

NEWS LETTER

July 2018

Support to Universal Suffrage Elections
in the Federal Republic of Somalia

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

IESG - Monthly News Updates

Joint Planning Retreat within Inclusive Politics Cluster

On 4-8 July, the Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), Ms. Halima Ibrahim, attended a joint planning retreat which took place in Mogadishu to follow-up on the decisions taken at the National Security Council (NSC) in Baidoa in June. The joint retreat, supported by UNDP, was organized by the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (MoCA) and the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR), and facilitated by the Federalisation Negotiation Technical Committee (FNTC). The retreat was opened by Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire and UN Deputy SRSG Peter de Clercq. The event brought together more than 70 participants from MoCA, MoIFAR, the Prime Minister's Office (OPM), the NIEC, different federal ministries such as Women Affairs and Justice, the Chief Justice, ministries from the Federal Member States (FMS), UNDP,

UNSON, CDI, Forum of Federations, the World Bank and civil society. The purpose of the technical retreat was to discuss the legislative and constitutional implications of the political agreements recently reached in Baidoa by the NSC, which comprises the country's Federal and State Leaders; on the electoral model and resource-sharing agreements; but also more broadly concerning priorities, concerns, options, and alignment of tasks between the key players within the inclusive politics cluster, especially in view of the next NSC. During the retreat the panel discussed the key outstanding issues to address the development of the electoral law and related constitutional implications, such as the size of the electoral constituency, the notion of a balanced seat distribution, and the elections modality of the Upper House.

Highlights (July 2018)

- ◆ 4-8 July: Joint Planning Retreat within Inclusive Politics Cluster;
- ◆ 7-8 July: MOIFAR Media Engagement Workshop on the draft Electoral Law;
- ◆ 9-11 July: NIEC Institutional Governance Retreat;
- ◆ 16-17 July: Somalia Partnership Forum, Brussels;
- ◆ 23 July: GIS training for new NIEC staff;
- ◆ 25-26 July: NIEC Voter Education Curriculum Workshop for CSOs and relevant ministries from the FMS;
- ◆ 29-30 July: NIEC Voter Education Curriculum Workshop for Political Parties and Alliances;
- ◆ 29 July: By-Elections orientation training for NIEC Secretariat.



Picture 1: Chairperson NIEC in a panel discussion on Elections 2020 - Joint Retreat, Mogadishu, 4-8 July, 2018 (Photo credit: NIEC)

Somalia Partnership Forum, Brussels

On 16 and 17 July, the European Union, Sweden and UN, together with the Federal Government of Somalia, hosted the Somalia Partnership Forum (SPF) in Brussels. The event aimed to inform international partners on commitments and progress, and encourage the international community to continue support for Somalia's efforts to build a

timelines to hold multi-party universal suffrage elections by 2020 when the term of the Federal Parliament expires. The Chair urged all stakeholders to fulfill their responsibilities to ensure the agreement is turned into reality, highlighting women's representation as a critical factor for the development of an inclusive, responsive, and transparent democracy.

agreement between the FGS and FMS which paves the way for the drafting, consultation and passage of the election law in 2018. This will be a major step towards the realization of a historic one-person-one-vote elections in 2020 for the first time since 1969.

- ◆ Calling on the Executive and Legislative branches of the current Government to deliver legislation that paves the way for holding historic multiparty universal elections by 2020.
- ◆ Supporting the FGS and Parliament's efforts to work closely together in ensuring the successful implementation of the political transformation based on political parties, including through alignment of relevant articles in the FMS constitutions with the Federal Constitution.
- ◆ Urging all partners and the FGS to ensure that resources for the electoral processes, at Federal and FMS levels, are mobilized in a timely manner and are commensurate with the agreement of key political benchmarks necessary to ensure an inclusive, free, fair and credible process in 2020. We call on the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) to present a clear plan for elections, including voter registration.



Picture 2: Dignitaries from Somalia attending Somalia Partnership Forum, Brussels, 16 July, 2018 (Photo credit: NIEC)

more secure and prosperous future following years of conflict. The conference brought together representatives from 58 countries, 6 international organizations, delegates from the Somali Federal Government (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS). The meeting was opened by H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo', the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

The Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) was a keynote speaker on Inclusive Politics at the Forum, underscoring the NIEC's determination to adhere to the constitutional framework and subsequent

The meeting was held in the context of recent positive and historic developments in Somalia, and enhanced engagement between the leaders of the region; creating new opportunities for reconciliation, stability, regional cooperation and economic integration. This new momentum should be seized by all Somali actors and calls for all in the international community to cooperate towards that end.

The Forum concluded with a joint communique by Somali leaders, international partners and donors, and highlighted key points linked to universal elections, 2020 in Somalia:

- ◆ Welcoming the landmark political



Picture 3: Chairperson NIEC attending Somalia Partnership Forum, Brussels, 16 July, 2018 (Photo credit: NIEC)

GIS Training

The NIEC is preparing for a pilot test later in 2018 to identify through a field exercise potential voter registration centres supported by Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data. The exercise will build on the identification of voter catchment areas, at this stage still only mapped out by satellite images and other data without any field verification. The allocation of voter catchment areas will facilitate the establishment of 3,000 to 4,000 potential voter registration centres and future polling centres across the country. In preparation for the test run to map out potential registration centres, NIEC's GIS technicians are being trained by IESG.

NIEC Voter Education Curriculum Workshop for CSOs and Political Parties

From 25 to 30 July, the NIEC organized workshops with national political entities as well as ministries and CSOs from the Federal Member States to seek input on the development of a voter education curriculum in preparation for universal elections in 2020.



