non-discriminatory, but in return members have to prove that they are committed to the party at all times.

The different party officials interviewed across the three parties mentioned that their respective parties had experienced a substantial increase in membership numbers over the past decade or so. Different reasons that are to a certain extent party specific explain this increase in membership. Regarding the MMM, there has always been a culture of people involvement through its different structures,<sup>23</sup> ensuring that its membership is constantly on the rise. As for the MSM, membership has been increasing since the creation of the party in 1983. The MSM has been in power for a fair part of its existence, and this has enabled the party to extend certain privileges and advantages to its members. LP membership has known phenomenal growth, especially in the past three years.

The three parties surveyed do not have an official recruitment strategy *per se* but use the different existing party structures – namely their youth and women’s wings – to target and encourage certain members to join the party.

Party members have different roles and responsibilities in their respective parties and are expected to discharge these duties accordingly. In fact, the party structures ensure that there are regular meetings with members who are located at different levels within the party. Such meetings take place once a month for the local/regional branches, every two weeks for the national party and once a week for the party’s executive/political bureau. At these meeting, members are allowed to express their divergent views and opinions in a free manner.

It is interesting to note that the different parties interviewed had no other means of communicating with their members. Although all three main parties have their own websites, the response rate to this new technology remains minimal. It might be worthwhile for parties to invest in different communication strategies to ensure that most of their members can access information pertaining to party matters and decisions.

The parties interviewed do not have any official training schemes; however, the youth and women’s wings of the three main parties provide training through the organisation of workshops and discussion platforms on topical issues.

Membership drives are important to all three parties. Maintaining party

members' level of involvement and commitment outside of an election year is indeed a challenging task. However, the different party representatives interviewed said there were always event-related opportunities to ensure that members remained active and committed. In fact, the political meetings organised on 1 May (Labour Day), are an important rallying occasion for all party members and are usually the litmus test as to the popularity of the different political parties.

### **PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

The process of selection and subsequent nomination of candidates is party specific. However, one thing common to all three parties is that it is the party leader who ultimately decides who is nominated as the party's candidate.

All three parties mentioned that age, party membership and proven loyalty to the party were the criteria most considered when selecting a potential candidate. All three parties followed certain procedural party 'rules' when it came to the selection of candidates. In the case of the MMM, suggestions of the names of eligible candidates came from its political bureau, which names then had to be approved by the party's central committee and assembly of delegates. As for the MSM, it establishes a pool of candidates (informally known as the 'MSM family') who have been groomed in the ways of the party. It is from this pool that the leader of the party establishes a list of candidates, following prior consultation with the party's central committee and its regional branches. The LP has an official selection committee that is chaired by the party leader. The selection committee is expected to make a short list of names from a list that emanates from the different party structures. There is an important step between being selected and ultimately being officially nominated by the party, and this is very often due to the high level of competition that exists between various members who are all vying for a party ticket.

### **NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES AND PARTY CAMPAIGNS**

The official list of the party's nominated candidates for any given general election is made public on nomination day, which is 30 days before the scheduled election date. Most parties in fact wait for nomination day to officially make public their respective list of candidates. Prior to that, however, there is much speculation as to who will be in the lists.

It is important to note that the list of nominated candidates very often contains the names of people who have already stood as candidates in previous elections. This is usually because there is no restriction on the number of terms that an existing MP can be successfully returned to his/her seat. Also, the competition to be nominated as a candidate is ferocious among the different party members, and very often certain members use their bargaining power to 'persuade' their leader to nominate them, leaving very little space for new 'blood' to be brought in. Parties are, however, under some pressure to nominate fresh faces.

Party officials of all three parties interviewed emphasised the importance of election manifestos, which they believed were the blueprint of their respective party's vision for the country for the next five years if they remain in, or are voted into, power. Each of the three parties interviewed had distinct strategies for formulating and developing the key ideas that would constitute the core of their electoral manifesto. In the case of the MMM, ad hoc committees were set up, each with a specific theme to research and develop. An editorial committee would then work on the final party manifesto. The MSM establishes a number of commissions and committees, and their output is reviewed and consequently adopted as the template for the party's political manifesto. The LP's electoral manifesto is developed through an inclusive process in which a diversity of views is sought; however, the NPF is the main body responsible for formulating and developing the LP's manifesto. Importantly, when a given party enters into a coalition with another party (and this has been a common occurrence in post-independent Mauritius) there is a need to merge their respective electoral manifestos or to work on a common one.

