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## ***Newsletter: October 2017***

# **UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) to the Federal Republic of Somalia**

### ***Highlights***

- The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) commenced in October the temporary registration of political parties. The first political associations started to submit the required documentation in anticipation of formal registration at a later stage once voters are registered.
- The NIEC led a voter registration feasibility study, supported by the UN, which enabled discussions between key stakeholders in the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), as well as civil society, to explore potential methodologies for voter registration with a view to universal elections in 2020.
- On 4 October, the UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) organized a Board Meeting together with the NIEC and the electoral law working group of the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR), to discuss the Joint Programme for 2018, and the electoral building blocks for support next year to the preparations of Somalia's first universal elections since 1969.

### ***IESG support to NIEC during the reporting period.***

#### **a. Voter Registration Feasibility Study**

In October, supported by the UN Joint Programme for Electoral Support and the US funded BUILD project with Creative Associates, the NIEC concluded its interactions with key national and subnational stakeholders of a feasibility study examining all aspects related to the introduction of a voter registration system for Somalia in preparation of universal elections. A final report is expected to be finalized and expected in the following reporting period. The study assessed the feasibility of different voter registration options and methodologies in the specific context of Somalia, where there has not been any nationwide registration of people in decades.

The team sought input and guidance from key government partners of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), as well as different stakeholders including civil society. The study is to inform the NIEC of the voter registration methodology to be decided and accepted by all key stakeholders in 2018, for actual voter registration to commence in 2019 according to the NIEC strategic plan. Preliminary feedback from various stakeholders relate to the issues of accessibility (including security),

the wider electoral legal framework, and the need of a political agreement on crucial constitutional issues. The citizenship law will be an important piece of legislation to define eligible voters. Other issues raised relate to the IDPs, nomadic population and the unknown size of the total population.

#### **b. Consultations on electoral systems**

On 19 October, IESG held a technical workshop for a federal-level electoral task force to review electoral systems with a focus on systems best suited to post-conflict environments. Key participants of the Electoral Task Force include the NIEC, representatives and advisors from MoIFAR, of the President's Office, of the office of the Prime Minister, and of the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs. Different alternative systems based upon proportional representation were discussed. Specific options further elaborated by MoIFAR are envisaged to be discussed with leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States.

#### **c. NIEC's launch of the temporary Political Party Registration**

In October, the NIEC started to register political parties. After decades of conflict resulting into a defragmented country, Somalia does not have formal nationwide political parties. In this month, already five political associations have submitted their registration documents. In line with the political party law adopted in 2016, political parties are first registered temporarily, in anticipation of official registration at a later stage once supporting voters are registered across different regions.

#### **d. NIEC Management Implementation Workshop**

From 1 to 10 October, the NIEC held a 10-days capacity development workshop organizational management. The workshop, co-facilitated by the former Chair of the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) as part of south-south cooperation, helped the NIEC to streamline its organizational planning and strengthen its internal processes and operations in line with the implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan.



The workshop was organized by the USAID-BUILD project and was given input and support from the Joint Programme of Electoral Support.



### ***Upcoming Activities***

- Finalization of the voter registration feasibility study
- Ongoing advisory support to the electoral law working group on electoral systems
- Finalization of the 2018 UN Electoral Support joint programme, including resource mobilization and budget prioritization with the NIEC
- Preparation for the conduct by the NIEC of by-elections