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## ***Newsletter: September 2017***

# **UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) to the Federal Republic of Somalia**

### ***Highlights***

- On 1 September, the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia (NIEC) became a member of the Association of the World Election Bodies (A-WEB) during its third general assembly held in Bucharest, Romania.
- On 10 September, the NIEC initiated a Voter Registration Feasibility Study to examine in detail all aspects related to the introduction of a voter registration system for Somalia in preparation of universal elections.
- On 20 September, the NIEC convened a donor coordination meeting with international partners, presenting the details of its five-year strategic plan (2017-2021) including an overall budget to plan and conduct universal elections in 2020.
- On 27 September, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) and the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (MoCA) led the first meeting of the Pillar Working Group 1 on Inclusive Politics as part of the implementation of the National Development Plan.
- On 28 September, the NIEC launched the temporary registration process of political parties. With about 20 political associations in attendance, the NIEC presented the required forms and explained the process that will allow political party associations to become registered parties, in line with the political party law adopted in 2016.

### ***Political-electoral updates***

On 27 September, MOIFAR and MOCA led the first meeting of the Pillar Working Group 1 (PWG1) on Inclusive Politics, co-chaired by the UE and Switzerland. The PWG1 brings together representatives from: The Federal Government of Somalia, FMS, relevant Parliament Committees (OC), relevant national independent commissions, civil society organizations, UN, bilateral donors, implementing partners and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

The priorities of the PWG1 include: 1) advance inclusive political dialogue to clarify and settle relations between the Federal Government and Federal Members States (FMS) and initiate a process of political and social reconciliation to restore trust between communities; 2) To set foundations for durable peace, stability and end the violent conflict that has caused unnecessary loss of lives and human displacement; 3) Finalize and adopt a Federal Constitution by 2019; 4) Prepare for and hold credible elections by 2020/21. The first meeting provided an update, including from MOIFAR and the NIEC

on electoral issues, while discussion was focused on the terms of reference of Pillar Working Group-1.

## ***IESG support to NIEC - drafting process electoral legislation***

### **a. Voter Registration Feasibility Study**

Launched on 10 September 2017, the NIEC is currently conducting a voter registration feasibility study together with IESG (UNSOM & UNDP) and BUILD (US funded electoral project from Creative Associates). The aim of this joint study is to examine in detail all aspects related to the introduction of a voter registration system for Somalia, in preparation of universal elections. The study will be assessing the feasibility of voter registration options and methodologies in the specific context of Somalia.

The joined team has been seeking inputs and guidance from key government partners of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), as well as different stakeholders including civil society. The first meetings were organized in Mogadishu with the members of the Federal Government, which was attended by the Deputy Vice Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, the Minister of Planning, the Minister of Constitution, and Minister of security, the Speakers of the House of the People and the Upper House, the Director of Immigration, different Political Party Associations and civil society.

After these meetings in Mogadishu, the team conducted in September also field trips to the following regions Puntland (Garowe), and Jubaland (Kismayo) and South West (Baidoa), in order to expand the study and seek inputs from the Federal Member States. The team also met in Mogadishu representatives from Hirshabelle and Benadir.

The team is currently compiling all feedback and further internal discussions are being held. A final report is expected next month. Preliminary feedback from various stakeholders relate to the issues of accessibility (including security), the wider electoral legal framework, and the need of a political agreement on crucial constitutional issues. The citizenship law will be an important piece of legislation to define eligible voters. Other issues raised relate to the IDPs, nomadic population and the unknown size of the total population.

### **b. NIEC's Launch of the temporary Political Party Registration**

On 28 September, the NIEC launched the Temporary Registration process of Political Parties with about 20 political associations in attendance. The NIEC presented the required forms and explained the process that will allow political party associations to become registered parties, in line with the political party law adopted on June 2016. The main objective of this ceremony was to show that NIEC is ready to accommodate the temporary registration process of political parties, and to inform the public and specifically political associations to come forward and register as a political party.



FIGURE 1: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MR. AHMED GULED WITH THE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF NIEC

**c. NIEC coordination meeting with international partners**

On 20 September, the NIEC presented to international partners its five-year strategic plan and budget from 2017-2021 to plan and conduct universal elections.

**d. NIEC membership of the Association of the World Election Bodies**



FIGURE 2 A-WEB SESSION

On 31 August, supported by IESG, the Deputy Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), Mr. Sayed Ali Mohamed, attended the third general assembly of the Association of the World Election Bodies (A-WEB), held in Bucharest, Romania. During the session, the request for membership presented earlier in 2017 by the NIEC was accepted, along with the ones from Papua New Guinea, Colombia and Peru: the new members will join the existing 106 members. The Organization for the Arab Electoral Management Bodies (Arab EMBs) also became an associate member of the AWEB. The NIEC, also member of the Arab EMBs since 2016,

intends to capitalize on the electoral experience and knowledge of these international institutions.



FIGURE 3 NIEC DEPUTY CHAIR MR. SAYED ALI MOHAMED

#### e. Electoral Systems Workshop

From 21 to 24 September, the NIEC organized a technical workshop on electoral systems, facilitated by two international experts contracted by the USAID funded electoral project (BUILD). The workshop at the NIEC was attended by ministry representatives and government officials that have direct relations to electoral framework including the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs, Ministry of Women and Human Rights, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Constitution and representatives from the office of the President and office of the Prime minister. The workshop is in line with earlier technical sessions provided by IESG on electoral systems to representatives for NIEC and MOFAIR, and builds on the formation of an electoral coordination task force amongst members of the FGS that was formed in August under the auspices of MOIFAR.

#### *Upcoming Activities*

- 1-10 October: NIEC internal strategic management implementation workshop, which IESG is supporting.
- 4 October: IESG-NIEC-MOIFAR Board meeting: Presentation of Q4/2017 plan with request for donor funding, and circulation of draft IESG Project plan for 2018.
- Late October: NIEC intends to conduct three by-elections (Jubaland, Hirshabelle, Somalilanders community)

## Annex 1

### Update report IESG Q3 activities JULY-SEPTEMBER 2017

#### Key activities for the three-month period, July-September, 2017, include:

#	Activity	STATUS
1	NIEC State Engagements on Strategic Plan and Relations Building with the Federal Member States	Strategic Plan developed NIEC visits to Kismayo, Garowe, Baidoa and Jowhar
2	International Political Party Registration Workshop with African and Arab EMBs organized by NIEC	Conducted in July
3	NIEC Engagements with Political Associations and Stakeholders on Political Party Registration; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including Dissemination of the NIEC Political Party Registration Manual</li> </ul>	Temporary Registration of Political Parties on 28th September
4	NIEC 25/July Parliamentary Report	NIEC addressed to Lower House on 26th July and the House of the People on 8 August.
5	Inclusive Politics Committee Engagement (NIEC)	Pillar One Working Group meeting occurred on 27 <sup>th</sup> September
6	Internal UN Inclusive Political Coordination	On-going
7	NIEC Submission of Political Party Law Amendments to Parliament	On-going
8	Voter Registration Study	Study on-going (See report)
9	Geographic Information Systems Training (NIEC & BFC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish of GIS Offices (NIEC &amp; BFC)</li> <li>▪ Purchase and Deploy GIS Equipment and Software (NIEC &amp; BFC)</li> <li>▪ Training on Mobile Field Data Collection (NIEC)</li> <li>▪ Voter Registration (Polling) Centre Allocation Workshop</li> </ul>	On-going  BFC took a field visit to Ethiopia accompanied by IESG GIS expert to learn and be informed on the Ethiopian boundaries process.
10	Electoral Law drafting progress: Engagements of key political partners on Options and Political/Technical Distinctions	Establishing coordination meetings with FGS led by MOIFAR
11	Printing and summarization/ Dissemination of Historical Electoral Laws (Somali and English)	Completed
12	Electoral Law Workshop (MOIFAR) on how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop Draft Electoral Laws</li> <li>▪ Conduct Public Outreach on Developed Electoral Laws</li> </ul>	On-going
13	Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Regional Joint Operation Centres</li> <li>▪ Develop Strategic and Operational Plan</li> <li>▪ Somali Security Intelligence and Coordination Systems</li> </ul>	On-going
14	Electoral lexicon PO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sensitisation</li> <li>▪ Implementation and</li> <li>▪ Dissemination</li> </ul>	Re-scheduled for Q4
15	By-election Preparations and Readiness	Tentatively scheduled for late October
16	Re-development of NIEC Website and Social Media	On-going

17	Development of Standard Operating Procedures for Administration (NIEC) – HR, Finance,	Completed
18	Development of NIEC Internal Processes - Regulations	Rescheduled for Q4
19	Commence Civic Education Planning and Strategy Development	Rescheduled for late 2017 and 2018
20	Launch and Dissemination NIEC 5-year Strategic Plan	Rescheduled for November
21	NIEC Physical Office Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construction of the Wall</li> <li>▪ Mobilisation of Funds for Phase 2 Construction</li> </ul>	Phase 1 scheduled for completion in November No committed funding yet for Phase 2 in 2018
22	Coordination of Technical Assistance to NIEC with other providers	NIEC coordination meeting (20 Sept)
23	Development of UN Project Document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Donor and Stakeholder Engagements</li> </ul>	Draft prodoc being circulated for approval late 2017 and commencement in January 2018