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Newsletter: July 2017

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

Highlights

- From 10 to 12 July, the NIEC organized together with the UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) and UNDP RBAS a workshop in Nairobi on political party registration for representatives of other African and Arab electoral management bodies to share expertise and experiences.
- On 22 July, a delegation from the NIEC engaged in Kismayo with representatives of the Federal Member State of Jubaland, including the State President who assured his support to the NIEC in line with its constitutional mandate.
- On 26 July, the NIEC addressed the House of the People responding to a letter from the Parliament containing nine questions on the electoral path for 2021.

1. Political-electoral overview.

a. NIEC's Presentation to Parliament

On 26 July, the NIEC went to the House of the People to present its Quarterly Report. This was the second time NIEC was invited by the Parliament, the last time being July 2016.

The NIEC reported on the progress made, including the development of the 5-year strategic plan (2017-2021), ongoing political consultations with Federal Member States, the opening of the office of the registrar, the appointment of the registrar, the establishment of the political association temporary liaison committee, and the conduct of several capacity building workshops held both in and out of the country.

NIEC Chairperson, Halima Ismail Ibrahim, raised the issue of its allocated budget, referring to the need to conduct electoral operations in the upcoming future, including political party registration) and the difficulty to attract and retain skilled secretariat staff. Deputy Chairperson Mr. Sayed Ali Sheik Mohamed presented a presentation that addressed the nine questions the House had asked the Commission on the necessary preparations for 'one person, one vote' elections by 2021.

Due to the lack of time on the part of the House, the session was halted and the Deputy Chair of the House Mr. Mahad Cawad said that the Parliament will go through all the materials submitted by the NIEC and come up with comments. The NIEC was invited to address the Parliament in a follow-up session on 8 August.

b. NIEC's outreach and engagement to the Federal Member State of Jubaland.



FIGURE 1: Letter from Jubaland State President confirming support to the constitutional mandate of the NIEC.

On 22 July, with logistical support from IESG, in Kismayo, a delegation of the Somali Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) paid a visit to Jubaland and met with the State President Mr. Ahmed Sheikh Mohamed Islaam, different Members of Parliament, and civil society representatives to discuss plans for the 2021 federal elections. The Commission informed the Jubaland stakeholders of the achievements since its establishment, challenges faced, and the importance of cooperation between Jubaland and NIEC. The Commission also shared its five-year work plan, as well as its plans for the registration of the political parties. The Jubaland President offered his support to the Commission to fulfill its constitutional mandate. Confirmed in a letter (attached), he urged the Commissioners to work towards the

reconciliation and healing of the Somali people and to work with integrity and impartiality while upholding the country's electoral law to gain trust of the Somali people.

2. Project activities during the reporting period

a. NIEC Political Parties Registration Workshop with Arab and African Electoral Management Bodies



FIGURE 2: NIEC Political Party Registration Workshop facilitated by IESG and UNDP RBAS. Nairobi, 10-12 July 2017. Photo credit: UNDP

The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) of the Federal Republic of Somalia hosted a three-day workshop from 10-12 July, in Nairobi, Kenya, on Political Party Registration supported by the UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) in partnership with the Arab Electoral Management Bodies Organization (Arab EMB's) and UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States. As a member of the Organization of Arab Electoral

Management Bodies (Arab EMB's), the NIEC invited a panel of presenters who shared their expertise and experiences. Interactions with the NIEC on these issues help to enrich policy decision-making and administrative approaches, aimed at establishing a strong foundation and developing appropriate systems to comply with legislation. Bearing in mind that the Commission is a relatively new statutory body with no prior experience in conducting an electoral process, NIEC members deemed it prudent to learn from other Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) from Africa and Arab States that have implemented the registration of political parties, which falls within responsibilities of NIEC.



Figure 3: NIEC workshop on political party registration with representatives of other African and Arab EMBs. Nairobi, 10-12 July 2017. Photo Credit: UNSOM

b. Polling and Counting Training.



FIGURE 4: NIEC staff trained on polling and counting. Mogadishu, 24 July 2017. Photo credit: NIEC

Continuous staff training and development is necessary to strengthen the institutional capacity of the NIEC. On 23- 26 July 2017, IESG supported the NIEC with the conduct of a polling and counting training session to prepare and train the secretariat staff and enhance their knowledge and understanding of polling and counting procedures, to be able to conduct by-elections and in preparation of general elections. The training as structured for participatory and interactive method. Staff members expressed that *“it was the first time to see ballot papers and ballot boxes. This prompted me to think that I will vote one day on my life and I am waiting that day”*.