The development and crystallisation of an election manifesto forms part of the larger campaign strategy of a party or a coalition running for election. In fact, all three parties interviewed made mention of a well-oiled campaign machinery that gets into full swing once the official election campaign is launched. In the case of the MMM, its campaign strategy is often based on whether the party is in opposition, in government or about to enter into a coalition with another party. As the election draws nearer, the campaign gets more focused. A dedicated team develops key issues and tries as much as possible to promote the ideas contained in the election manifesto. An

important feature of the MMM's campaign is the development of slogans. According to party officials interviewed, slogans are critical as they allow the party to distil key thoughts which can in turn easily capture the attention of voters.

The MSM has a centralised campaign committee that develops a general plan of action for a national campaign. In addition, there are 20 sub-campaign committees that deal with constituency-specific matters. During the campaign, the sub-committees meet on a daily basis providing and sharing details of the campaign trail. In addition to these daily campaign briefs, there are also weekly meetings at which the centralised campaign committee takes stock of constituency level progress.

The LP also has a centralised committee that coordinates all matters pertaining to campaign strategy. However, the bulk of the work is done at the level of the different CLPs, such as keeping the electoral lists up to date and mobilising people in general. At national level, the party engages in assessing the elements that constitute positive and negative campaigning as well as the marketing of pre-electoral discourses.

#### **PARTY OUTREACH PROGRAMMES**

None of the three parties interviewed had a well-entrenched civic or voter education programme. This was essentially due to the fact that such practices do not exist as the individual parties through their grassroots set up, such as the regional and local branches, maintain a sense of proximity and regular contact with their respective electoral bases, which intensifies during an election campaign.

Although the different party officials were conscious of the need to inform and sensitise voters, this need was essentially equated with the fact that those voters would end up voting for them. Their concern is therefore more partisan than based on any perceived need for civic education.

To a certain extent civic and voter education was deemed unnecessary as voter turnout has always been high. However, the notion of civic and voter education is much more than getting people to vote. It is in fact about the quality of democracy that is in place, and such education should enable voters

to better understand the electoral and voting system, thereby enabling them to make more informed decisions. There is certainly need for a more integrated and inclusive approach to civic and voter education in Mauritius. This would involve the Electoral Commission, the different political parties as well as other stakeholders such as the media and certain sections of civil society.

The relationship that the three main parties have with external partners varies depending on who these partners are. In the case of international contacts, all three parties are affiliated to Socialist International. The MMM, MSM and LP have also invested in building the necessary relations with other political parties, such as the Congress Party and Bharatiya Janata Party in India, the Communist Party in China, the African National Congress in South Africa, the UK's Labour and Conservative parties and the Malagasy Party in Madagascar. However, the degree of exchange with these parties remains minimal and essentially equates to members or delegates attending various partner party conferences when officially invited, and at times reciprocating such invitations.

At the national level, political parties maintain a relationship with each other if they are officially part of a coalition or about to enter into such a mode of cooperation. The MMM and MSM form the present coalition government and have officially announced their intention of presenting themselves as the MMM/MSM coalition party. As for the LP, it, together with five other smaller parties (*Mouvement Republican* [MR], MMSM, *Les Verts*, *Mouvement Socialiste Democrate* [MSD] and *Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval* [PMXD]) constitutes the *L'Alliance Sociale*. It is important to stress that although a certain party may be in an official coalition with another party, it is essentially the responsibility of each individual party to attend to and where necessary deal with its own internal party matters. Common platforms exist at press conferences, public meetings, and during the development of a common electoral manifesto or campaign strategy.

The relationship of political parties with the Electoral Commission and its ancillary bodies, namely the ESC and EBC, exists only at election time. As mentioned earlier it is mandatory for all political parties and independent candidates to register officially with the ESC prior to polling day and,

accordingly, they have to abide by all the rules and regulations that this commission issues. In fact, discussions have been initiated towards extending the official relationship beyond election times, thus allowing for a much more entrenched and involved exchange between the commission and the different political parties.

The three main parties interviewed have no formal relations with civil society organisations (CSOs) or any other organisations for that matter, such as business, trade unions or religious bodies. The absence of any formal relationship, however, does not act as a barrier for these three parties to maintain what an MMM party representative defined as ‘cordial and good ties’. ‘Ad hoc and informal relationships’ were terms used by an MSM representative, while an LP representative termed the relationship as ‘lending an ear to all stakeholders’. It is important to note that behind the discourse of being attentive to all relevant stakeholders, the MMM, MSM and LP have cultivated a ‘special relationship’ with certain ethno-religious bodies and organisations in Mauritius. In fact, this relationship seems to intensify as general elections approach, when some ethno-religious bodies decide to officially endorse a given political party.

### **GENDER EQUALITY**

Mauritius is signatory to two important protocols that aim to improve the representation of women in parliament, namely the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. Despite this, Mauritius continues to have one of the lowest levels of women’s representation in parliament among the various SADC countries at 5.7%.<sup>24</sup> The ‘invisibility’ of women in politics – and by extension in parliament – is highlighted by the Sachs Commission Report that describes this state of affairs as ‘a grave democratic deficit’, and goes to the extent of ‘blaming’ the present electoral system, which ‘will never do justice to the true role of women in society and will never enhance the empowerment of women’.<sup>25</sup>

Civil society groups, particularly those comprising women, have over the past few years started engaging in different kinds of advocacy work; however, much more still needs to be done. Mauritius has been adept in its politics of recognition but this has not addressed the question of women. The issue is

not simply a numerical one (politics of presence) but also one focused on societal transformation (politics of ideas) that uplifts the human condition. Increasing numbers of politicians as well as ordinary citizens recognise the validity and pertinence of more women in parliament, however, different forms of resistance exist in certain quarters.

The three political parties interviewed were conscious of the need to promote gender equality within their respective parties. In fact, all three parties have well structured and working women's wings which usually generate their own funds through different fundraising mechanisms. The female representatives of the three parties made mention of the level of autonomy that their respective women's wings have when it comes to dealing with gender-related matters; however, they expressed concern that they have minimal impact when it comes to other party matters, which essentially remain male dominated.

The only party that has instituted an internal party quota is the LP. The party's constitution has recently been amended to ensure that one-third of CLP representatives are women, and this is a guideline that the party has agreed upon. In the case of the MMM, mention was made of the fact that two members of its women's wing are ex-officio members of the party's national executive body. It is interesting to note, however, that the party's constitution stipulates that at least 20% of candidates nominated for legislative and municipal elections must be women – a percentage the party has never attained. As for the MSM, the party actively encourages women to form part of the regional and local branches, which allows them to integrate into the party structure and ultimately gravitate to higher levels of responsibility within the party.

#### **PARTY FUNDING**

The funding of political parties is an issue that has attracted a lot of attention. Unfortunately, not much has come out of it as access to funds and the amount that is actually spent during an electoral campaign remains largely unregulated, since the Electoral Commission has a limited role when it comes to scrutinising the expenditures of the various political parties.

Mention was made earlier of the Select Committee on the Funding of Political Parties Report that was released in October 2004. However, to date there is

no real consensus on what type of financing model (state funding or common public/private sector funding) to adopt, and the country once again faced a general election without any mechanism in place to ensure a minimal level playing field for most parties and their candidates when it comes to access to funds.

All three parties interviewed were rather evasive when it came to discussing funding matters. The treasurers of the three parties were not willing to disclose any amount pertaining to the various expenditures incurred by their respective parties. When the researchers insisted on getting even a rough estimate, they were told that only the party leader could disclose such information. According to the three party treasurers, the following items represent the main expenditures of their respective parties: publicity; salaries; transportation; and national and regional meetings. However, in an election year the overriding expense was on a party's election campaign. When the three parties were quizzed on the amount of money that was spent during an election, the party representatives said that their respective parties abided by what was prescribed by the law.

None of the three parties required any sum of money from candidates to secure their candidacy; however, once candidates were offered seats they must be ready to dig deep into their pockets to finance certain aspects of their campaigns. Concerning the management and distribution of funds for campaign purposes, each of the three parties has specific methods. In the case of the MMM, the onus is on the officially designated campaign manager, while in the MSM a number of items are centrally financed by the party and the rest is self-financed by each constituency. As for the LP, every aspect of campaign financing and distribution remains in the hands of the party leader.

The three political parties interviewed were equally silent when asked about their main sources of income. In fact, representatives of the political parties interviewed used the term 'well wishers' to describe those individuals or corporate bodies that donated money to their respective parties. As expected, the party representatives were unwilling to disclose the names of these well wishers or the amounts donated. It is interesting to note that none of the three parties has any fundraising strategies as they rely to a great extent on donations, especially for their election campaigns. Concerning assets held

by the different parties, the MSM made mention of a building (the Sun Trust), while the MMM said it owns a party newspaper.

