Sudan Program Summary
The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January of 2005 to end a decades-long civil war between northern and southern Sudan, ushered in a period of great opportunity for the country. IRI provides training and technical assistance to those individuals, political parties, and government institutions that continue to work toward a viable peace for the Sudanese people and help meet the needs of those who were previously excluded from open political participation. Understanding the need for legitimate and democratic institutions at all levels of government, IRI programs support participants at the national, regional, and local levels. IRI has worked in Sudan since 2002, and is currently supported by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development.

Political Party Development
In Sudan, IRI works with the Southern majority political party, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, and seven opposition parties (Sudan African National Union, United Democratic Front, South Sudan Democratic Forum, United Sudan African Parties, Union of Sudan African Parties, United Democratic Salvation Front and United Democratic Salvation Front-Mainstream) to support the development of legitimate and accountable political parties and to improve their organizational capacity. In Northern Sudan, IRI works with parties through the Political Party Affairs Council.

A focus of IRI’s political party development program is strategic planning training, through which parties are able to identify priorities, address weaknesses and create action plans for the pre-election period. IRI also provides training and technical assistance to parties on such topics as grassroots mobilization, membership recruitment, transparent political financing, internal and external communications strategies, and the creation of women’s leagues and youth wings. Further, IRI’s programming emphasizes the importance of internal democracy, and encourages the election of party leadership and candidates.

Campaigns and Elections
National elections in Sudan are currently scheduled for 2010, the first such elections in more than 20 years. IRI works with political parties to provide the skills necessary to effectively compete.

Through regular campaign schools at the national and state levels, IRI trains parties and candidates on topics such as candidate selection, volunteer mobilization, message development, grassroots campaigning, fundraising, campaign management, media relations, voter targeting and voter turnout. Further, IRI will provide party agent training to ensure that political parties have the capacity to identify election fraud at polling stations.

Involving women and other marginalized groups in the political process is essential for a strong democratic system. Understanding this, IRI conducts training with aspiring women candidates to educate them on Sudan’s 25 percent quota system, improve public speaking skills, and provide strategies for being represented on the party candidate list. In its work with party youth wings, IRI emphasizes the importance of youth in party politics, specifically with regards to grassroots campaign efforts. In the lead up to national elections, IRI will coordinate town hall meetings and candidate forums so as to enable candidates to speak directly to constituents.

Governance
After the signing of the CPA, representatives of Southern political parties were faced with the daunting task of entering government with virtually no legislative or executive experience. IRI works with the semi-autonomous
Government of South Sudan (GOSS), the South Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) and state legislatures to increase their capacity to govern effectively.

In the fall of 2005, IRI began working with the SSLA to promote good governance and strengthen party leadership in the nascent assembly. Through party caucus trainings, IRI provides SPLM with the skills necessary to serve as a successful majority party while also working with minority parties on mounting an effective opposition and conducting oversight of the executive branch. In addition to its work with party caucuses, IRI partners with the SSLA Women’s Forum to support women parliamentarians in developing skills and confidence in their roles as legislators and representatives of the broad constituency of women.

A fundamental component of good governance is communicating accomplishments to constituents. IRI provides messaging and communications training to members of the SSLA and GOSS ministers to achieve this. With national elections on the horizon, IRI is working with these same individuals to use legislative and government accomplishments to their advantage in reelection campaigns.

Finally, IRI works with parliamentary committees to increase their oversight role and strengthen their capacity to consider legislation, engage in democratic governance and deter corrupt practices.