

UNDP/UNSOM INTEGRATED ELECTORAL SUPPORT GROUP (IESG) TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

Electoral summit concludes with agreement on key issues

On 27 May, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member State (FMS) leaders reached agreement on key issues related to the implementation of the electoral process, including a roadmap for taking forward Somalia’s state-building process. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the agreement and urged all stakeholders to swiftly implement it as a “critical step toward the holding of a consensual and transparent electoral process without further delays.”

The members of the Security Council welcomed the commitment to “hold peaceful, transparent, inclusive, and credible elections, which respect the agreed-upon minimum 30% women’s quota in parliament”. They also commended the support provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and expressed their full backing for both missions as the country prepares for elections, implements the roadmap outlined in the appendix to the 27 May Communiqué, and “works to deliver the transition to Somali-led security, as called for in UN Security Council Resolution 2568.”

Under the 17 September electoral model agreed upon in 2020 by FGS and FMSs, delegates selected by traditional elders and civil society would elect a parliament, which then would elect a president. The parliamentary elections were scheduled for December 2020 but were then delayed.

The talks between FGS and FMS leaders, which began in March 2021, regrettably broke down in early April. The House of the People of the Somali Parliament then adopted a “Special Law” abandoning the landmark agreement and extending the mandates of current officeholders for up to two years. Opposition to these moves led to the mobilization of militias and exposed divisions within Somali security forces. Violent clashes ensued on 25 April, risking broader conflict. “Since then, Somalia has come back from the brink of this worst-case scenario,” noted SRSRG James Swan in his briefing to the Security Council on 25 May, recalling that the House of the People reversed the Special Law on 1 May under intense pressure, which finally eased tensions.



The photo was published by the OPM facebook page on 29 May 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/OPMSomalia/posts/2992025377695243>

The United Nations, in close coordination with key international partners, facilitated the resumption of dialogue and supported the organization of the Mogadishu summit.

On 29 May, the Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, together with all the FMS Presidents and Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) Governor, held a meeting with the international development partners regarding financial and technical support to the implementation of the electoral agreement and the management of election security.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Electoral summit agreement on key issues
- Women’s 30% quota for parliamentary seats
- Election security preparedness
- IESG SWOT
- NIEC capacity building

Electoral committees

On 20 April, Deputy Prime Minister Khadar Gulaid met with the indirect electoral committees to thank them for their efforts over the past six months. The Deputy Prime Minister requested the electoral committees to vacate by 25 April the hotels from where they have been working, to reduce expenses.

While there was no official statement from FGS, some media outlets claimed that the committees were disbanded but the Federal Elections Implementation Team (FEIT) chairman claimed these were fake news.



Source: <https://twitter.com/KhadarGulaid/status/1384580129284833289?s=19> @Mahdi M. Gulaid Twitter account (20 April 2021)

Women's 30% quota for parliamentary seats

IESG, as part of the UN Gender and Elections Task Team (GETT), participated in a review of the strategy to achieve the 30% quota for women's representation in parliament. Considering the new political agreement on indirect elections, GETT will consider how best to support the women of Somalia in their

efforts to ensure that the National Consultative Council meets its commitment to the 30% women's quota both in electoral management bodies and the parliament.

Election security preparedness

On 18 April, the ICT equipment and Motorola tactical radio system were deployed for the Garowe Joint Operations Centre (JOC), and successfully handed over to JOC Focal Point.

On 24 April, ICT equipment and office stationery were handed over to the JOC Focal Point in Bosasso, Puntland.

Most of IESG support to elections security was largely paused in May, while preparations for the 20 May summit were ongoing, with the exception of the ongoing installation of the tactical radio system at the Beletweyne JOC.



On 19 April, the Somali Police Commissioner, Major General Abdi Hassan Mohamed, participated in the awards ceremony that concluded the training for 13 Somali Police Force (SPF) operators at the General Kaahiye Police Academy in Mogadishu, supported by IESG. He advised the trainees to be diligent and put into practice what they had learned. The aim of the training was to rebuild SPF communication radio operators-trainers' skills to perform their duties and enhance their knowledge of police radio communications to improve police communications. The training aimed to help participants understand the principles of communication radio procedures; learn how to use the new tactical communications equipment provided by the Peacebuilding Fund project implemented by IESG; understand Motorola Digital two-way system IP site and how it connects to the designed national network to provide secure communications for the Somali national elections. The SPF Communications Directorate is working to build a national communications system to secure the national elections.

IESG supports UN and non-UN electoral assistance coordination

On 14 and 28 April, IESG hosted meetings for the international electoral assistance partners, which was attended by Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), Creative Associates, UN Women, UNDP, IOM, UNSOM gender unit and PAMG.

IESG continued to host the UN electoral task force meetings during the reporting period (6, 13, 27 April, and 11 and 25 May).



Assistance to NIEC Office of Political Party Registrar

The IESG IT Section is currently assisting the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) Office of the Political Party Registrar (OPPR) in developing a software tool to register political parties. Apart from information such as party name, abbreviation and other required information, the software will record the parties' logos, manage fee payment and registration status. The political party registration database will be deployed at the NIEC headquarters.



Assistance to NIEC Office of Political Party Registrar (cont'd)

Each political party is required to have 10,000 members. The software will record each party member's attributes in bulk from an electronic file adhering to a specific template designed by the NIEC through the OPRR. Information about every party member will be vetted to identify potential duplicates. All party executive members details will be registered in the system and their attributes compared to those of other parties to flag potential duplicates. The IESG IT Section has also helped the OPRR design drafts of different forms that will be used by the political parties to record registration information.

IESG SWOT analysis

Over the past six years, IESG has been supporting the NIEC by providing capacity building on all the phases of the electoral cycle to enable the organization to fulfil its mandate. Recently, IESG conducted an internal analysis of its approach to NIEC capacity building, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and make necessary adjustments where required for improved impact. The analysis

was based on how best IESG can structure its approach on capacity building to ensure the NIEC has suitably skilled staff to implement an electoral process. The outcome of this analysis generated new ideas and the knowledge gained will enable improvements to be made to capacity building efforts tailored to the requirements of the NIEC.

NIEC to develop a new five-year strategic plan

Following its all-staff retreat held in January 2021, and in preparation for developing a new five-year strategic plan for 2022-2026, the NIEC is conducting a SWOT analysis exercise. The exercise takes a holistic approach assessing NIEC's internal and external environment and identifying gaps and improvement opportunities.

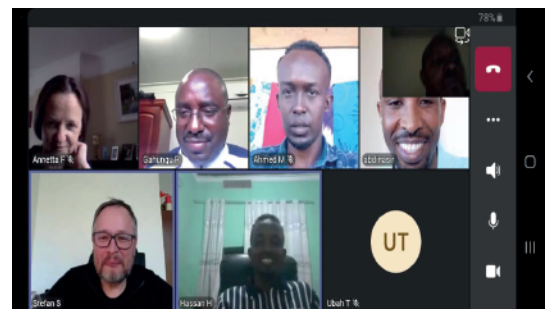
The NIEC is committed to fulfilling its mission through a blend of sound election management, strong governance and dedication to vision as driving forces that give the organization its purpose and direction.

NIEC capacity building

Preparations to review electoral legal framework

In April and May, IESG Legal/Procedures team prepared and conducted online sessions on the electoral legal framework review, as a part of their regular mentoring sessions with the Legal Department of the NIEC. The sessions were preceded by planning and needs assessment meetings, held with NIEC Legal department on 8 and 15 April. The interactive workshops provided guidance on the definition and content of the Electoral Legal Framework, and the fundamental principles to be respected when assessing and reviewing the electoral legal framework to support the NIEC electoral legal framework review process.

As a follow-up activity, a draft table of contents of an Electoral Law was prepared by both legal teams in order to identify gaps and shortcomings of the existing Electoral Legal Framework. These workshops are part of the IESG's ongoing capacity building and mentoring activities. The activity was designed to enhance the technical capabilities of NIEC Legal Department staff to assess and review the Electoral Legal Framework, and to be able to provide advice on how to amend it. Participants acquired knowledge and technical skills on how to develop appropriate and effective proposals for decision makers to achieve an inclusive electoral process in line with the Constitution. The workshops functioned as a kick-off event to provide context before beginning the actual work of assessing and reviewing the Electoral Legal Framework. The NIEC aims to build its capacity as an electoral expert body capable of providing technical advice to decision makers on the review of the Electoral Legal Framework in Somalia.

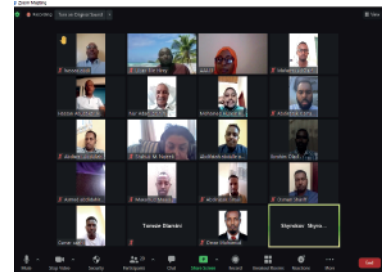


Supervisory skills workshop



NIEC capacity building (cont'd)

NIEC management staff from the Field Offices and Headquarters participated in a Supervisory Skills working session from 17 to 20 May, coordinated by IESG and delivered virtually by United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) Training Unit. The session was organized based on the recommendations of the NIEC all-staff retreat held in January 2021. The working session focused on leadership, motivation, appraisal of staff performance, receiving and giving feedback. To assess the increase in knowledge, staff were given scenarios to apply the concepts that they learned. They shared ideas on how they can be agents of change to improve their organizational culture and be an organization of choice to attract and retain employees through excellence in leadership and professionalism. Participants worked on practice cases and received feedback. Participants also prepared action plans, which they will use in their day-to-day work applying the knowledge gained from the training.

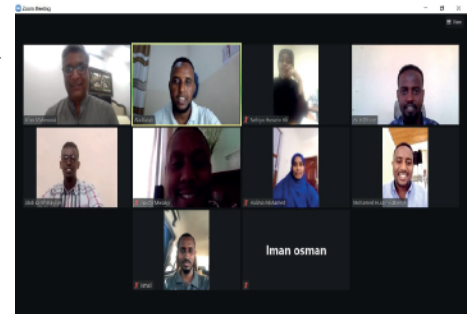


Management skills training

On 5 April, IESG delivered a training session for the NIEC Directorate of Administration and Finance entitled 'Identification of the needs and preparation of descriptions of specifications for Goods.' The training enabled NIEC participants to increase their knowledge on the preparation of solicitation documents and preparation of description of specifications for goods. The training provided clear and detailed guidance on the procedures to be followed to identify the needs and prepare solicitation documents in line with the FGS procurement rules and procedures.

On 12 April, IESG organized a training for the NIEC Directorate of Administration and Finance entitled 'Preparation of descriptions of requirements for Civil Works.' The training focused on the preparation of solicitation documents and the requirements for civil works, and offered guidance on the procedures to be followed for preparation of solicitation documents for civil works in line with FGS procurement rules and procedures.

On 31 May, IESG conducted a refresher training session for the NIEC Directorate of Administration and Finance entitled 'Financial Management and Procurement.' The training addressed the issues of financial management of Letter of Agreements (LoAs) and the role of procurement review and evaluation committees. The session provided detailed guidance on the management of cash advance funds provided by UNDP under the LoA, and the roles and functions of the two committees.



Farewell to IESG project manager

Mr. Irfan Mahmood, IESG project manager since September 2019, has been re-assigned as Senior Project Management Specialist with UNDP Libya office to support a) Promoting Elections for the People of Libya (PEPOL) and 2) Political Dialogue (PD). He will assume his new role with UNDP Libya on 7 June 2021. Mr. Mahmood joined UNDP Somalia office on 1 October 2015 where he initially supported a) Parliamentary Support Project and b) Support to Constitution Review process.

Later, he led the Inclusive Politics portfolio project management team under five projects including a) Electoral support programme b) Constitution Review Support c) Parliamentary Support d) Reconciliation and Federalism Support and e) Women's Political Participation. From September 2019, he had been successfully supporting IESG as a Project Manager. As a valued member of the IESG team, we wish to take this opportunity to thank Irfan for his hard work and dedication, and wish him good luck with the new assignment.



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