

NEWS LETTER

September-October 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

FGS meeting with International Partners on Inclusive Politics

Federal Government re-states Commitment to hold Universal Elections in 2020



NIEC Chairperson, Halima Ismail Ibrahim, presenting progress on preparations for "one person, one vote" elections during a meeting on Inclusive Politics. Mogadishu, 1 October 2018. (Photo credit: UNDP)

On 1 October 2018, the Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire hosted a meeting in Mogadishu and updated International Partners on the Government's Inclusive Politics agenda. The Federal Government and the Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim, reiterated the Government's commitment of holding one-person-one-vote elections in 2020, and called on the international community to continue to support inclusive constitutional review, federalization and electoral processes in the country.

In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister outlined achievements made by his Administration under the inclusive politics agenda, listing the agreements made in Baidoa in June in 2018 on the electoral model and resource sharing,

deepening federalism, and completion of the review of the first five chapters of the constitution, as key milestones along an inclusive political roadmap that was agreed by the Government in late 2017. The Prime Minister reconfirmed the Government's commitment to empowering the Somali citizens to fully participate in governance processes, and for the citizens' voices to be heard and represented.

Halima Ismail Ibrahim, Chairperson of the NIEC, underscored the progress made in preparation for universal elections, and underlined the need for continued international and national support to deliver the elections in 2020. The Chairperson emphasized that 2019 is a critical time for timely preparations and different electoral deadlines already to be met.

Highlights

- ◆ 4 Sept: Conduct of by-election in Galmudug
- ◆ 1 Oct: FGS meeting with International Partners on Inclusive Politics
- ◆ 7 Oct: NIEC conduct of by-election in Puntland
- ◆ 9-11 Oct: NIEC workshop development Voter Education Curriculum
- ◆ 15-18 Oct: NIEC Institutional Governance Workshop
- ◆ 17 Oct: NIEC meeting with newly appointed UN SRSG
- ◆ 20-24 Oct: Review workshop of the NIEC Strategic Plan
- ◆ 21-28 Oct: NIEC pilot project of GIS mapping of voter allocation areas
- ◆ 23-27 Oct: MoIFAR holds consultations with Political Parties and CSOs on Electoral Law

The United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia (DSRSG), Peter de Clercq underscored the importance of women's participation in political processes, the significance to finalize the Electoral Law by the end of 2018, and the continued collaboration between the Federal Government and Federal Member States in order to move forward on gains made. He underlined that women's representation and participation, particularly in leadership and decision-making, is one of the fundamental underpinnings of inclusive politics. The DSRSG reconfirmed the UN's support to the constitutional review process, the elections, federalism and reconciliation, as Somali-led and Somali-owned processes.

MolFAR Consultations with Political Parties and Civil Society on the draft Electoral Law

In October, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MolFAR) finalized the draft of the country's Electoral Law in preparation of Somalia's first universal elections since 1969.

From 23 to 28 October 2018, MolFAR held consultations with registered political parties, political associations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on different aspects of the draft Electoral Law.

For four days, from 23 to 28 October, workshops were held in Mogadishu where 75 to 100 representatives of political parties and associations presented, while on 28 October a separate session was also held with approximately 120 members of civil society groups, including 20 from the Federal Member States.

In both workshops, MolFAR and experts of the Federal Government presented the draft law to the participants, explained key elements and organized Q&A sessions to

provide clarifications. Participants were offered the opportunity to provide comments; which were compiled and added as an annex to the draft Law. The purpose of the consultative workshops was to listen to the views and concerns of political parties and civil society organizations on the draft electoral law before sending it to the Council of Ministers of the Federal Government for further deliberation. As a next step, the Council of Minister has to submit the draft Law to Parliament. The FGS has committed in different instances that the Electoral Law will be approved before the end of 2018.

The Electoral Law is a priority for the Federal Government of Somalia and defines the future system of representation, including the type of electoral system, the constituency, the respective seat allocations, electoral principles, and the framework for the NIEC to organize universal elections.



Glimpses of consultations with political parties and CSOs on electoral law, Mogadishu, 23-28 October 2018. (Photos: NICE)

NIEC mapping of voter catchment areas and possible voter registration locations

In September, the NIEC finalized a desk study identifying 1,763 potential voter catchment areas across the country, based on satellite images, GIS data and tentative population estimates. The identification of voter catchment areas is a first step in the process of establishing future voter registration centres. In October, the NIEC conducted a pilot exercise in two districts to verify on the ground the voter catchment areas. Equipped with GIS tools, the NIEC recruited enumerators to map 140 potential voter registration points in one district in Mogadishu and one in Jowhar, and to identify suitable locations to possibly serve later as voter registration centres. The results of the pilot project will feed into the NIEC's planning of a nationwide verification process of voter catchment areas in the upcoming months.



NIEC staff engaged in pilot mapping exercise for identification of potential voter registration centers. Mogadishu, October 2018. (Photos: NIEC)

First meeting of newly appointed UN SRSG with Electoral Commission Somalia

On 17 October 2018, the newly appointed Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia, Nicholas Haysom, had his first meeting with the Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), Ms. Halima Ibrahim, ahead of the preparations of the country's important 2020 elections.

Mr. Nicholas Haysom highlighted that the UN and international community continuing their support to Somalis in their pursuit of universal suffrage. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Nicholas Haysom of South Africa as his Special Representative for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. Mr. Haysom had a long international career with a focus on democratic governance, constitutional and electoral reforms, reconciliation and peace processes.



