

NEWS LETTER

June 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

When the term of the current Federal Parliament comes to an end in late 2020, Somalia will be at a historic crossroad as the country committed itself to organize multi-party universal suffrage 'one person, one vote' elections for the first time since 1969.

The UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme for Electoral Support is putting its utmost efforts to develop favorable conditions and the necessary infrastructure to prepare for these elections. In 2018, the joint programme focuses on different crucial electoral preparatory steps to be taken, from institutional capacity-building and electoral support to the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), including its deployment at sub-national level; to preparations for voter registration, assessment of voting catchment

areas, accreditation of political parties, and the development of electoral procedures and regulations. In addition, the Joint Programme supports the NIEC with public outreach and enhanced engagements with national and sub-national stakeholders. Furthermore, assistance is being provided to the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) to draft the country's Electoral Law.

By the end of 2018, stock will be taken by all partners on progress and different crucial milestones, in particular the development of the electoral law, and the NIEC's decision on an agreed and accepted voter registration methodology.

Highlights (June 2018)

- ◆ 6 June: Somalia's National Security Council (NSC) agrees in Baidoa on the future electoral model;
- ◆ 9 and 10 June: NIEC consultation with local stakeholders on the development of the voter education curriculum;
- ◆ 11 June: NIEC registered five more political parties, granting in total 15 temporary registration certificates to date;
- ◆ 25 June: NIEC consultation meeting with political parties;
- ◆ 27 June: discussion amongst the government's Electoral Task Force on the drafting of the electoral law;
- ◆ 28 June: NIEC organized a visit to Kismayo, to discuss the establishment of its sub-national office and staff in Jubbaland;
- ◆ In June, IESG visited Kismayo, Jubbaland, and Baidoa, South-West, to assess UN logistical capacity in support of future NIEC electoral operations in the field.

NIEC temporary registration certificates for five more political parties

On 11 June 2018, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) offered temporary registration certificates to five political parties, bringing the total number of registered political parties to 15. Names and details of the different political parties can be found on the NIEC's website: www.niec.org.

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.



Baidoa Agreement on the Electoral Model

On 6 June, in Baidoa, the National Security Council (NSC), which comprises Somalia's Federal Government and the State Presidents, agreed on the electoral model for the federal elections, confirming "one person, one vote" suffrage elections based on political multi-party competition and closed list-proportional representation. Important elements, as literally mentioned in the Agreement, include:

Fundamental principles

- 3.1 The type of electoral system and electoral districts that the country shall adopt must be able to realize that the people can freely and democratically express their vote (one person, one vote);
- 3.2 The electoral system shall be one taking into consideration the security, economic conditions as well as balanced political representation;
- 3.3 The type of electoral system shall encourage political multi-party competition based on democratic model that consider balanced representation;
- 3.4 The type of electoral model must be one that protects the representation by women and minorities;
- 3.5 The electoral model must be one that encourages political multi-party system and based on democratic model that considers a balanced clan seat;
- 3.6 The type of electoral model must be one that safeguards representation by women and minorities;
- 3.7 The model of electoral system must be one that ensures community of the society and the inviolability of the Somali unity;
- 3.8 The electoral model must be one that gives confidence to the Somali people that their needs are duly represented by

deputies chosen by them.

Based on the principles enunciated above the Council agreed on following decisions:

- Article 1: The Electoral Model for the country shall be the Closed List-Proportional Representation one;
- Article 2: Somali persons that have right to express their voting preferences must be



- registered, wherever it is possible, and made sure that they freely vote;
- Article 3: Voting process shall take all over the country, wherever it is possible in a unified country;
- Article 4: The drafting and approval of the electoral law concluded latest by December 2018;
- Article 5: (Government) agencies tasked with electoral process are instructed to implement this agreement as per the laws of the country.
- The Joint Programme for Electoral Support has been providing in-depth technical assistance to MOIFAR, the lead entity within the Government to draft the Electoral Law, and other key interlocutors on electoral concepts of the different systems of representation. By supporting an 'Electoral Law Working Group' (ELWG) within MOIFAR, consisting of 5 to 6 national advisors, the Project provided

technical and legal advice, and encouraged the Ministry to seek consensus amongst federal and member state partners on key aspects of the law, before submission to the Council of Ministers and parliament. The Government's Roadmap for 2020 elections envisages that the electoral law will be completed by end of 2018. An informal Electoral Task Force (ETF), including the MOIFAR ELWG, the NIEC, advisors from the President's Office and from the Prime Minister, and representatives of other Ministries had briefed in March and April the joint FGS-FMS 'Technical Committee for the Promotion of Federal Affairs'. This



Technical Committee was requested to submit a proposal containing the 'applicable' electoral system for Somalia to the NSC in Baidoa.

