

Newsletter: November 2017

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

Highlights

- On 5 November, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) agreed during a high-level political meeting in Mogadishu to “engage and consult jointly on the one-person-one-vote electoral process in Somalia by creating a viable environment for its realization”.
- The FGS further agreed for the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) to “undertake political consultations on the electoral process within 90 days and inform FMS when this process will start”.
- In addition, FGS and FMS call for “the NIEC to be fully supported, to solicit funding for the 2020 elections, and with efforts geared towards local resource mobilizations and thereafter seek International Community’s assistance”.

Political-electoral updates

The Mogadishu Agreement of 5 November instructed the NIEC to prepare a 90-day plan to visit Federal Member States to hold inclusive consultations with stakeholders with a view to the universal elections by end of 2020. This is intended to facilitate political agreement on electoral challenges. The Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) provides technical, logistical and budgetary support to the NIEC for these consultations.

IESG support to NIEC during the reporting period.

a. Polling and counting training to the NIEC



On 14 and 15 November, the NIEC, embarked on a training programme aimed at building capacity of its officers on the by-election procedures. Commissioners demonstrated commitment by actively participating in the two-day workshop with the secretariat understanding the critical oversight role they will play in the by-election processes. Following on the agreed procedures of the 2016 electoral

process, the Secretariat went through all aspects covering registration of candidates, logistical arrangements for movement of material, accreditation of observers, polling and counting procedures. The NIEC Deputy Chairperson, Sayed Ali Sheikh Mohamed, stressed

the importance of following procedures and conducting the process in a professional manner reflecting on the core values of transparency and accountability that the NIEC upholds. Responding to a request from the Parliament in August 2017, The NIEC was requested in August 2017 by the Parliament to conduct the by-elections for vacant seats. To date, the NIEC has been informed officially of three vacant seats for the House of the People: Jubaland, Hirshabelle and for the Somalilanders. The NIEC is ready for the conduct of these by-elections as soon as the Parliament has allocated and provided the requested budget to support the delegates.

b. Drafting process of the Electoral Law – discussions on systems and model

IESG continued to advise the Electoral Task Force (ETF), comprising representatives of MoIFAR, NIEC, President's Office and Prime Minister's Office, and relevant Federal Ministries, on different systems of representation, to support MoIFAR in making its recommendations on electoral options to the Somali leadership. This system of representation is an integral part of the electoral law. After consultations, the draft bill is to be submitted to Parliament for further passage.

On 27 November, assisted by expert on international electoral systems, IESG held a



meeting with technical advisors of the Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Reconciliation (MoIFAR), as well as other members from the federal-level Electoral Task Force (ETF) for further discussion on the electoral systems and constituencies.

The agenda was to help and advise the ETF on the viability of different options and the pros and cons of some electoral models, notably majority systems (first-past-the-post), proportional representation (PR) and mixed systems. The contribution of IESG enhances the technical understanding of counterparts on specific electoral-legal issues and build capacity before formal recommendations are being tabled. This system of representation is an integral part of the electoral law.

From 20 to 22 November 2017, the ETF had a three-day retreat workshop in Kenya, facilitated by Interpeace. The retreat enabled all key partners to have open discussions on the different models in the context of Somalia. Discussions were arranged on the roadmap to draft and complete the Electoral Law in an inclusive and consultative manner, as a key objective for 2018. The participants of the workshop were mainly from Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Reconciliation (MoIFAR), Office of the Prime-Minister's, Office of the



President's, and the Boundary and Federation Commission. IESG1 also attended as invited by Interpeace. The ETF agreed on a roadmap for the development and completion of the electoral law in 2018.

Upcoming Activities

- NIEC political party registration ceremony
- NIEC public launch of the electoral lexicon and strategic plan
- Commencement of the NIEC missions to the Federal Member States for subnational stakeholder engagements
- Finalization of the voter registration feasibility study
- Ongoing advisory support to the electoral law working group on electoral systems
- Preparation for the conduct by the NIEC of by-elections
- IESG Board Meeting on 2018 UN Electoral Support Joint Programme – PWG-1 meeting on Inclusive Politics