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PRESS RELEASE

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USAID Launches New Support to Political Parties

Three year activity will help elected officials become more responsive to citizens



L-R: Hon Kawuwa Damina, Speaker of the Bauchi State House of Assembly; Erin Holleran, USAID Deputy Mission Director; W Stuart Symington, US Ambassador to Nigeria; Daniel Twining, President of International Republican Institute.

Abuja – On February 13, U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria W. Stuart Symington joined more than 40 prominent Nigerian politicians and International Republican Institute (IRI) President, Daniel Twining to launch a new activity supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help political parties adopt better governance practices and improve the quality of political discourse.

Implemented for USAID by IRI and Search for Common Ground, the three-year, \$5.5 million Responsive Political Party Program (RPPP) will help the major national political parties in Nigeria improve responsiveness to their constituents. It will also contribute to creating peaceful participation ahead of the upcoming elections.

“If you seek to be followed . . . tell the story not only of what is wrong, but what you would do right for the future,” Ambassador Symington told the assembled politicians. “And the greatest ‘right’ you can do is to inspire your members to come together and make Nigeria better.”

The activity promises to help parties contesting the upcoming elections to become more representative of the citizenry, and improve the oversight of government programs. It also aims to increase the frequency and intensity of political party interactions with their constituents, improve communication among party officials, candidates, and officeholders at all levels, and boost the participation of marginalized groups in political processes and within the parties themselves.

The RPPP will also help spread the message of peace and non-violence through the electoral process, determine early warning signs of electoral violence, and formulate strategies to mitigate potential violence through conflict assessment in conjunction with political parties and civil society organizations.

“Working with [IRI] on this project, our parties will be stronger and more efficient, vibrant and responsive to the yearnings of Nigerians,” Deputy Senate President Ike Ekeremadu remarked. “I assure you of the cooperation of the National Assembly towards the actualization of this noble initiative.”

About USAID: USAID partners to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. In its partnership with Nigeria, the United States strengthens social stability through social services, supports transparent and accountable governance, promotes a more market led economy, and enhances Nigeria’s capacity as a responsible regional and trade partner. For more information about USAID and its programs, please visit www.usaid.gov

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