DEEPENING DEMOCRACY: ELECTION MANAGEMENT AND STABILITY IN AFRICA’S DIVIDED SOCIETIES


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deepening Democracy: Election Management and Stability in Africa’s Divided Societies

I. Introduction

UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa in partnership with UNDP Kenya Country Office with support from the Africa Policy Institute (API) convened the 6th Maendeleo Policy Forum in Nairobi Kenya on Wednesday December 14, 2016. An initiative of UNDP, the forum brought together African national managers of elections, experts on elections from regional organizations, civil society and academic institutions, think tanks and media, parliamentarians and senior officials of political parties, opinion leaders on African affairs, including elections and security, relevant senior Government officials, representatives of key development partners and activists.

Panelists included the Chairperson of the Ghana Electoral Commission, Ms Charlotte Kessonmith Osei, Kenyan academics, Prof. Peter Kagwanja (President and CEO of the Africa Policy and Leadership Institute (API, Nairobi) and Prof. Karuti Kanyinga (Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya) and Mr. Joram Rukambe (Chief Technical Adviser UNDP Elections Support to Kenya) and was moderated by Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, Regional Cluster Director, Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa. The welcome statement was provided by Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, Kenya while the edition was declared open by Ms. Monica Juma, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Kenya Government.

The forum took place against the backdrop of violent elections in Kenya in 2016, including the relatively divisive elections in Zambia and Gambia as well as the relatively stable and peaceful elections in Ghana, revealing the mixed fortunes of elections in Africa. The forum underscored the role of a credible and efficient electoral management system in guaranteeing democratic stability. In this regard, the policy meeting sought to generate and share lessons and good practices on the management of elections in divided societies to ensure electoral peace and stability. It was also designed to play a conflict prevention role in the light of the upcoming elections in 2017, including Kenya’s general elections, by sharing lessons from past elections.

II. Broad Thematic Areas

The forum’s participants emphasised that even though democracy has steadily gained roots—and elections have increasingly become the norm—across the world, in recent decades it has been stalling or facing serious reversals in Africa. Election-related disputes and tensions are the main causes of instability and violent conflicts in contemporary Africa. It was observed that while
democratic institutions are often too weak to support a culture of democracy, poor management of diversity has become a major source of unhealthy competition, conflict and instability. Moreover, even as elections are promoted as instruments of resolving differences emanating from the diversity of identities and interests, in Africa regular polls have turned into triggers of violent conflict. The problem of poor management of diversity is accentuated by new bouts of extremism and populism now surging across the world and widespread disregard for the rule of law. This mix has made diversity the greatest pitfall and the bane of African democracies. It has also led to the decline in civic citizenship and the preponderant rise of sectarian mobilization, violence and intimidation. In the light of these challenges to African democracy, the forum focused on the following three thematic areas:

- **Peace and stability in Kenya**: The emphasis here was the search for lessons and good practices from the past and from across Africa to underpin effective management of elections and facilitate high integrity elections, especially promoting peace and stability in Kenya in the 2017 elections.
- **Cohesive and inclusive society**: The accent here was on the need to recognize cultural diversity and leverage initiatives to build social and national cohesion, unity of the various communities, multiethnic tolerance, long-term peace building and sustainable development in Kenya.
- **Enhancing the capacity of national election management**: The focus on this theme was on initiatives that have the potential of enhancing the capacity of national election management.

### III. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Participants concluded that African countries should adopt appropriate measures at the level of institutions, norms and management of diversity with the aim of transforming elections into an asset. To ensure post-election stability in countries like Kenya, efficient and strong institutions and mechanisms are urgently needed to underpin credible elections. Furthermore, electoral integrity is necessary to turn elections into instruments of promoting social cohesion and inclusion, creating political legitimacy and effective management of diversity. Countries should also adopt a wide range of measures to promote internal democracy within political parties as the best guarantee of entrenching democracy. Electoral management bodies have a role to oversee free fair and transparent party nomination processes and to settle disputes arising from such nominations. In Kenya, the IEBC has a role in adjudicating disputes presented by candidates from various parties. The overall conclusion that participants arrived at is that a credible election management system is central to democratic stability.

The 6th Maendeleo Forum arrived at a five-point cluster of lessons that are crucial in ensuring stability in the 14 or so African countries expected to hold elections in 2017, including Kenya. These are:

**1) Challenges to democracy and election management in Africa persist**
• Democracy operates in divided societies in Africa.
• Experiences in electoral management in Africa are mixed.
• Most elections in Africa are taking place in very undemocratic spaces.
• Interpretations of democracy that drive policy by states and the international community are often times contradictory, becoming a source of conflict.

2) For free and fair elections to take place, countries should ensure that:

• Positive perception of the capacity and political independence of electoral management bodies;
• The entire results collation process by electoral management bodies are kept open;
• Electoral management systems are fully equipped and staff trained, including additional equipment, polling stations and enhanced training of clerks and acquiring new technology to cut the cost and enhance the efficiency of managing elections;
• EMBs to plan in advance to foster credible and efficient electoral processes;
• Communication strategies of election management bodies are revamped to facilitate efficiently transmission of results, including live transmission of results and response to emerging concerns to enhance the credibility to electoral outcomes and;
• The independence of the electoral commission is paramount in upholding the credibility of results.

3) Inclusive political culture will foster better electoral processes and outcomes

• Politics in Kenya, as indeed in most African societies, is organized along ethnic lines.
• More education on governance and rule of law is needed to forge a compelling and unifying agenda that transcends ethnicity.

4) Technology should be embraced as part and parcel of modern elections

• Across the continent, there is huge interest in the use of technology to improve the electoral process.
• Experience with technology in elections show that EMBs bring credibility to the process.
• Voters are excited about the possibility of new frontiers of election management, but also concerned by the risks involved.
• Technology is also linked to the cost of elections.
• Back up plans are necessary when technology fails.

5) The role of external actors requires proper examination
• International community sets the normative framework that all counties should aspire to reach for free, fair and peaceful elections. However, societies differ, requiring adjustment of the principles of democracy to the exigencies and peculiarities of each country or society.

• Funding of elections and support to EMBs to ensure efficient management of elections should be the main roles of international actors or donors in their efforts to promote the consolidation of democracy in Africa through electoral assistance.

• As the case of Gambia has shown, regional leaders and organizations have a crucial role to play in ensuring peaceful transitions after contested democratic elections.
Deepening Democracy: Election Management and Stability in Africa’s Divided Societies

MPF MAIN REPORT

I. Introduction

Since the ‘Third Wave of Democratization’ that swept across Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s, democracy has steadily gained root across the continent. Even regimes that were opposed to multiparty politics have embraced pluralism, and competitive elections have become the norm across the continent. For instance, in the 1996-2006 decade, counties in the sub-Saharan Africa held 44 elections. Between 2005 and 2007, at least 26 Presidential and 28 Parliamentary elections were held across Africa, while 25 Presidential and 33 Parliamentary polls were held between 2011 and 2016.¹ The African Union reported that 31 Countries were to hold elections by the end of 2016.² By the end of 2017, another 14 countries are scheduled to hold Presidential and general elections.

Notable gains have been recorded in consolidating stable democracies. Countries emerging from conflict such as Sierra Leone have held credible elections and become increasingly stable.³ In Senegal (2012), Nigeria (2015), and Benin, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Zambia and Ghana in 2016, the incumbents have conceded defeat and peacefully handed over power. Ghana has particularly become a rare symbol of countries in Africa where the principle of peaceful transfer of power is taking roots after losers in the 2008 and 2016 elections peacefully handed over power to the winners. This has guaranteed stability despite the challenges that the electoral management system may be facing. According to the Brookings Institution, over 60 per cent of the elections held in 2016 were conducted in a free and transparent manner with satisfactory citizen involvement.⁴

Across Africa, elections have become more frequent and the accepted mechanism of choice for popular expression, choice and change of leaders and political accountability. They are increasingly touted as the avenue to a ‘second liberation’ from oppressive and corrupt regimes - after the first liberation from European colonialism. Political transitions are increasingly more participatory, peaceful and constitutional, a trend attributed to citizens’ awareness that their votes matter and demand for transparency, greater independence of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), a clear move towards issue-based politics and regional ownership of electoral processes.

Despite the progress, democratization in Africa is a paradox. The democratic experiment remains fragile and susceptible to instability and violent conflict. In several countries, Presidents faced with

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⁴ Songww Vera, Africa’s Mixed Political Transitions in the 3 Gs: Gabon, the Gambia and Ghana. Dec 2016.
constitutional term limits have refused to leave power gracefully, opting to change the constitution to extend their stay in office. In recent times, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Burundi, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo have amended the law, appealed to the Judiciary or refused to call elections. However, some countries like Rwanda have taken efforts to seek the opinion of the voters by holding referendums. Holding on to power has caused instability and violence in Burundi and Burkina Faso, and undermined the quality of democracy elsewhere. Elections themselves do not necessarily improve the value or quality of governance or ensure political stability. ‘Routine elections’, parodied by Terry Karl as ‘electoralism’ predispose Africa’s nascent democracies to violence before, during and after elections. The resurgence of military coups and the threat of terrorism and violent extremism have stalled democratic progress in Northern Africa.

Elections in Africa tend to widen long-standing social, political and tribal fault lines. By their very nature, elections are adversarial and divisive, triggering violence notably in countries that lack strong democratic institutions or struggle to manage diversity. Elections have generally failed to nourish cohesion: polls have divided people rather than uniting them. Elections are marred by a remarkable decline in civil citizenship resulting from the preponderant rise of sectarian mobilization, violence and intimidation. In the context of populism, disregard for the rule of law and extremism, elections have become a liability for emerging democracies in Africa. As the UN former Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon rightly observed, “diversity may be a source of creativity and growth” but when poorly managed, it “often becomes a source of unhealthy competition, conflict and instability.  

Free, fair and peaceful elections are possible where mandated institutions are able to ensure integrity of the electoral process. As the political crises in Kenya (2007/2008), Zimbabwe (2008) and Zambia (2016) demonstrate, electoral violence is more likely to occur when the electoral process lacks integrity, when there is a perceived critical departure from the accepted rules that govern the process. Efficient and strong African mechanisms are needed to underpin credible elections and transform elections into an asset. Electoral integrity is necessary to turn elections into instruments for promoting social cohesion and inclusion, creating political legitimacy and effective management of diversity. Internal democracy within political parties is becoming necessary in entrenching democracy and electoral management bodies are increasingly called upon to administer free, fair and transparent party nomination processes. In Kenya, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has a role to play in electoral dispute resolution. Credible election management system is central to democratic stability. 

Lessons and good practice from across Africa will go a long way in improving electoral management systems and practices to deliver results with integrity. However, preventing electoral violence requires a multistep approach that takes into account the full electoral cycle and the multiplicity of actors involved in the process. It also requires taking specific measures to eliminate loopholes identified from previous elections, guaranteeing inclusivity and the rights of both majority and minority, and responding to vulnerability to divisive political rhetoric and violent extremism.

II. Background: The Maendeleo Policy Forum in Kenya

The Maendeleo Policy Forum, convened by UNDP Regional Service for Africa, was launched in 2015 to provide space for African leaders, international mediators and negotiators, researchers, policy makers, development practitioners and writers on African issues, to debate on critical issues of development in Africa.\(^6\) The 5\(^{th}\) edition of the Maendeleo Policy Forum focusing on African elections was held on 18 August in Accra, bringing into sharp focus election experiences in sub-Saharan Africa. The aim was to examine the challenges faced by various countries in organizing democratic and peaceful elections, and at the same time, identify opportunities for a brighter future for Africa.\(^7\)

The 6\(^{th}\) Maendeleo Forum, and the second on African Elections, was held on 14 December 2016 in Kenya.\(^8\) The objective of the Forum was to collate lessons and good practices in election management from past elections in Africa, including Kenya, to inform democratic consolidation. Key speakers drawn from across the continent identified early-warning indicators and undertook analysis of risk to Kenya’s stability before, during and after the scheduled 2017 election. The


\(^8\) Other forums have been convened to discuss the National Dialogue in Burundi, Violent extremism in Africa, the Paris Climate Change in Africa, and the nexus between humanitarian and development interventions
ultimate goal is to share these good practices and lessons with policy makers and relevant authorities as the
country strives toward a credible and transparent poll. The main speaker of the Forum was Charlotte Osei, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana.\(^9\)

III. The Focus on Kenya

Kenya has long been held as an example of stability on the African continent. However, this image was dented by the violence that erupted in the country following the December 2007 general elections. In the wake of the crisis, which was blamed on the extant electoral management system, the country undertook an independent audit of the process which resulted in fundamental electoral reforms. The subsequent elections, held in March 2013, were widely seen as free and fair, and Kenya has since enjoyed relative stability and democratic freedoms.

However, as the country gears up to the 2017 general elections, tensions are mounting over the opposition’s claim that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission has a credibility gap. Politicians have also been making inflammatory statements that can instigate violence. For the second time, Kenya will also be holding complex elections for six positions – President, Senator, Governor, Member of Parliament, Women Representative and County Assembly Representative. Like recent elections in other African countries, the 2017 elections are a high stakes game pitting the incumbent against a vibrant opposition. Fear of violence due to hate speech, deepening ethnic polarization, claims of ineptitude and bias at the electoral management body and a recent history of electoral violence make the elections a defining moment for Kenya.

Different stakeholders are, therefore, monitoring the political context and supporting institutions to deliver a free, fair and peaceful election. Development partners are working with state institutions, the IEBC, faith-based organizations, and civil society groups to promote peace

\(^9\) For a full list of key speakers and participants, see Annex 1
building, conflict prevention, and strengthen early-warning and response mechanisms ahead of the elections.