### **INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY**

All three parties have well-entrenched structures that are supposed to promote a top-down as well as a bottom-up management approach. However, the important question is to what extent these structures are as open, inclusive and functional as they are made out to be. The research findings indicate that party discipline greatly restricts members, especially MPs, from playing their role fully. The pervasive culture of 'toeing the party line' impedes the democratic process within parties and is reflective of the quasi 'dominance' of the party leader, who decides on the selection and nomination of candidates, controls the purse and has vetoing power on certain important party matters.

Previous sections in this report have already dealt with some of the specific aspects relating to intra-party democracy – party leadership, election and selection within parties, gender equality and party funding. No doubt, these aspects possess both strengths and weaknesses and it is up to the different parties to ensure that their structures are functional and relevant to their respective members.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The findings of the study reveal that democracy is at work in Mauritius but that there are some major challenges. These relate to improving gender representation in parliament and electoral reform, such that parties with a high level of votes are not left out, as is often the case under the present electoral system. The first challenge is therefore to address these important democratic deficits.

Another challenge that persists is the question of funding of political parties. Openings have been made by the Select Committee on Political Party Funding, which was chaired by the attorney general and the director of the Joint Economic Council. The latter proposed that the business community as a whole should record all funding provided to political parties in company financial records.

A further challenge is the fight against ethno-religious based politics that exists in Mauritius. The Representation of the People Act (1958) and the best loser system are in many ways perpetuating ethno-religious political formations in the country. The Representation of the People Act demands that candidates standing for election declare the community to which they belong. But Mauritian unity and a sense of 'Mauritianness' can only be achieved and truly celebrated if the country succeeds in de-ethnicising and de-racialising the act. It should be noted, however, that the Representation of the People Act is gender blind and it is therefore important that the gender dimension be taken into consideration.

The existence of a well-defined constitution is no doubt an asset to the country and offers multiple opportunities to develop people-friendly legislation. However, the broad contours of the existing constitution can be worked on to allow for the emanation of specific electoral laws that would in turn facilitate and consolidate Mauritian democracy. The development of specific electoral laws can also help reduce the piecemeal approach often required when looking for relevant legislation and information regarding parliamentary and political democracy issues.

The rapidly changing media landscape offers an excellent opportunity for party representatives to share information and to enter into dialogue and debate with the population at large on key national issues. Prior to liberalisation, the Mauritian broadcast media was skewed and tilted towards propaganda, and in many ways consolidated the politics of incumbency. But liberalisation of the airwaves has allowed for a multiplicity of voices, and this has helped to support alternative discourses and visions of the political parties, the role of political actors as well as other relevant stakeholders – hence contributing to the deepening of democracy. There seems to be a growing consciousness of the abuse that incumbents make of the various state apparatus, in particular the public broadcast media. The emerging sense of embarrassment in certain quarters may help to mitigate such a problem.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the researchers' conclusions and offers recommendations for improving the functioning and effectiveness of political parties.

- ❑ It is evident that internal party democracy is one of the major challenges for Mauritian democracy. It is therefore imperative that political parties strive towards improving their intra-party democratic structures and procedures.
- ❑ Relationships between parties and society remain problematic despite Mauritius's world-acclaimed stable liberal democracy. It is therefore strongly recommended that political parties engage in systematic and well-coordinated civic and voter education programmes both during and between elections.
- ❑ Funding of political parties remains a thorny issue. It is incontrovertible that without resources, political parties are bound to be ineffective. Mauritius is yet to find the right formula for the regulation of funding to political parties following the 2004 report of the select committee of parliament on this issue. Such a framework will have to state clear procedures and regulations regarding both public and private funding to political parties.
- ❑ A code of conduct for political parties needs to be developed in order to regulate not only inter-party relations, but also to deal with the abusive language and violence that tends to mark election campaigning.
- ❑ Specific legislations should be worked out to prevent the ease with which floor crossing takes place and which in the process weakens those parties in parliament.
- ❑ Parties should ensure that their efforts towards building internal democracy include a firm commitment from both top leadership and rank-and-file members to gender equality.

