

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

Indirect elections start with the Upper House

In accordance with the 27 May agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the country's Federal Member States (FMSs), Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble appointed the Technical Elections Implementation Team (TEST) to facilitate the organization of the indirect elections under the direction of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). On 13 June, the UN started its meetings and discussions with the OPM/TEST. IESG coordinated discussions between OPM and UN entities and donors regarding the electoral operations budget in coordination with the FGS Ministry of Finance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Indirect elections for Upper House underway
- Project board meeting approves \$7.7 million in support of the indirect elections
- Indirect electoral committees elect leadership except Somaliland
- IESG supports electoral committees' induction training

On 19 June, Prime Minister Roble issued the list of the revised electoral committees in compliance with the 27 May agreement. The revised committees included members of the Federal Elections Implementation Team (FEIT), the Federal Elections Dispute Resolution Committee (FEDRC), and State-level Elections Implementation Teams (SEITs). The National Consultative Council (NCC) convened a meeting to discuss recent electoral developments on 28 and 29 June. The UN and international partners issued a joint press statement on 5 July welcoming the NCC meeting and noting that the "positive atmosphere at the meeting, including engagement with other stakeholders such as the Council of Presidential Candidates, is fundamental to continued progress toward elections."



Jubaland MP votes in the Upper House election
Photo Credit: Mohamed Hassan Iirro, FEIT chairperson, Facebook page on 29 July 2021

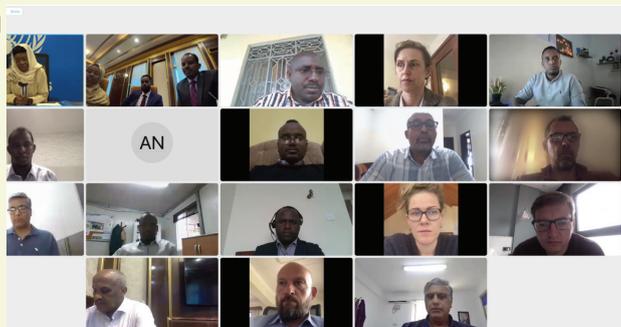
Another NCC meeting was convened on 27 July. The international partners issued a statement three days later citing several examples of progress: "An updated electoral calendar has been adopted. Most election management bodies have now been constituted and have chosen their leaders. An initial meeting of the Election Security Committee was convened. The PM appointed Goodwill Ambassadors to promote the women's 30 percent quota. All these are laudable achievements."

On 29 July, Jubaland held elections for four of the eight Upper House seats allocated to the FMS. Other FMSs are expected to follow suit during the month of August.

Project board meeting

On 26 July, a virtual project board meeting was held. The meeting was co-chaired by Jacqueline Olweya, the acting Resident Representative of UNDP in Somalia, and Halima Ismail, Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC).

The FGS has agreed to provide \$11.2 million in direct budget support drawn from candidate fees and own resources which, together with the international partners' commitment of \$7.7 million, should be sufficient to fully resource the election budget.



UN Joint Electoral Support Project board meeting on 26 July

Electoral committees

During July, the various electoral committees elected their chairpersons and deputy chairpersons except for Somaliland, which has yet to settle some leadership issues. The FEIT held a workshop on the participation of Persons with Disabilities on 24 July.

Induction training

On 3 July in Mogadishu, a three-day training was concluded for the FEIT, SEITs, and FEDRC. The training was organized by the TEST of the OPM and supported operationally and technically by IESG. On 30 June, Prime Minister Roble delivered an opening speech to the participants that highlighted the need for committees to function with integrity and warned against corruption and abuse of authority. The Prime Minister noted that committee members will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct. He also highlighted the historical importance of these elections for the country.



Indirect Electoral Committees Training - Photo credit: OPM Facebook page on 30 June

On 1 July, FEIT members were given a general briefing on the main aspects of the upcoming indirect elections. On 2 and 3 July, FEIT members met to discuss the budget, the five SEITs and the election implementation teams for the Banadir Regional Administration and Somaliland were trained. FEIT members met to discuss the budget, implementation of the 30% quota for women's representation in parliament, and internal coordination. NIEC advisors supported the induction training as requested by the TEST, and they formed an integral part of the induction programme.

NIEC capacity building

Mentoring sessions

On 2, 9, 13 and 14 June, mentoring sessions between representatives of the IESG Legal/ Procedures team and the NIEC Legal Department took place to provide advice and support on various legal and procedural matters. During the four mentoring sessions, the IESG Legal/Procedures team provided advice on legal requirements for the NIEC Office of the Political Party Registrar (OPPR) as well as political party registration software and forms to enable the NIEC Legal Department to work with the OPRR. Advice and support were also provided on election dispute resolution procedures and strategic objectives and activities of the NIEC Legal Department for inclusion in the new NIEC Strategic Plan. On 19 June, members of the NIEC Legal Department and the IESG Legal/Procedures team attended a meeting to present such strategic objectives and activities to the NIEC Secretary General.

On 8 and 18 July, mentoring sessions between representatives of the IESG Legal/Procedures team and the NIEC Legal Department took place to provide advice on recent Electoral Legal Framework Review activities in order to identify gaps and shortcomings in the Electoral Law and the Voter Registration Legal Framework. This will support the drafting of NIEC secondary legislation to facilitate a voter registration pilot exercise in line with the existing Electoral Legal Framework. It was agreed to organize a workshop on the topic of voter registration.

Workshop on voter registration and drafting of NIEC secondary legislation

On 29 July, the IESG Legal/Procedures team conducted an online workshop session with members of the NIEC Legal Department. The workshop session provided guidance on the basic principles of voter registration, the structure and content of a voter registration legal framework, and a voter registration pilot exercise. The workshop session was part of ongoing IESG Legal/Procedures team mentoring sessions with the NIEC Legal Department.



Workshop on voter registration and drafting of NIEC secondary legislation (cont'd)

The workshop and follow-up session are part of the IESG's ongoing capacity building and mentoring activities. The activity was designed to enhance the technical capabilities of the NIEC Legal Department staff to assess and review the Electoral Legal Framework and draft NIEC secondary legislation.

Report writing and institutional memory module

During July, a three-part interactive training module on report writing and institutional memory was finalised. It was developed by IESG field offices, with inputs from the IESG training unit. Report writing was identified by NIEC field staff members as one of the areas that needed improvement. IESG Field Coordination also discussed with the training unit future training and capacity building opportunities.

Additionally, Field Coordination facilitated the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for trainings conducted by IESG field offices for NIEC field staff. The UNSOS training unit provided the necessary tools and support.

IESG coordination

During June, IESG contributed to the drafting of documents for use in the induction training of ad-hoc electoral bodies. An infographic was produced in collaboration with the Joint Operations Center/Integrated Information Hub (JOC/IIH) to explain the nominations of the indirect electoral committees.

During July, IESG field offices and Field Coordination worked intensively on the operational aspect of election preparations. Field offices established contact with SEITs and the civil society organizations involved with election observation in the various FMSs.

The handover of electoral material was concluded with all SEITs except in the case of the Hirshabelle FMS, where a SEIT has not yet been established on the ground, and Somaliland, where the issue of who will head the election committee has yet to be resolved.

Women's 30% quota for parliamentary seats

On 25 July, the Prime Minister announced the formation of an advocacy committee for the 30 per cent women's parliamentary quota, which will play a role similar to that of the Good Will Ambassadors during the 2016 electoral process.

Election security preparedness

IESG's support for the indirect elections remained on hold in June while the TEST considered a draft elections budget and the types of support from the international community that will be needed for election security. IESG met with the TEST to offer advice and support on a variety of electoral matters that include election security and the need for a new national Elections Security Committee Secretariat.

IESG's elections security team produced a report titled Lessons Learned Report on JOC Equipment Procurement and Delivery. The document contains recommendations which have been shared internally to inform similar activities in future. On 10 June, IESG visited the National Joint Operations Centre (NJOC) at Somali Police Force (SPF) headquarters in Mogadishu. IESG met with the NJOC focal point Captain Mahad Adan Abdi.



New offices of NJOC



Election security preparedness (cont'd)

The SouthWest State and Jubaland Field Offices worked closely with the IESG election security unit to facilitate the handover of JOC material to the corresponding focal points. The OPM presented a revised elections budget to donors and partners on 13 July. The budget includes funds for election security, which were increased from \$2.5 million to \$5.3 million.

During 13-15 July, the NESC held its inaugural meetings. Chaired by Prime Minister Roble, the NESC comprises Somalia's federal Police Commissioner, FMS and Benadir police commanders, and AMISOM and UN Police Commissioners. The Prime Minister instructed panel members



Prime Minister Roble chairing the inaugural NESC meeting at Villa Somalia.



Representatives from AMISOM Police and Military, Jubaland Police and UN Police witness the handover of JOC equipment in Kismayo

to undertake the necessary preparations to ensure the security of the election sites in their respective jurisdictions. All FMSs were represented, and a very cooperative and inclusive atmosphere prevailed during the meetings.

Following the first meetings of the NESC, IESG distributed the remaining equipment earmarked for the various JOCs around the country. A full suite of equipment was handed over to the focal point for the Kismayo JOC. The Baidoa JOC had previously received all of its equipment except for a tactical radio system.

IESG supports UN and non-UN electoral assistance coordination

On 23 June, 7 and 21 July, IESG hosted meetings for the international assistance partners, which was attended by Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), Creative Associates, UN Women, UNDP, IOM, the UNSOM gender unit and the Mission's Political Affairs and Mediation Group.

IESG continued to host UN electoral task force meetings during the reporting period (8, 15, 22 and 29 June and 6, 13 and 27 July).



IESG meeting with assistance partners on 21 July 2021

Assistance to NIEC Office of Political Party Registrar

After finalizing the manual forms for political party registration (including general party information, executive committee, and member forms), the software development phase is now underway. The database architecture was presented to the NIEC OPPr staff. Their comments and remarks were considered, and the most relevant ones were applied to the database architecture. The software module currently under development concerns a political party's general information. Once a functioning beta version is available, it will be presented to the NIEC OPPr staff for their review.

NIEC strategic plan & IESG SWOT

On 14 and 16 June, the IESG Field Coordination team hosted meetings with the NIEC Director of Operations, NIEC Field Coordination, and NIEC Field Offices, to review the NIEC's strategic plan objectives, as requested by the NIEC Secretary General.

In July, the IESG and NIEC adopted a common approach for assessing the impact of institutional capacity building implemented over the past four years by analysing IESG strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The exercise sought to identify factors and strategic alternatives for improved development of the NIEC as a professional institution. The exercise presented an opportunity to the IESG and its counterparts to map out and prioritise actions that will affect the NIEC's performance. The NIEC and IESG have developed a roadmap for the action plan with key indicators to monitor implementation and address any hurdles that might hamper a rectification of the gaps that were identified by the SWOT analysis exercise.

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