Picture 4: Deputy Prime Minister giving the opening remarks during NIEC Voter Education Workshop, Mogadishu, 29 July, 2018 (Photo credit: NIEC)

25-27 July: Voter Education Curriculum Workshop for CSOs: 28 participants including 8 women attended the workshop. In his opening remarks the Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, Mr. Cabdi Maxamed Sabriya, thanked the NIEC for organizing important consultations with CSOs representatives from different FMS across the country. He stressed that the level of elections-related awareness is very low in the country, thus intensive awareness raising on electoral processes is very necessary to educate the public on the importance and advantages of one-person, one-vote elections.

By-Elections Orientation Training for NIEC Secretariat

On 29 July, a by-elections orientation workshop was conducted in Mogadishu for NIEC secretariat staff with a particular focus on newly appointed staff, such as the Electoral Planning Manager, Manager of Voter Registration, Logistics Electoral Manager, Manager of Electoral Training and Assistant to the Secretary General.

The working session introduced participants to fundamental principles of electoral administration of transparency, integrity, professionalism and accountability which are essential to a credible electoral process. The purpose

of the session was to assist staff to prepare for three upcoming by-elections which will be held in South West (Baidoa) and Galmudug (Dhusamareb).

The simulated polling and counting process helped participants to familiarize themselves with the operations involved including polling and counting procedures for the by-elections. The newly recruited NIEC Manager for Voter Registration acknowledged that the team has learned a lot from the workshop saying "Before the training I had no idea about polling and counting, through

orientation I learnt about polling and counting process, and now I can play an important role in the upcoming by-elections."



Picture 5: Two NIEC staff attending by-elections orientation training, Mogadishu, 29 July, 2018 (Photo credit: NIEC)

29-30 July: Voter Education Curriculum Workshop for Political Parties: 90 participants including 20 women, from 19 registered political parties and 13 political associations participated in the workshop. The workshop provided an opportunity for political parties and political associations to foster networking and share knowledge for the development of a voter education curriculum with the aim of providing parties with guidance on developing strategies to reach out to citizens. The NIEC highlighted that the political parties and political associations have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the voter education curriculum that will help them to develop strategies for their party's awareness raising campaigns.

The deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Mahdi Ahmed, stated that the public and political willingness to move beyond the clan based political system by adopting a multi-party system will give all Somalis the chance to participate equally in elections. He informed that his government and the FMS agreed in Brussels to embrace the new multiparty system that will lead to free and fair elections in 2020. He also acknowledged the NIEC for the great work the institution is doing to consult with different stakeholders and engage them in the early stages of the preparations, all phases of their activities.

The NIEC outlined its mission and key achievements including the five-year strategic plan and organogram. The workshops featured group work, presentations, discussions, questions and answer sessions.

NIEC Institutional Governance Retreat, Nairobi

To deliver its constitutional mandate of conducting the next federal elections, the NIEC had developed last year its five-year strategic plan: 2017-2021, and one of the key objectives is to strengthen its institutional capacity for programme delivery. As part of institutional strengthening, the NIEC identified corporate governance as an imperative.

With the support of the Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG), the NIEC held the first of a series of planned retreats to strengthen its internal governance mechanism in Nairobi from 9 to 11 July. The objectives of the retreat was to build the capacity of the NIEC Commissioners in corporate governance, integrate corporate governance principles into

the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Commission and to address existing internal concerns within the Commission as well as to develop a



Picture 6: Participants at NIEC Institutional Governance Retreat, Nairobi, 9 July, 2018 (Photo credit: IESG)

programme of action leading to the development of the NIEC Corporate Governance Framework.

A critical issue highlighted is the need to fill the vacant position of Secretary General to lead the secretariat. , On effective governance the Commissioners were taken through

their roles and responsibilities, which included: leadership, strategy, policy and oversight. The outcome of the retreat was the realization by the

Commissioners of the need to enhance ethical conduct in the Commission by focusing on transparency, accountability and good governance.

In the following months with the help of IESG, the Commission will finalize the renewed Plan of Action on the

selected priorities of the corporate governance principles, develop and establish a comprehensive Corporate Governance Framework, and mount a Mid-Term review of its Strategic Plan.

Media Engagement and Sensitization on the Draft Electoral Law Workshop

On 7 and 8 July, a two-day workshop was held for Media representatives on the Draft Electoral Law organized by MoIFAR in Mogadishu, supported by IESG. 36 journalists from both print and electronic media houses across Somalia attended the workshop. During the two-day workshop, journalists were informed on a broad range of issues through presentations, panel discussions, plenary meetings, panel discussions and question and answer sessions. Journalists were briefed on the historical background of electoral laws, basic concepts of electoral legal framework, electoral systems, electoral

constituencies and the electoral cycle and introduced to the Somali Lexicon of Electoral Terminology.

Discussions centered around the outline and contents of the legal framework and electoral law. The participants were deliberated on effective methods for disseminating, publicizing and educating the public about the electoral law. A panel discussion on legal issues in electoral reporting and guidelines from the electoral law raised questions about the relationship between media law and electoral law and their implementation in Somalia. Through

group discussions various methods and techniques were introduced to the participants which can be used to educate the public on the electoral law.

IESG has had intensified advisory sessions with MOIFAR's Electoral Law Working Group (ELWG), to assist the Ministry with the finalization of an advanced draft, for further review, discussion with key stakeholders, and presentation to the Council of Ministers, followed by submission to Parliament to ensure timely conclusion before the end of 2018 as committed by the FGS.