**NOTES**

- 1 Linz J & Stepan A, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996.
- 2 Electoral Commission Database, Mauritius: Electoral Office, 2005.
- 3 Constitution of Mauritius, First Schedule, section 2.
- 4 Linz & Stepan, op cit.
- 5 See, for example, Bowman LW, *Mauritius - Democracy and Development in the Indian Ocean*. San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991; Brautigam D, Institutions, economic reform and democratic consolidation in Mauritius, *Comparative Politics* 30(1), 1997, pp 45-62; Carroll BW & Caroll T, The consolidation of democracy in Mauritius, *Democratization* 6(1), 1999, pp 179-97; Dahoo MA, Mauritius, in Lodge T, Kadima D & Pottie D (eds), *Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: EISA, 2002; Mathur H, *Parliament in Mauritius*. Mauritius: Editions de L'Ocean Indien, 1991; and Srebrnik H, Full of sound and fury: Three decades of parliamentary politics in Mauritius, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28(2), 2002, pp 277-89.
- 6 *Foresight and Competitiveness Report*, Mauritius: National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, 2004.
- 7 Central Statistics Office, Mauritius, 2004.
- 8 The criteria concerning qualification are further detailed in the Constitution of Mauritius (section 33), where the nominated candidate should be, among other things, a Commonwealth citizen of not less than 18 years old, has resided in Mauritius for a period amounting to not less than two years before the date of his/her nomination and is able to speak and read the English language with a degree of proficiency that enables him/her to participate in parliamentary debates.
- 9 The Constitution of Mauritius, First Schedule, section 3(4) recognises the following communities: Hindu, Muslim, Sino-Mauritian and General Population.
- 10 The 2005 elections will be interesting as it will be first time that private commercial radio stations will be operational during a general election. However, the necessary caution must be exercised to ensure a level playing field for all parties and candidates.
- 11 Representation of the People Act, 1958. Mauritius: Government Printers.
- 12 Select Committee on Funding of Political Parties Report, October 2004, p 12.
- 13 Polls open at 6 am and close at 6 pm.
- 14 In 2004 and 2005, Mauritius was invited to observe elections in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
- 15 Sachs A, Tandon BB & Ahnee R, *Report of the Commission on Constitutional and Electoral Reform 2001/02*, 2002, para 33.
- 16 Ibid, para 37.
- 17 Electoral Commission Database, 2005.
- 18 Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius, section 58 (1).
- 19 Ibid, section 6(1).
- 20 Ibid, section 73.
- 21 This committee sets the procedures to be adopted for the carrying out of the functions of parliament during its mandate.

- 22 The main function of this committee is to screen and scrutinise the director of audit's report that is tabled to the National Assembly.
- 23 The MMM was one of the first political parties to officially institute well-defined party structures.
- 24 *Women in Parliaments Database*, Inter Parliamentary Union Database, 2005.
- 25 Sachs et al, op cit.

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

## **APPENDIX 1: COUNTRY CONTEXT QUESTIONNAIRE**

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

### **BASIC MEDIA STRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

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

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

## **APPENDIX 2: EXTERNAL REGULATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **LEGISLATION GOVERNING POLITICAL PARTIES**

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

### **INTERNAL PARTY FUNCTIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### ELECTION CAMPAIGNS AND OBSERVATION

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

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

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

#### **FOUNDING OF PARTY**

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

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

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

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

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

#### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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

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

#### Policy development – additional comments

#### MEMBERSHIP

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

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

#### Membership – additional comments

#### ELECTORAL ACTIVITY – CANDIDATES

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

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

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

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

#### Electoral activities – candidates – additional comments

#### ELECTORAL ACTIVITY – CAMPAIGNS

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

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

Electoral activities – campaigns – additional comments

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE PARTY

### International contacts

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

### National contacts

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

External relations of the party – additional comments

## FUNDING

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

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

#### Funding – additional comments

#### QUESTIONS FOR ALL INTERVIEWEES

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

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

**S/election of candidate**

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

**Additional comments**

## ABOUT EISA



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

### **VISION**

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

### **MISSION**

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

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## **VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

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

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

## **OBJECTIVES**

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

## **CORE ACTIVITIES**

- Research
- Conferences, seminars and workshops
- Publishing

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

## **PROGRAMMES**

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

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

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

### **ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES**

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

### **BALLOTING AND ELECTORAL SERVICES**

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

**EISA'S SPECIAL PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

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

**EISA'S SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE:**

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

**EISA PRODUCTS**

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

## ABOUT IDEA



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

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

IDEA has an African Office based in South Africa:

International IDEA Africa  
Beeld Park Building  
1166 Schoeman Street  
Hatfield, 0001  
Pretoria  
South Africa

Postal Address:  
Suite 55, Private Bag X1  
Menlo Park, 0102 Pretoria  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 12 342 6988  
Fax: +27 12 342 6989

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