The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative *in Libya*

"Benghazi did not represent the millions of Libyan people who want peace and deplore violence… And on their own initiative, the people of Benghazi overran extremist bases and insisted that militias disarm and accept the rule of law… Now we're encouraging civil society to be fully engaged in drafting a new constitution that will protect the equal rights of all Libyan citizens."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton – October 12, 2012

The United States is supporting Libya as it moves forward in its challenging transition to democracy. The Libyan people faced great difficulty in their revolution for a democratic future with peace, security and prosperity. The United States looks to all Libyans to achieve their aspirations peacefully and to recognize the importance of establishing institutions for ensuring stability during this time.

MEPI promotes the development of a sustainable civil society in Libya, encourages civic participation, and facilitates constructive dialogue between the Libyan government and Libyan civil society. MEPI provides opportunities for civil society organizations to develop their capacities to address issues in their communities and organize advocacy initiatives, as they lead their country through historic changes. MEPI is also working to shore up Libya's legal system; support citizen engagement in the political process; and enhance economic opportunities. Since the revolution, MEPI has provided more than $16 million in support of Libya's democratic transition.

SUPPORTING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES

MEPI is committed to helping Libyans develop a participatory and inclusive system for democratic governance. MEPI works with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) to provide technical assistance to political parties in support of a competitive, inclusive and multi-partisan environment. MEPI is also working to make sure women's voices are heard during the political transition. Ahead of the July 2012 General National Congress elections, NDI organized training academies for 75 women candidates and campaign managers in Tripoli and Benghazi.

MEPI also works with the International Republican Institute (IRI) to provide women seeking office with regional models of good governance, coalition building and advocacy skills. The program also trains women who are leaders in their communities to advocate for gender equality.

MEPI is providing assistance to networks of Libyan women and youth to conduct nationwide, nonpartisan election monitoring efforts that support credible and transparent elections. In the July 2012 elections, NDI helped train and deploy 3,600 accredited elections monitors across Libya's 13 electoral districts.

In recognition of the vital role that media plays in helping the Libyan public understand and participate in the transition process, MEPI is partnering with The Institute for War

and Peace Reporting to provide in-house technical assistance to a range of print, broadcast and radio media. To date, MEPI has supported hands-on, personalized mentoring to eight media outlets and over 75 journalists across Libya.

EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY

Through the Community Driven Grants Program, MEPI promotes civic engagement via small community development projects focused on increasing the capacity of emerging civil society groups. Through this program, Creative Associates International (Creative) provides tailored technical assistance, microgrants and organizational consulting services to these groups, which bolster voices of underrepresented citizens. This project supports 40 civil society organizations through targeted technical assistance and designed projects to improve their capacities in financial management, strategic planning, project management, human resource management, community engagement, and government relations. Additionally, through a public-private partnership with Microsoft Corporation, MEPI is providing $300,000 in training and licensed software to all CDGP partners.

Creative is also working with local civil society organizations to build to support their efforts to become sustainable providers of civic education through the Voter Ownership and Increasing Civic Engagement (VOICE) project. VOICE is increasing citizen oversight of the political process by educating voters developing messages that resonate with youth and women.

MEPI also works with Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG) to advise Libyan civil society organizations (CSOs) that are advocating for a fully participatory electoral system focused on civil and political rights for women, youth, and underrepresented voices. PILPG trains local partners with specific policy-focused drafting skills to advocate for a seat at the table with policy makers and electoral officials during the constitutional design process.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND STABILITY

MEPI's work in Libya is contributing to Libyans' efforts to reform their trade and investment framework as a precursor to enhanced economic growth. Implemented in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program, MEPI is providing technical assistance to Libyan trade agreement negotiators on model trade agreements, international trade and bilateral agreements to improve legislative and regulatory environments to do business.

MEPI is also increasing access to the internet across Libya by working in a public-private partnership with Microsoft. The Internet for All project establishes free public wireless hotspots in rural and marginalized areas.

STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW

As Libya transitions toward democracy, ensuring the protection of citizens' rights is paramount. MEPI is working through the American Bar Association to support legal reform through Libyan bar association and CSO collaboration. The program seeks to reform election law and transition-related rule of law, and equips bar associations to be sustainable providers of rule-of-law-focused civic education. Trainings are offered throughout the country, reaching hundreds of Libyan lawyers and civil society members.

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