The Baidoa Agreement, including consensus on the system of representation, paves the way for the development of the Electoral Law by MOIFAR and the submission of the draft law by the Council of Ministers to the Parliament. The NSC tasked the relevant government entities to implement the 'Baidoa Agreement' and to have the Electoral Law concluded by December 2018.

Meeting of the Electoral Task Force on the drafting of the Electoral Law

Following the Baidoa Agreement, the federal 'Electoral Task Force' met on 27 June to discuss and improve the draft Law and to agree on a road map leading to the passage of the Law by December 2018. The meeting was attended by the NIEC, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation (MoIFAR),

representatives from the Office of the President (OoP), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (MoCA), Boundaries and Federation Commission (BFC), Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD) and the Ten-person committee.

NIEC Consultative Forum with Political Parties



On 25 June 2018 the NIEC organized in Mogadishu a consultative forum for all temporary registered political parties, discussing the indispensable role of political parties in the electoral process. NIEC Chair Ms. Halima Ismail emphasized the requirement for political parties to organize themselves, and develop their regulations based on the legal framework and party policies.

The Chair also highlighted the need for collaboration between political parties and the Commission to make the election process inclusive and transparent. The NIEC Deputy Chair Sayid Ali Sheikh Mohamed stressed the importance for political parties to be fully registered after the current temporary registration.

NIEC Chairperson nominated for the 2018 Chatham House Prize



Chairperson, Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim, has been nominated to the shortlist for the 2018 Chatham House Prize, for her work in the stewardship of the NIEC.

Consultative Meeting on Development & Implementation of Voter Education Curriculum



Voter education enhances the public awareness of the democratic process, builds confidence in the transparency and accountability of the electoral process, and promotes opportunities for inclusive participation. The NIEC has an important responsibility to optimize

public participation in the electoral process and to safeguard the democratic process; and has identified Voter Education as top priority in its Strategic Plan.

Towards this result, on 9 and 10 June, the NIEC organized a two-day consultation session with civil society, education institutions, media, youth and women associations, and government agencies on the development and the implementation of a voter education curriculum. Prominent participants included the Somali National University (SNU), academy of science, culture and arts as well as ministries of education, women and information. During the 2-day consultation session, the participants



put forward interesting ideas for the NIEC to tap into during the development and implementation of a national voter education curriculum.

NIEC meeting with the Leadership of the House of People of the Federal Parliament

On 6 June 2018, a delegation of National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) led by the Chairperson Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim



met with the Speaker of the House of People (HoP), Mr. Mohamed Mursal Sheikh Abdirahman, the two Deputy Speakers and the Permanent Committee.

The meeting was organized by the NIEC to brief the new leadership the House about the Commission's mandate, its

strategic plan, and the activities of the last months as well as upcoming plans. The NIEC delegation presented the report of the public consultations of the

2020 electoral process together with recommendations of the Somali people. The leadership of the HoP of the Federal Parliament were also given the report of the voter registration feasibility study carried out by the NIEC. The NIEC also informed the House about the limited timetable for the 2021 universal elections and the imperatives that need to put in place for the elections, such as the completion of the necessary legal framework, election funding, and the construction of the NIEC headquarters in Mogadishu.

IESG field missions in Kismayo and Baidoa

From 10 to 14 June and from 22 to 26 July, The UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) conducted field missions to Kismayo and Baidoa, respectively, to analyze programme presence in those cities, to determine support to the NIEC deployment plans in Jubbaland and South-West; to assess UN logistical capacity in support of NIEC electoral operations in the field; and to have an informed opinion on the security situation on the ground in both Federal Member States.

Glimpse of IESG supported activities in June



On 25 June, NIEC Organized a Consultative Forum on Role of Political Parties in Electoral Process



On 3-4 June, a high level of National Security Council held in Baidoa.



On 6 June, NIEC Meeting with the Leadership of the House of People



On 9-10 June, consultative meeting on development & implementation of Voter Education Curriculum



NIEC visit to Kismayo

On 28 June a delegation from the NIEC led by the chairperson Ms. Halima Ibrahim reached Kismayo. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the establishment of its sub-national office and staff in Jubbaland;

For Contact: