

LAS-UN Forum of Electoral Management Bodies in the Arab States

13-14 November, Cairo

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction:

The second Forum of Electoral Management Bodies in the Arab States, a cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, will be held on 13-14 November 2018 at the League's headquarters in Cairo. The first Forum was held in May 2016.

The Forum is organized as part of the cooperation between the League of Arab States' Electoral Affairs Department, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division and UNDP's Regional Electoral Support for the Arab States, and per the decision of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level in its Ordinary Session No. 144 during which the Resolution No. 7961 dated September 13, 2015 was passed to host the event.

The Forum offers a platform for member states to come together and discuss establishing renewed cooperation and communication channels between and among themselves as well as with relevant regional and international organizations. The event is aimed at enhancing and consolidating the achievements of the first Forum, while moving from general aspects of the electoral process and electoral administration towards more specific issue areas and technical challenges in the conduct of elections.

The theme of the second Forum is on "voter registration", a topic of high relevance to many of the member states who are in the process of creating and/or reforming their electoral registries. In this context, a regional exchange of experiences and lessons learnt on voter registration systems and processes is of utmost importance.

Voter registration is considered one of the key enabling factors to the success of electoral events, the mechanism by which an individual's right to vote is established. It allows authorities to determine who has access to voting, for whom it should be restricted, and allows/enables electoral authorities to plan accordingly. Voter registration processes span to include the means by which eligibility challenges are resolved. Importantly and often overlooked, professional voter registration management also takes into account EMBs

actions regarding the organization and preparation of voter data to support polling and statistics.

While many entities may be involved in voter registration, the election management body has the primary responsibility. The goal of any election management body is to uphold the laws whilst delivering a process that provides a credible and effective voter register. Although every country has its own way of conducting voter registration and faces different challenges, there are also commonalities that can be explored as well as solutions to be shared.

It is within this context of sharing and learning that the second Forum is organized to allow members states to present and discuss key aspects of voter registration in their respective countries including registration methods, the updating of voter registers, the linkages with civil registries and citizen identification, as well the mechanisms for ensuring participation of all eligible populations including, among others, women, youth, displaced and special populations.

Objectives

The main objectives of the 2018 forum are as follows:

1. To promote the exchange of electoral experiences in the Arab region and highlight lessons learned in the area of voter registration
2. To enhance regional knowledge and understanding on voter registration practices in the region
3. To strengthen collaborative relationships among electoral stakeholders in the Arab States, as well as with relevant regional and international organizations

Participants

The Forum participants will include the following:

- A. Member States of the League of Arab States: each Member State will be invited to nominate 2 electoral representatives according to the following criteria:
 - head of the electoral body
 - representative responsible for voter registration
- B. Regional and international organizations engaged in the field of elections

Date and Location

The two-day meeting will take place on 13-14 November 2018 at the LAS Headquarters in Cairo.