The 6th Maendeleo Forum was timely for several reasons: First, the 2017 elections present a historic transition for the constitution of 2010 when Kenya renewed her social contract with the people and defined the manner in which the electoral process should be managed. The country will have fully transitioned to the new constitutional dispensation. Secondly, the Forum is significant in the context of the global democratic project, it presents Kenya with the opportunity to reflect on the process of deepening democracy in the country. Thirdly, it is taking place at a time when the President of Kenya is Chair of the APRM and the country is preparing to undergo a second peer-review in January 2017 after the one held in 2006. The Peer Review gives Kenya an opportunity to showcase its commitment to governance reforms, including electoral reform. Fourthly, the Forum is consistent with the Kenya Government’s efforts to broad governance reforms in the country and in Africa. In his first inaugural speech at the AU summit on the 26 May, 2013, the President reflected on electoral processes in Africa and the challenge of managing diversity on the continent, and committed himself to providing a space to discuss these issues. The commendable provision of this space by UNDP is consistent with this commitment.

The forum is part of ongoing preparedness activities by state departments. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a meeting with the diplomatic community to appraise them on the preparedness of Kenya for the 2017 General Election. The Ministry is looking to build a continental framework in 2017 that will debate the issues of electoral management in Africa

IV. Objectives

The objective of the forum is to collate lessons and good practices in election management from past elections in Kenya and from selected cases from the rest of Africa with a view to ensuring that elections have integrity and effectively manage diversity especially along the pervasive fault lines of ethnicity along which violence has occurred in the past.

Participants to the forum will also identify early-warning indicators and undertake analysis of risk to Kenya’s stability before, during and after the 2017 election. The Forum is a dialogue of experts, the policy community and practitioners, which will directly feed into policy-making and whose outputs will be shared across the stakeholders.

IV. Elections in Africa

Elections should not signify periods of divisions, pain, suffering and anger, but in much of Africa, elections are perilous times characterized by violence and disruption. Although these challenges are not unique to Africa and even developed economies are vulnerable to the same challenges, elections in Africa are violent about 25% of the time. Electoral violence tends to recur in the same regions of affected countries. Electoral violence slows economic growth, undermines durable peace and stability, and the consolidation of a democratic culture. Countries with strong authoritarian legacies and/or deep ethnic cleavages find it difficult to manage multi-party politics,

10 United States Institute for Peace, Preventing Electoral Violence in Africa
and as social, political and economic tensions increase during elections, they become vulnerable to violence. South Africa and Ghana are shining examples of electoral management and peaceful leadership transitions, and offer many useful lessons for the rest of Africa. Indeed, many admire and applaud Ghana for the successful election and aims to emulate its election management in future elections.

Recent elections in Africa present novel and interesting observations about what works to result in free, fair and credible elections. In Gambia, for instance, using marbles instead of ballots raised important questions about the cost of elections, innovation and the role of technology. In Ghana, a combination of biometric and manual systems to forestall challenges that might have emerged from failure to vote or delayed submission of results showed that dependence of technology should be complemented with more traditional systems.

The high investment in elections to create the perception of credibility and transparency, results in expensive elections. While heavy investment reflects the high-level of mistrust in elections, it makes elections a liability for fledgling economies, particularly when technology fails or the process is marred by other electoral irregularities. It is important to link elections with the rule of law and development to nurture a democratic culture. It is also important to support efforts that strengthen the credibility and capacity of electoral institutions and the electoral process to ensure the elections are credible and the outcome legitimate and acceptable to all stakeholders.

V. Free and Fair Elections: Lessons from Ghana’s 2016 Elections

Ghana continues to stand out as an icon of African democracy and draws applause and admiration for her track record of peaceful, free and fair elections. This record, the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, Ms. Charlotte Osei noted, is due to a combination of many factors that work in concert to safeguard the transparency and legitimacy of the electoral process. These include strengthening the EMB to make it truly independent, professional and equipped to build public confidence; continuous electoral reforms based on analysis of lessons from previous elections; continuous civic education to encourage issue-based messaging and mobilization; and engagement of key stakeholders, including political parties, at all phases of the electoral process.

In Africa, perceptions of capacity and political independence of electoral management bodies plays a critical role in shaping notions of the credibility of elections, their outcomes and acceptance of results. In the 2016 elections, the Electoral Commission of Ghana took several steps to ensure free and fair elections.
• **Strong and independent institutions:** Ghana has a strong electoral commission, which has benefited from concerted efforts to institute fundamental reforms following the 2012 general elections. The 2012 elections, which were closely contested and characterized by hate-speech and threats of violence brought to the fore several institutional weaknesses within the EMB and the electoral process itself. After the elections, the EMB undertook an audit, which made 29 recommendations for reforms. The commission adopted and implemented 27 of these recommendations and rejected two relating to manual verification of results and inclusion of civil society organizations in the Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC). Although the rejection of the two recommendations drew accusations of political bias, reform measures to correct flaws recognized in 2012 improved levels of public confidence in the EMB and the credibility and transparency of the electoral process. Some of the changes included passing new laws, inclusive resource collection and collation process, transparent declaration of resources, and wider distribution of Biometric Voter Registration machines.

• **Additional equipment, polling stations and enhanced training of clerks:** In 2012, the BVR kits were not enough and many failed in part due to lack of sufficient training of election clerks. The Commission procured additional BVR machines to ensure that there were at least 2 kits at all levels, and ensured there were back up kits at the district level. The Commission expanded the number of polling stations, which also eased queue management and lessened pressure on staff and on equipment. Voting therefore ended early and counting could start early.

• **Opening the entire results collation process:** To manage the high levels of mistrust, the Commission opened the entire results collation process. Results were announced at the polling station and a copy of the results, signed by party agents, was pasted at the polling station and electronically submitted to the national tallying centers. At the regional tallying centers, results were announced, verified by party agents who were also given copies of the results before submission. The results were beamed on a projector for all to see before being transmitted electronically to the National Tallying Centre. The media and Party agents were present at the National Collation Centre where Presidential election results were received. Despite delays in releasing results, live coverage on TV and radio of the collation process enhanced transparency and credibility of the results.

• **Planning in advance:** The Commission was well prepared for the elections. All materials needed were in place at least one month before the elections. Three weeks before the elections, all non-strategic materials had been moved from the headquarters to district offices. Printing of ballot papers was done earlier. Early planning ensured there was ample time to correct identified challenges on time. There was better management of logistics compared to 2012.

• **Revamping communication strategy:** The EMB revamped the communication structure and policy. Compared to 2012, the Commission was more engaging, more open. Certain challenges emerged due to the nature of media ownership and wide media space, including biased coverage and use of strong language. Ghana has over 450 FM radio stations and
over 50 private TV stations, owned mainly by politicians. This context created opportunity for mischief and the commission was often assailed with allegations and rumors of political bias. The social media was also difficult to monitor, especially when the mainstream media adopted stories. To address these challenges, the Ghana EMB took specific measures: (i) set up a social media hub to monitor stories that came out via social media; and (ii) set up a Digital Election Hub to counter bias and falsehoods.

- **Monitoring stories:** The Hubs allowed the commission to respond expeditiously to emerging stories and to verify allegations. The hub became interactive platforms that allowed people to call in and the Commission to verify information or respond with facts. The hubs became critical centres of information. People who could not find polling stations on the election day could call in and be directed. Hubs enabled the Commission to constantly respond to emerging technical challenges. Regular Press Briefings on election day: The Commission allowed FM stations to be present at the Digital Hub

- **Live transmission of results and response to emerging concerns:** Live coverage of elections and the results collation at the headquarters enhanced transparency and credibility of the results. Independent media, party agents and NGOs were allowed to verify the election results declared by the Commission. The perception of the commission of independent and professional restored confidence that it had the capacity to deliver elections that reflected the will of the people. The digital hub allowed the commission to respond to emerging stories and address security concerns. Continuous information flow helped the commission keep a grip on all the issues. Despite challenges, nothing got out of hand.

- **Independence of the Commission:** As noted above, the Commission took specific measures to insulate itself from external interference. In a tensed electoral context, the Commission’s core strategy was to follow the law. The EMB faced over 25 court cases in 2016 alone. The cases challenge to decisions taken by the Commission or that people wanted the commission to take. In the space where elections are keenly contested and tense, with two strong parties, it is important to follow the law, however difficult it may be due to political pressure and polarized public opinion. The Court won some cases and lost some, and obeyed direction of the court. Fidelity to the law can create a lot of conflict but the EMB comes out stronger and better, and it establishes its independence in the eyes of the political class and the public.

- **Managing the cost of elections:** Elections are an expensive affair and it is important to budget for all activities and secure resources well in advance. The Ghana elections cost an estimated 1.2 billion cedees (300 million US dollars) and was funded by the government. Donors played an important part in supporting stakeholder engagement activities and volunteers at the social media hub. Other than the social media hub that was managed by volunteers, the other activities and costs such as additional biometric devices, expansion of the communication system, etc were budgeted for and funded by the government. The commission relied on volunteers to manage the social media hub on election date.

Overall, the electoral context in Ghana is not significantly different from other African countries. Indeed, the political culture and behavior of politicians is the same everywhere in Africa. In Ghana,
challenges related to campaigns and delayed announcement of results, which could have easily degenerated into violence were managed in transparent manner. The patience of the people and maturity displayed by presidential and other candidates attest to the high degree of confidence in Ghana’s electoral Commission.

Ghana’s 2016 election offers many important lessons on election management. Political parties have a responsibility for the integrity of electoral processes, and engaging directly with the people at the grassroots is critical. Electoral bodies in Africa face allegations of incompetence and political bias. However, reforms to address institutional weaknesses and adherence to the law can restore public confidence in electoral commissions. EMBs need multi-sectoral support to improve professionalism and efficiency.

VI. Challenges for Democracy and election management in Africa

Experiences in electoral management in Africa are mixed. For every good example like Ghana, there are countries that subvert the purpose of elections. Rigging to predetermine the winner, violence and irregularities to undermine the legitimacy of the process. Nonetheless, Africa is safer today than it was two decades ago. The guns are going silent and the number of military coups is reducing. More and more countries are adopting democratic elections as the system for the future.

Most elections in Africa are taking place in a very undemocratic space. It is a space that is going through a democratic transition. Judging elections as conducted on Election Day as free and fair ignores the broader environment within which the elections are taking place. African countries may be categorized into four:

- Those holding elections during civil wars
- Those holding elections in post-conflict situations
- Those holding elections within an authoritarian framework
- Those with political will to hold democratic elections but are unable to do so due to poverty - they are unable to overcome the grievances that come from poverty

Democracy operates in divided societies. American democracy is challenged by racism while in Africa, ethnicity and clannism are important factors shaping political mobilization, public participation and overall quality of democracy. There are many experiences in Africa where governments interfere with the electoral process to influence the outcome. The concern in such contexts is how to preserve the integrity of the electoral process, and what should be the role of external actors. Some people argue that incumbents cannot lose an election that they have organized, but others believe that it is possible if there is integrity in the system. It is therefore important to build and support institutions that mediate and manage diversities in a manner that elections become a solution rather than a problem.

There are two contradictory interpretations of democracy that drive policy by states and the international community. The first is the celebratory notion of democracy which sees regular elections and liberal institutions as the panacea to a whole range of issues affecting divided societies, including conflict and poverty alleviation. This notion is the premise of the Democratic Peace Theory, which holds that democracies seldom go to war. Therefore, introducing democracy
in Africa will end all civil wars. The second view is that elections lead to violence and exclusive politics. Where there are conflicts, elections exacerbate tensions and increase the number of deaths in their aftermath. For example, before the elections in Kenya, at least 300,000 people were displaced from their homes in 1992 and in 2008 over 1,300 people were killed and 600,000 others displaced. In Nigeria, at least 500 were killed in the 2011 elections. Several countries have restricted democratic rights to stifle political opposition and weakened institutions to rule in their favor. From this assessment, some argue that it is better to address the causes of conflict first then introduce competitive politics thereafter. The problem is not necessarily the electoral process itself but the grievances within which elections take place.

Are elections a solution to African’s governance problems or not? There is no consensus yet. However, there is an agreement that liberal democracy as a one-size fits all for all African contexts is erroneous. For example, election outcomes can be predetermined if political mobilization is conducted along ethnic lines. In Rwanda and Burundi, a Hutu can be always expected to win if it is purely about numbers. Voting along ethnic lines only worsens existing cleavages. The need to re-engineer democracy away from exclusive and divisive mobilization to issue-based campaigns is clear, and countries such as Ghana are showing the way. However, it is difficult do so in many African contexts because lack of a national ideology relegates a country to ethnic mobilization. Racial, ethnic or clan labels are the tools for electoral victory. Democratic elections can promote exclusion. In Kenya, for instance, 5 ethnic groups constitute 73% of the population and, by extension, the voting power. If you add 2 more middle-tier communities, you have 85% of the population. Therefore, to win an election emphatically in Kenya you need a minimum of 3 ethnic groups.

While Africa is too diverse to generalize the challenges to democracy and electoral management, there are specific challenges that emanate from the electoral system: countries with First-Past-the-Post electoral systems are more prone to violence than those using Mixed Member Proportional Representation. The former is about the winning candidate attaining the highest – not necessarily the majority vote. In this system, the winner takes all while the loser gets nothing. The latter is more responsive to issues and representation of various categories of the population in government. Critics of the FPTP system, which is most common in Africa, argue that it is ‘bad for voters, bad for government and bad for democracy.’

The recommendations of post-election audits should be implemented, as Ghana did in the run up to the 2016 election. Many of the recommendations are similar to those made for Kenya by the Independent Review Commission on the General Election held in Kenya on 27 December 2007 (IREC/ Kriegler Commission). IREC found fault with several institutions with roles in elections, and subsequently recommended an overhaul of the electoral process and the election management body. While the recommendations were made ahead of the 2013 elections, there have been major reversals. For Kenya, it may be useful to revisit the Kriegler recommendations and examine how the recommendations were made and their status as the country approaches the 2017 elections. For example, is a Political Parties Liaison Committee in place or how effective is it in supporting actions towards a free and fair election?

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11 These are the Kikuyu (23%), Luhya (14%), Luo (13%), Kalenjin (12%) and Kamba (11%).
12 These are the Kisii (6%) and Meru (6%).
Adherence to the rule of law is a fundamental requirement for the integrity of electoral process and legitimacy of results. Africa is diverse in regards to how the rule of law is enforced. Most countries struggle to enforce the rule of the law. The kind of administrative technicalities and good results in Ghana reflect the good practices learnt from Kenya. Unlike Ghana, Kenya’s law enforcement is severely lacking or weak, which weakens institutions and makes them susceptible to political interference. The administrative aspects of managing the electoral process are the same in Kenya and Ghana. The only difference is that in Ghana, the Electoral Commission enforced the rule of law without fear.

Democracy anywhere in the world is a work in progress. There is no one-size fits all for democratization therefore it is important to appreciate that different countries democratize different based on their political culture, history and resource endowment. There are no best practices only or lessons. Even the U.S used the rule of the jungle to effect regime change until they adopted the principle of peaceful transfer of power. Africa needs to have shared values in their political culture because political parties are buttressing the lack of rule of law and lack of integrity

Democracy is more than elections. Elections can trigger violent conflict but embracing democracy implies promoting inclusion, transparency in public institutions and addressing grievances that result from development challenges. Many changes have been made to improve the quality of governance, including legal and constitutional reforms, but there is lack of constitutionalism and rule of law. Reforms are easily rolled back by lack of enforcement of the rule of law. The rules for elections are not contiguous with the rules of politics; strong institutions are needed to stand up to political parties and other actors governed more by political culture than by the rule of law. The future of democracy lies in the rule of law and the punishment of crimes that are political in nature. Strong institutions critical for elections especially the presence of a Political Party Liaison to coordinate stakeholder relations within an electoral body. Strong democratic parties necessary for a sustainable democracy and elections.

If governments are to aspire to the normative way of doing elections, institutions are as important as informal relations that drive the way we do things. Although the focus on electoral reform may be to address irregularities such as voter bribery, there are practices that drive that behavior, such as corrupt modes of exchange or the degree of moral commitment to do what is right, what is legal and in the best interest of the country. While the political class may take advantage of voters, institutions must stay on course and adhere to the rule of law and moderate informal rules that exist to access formal spaces of power.

**VI. Inclusive political culture**

Absence of inclusive politics leads to the absence of inclusive development. Without inclusivity in development, elections will always be a threat to the democratization process. Although people in many African countries tend to vote along ethnic lines, they are also voting on fundamental issues. For instance, in Kenya before the 2010 constitutional referendum, when one voted for a Kikuyu leader one was voting for a unitary system. If you were in Coast, Western or Rift Valley provinces one was voting for a devolved system of governance. Ethnicity remains a key mobilizing tool because the state is the main engine of development and whoever assumes power of it
monopolizes development. Debate on the creation of national wealth and inclusive politics is lacking in Africa. There is more focus on how the wealth is distributed. While there is a clear move towards issue-based messaging, inclusive politics and development are key to a progressive political culture.

How do we cultivate an inclusive political culture? Politicians are the bane of most conflict-ridden societies. However, blaming politicians hides the society’s ingrained political culture: people vote for people they know are not leaders and fail to support reforms to strengthen institutions. At the same time, people who subvert the law are known but they enjoy impunity. In addition, the media is used to misinform the people and ultimately, debates are about the interests of political elites rather than the needs of the common person.

Politics in Kenya, as indeed in most African societies, is organized along ethnic lines. The need to ensure ethnic representation has weakened institutions, and political fights to replace competent individuals with persons from particular regions can turn ‘reforms’ into a game of musical chairs. There is a dire need to change public opinion about what it means to strengthen institutions, and for citizens to hold those institutions accountable. When politicians discredit or appoint unqualified cronies into institutions, they become weak and incapable of addressing challenges in the society. In ethnically polarized contexts, elections themselves – whether they follow rules or not - the win is perceived to create an illegitimacy.

Electoral malpractice is a sector malaise; university elections and political party nominations are neither free nor fair or credible. Social acceptance of electoral malpractice lower public expectations of quality performance from the EMB. Consolidation of a democratic culture must be from manifest in state institutions. The role of civil society is critical in propagating the internalization of these values. States need to be less critical of civil society but to respect them and support the work that they do. Politicians are only a reflection of society which condones disregard for the rule of law. The elements for a credible election are a functional state, electoral laws and an effective electoral management body. The law should be used to regulate the conduct of politicians, and strong institutions should stand up to incumbency.

More education on governance and rule of law is needed to forge a compelling agenda that transcends ethnicity. Citizens need to be made more aware that just because someone from their own tribe is included in a leadership organogram does not mean better service delivery or accountability. Citizens need to overcome the tendency to sanitize people who are not reformers merely because they change political parties. Politics needs to change to focus on issues and service delivery, as is taking root in Mauritius, Cape Verde, Botswana and Ghana.

Political futures point to a growing preference to devolution. More and more countries are opting for decentralization and reduced powers of the executive. However, emerging wisdom indicates that creation of new centres of power replicates the political culture of the national level to sub-national spaces. If devolution were working the way it should – and there are a few good examples – there would be less focus on ethnicity. While the turn-over for elected officials can be as high as 75% in elections, the new group eventually begin to act like the outgoing group, which perpetuates a political culture of self-interest and disregard for the rule of law. Stakeholders need to devise
strategies to make the power in the people challenge the people in power. Speaking truth to power is noble, but the bigger challenge is to make power truthful.

**VII. Technology and elections**

Across the continent, there is huge interest in the use of technology to improve the electoral process. The degree of sophistication of ICT equipment varies, but most EMBs in Africa are using technology to improve biometric voter registration, database management, verify voter eligibility, automate recording and counting of votes cast and transmission of election results. The introduction of technology attempts to address challenges associated with manual processes, improve logistics, transparency and credibility of the process, and reliability of results.

Experience with technology in elections shows that EMBs and voters are excited about the possibility of new frontiers of election management, but also concerned by the risks involved. Technology has little room for error and can easily put the entire process in jeopardy in the event of procedural or technological failure or breaches of security of data, e.g. through hacking or physical damage. It is noted that technology is as good as the person behind it: it is problematic and can fail, while manipulation resulting in systematic error or delayed transmission of results can undermine the integrity of the process and credibility of election outcome. Where people have low levels of trust, they are more willing to take the risks associated with technology. While technology has the potential to improve electoral systems, it is not the panacea for many problems faced during elections in Africa.

Technology is also linked to the cost of elections. The cost of elections, compared to what is spent on security agents, is too high. The high cost of technology for elections results from the initial costs of procuring and setting up the electronic system, new expertise and training of staff, maintenance and management. Technology changes very quickly and equipment or software become outdated and obsolete within a few years, making technology both expensive and unsustainable. Technology may also be unusable due to lack of supporting physical environment and infrastructure.\(^\text{13}\)

Back up plans are necessary. The multiple risks associated with technology make it imperative to put in place contingency plans to avoid paralysis from dependence. In Ghana, for instance, a manual back up plan was in place to ensure failures did not interrupt the process. It is also possible to use technology and manual processes simultaneously, such as combining manual counting and electronic transmission, and manual backup copies of data. In Kenya, some political actors are suspicious that reintroduction of manual back up could create loopholes for malpractice and rigging. Where there are high levels of trust in the EMB, they are likely to spend less on elections and electoral risk is lower.

Elections are expensive. There are discussions about how to reduce costs when using technology. The successful use of marbles instead of ballot papers in Gambia suggests that traditional low cost and effective methods that work should not be discarded. Through regional integration

\(^{13}\) For more discussion on this, see ACE Election Knowledge Network, [https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/et](https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/et)
arrangements African nations are exploring the possibility of pooling resources between them to reduce costs.

VIII. Role of external actors

International community sets the normative framework that all country should aspire to reach for free, fair and peace elections. However, societies differ, and each needing to examine what type of democracy or society it is aspiring to be, and how to get there. Different countries adopt different approaches, and scrutiny of those approaches may be seen as external interference. However, democracy does not have varied meanings. Therefore, if foreign governments argue that democracy and freedom are essential for development, this does not translate to interference. If it were so, many African countries interfered in the U.S. elections by voicing their opposition to Donald Trump. In the same way, external actors have an obligation to comment on who they perceive to be more likely to promote democracy. Agitation for entrenchment of the rule of law, freedoms and democracy should not be interpreted as interference by the international community.

In the early 1990s, there was undue influence by the international community in the era of multi-party politics to dethrone authoritarian systems. In the current age, sovereignty is being used to agitate for different forms of democracy. Governance models in diverse parts of Africa are not a problem in their substance; democracy at the operational level is what is contested. Some question whether Western-style democracy based on liberalism is the best that Africa can embrace, or if to explore a different operationalization of democracy. Others observe that it is the implementation of models of democracy that is problematic due to weak law enforcement. Lack of constitutionalism also leads to situations where leaders organize elections but refuse to accept the outcome especially when it is not favorable

One of the main roles of international actors or donors promoting the consolidation of democracy in Africa is through electoral assistance - funding of elections and support to EMBs. Through all the phases of the electoral cycle, external actors are involved in support and oversight of the electoral process. Building the capacity of EMBs ensures enhanced cost-effective elections. Donors and other external actors provide different forms of electoral assistance, including but not limited to professional capacity building for electoral officials, including training and logistical assistance; civic and voter education and information materials, technical support for electoral administration and planning, review of electoral laws and regulations, electoral dispute resolution, boundary delimitation, voter registration, election budgeting, logistics and procurement, use of technology, training, voting and counting operations and election security. Some donors focus on formation of political parties that are institutionalization and well regulated by the law. Political parties are often not regulated by law but by culture. There are efforts to support development of parties that go beyond one generation and through these parties to forge a democratic culture of shared political values such as observance of the rule of law.

Regional leaders under regional integration arrangements are taking a more active role in ensuring peaceful leadership transitions. For instance, the African Union, the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have led mediation efforts to resolve political crises following elections.
IX. Conclusion

For free, fair and credible elections, a lot of responsibility is placed on EMBs, which are responsible for managing the electoral process and elections that produce results acceptable to candidates and the electorate. This entails creating a level playing ground by ensuring all actors adhere to rules. For the EMB to be independent, it needs to be supported by the media, political class, the civil society, the judiciary and members of the public when it is attacked. On its part, the EMB should act according to conscience and the law.

The successful 2016 election and peaceful leadership transition in Ghana offers some important lessons for Kenya and Africa. Continuous engagement of all stakeholders in the electoral process – women, youth, media, persons with disabilities, political parties, etc., is critical to restore and enhance public confidence in the electoral commission. Direct involvement of the people through social media can help address emerging concerns and respond to rumors with factual information. Continuous training of both candidates and members of the public can nurture the sense of ownership of the electoral process and responsibility for a peaceful, free and fair election.

The quality of political actors is important. Candidates who understand the need to respect the rule of law, and appreciate that there will be one winner is important for acceptance of results and peaceful leadership transition.

Public confidence in the EMB is very important at the national and local level. Experience from Kenya’s 2013 elections showed that while presidential results can be contested, the issues over which petitions were filed for lower level elections had few contests with the EMB itself. This suggests that the level of trust in the IEBC at the local level was high. This suggests that it is important for the EMB to maintain constant dialogue with politicians who matter at the national level. Democracy in Africa is making good progress.
ANNEX 1

The 6th Maendeleo Forum Program

Theme: Deepening Democracy: “Election Management and Stability in Africa’s Divided Societies”

Venue: Intercontinental Hotel

Date: 14 December 2016

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Election Management and Stability in Africa's Divided Societies

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:30</td>
<td>OPENING REMARKS</td>
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<tr>
<th>16:30 – 17:20</th>
<th>PANEL SESSION: Election Management and Stability</th>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitator:</td>
<td>Dr. Ozzonia Ojielo, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa</td>
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<th>Panelists:</th>
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<td>o Prof. Peter Kagwanja</td>
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<td>o Mrs. Charlotte Osei</td>
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<td>o Prof. Karuti Kanyinga</td>
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<td>o Mr. Joram Rukange</td>
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<th>17:20 - 18:00</th>
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<td>o CEO – IEBC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Mr. Siddarth Charterjee - UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, Kenya</td>
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### List of Invited Institutions

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<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONS/OFFICES/ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary Interior</td>
<td>E.U. Head of the Delegation</td>
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<td>Majority Senate leader</td>
<td>Head of Mission at the Nigerian High commission</td>
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<td>Senator</td>
<td>Ugandan High Commissioner</td>
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<td>MP Runyenjes (Jubilee)</td>
<td>Burundi Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women Representative, Meru County</td>
<td>Botswana High Commissioner</td>
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<td>Woman Representative, Kiambu County</td>
<td>Rwandan High Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya</td>
<td>Algeria's Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governor, Machakos County</td>
<td>Tanzanian High Commissioner to Kenya</td>
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<td>Governor, Makueni County</td>
<td>Brazil ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Jubilee Party Secretariat</td>
<td>Egypt ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator, Meru County</td>
<td>Zambian High Commissioner to Kenya</td>
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<td>Senator, Garissa County</td>
<td>South African High Commissioner to Kenya</td>
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<td>Senator, Kisumu County</td>
<td>Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>Budalangi Member of Parliament</td>
<td>Executive Secretary IGAD</td>
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<td>Senator, Mombasa County</td>
<td>Danish Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>Mbita Member of parliament</td>
<td>Finnish Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>PS Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Iceland Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>Office of the President</td>
<td>Norwegian Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>CJ &amp; President of Supreme Court</td>
<td>Italian ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>Kenya Electoral Commission</td>
<td>Swedish Ambassador to Kenya</td>
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<td>Inspector General National Police Service of the Republic</td>
<td>AU CHAIRPERSON</td>
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<td>PS Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>USAID Administrator</td>
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<td>Office of the President</td>
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<td>Director of Criminal Investigation</td>
<td>USAID Administrator</td>
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<td>Chairman KEPSA</td>
<td>PS Interior</td>
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<td>SUPKEM</td>
<td>PS State Department of Devolution</td>
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<td>General Secretary National Council of Churches (NCCK)</td>
<td>PS state Department of Planning</td>
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<td>Dean of Students -University of Nairobi</td>
<td>PS State Department of Gender Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Director Institute for Education in Democracy</td>
<td>Secretary General Inter-Religious Council of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Nairobi</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights-OHCHR</td>
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<td>VC United States of International University</td>
<td>Executive Director of the UNODC</td>
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<tr>
<td>South African Expert</td>
<td>Office of Registrar of Political Parties</td>
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<td>Director of the Department of Political Affairs at the African Union.</td>
<td>Council of Governors - Chair</td>
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<td>Strathmore University</td>
<td>Council of Governors - CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director NDC</td>
<td>Former PS Justice</td>
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<td>NDC</td>
<td>Chairperson of the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)</td>
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<td>NMG</td>
<td>Chairperson FIDA</td>
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<td>C.E.O Media Council of Kenya</td>
<td>Political Parties Dispute Tribunal</td>
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<td>Nation TV</td>
<td>EISA Kenya's Country Director</td>
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<td>K24</td>
<td>ELOG National Coordinator</td>
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<td>Standard Group CEO</td>
<td>DFID Country Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>Executive Director Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD-Kenya)</td>
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<td>Editor in Chief KBC</td>
<td>Chairperson KNCHR</td>
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<td>Senate Majority leader</td>
<td>Executive Director of UN Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>Director UNIC</td>
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<td>U.K. Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>President NDI Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>outgoing chair IEBC</td>
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<td>Russian Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>Chair IFES</td>
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<td>French Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>Chair office of the Ombudsman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>Vice Chairperson NCIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Ambassador to Kenya</td>
<td>Chair, Board of Directors Youth Agenda CSO</td>
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<td>Youth Parliament</td>
<td>United Nations Team</td>
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Bio of Speakers

Mrs. Charlotte Osei is Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of Ghana’s Electoral Commission following her appointment by His Excellency John Mahama in June 2015. Prior to her appointment, from October 2011 to June 2015, she chaired the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), an independent governance commission established under Ghana’s Constitution. The NCCE is the constitutional commission mandated to educate Ghanaians on their civic rights and responsibilities, voter education, knowledge of Ghana’s Constitution and work towards strengthening Ghana’s democracy.

Prior to joining Ghana's public service, Charlotte established and managed Prime Attorneys, a boutique business and investment law firm, in Accra. Charlotte has significant experience and specialization in corporate/business law, banking, insurance, labour, infrastructure project financing and public private partnerships. Her work experience has covered the general assignments of compliance officer and general counsel for financial institutions, advising on compliance and regulatory issues, to corporate financing and restructuring, negotiating transactions, labour and human resource management matters. She consulted in a variety of areas and the law firm provides support services for several Ghanaian companies, foreign investors and international development agencies in Ghana in several areas.

Charlotte holds a LL. B (Hons) degree from the University of Ghana, Legon; a Qualifying Certificate in Law from the Ghana School of Law; a Master of Laws (LLM) from Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada and a Master’s in Business Leadership (MBL), from the University of South Africa in Pretoria. Charlotte is a published writer and holds several academic awards and distinctions. She has served as a director on the Board of several Ghanaian and international institutions including Ghana Commercial Bank Limited, Ghana Reinsurance Company Limited, Dominion University College and The African Capacity Building Foundation. Charlotte was also previously a part-time lecturer in Contracts, Company Law and Business Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana. She is a member of the Ghana Bar Association and the International Bar Association and
the president of the Association of African Election Authorities, a regional network of electoral management bodies.

Prof. Peter Kagwanja is a Kenyan intellectual, adviser, reform strategist and policy thinker on governance, security and African affairs. From the early 1990s, Prof. Kagwanja was associated with Kenya's pro-democracy movement through his research and writings in the media, and was one of the founders of the University Academic Staff Union. As an emigre in South Africa, he was in the team of experts that provided technical backing to the intense policy processes that led to the creation of the African Union and its peace and security architecture. When Kenya’s opposition ascended to power, Prof. Kagwanja became part of the technical team that re-engineered and realigned the country’s foreign policy and strategy to the challenges of the 21st century. He became government adviser on the post-2008 reform agenda and strategy; managed its successful campaign for the New Constitution of Kenya and provided strategic thinking towards the transition to the post-Kibaki order. Prof. Kagwanja is a public intellectual who has authored many articles and books, including Kenya's Uncertain Democracy: The Electoral Crisis of 2008 London: Routledge.

Prof. Kagwanja is the President and CEO of the Africa Policy and Leadership Institute (API). The API is an independent, not-for-profit pan-African think tank, founded in 2007 by a wide variety of African think tank scholars. In the same year, it was registered in South Africa and operates in Kenya, Uganda and Sudan.

Africa Policy and Leadership Institute (API) conducts policy-relevant research to develop solutions to public policy challenges to help create a peaceful, secure and prosperous Africa and the world at large. API’s work is therefore geared towards providing policy-relevant research and analysis for Africa’s solutions in security, governance and strategic issues.

API has extensive work experience in the Africa region where it provides technical and advisory support to governments, civil societies, as well as regional and international organizations.
Prof. Karuti Kanyinga is an accomplished development researcher and scholar with extensive national and international experience and exposure. He has carried out many research programmes and projects at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, in the last 20 years. He has published extensively on development and governance in Kenya and is renowned for his contributions to scholarship and knowledge in governance and development. Karuti is renowned particularly for his extensive research and publications on land rights in Kenya; civil society and development; ethnicity and development; and electoral politics and development.

Karuti has been engaged in graduate teaching and training programmes at the IDS and undertakes several administrative and research responsibilities at the Institute. He has conceptualized, sought funding and coordinated several research projects at the University. In addition, Karuti has supervised several MA and PhD students at the IDS, other departments of the University of Nairobi, and other universities. He is an external examiner in several universities in East Africa where he has also examined many undergraduate and graduate students.

Karuti is widely travelled and has participated in many international academic conferences and events and presented papers on development issues. He has served as a resource person in the area of development studies for many international organizations in Kenya and Africa in general.