Newly appointed SRSG, Nicholas Haysom meeting with Halima Ibrahim, Chairperson NIEC, Mogadishu, 17 October (Photo credit: IESG)

NIEC Strategic Plan Review Workshop



Officials from NIEC in Review Workshop of the NIEC Strategic Plan Mogadishu, 20-24 October 2018 (Photo credit: IESG)

From 20 to 24 October 2018, the NIEC, in collaboration with UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (UN IESG) convened a five-day intensive strategic review workshop at the AMISOM VIP Conference Centre in Mogadishu. Officials from the NIEC together with IESG and the US 'BUILD' Project and senior facilitators, including the former Chair of the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBCS) attended the review of NIEC strategic plan workshop.

The objective of the workshop was to review the activities in line with the NIEC Strategic Plan and evaluate the progress as well as to assess the NIEC institutional capacity to achieve the goal of universal one-person-one-vote elections to be held in 2020.

During the workshop, the participants identified areas in the NIEC Strategic Plan that require review and adjustment, assessed the capacity gaps of the NIEC and other stakeholders, and identified partners to enhance effectiveness in the implementation of the strategic plan as well as effective management of the electoral processes.

Finally, the review is to emerge with an action plan containing specific project activities and priorities including identified possible collaboration with different partners to achieve maximum output. A follow-up workshop is scheduled in December to finalize the action plan. It was also stressed to build an effective mechanism of coordination and monitoring of the works of the various clusters.

Conduct of by-elections in Galmudug and Puntland

On 4 September and 7 October, the NIEC conducted a by-election in Dhusamarreb, in Galmudug state, and in Garowe, Puntland, respectively, for two vacant seats in the Federal House of the People. The by-elections were conducted according to the procedures of the '2016 clan-based limited franchise electoral process', with 51 clan-members voting for the candidates from their respective clan.



NIEC Chairperson present in Dhusamarreb to conduct by-election. Galmudug, 4 September 2018, (Photo credit: NIEC)

NIEC Institutional Governance Workshop

The NIEC has prioritised governance as an avenue for continuous learning essential for the establishment of a professional and credible institution, contributing to the transformation of Somalia as the country embarks on a new democratic trajectory. Recognising the importance to practice effective leadership and governance in executing its statutory mandate, the members of the Commission have acknowledged the need for capacity development in the area of governance and leadership.

From 15-18 October 2018, the NIEC, with the support of IESG conducted an Institutional Governance Workshop at AMISOM VIP in Mogadishu. The workshop was attended by NIEC Commissioners and senior management of the Secretariat, and facilitated by two senior experts, including the former Chair of the IEBC who was instrumental

in sharing experiences and expertise.

The workshop aimed to build the institutional capacity of the NIEC in governance and leadership and to strengthen management, administrative,



Officials from NIEC in Institutional Governance Workshop Mogadishu, 15-18 October 2018 (Photo credit: IESG)

policies and operations that are essential for the Commission to become accountable and effective institution in executing its responsibilities in a professional, transparent and credible manner.

The workshop contributes to a strong foundation integrating global best practices, standards and ethics that

demonstrate accountability, transparency and integrity in the operations of the Commission, providing strategic leadership and ethical conduct as they discharge their statutory mandate as articulated in the Provisional Constitution and the NIEC 5-year strategic plan. A key concern was the vacant position of Secretary General of the NIEC Secretariat. While the post has been advertised and shortlisted has been completed, the Commission was requested to make the final decision on the best qualified individual the soonest.

At the end of the workshop, Chairperson NIEC and Commissioners demonstrated the NIEC's commitment to promoting good governance and practices as they prepare to undertake the mammoth task of delivering the first post-war democratic elections in Somalia.

NIEC Voter Education Curriculum Reviewing Workshop

From 9 to 11 October 2018, the NIEC organized a second round of consultation workshops on the preparation of Voter Education Curriculum in Mogadishu. The workshop was attended by 32 participants, including 9 women, from 22 registered political parties. The NIEC Chairperson Ms. Halima Ismail had officially opened the workshop and said, the purpose of the workshop is to engage stakeholders from different sectors to review the draft Voter Education Curriculum Handbook and to finalize it after the consultations.

On the first day, the NIEC briefed participants on the significance of Voter Education prior to the Somali universal suffrage. Through presentations, essential areas of voter education were covered such as electoral systems, electoral cycle, dispute settlements mechanism, security and result management system, as well as the best possible means and

approaches to conduct voter education awareness across the country e.g. SMS, radio, TV, role plays, poetry, songs and journals. The facilitators used different methods such as presentations, plenary discussions, group works, questions and answers sessions for the active



Participants at Voter Education Curriculum Reviewing Workshop Mogadishu, 9-11 October 2018. (Photo credit: NIEC)

participation of the participants in reviewing the draft Voter Education Curriculum Handbook.

On the second day of the workshop, 84

participants attended the workshop from different groups comprising youth representatives from various districts, universities (both public and private), marginalized youth, and disability groups. The workshop aimed to share knowledge with others to understand the electoral

process in general and the Voter Education more specifically, to comprehend the rights and responsibilities of citizens as well as participate on the electoral process. On the third day of the workshop, NIEC invited the stakeholders such as the women group, elders, business people, federal ministries, religious leaders, minorities, marginalized communities, and disabled groups. NIEC had selectively invited all these sectors of the communities as their stakeholders to be fully engaged in the completion of the Curriculum Handbook.



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