

**“The Electoral Process in Burundi: Lessons and Prospects”**  
**Bujumbura, 11-13 March 2013**  
**Elements for a roadmap towards 2015**

Under the auspices of the United Nations, the former Presidents of the Republic, the distinguished representatives of the Government and the Senate, the Honourable Ombudsman, the President of the Independent National Electoral Commission, and political parties and actors meeting in the premises of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), have hereby agreed to consider the following elements:

**General Principles**

1. Political dialogue which includes all political actors is a requirement for the democratic life of any nation;
2. Elections are one of the vital components in the political life of a nation, hence the need to properly organize the entire electoral cycle—the legal framework, the campaigns, the ballots, and the post-electoral period—in a transparent, free and fair manner;
3. The creation of a conducive security environment for the holding of free and peaceful elections is crucial;
4. Political parties, actors and coalitions should be able to freely carry out their activities in compliance with the laws in force;
5. A climate of mutual trust characterized by openness, frank dialogue, transparency and diverse participation is a prerequisite for the holding of free, transparent and fair elections;
6. The political participation of women at all levels must be encouraged to guarantee equal opportunity as envisaged by the Constitution and international instruments, and to ensure their contribution to decision-making on the future of their country;
7. The parties must respect the verdict of the ballot box. The winners should avoid any triumphalism and govern in the interest of all citizens. The losers should resolve any electoral disputes through peaceful and legal means;
8. The winners and losers of an election should work together in the interest of all citizens;
9. In a democracy there is no place for resorting to violence;
10. The role of the media and civil society in consolidating democratic achievements must be protected. They should perform their duties professionally and in accordance with their codes of professional conduct;
11. Creating a conducive environment for the holding of free, transparent and fair elections is as much a responsibility of the government and institutions as it is of political parties and political actors, civil society, religious denominations and the media;

**Recommendations**

**Legal Framework of Elections**

12. Ensure the adoption of a consensual electoral code to be promulgated no later than December 2013;

13. Reach consensus on the Constitutional provisions that should be revised before the elections;
14. Request the President of the Republic, in accordance with Articles 297 and 299 of the Constitution, to specify the Constitutional provisions to be amended as soon as possible;
15. Prepare in an inclusive manner for the revision and harmonization of the legal framework governing elections and the national political landscape;
16. Ensure that fundamental civil and political freedoms are respected and, in this regard, harmonize national laws related to human rights and civil liberties with the Constitution of Burundi and with international instruments to which Burundi is party, taking into consideration the views of political parties and actors;

### **National, Provincial and Communal Independent Electoral Commissions (CENI, CEPI and CECI)**

17. Guarantee the independence, impartiality and financial autonomy of the CENI;
18. Ensure that the CENI applies the sanctions foreseen by law with regard to electoral matters;
19. Agree on the inclusive representation of political parties in the CEPIs and CECIs;
20. Establish electoral dispute management bodies other than the CENI with simple and clear rules and procedures;
21. Establish a system for the evaluation and self-evaluation of political parties and actors and the CENI after each phase of the electoral process;
22. Establish a mechanism for regular dialogue between the CENI and political parties and actors;

### **Conducive Environment**

23. Guarantee the participation of all political actors in the electoral process through inclusive dialogue on all electoral issues;
24. Enshrine dialogue among all stakeholders as an imperative in political governance and the governance of political parties;
25. Encourage the merging and/or reunification of political parties, and ensure non-interference in the functioning of political parties;
26. End impunity and reject all forms of violence as a mode of political expression;
27. Guarantee civic education for all stakeholders in the electoral process, in particular to fight intolerance and guarantee a more marked participation of women in the electoral process;
28. Consider the best manner of guaranteeing the implementation of the ethnic and gender balances provided for by the Constitution of Burundi and giving concrete expression to the spirit of the Arusha Agreement;
29. Ensure that youth affiliated to political parties contribute constructively to the establishment of a conducive environment for the elections;
30. Create a security environment that protects all political actors and facilitates their activities as well as the free participation of the population in the electoral process;

31. Guarantee the free access of political parties and actors to State media as well as the freedom of expression, of demonstration, and of assembly;
32. Ensure political pluralism by guaranteeing the participation of all in elections;
33. Draw up and ensure the adoption of a code of conduct to guide the actions of political actors throughout the electoral process;

### **Management and Conduct of Elections**

34. Ensure the periodic and transparent revision of the electoral register and the issuing of legal identity cards and voter cards to all citizens meeting the necessary requirements;
35. Use single ballot papers during the next elections;
36. Combine some polls;
37. Adopt distinctive party insignia to avoid any confusion;
38. Ensure the equitable treatment of and the coverage of basic expenses for the representatives of candidates during the electoral process;
39. Ensure that the records of the tabulations of votes are pasted and transmitted securely to the competent authority, and that the representatives of candidates receive a copy of the tabulations and/or the results slips after the voting;
40. Associate national, regional and international observation missions to the holding of elections;

### **Follow-up Mechanism**

41. Ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the workshop in an inclusive framework comprising political parties and actors, with the support of the United Nations and international partners;
42. In this spirit, request the Government to organize, as soon as possible, follow-up workshops and to draw up a calendar for the implementation of the workshop recommendations in close cooperation with the relevant national institutions, Burundian political parties and actors, the United Nations, and international partners.

*Bujumbura, 13 March 2013*

## **Contributions to the Discussions by members of the International Community**

Among the points made by the international partners, it can be noted in particular that they:

- Welcomed the inclusive dialogue initiated thanks to the workshop on ‘Lessons learned from 2010 and perspectives for 2015’ and encouraged the government as well as all other political actors to maintain this inclusive dialogue with a view to peaceful, just and transparent elections in 2015.
- Undertook to provide technical, financial and logistical support to the government to guarantee the organization of credible, free, transparent and fair elections;
- Welcomed the return to Burundi of political leaders in exile and called on them to stay in the country to work with the members of their parties and contribute to the organization of the 2015 elections;
- Stressed the inclusive nature of the elections and the responsibility of the government and political parties to guarantee the organization of peaceful elections ;
- Encouraged the government and political parties to respect the verdict of the ballot box;
- Encouraged the government and political parties to implement the recommendations of this workshop as well as those of the 2010 election observation missions with a view to improving the legal framework and the political and security environment for peaceful elections in 2015;
- Expressed their willingness to deploy observation missions during the 2015 elections if the Government of Burundi so wishes;
- Supported the Government’s call to political leaders that are still in exile to return to Burundi to contribute not only to the improvement of the political climate but also to participate in the 2015 elections.

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