He has been a key note speaker on issues of development in Kenya and Africa in many international and national events. He has made intellectual contributions to the society through participation in community and national development efforts as well as providing intellectual insights on many national issues. He has served in national government task forces and national advisory committees.
Mr. Rukambe is the Chief Technical Adviser UNDP Elections Support to Kenya. Prior to his current position, Mr. Rukambe was the Regional Electoral Advisor at the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Moderator

Dr. Ozonnia OJIELO leads the Governance and Peacebuilding cluster and provides strategic policy, thought and programmatic leadership to country offices, national and regional partners. From 2011 to 2014, he served as the Coordinator for Conflict Prevention and Recovery at UNDP’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Before this, he was the Senior Peace and Development Adviser to the UN RC/HC and the Chief of the Peacebuilding Programme for UNDP in Kenya. From 2004 to 2008, he was the Senior Governance Adviser to the UN RC, and Head of the Governance Programme at UNDP Ghana. He has also worked as the Head of Operations and Officer of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission; a Human Rights Lawyer; and a chartered mediator, arbitrator and conciliator in Nigeria; and the president for the Centre for Peace in Africa (Lagos). He holds a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, an MBA (Strategic and Project Management), an MA (History) and an LL.B Hons in Law.
Context
Democratization in Africa is a paradox. While democracy has steadily gained roots, in recent decades, African democracy has stalled or is facing serious reversals. Since the end of the Cold War and the onset of the “Third Wave of democratization” that washed over Africa from the late 1980s, democracy has flourished. This is what has been touted as “second liberation” after the first liberation from European colonialism. Elections have become regular, and widely accepted as the mechanism of choice for popular expression, choice and change of leaders and political accountability. Elections are increasingly the norm across the continent. The number of countries holding elections in Africa have grown exponentially in the last two decades. In the 1996–2006 decade, countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa held 44 elections. In 2005–2007, 26 presidential and 28 parliamentary elections were held in Africa and in 2011-2012, 25 presidential elections and 33 parliamentary polls took effectively place. And the African Union indicates that the continent will have held 31 elections by end of December 2016. Some 14 countries are scheduled to hold presidential and general elections in 2017.

Despite the progress, Africa’s democratic experiment remains fragile and susceptible to the threat of instability, violent conflict. However, greater regularity or routine elections—which political scientist Terry Karl parodied as “electoralism”, a "half-way" transition from authoritarian rule toward democratic governance—have not necessarily enhanced the value or quality of democracy or insured its stability or survival. Africa’s nascent democracies are everywhere at risk of violence before, during or after elections. Countries like Mali, earlier praised as a showpiece of democratic success, have succumbed to military coups, violent conflict and invasion by terrorists. In 2016, Zambia, one of the first African countries to undergo democratic transitions in the 1990s, faced post-election paralysis and violence. Democratic transitions in North Africa have stalled, giving way to instability in Libya, Algeria, and Egypt and creating fertile grounds for violent extremism. While surveys by both the Freedom House and Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) have indicated that the overall state of governance in Africa has improved over the last two decades, the vast majority of African citizens live in countries that are either “partly free” or “not free.”

14 The Maendeleo Policy Forum was launched in 2015 to provide space for African leaders, international mediators and negotiators, researchers, policy makers, development practitioners and writers on African issues, to debate on critical issues of development in Africa. The word "Maendeleo" means development in Swahili.
However, safety and rule of law remain the biggest issues facing the continent today\textsuperscript{17}. Elections have contributed in large measure to the challenge of instability on the continent. African democracies are not yet out of the woods for a variety of reasons. Democratic institutions are too weak to entrench the culture of democracy.

Africa faces a serious problem of managing diversity. As the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon rightly observed, “diversity may be a source of creativity and positive growth” but when poorly managed, it “often becomes a source of unhealthy competition, conflict and instability.”\textsuperscript{18} Even though elections are widely perceived as instruments for resolving differences, they have everywhere become triggers of violent conflict. Polls have divided people rather than uniting them. Elections are marred by a remarkable decline in civil citizenship resulting from the preponderant rise of sectarian mobilization, violence and intimidation. In many ways, diversity in the context of extremism populism and disregard for the rule of law has become a liability and the salient bane of African democracies.

Efficient and strong African mechanisms are needed to underpin credible elections and to transform elections into an asset. Electoral integrity is necessary to elections into instruments of promoting social cohesion and inclusion, creating political legitimacy and effective management of diversity. Internal democracy within political parties is becoming necessary in entrenching democracy, and electoral management bodies are increasingly called upon to administer free fair and transparent party nomination processes. In Kenya, the IEBC has a role in adjudicating disputes presented by candidates from various parties. Credible election management system is, therefore central to democratic stability.

Lessons and good practices Africa has acquired in recent elections will go a long way in improving electoral management systems and practices to deliver election results with integrity as a surest way of managing diversity (ethnic, class, race, gender, age or religion) in order to ensure stability.

Ensuring electoral stability in Africa also demand managing diversity. Election-related violence is aggravated by the complex multi-ethnic nature of African states where voting tends to take the form of ethnic identity or clan and rarely follow class or class identity. The rights of both the majority and minority need to be guaranteed. Kenya has adopted the county system to ensure that groups are not locked out of the benefits of the state resources and opportunities irrespective of which side they voted. Political parties must avoid electoral strategies and populist political campaigns that play on tribal grievances and sensibilities in a manner that can ignite violence. The vulnerability of the state to violent extremism is also at its highest during elections. Similarly, the resilience of communities to radicalization to violence, especially among populations with a deep sense of grievance is at its lowest during electoral seasons. But as history has shown, prosperous and just societies are better suited to resist extremism and terrorism.

\textsuperscript{17} A Decade of African Governance 2006 – 2015, 2016 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance
\textsuperscript{18} Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General 2011
Rationale for the Maendeleo Policy Forum in Kenya

Kenya has long been held as an example of stability in the African continent. In recent months, Kenya has faced rising tensions over integrity issues raised against its Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), which has feed fears about violence in next year’s general elections (presidential, parliamentary, senatorial, women representatives, gubernatorial, and civic/county). This worry about violence comes against the backdrop of the country’s effort to recover from the post-election violence that followed the disputed 2007 presidential election, which led to loss of lives and property, precipitated a profound political, economic, and humanitarian crisis and posed a real threat to its stability. The crisis was blamed on the extant electoral management system, which was accused of failing to facilitate a credible election and to deepen democratic institutions and culture. The 2013 elections were widely seen as free and fair, and Kenya has since enjoyed relative degree of stability and made major steps in entrenching freedom.

The MPF on “Elections in the Sub-Saharan Africa: General Trends, Challenges and Opportunities”, held in Accra in August 2016, identified several factors which culminate to truncate electoral process in Africa. These factors include failed expectations from the electorate, identification question, independence and weak capacity of the electoral management bodies and the role of the constitution in the electioneering process.

Objectives

The objective of the forum is to collate lessons and good practices in election management from past elections in Kenya and from selected cases from the rest of Africa with a view to ensuring that elections have integrity and effectively manage diversity especially along the pervasive fault lines of ethnicity along which violence has occurred in the past. Participants to the forum will also identify early-warning indicators and undertake analysis of risk to Kenya’s stability before, during and after the 2017 election. The Forum is a dialogue of experts, the policy community and practitioners, which will directly feed into policy-making and whose outputs will be shared across the stakeholders.

Expected Outcome

A credible and efficient electoral management system to guarantee democratic stability in Kenya in 2017 and beyond. The forum will be an in-depth account of electoral processes in Kenya and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and continuing challenges in the democratization process particularly in the region. The report which will derive from the debate is intended to inform national actors, development partners, regional and sub-regional institutions on the progress, common problems, possible solutions and good practices. The electoral stakeholders in Kenya are expected to benefit from the dialogue considering the country’s general elections holding in August 2017.

Panelists
The main Speaker of the Forum will be Mrs. Charlotte Osei, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), who has successfully presided over the 2016 General Elections.

**Format of Dialogue**

The dialogue will consist of the main presentations by the panelists and a question and answer session to facilitate in-depth discussions and contributions.