

NEWS LETTER

August 2018

Support to Universal Suffrage Elections
in the Federal Republic of Somalia

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

IESG - Monthly News Updates

NIEC-IESG Board Meeting with Donors

On 28 August, IESG and the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) co-chaired in Mogadishu a board meeting of the joint programme for electoral support, with VTC connection to Nairobi. Donor partners included the EU, Germany, and the UK. Sweden had provided its input per email. USAID attended as well. The purpose of the meeting was to update donors about electoral activities and to provide a financial overview of the project.

During the meeting, the NIEC chair briefed partners on its institution's expansion plans both at central and sub-national level, including the recruitment of additional staff and the opening of offices later this year in the State Capitals, the drafting of a voter education curriculum, the NIEC's discussions on a methodology for voter registration, the upcoming voter registration site mapping exercise and a relevant pilot project to verify GIS mapped voter allocation areas, plus on upcoming Federal by-elections in Southwest and Galmudug. The NIEC Chair also outlined ongoing challenges including limited funds and workspace, the concerns about progress on the legal framework (electoral law), and security.

IESG and NIEC announced the plans to start at the end of September regular monthly information sharing meetings between the NIEC and international partners. IESG presented a situation report on the UNDP managed donor

basket fund.

IESG announced the vacant position of Director/Chief Electoral Advisor. Former Director Gerald Mitchell, who embarked in August on a new position with the United Nations Office to the African Union, was thanked for his extensive support to Somalia's electoral work, starting in 2014 by laying the foundations of the UN Integrated Electoral Support Group, and assisting the country with the establishment of the NIEC in 2015, its electoral legal framework, and providing strategic direction to Somalia's building blocks for universal elections at the end of the term of the current Federal Parliament in late 2020.

Highlights (August 2018)

- ◆ 4 Aug: Electoral Task Force Meeting on Electoral Law.
- ◆ 5-7 Aug: Logistics and Electoral Operations Training for NIEC
- ◆ 6-9 Aug: Capacity Building Workshop for NIEC and Stakeholders on Electoral Systems and Boundaries Delimitation
- ◆ 15 Aug: Training on Mentoring, Coaching and Skills Transfer
- ◆ 18-19 Aug: Media Engagement and Public Outreach Workshop for NIEC
- ◆ 26 Aug: NIEC Temporary Registration Certificates for seven new Political Parties
- ◆ 27-29 Aug: Civic and Voter Education Training for NIEC Staff
- ◆ 28 Aug: NIEC-IESG Board Meeting with Donor Partners
- ◆ 29 Aug: Electoral Task Force Meeting on Electoral Law



Picture 1: NIEC thanking departing IESG Director Gerald Mitchell for his contribution since 2014 to Somalia on electoral preparations, Mogadishu, 20 August 2018. (Photo credit: IESG)

Electoral Task Force Meeting on Electoral Law

On 4 and 29 August, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) chaired a meeting of the Electoral Task Force to discuss with other members of the Federal Government and the NIEC aspects of the draft Electoral Law. The meeting was focused on reaching an agreement regarding amendments from various ministries and the NIEC on the Electoral Law. A subcommittee of nine members was tasked to prepare a final draft of the law for

presentation to the Electoral Task Force in September; before further consultations are envisaged with political parties and representatives from the Federal Member States. MOIFAR strives to reach for a consensus on the draft law before official presentation to the Council of Ministers and subsequent submission to Parliament.

The members of the subcommittee comprise 4 staff members of MOIFAR, 2 from the NIEC, 2 from

the Office of the Prime Minister, and 1 from the Office of the President. The committee focuses on the identification of those articles that need political agreement, such as the constituency size, the system of representation, an electoral appeal system and the election of the Upper House. Technical details will be required in the law to clarify the process of seat allocation.

NIEC Temporary Registration Certificates for seven new Political Parties



Picture 2: NIEC Chairperson awarding temporary registration certificates to new political parties, Mogadishu, 26-August 2018. (Photo credit: NIEC)

The NIEC offered temporary registration certificates to seven more political parties, bringing the total number of registered political parties to 22. The awards ceremony was held in the NIEC office on 26 August, 2018. Names and details of the different political parties can be found on the NIEC's website: www.niec.so.

The political party registration is envisaged to be conducted in two phases: temporary certification until general registration of voters, followed by official political party registration based on the submission of the required signatories of 10,000 registered voters, from minimum 9 of the 18 regions that existed before 1991.

Draft Concept Note Voter Registration

On 29 August, IESG and NIEC senior management discussed a draft concept note on Voter Registration (VR). The document describes the Concept of Operations (ConOps) for the voter registration process from a technical point of view. The document outlines different key operational activities to the implementation of voter registration, an overview of operational scenarios - looking both into manual and biometric voter registration methodologies, as well as an overall financial cost evaluation of VR hardware and software pertaining to VR kits and the operationalisation of the NIEC central data processing centre. IESG is also working on the development of an operational chronogram for voter registration, listing key benchmarks and activities leading up to the publication of the final voter list. The timelines and durations of activities still need to be identified and require elaborated discussions with the NIEC. The document will enable the NIEC to monitor progress on the VR operation.

IESG Electoral Capacity Development

The UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) comprises electoral advisors from both UNDP and UNSOM, brought together to strengthen the institutional capacity development of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) through provision of electoral advisory support, tailored workshops, hands-on assistance, deployment of national advisors, and joint planning on electoral preparations. Together with the NIEC, IESG has mapped out a detailed matrix to plan and enhance different kinds of electoral trainings and workshop for the upcoming period. In August, IESG provided workshops for NIEC staff members on Electoral Logistics; Civic and Voter Education; and Media Engagement and Public Outreach; and Monitoring, Coaching and Skills Transfer. IESG also contributed to the workshop from the African Union/AMISOM to the NIEC and other partners on electoral systems and boundary delimitation.

Media Engagement and Public Outreach Workshop for NIEC



Picture 3: Participants at the Media and Public Outreach Workshop, Mogadishu, 18-19 August 2018. (Photo credit: NIEC)

increase ability of the NIEC to engage the media and the Somali public in the run up to the 2020 one-person-one-vote elections.

The workshop was delivered by UN representatives and electoral experts from the continent using the “BRIDGE” curriculum (“Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections”), which is a professional training platform used around the world to support democratic electoral processes.

On 18 and 19 August, the staff members from the NIEC took part in a two-day public outreach workshop in Mogadishu organized by IESG, with funding from the European Union, Germany and the UK. The purpose of the workshop was to

Civic and Voter Education Training for NIEC Staff

From 27 to 29 August 2018, IESG organized a Civic Education workshop to reinforce the NIEC's capacity on the concepts of civic and voter education. Different approaches and mediums were discussed, to assist the NIEC with developing the basis and design of a context-specific programme for civic and voter education. Participants recommended to involve influential community figures such as religious leaders to build the trust among communities and for the smooth implementation of the NIEC's Civic and

Voter Education (CVE) programme. Staff members of the NIEC secretariat appreciated the content of the training and admired that the workshop conducted at a crucial time when the NIEC is working on the preparations for universal elections. Challenges identified regarding the implementation of the NIEC's CVE programme in the field, including security concerns. The workshop was facilitated by BRIDGE experts from different countries in Africa to provide cross-cutting examples.



Picture 4: NIEC staff at Civic and Voter Education Training Mogadishu, 27-29 August 2018. (Photo credit: NIEC)



Capacity Building Workshop for NIEC and other Stakeholders on Electoral Systems and Boundaries Delimitation

From 6 to 9 August 2018, the African Union and its Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) organized a training workshop on electoral boundaries delimitation and electoral systems for the NIEC and other members of the Electoral Task Force (ETF) in Nairobi, Kenya. The multi-stakeholder training workshop drew Somali participants from the NIEC, the Boundaries and Federation Commission (BFC), the Federal Government and some Members of Parliaments. IESG facilitated certain parts of the workshop, in particular the GIS mapping of potential voter allocation centres. Electoral systems and electoral boundary delimitation are crucial in shaping the type of electoral architecture for Somalia and the workshop was conducted at a crucial time when stakeholders are engaged in constitutional-making process and development of the legal framework for the general elections based on universal suffrage.



Picture 5: Representatives from AMISOM in the capacity building workshop on Electoral Boundaries Delimitation, Nairobi, 6-9 August 2018. (Photo credit: NIEC)

Training on Mentoring, Coaching and Skills Transfer

On 15 August 2018, IESG conducted a workshop on Mentoring, Coaching and Skills Transfer for the national advisors embedded at the NIEC. During the workshop the IESG training advisors explored practical approaches aimed at bringing out the best performance in individuals and teams, identified areas for improvement to enhance performance of the NIEC and raised discussions to improve the reporting system.



Picture 6: IESG team conducting Mentoring, Coaching and Skills Transfer Workshop for NIEC Advisors Mogadishu, 15 August 2018. (Photo credit: IESG)

Logistics and Electoral Operations Training for NIEC

From 5 to 7 August 2018, IESG conducted a training on Logistics and Electoral Operations for newly appointed NIEC staff. The training covered key logistics aspects such as Voter Registration (VR) trends, warehouse management on methodologies for proper packing, quality control, documentations, forms designing and transportation. The training was essential as the NIEC logistics will be playing a major role during the conduct of the electoral process.



Picture 7: IESG team conducting Logistics and Electoral Operations Training for NIEC Mogadishu, 5-7 August 2018. (Photo credit: NIEC)

Contact: