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Newsletter: January 2018

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

Highlights

- On 18 January, the Council of Ministers of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) adopted a Political Roadmap on Inclusive Politics and with a trajectory between 2017 and 2020 towards universal elections.
- On 28 January, in Jowhar, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) organized the by-election for the vacant seat in the Federal House of the People for Hirshabelle. It was the first official election organized by the NIEC since its establishment in 2015.
- In January, the NIEC expanded its consultation with stakeholders in different Federal Member States intended to facilitate political agreements on electoral challenges.

Electoral Updates

a. Political updates

On 18 January, the Council of Ministers of Somalia's Federal Government endorsed the 2020 Political Roadmap, which sets out as a top priority a clear trajectory towards universal elections in 2020. The Roadmap interlinks essential steps with regard to constitutional review, electoral preparations, state-formation and federalism. It outlines responsible partners and processes to be undertaken between 2017 and 2020, for the government to create a conducive political environment for universal elections in 2020. The Roadmap provides "Logical Framework Matrix" for quarterly reviews as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism on the political benchmarks, with quarterly meetings to review progress which includes Somalia's federal member states and international partners. In its preamble, the Roadmap underscores its thrust to set out the critical steps necessary to achieve direct elections in 2020 that are credible and transparent.

b. NIEC consultations with sub-national stakeholders

In an effort to reach out to Somalia's Federal Member States and engage with sub-national stakeholders, the NIEC increased in January its consultations in the different regions of the country. Traveling to multiple locations in Puntland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, South-West and Jubaland, the NIEC organized meetings on electoral issues with regional officials, local administration, traditional elders, aspiring political parties, religion leaders, women, youth groups and other civil society movements. It was the first time that the NIEC traveled this extensively within the country to reach out to stakeholders.

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Figure 1: NIEC consultations with sub-national stakeholders in Garowe, Puntland. January 2018. Photo credit: NIEC

The aim of these consultations is to discuss challenges facing the organization of universal suffrage elections, for the NIEC to receive consultative feedback and to permit consideration of political agreements to address identified challenges. The consultations followed on the Mogadishu Agreement in November 2017 between the central government and the federal member states of Somalia to enhance the country's federal dynamics. The Mogadishu Agreement stipulated the NIEC to hold within 90 days discussions with local partners in preparation for universal elections in 2020. The consultations will conclude in February in Mogadishu, where the NIEC will meet partners from the capital region and the Somaliland community. The NIEC's regional consultations have been welcomed by local stakeholders, and have been receiving wide media coverage on Somali radio, TV, and social media, including the NIEC's Facebook page and twitter (<https://www.facebook.com/NIECSomalia>; and <https://twitter.com/NIECSomalia>).

The UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) assisted the NIEC with the development of a facilitation guide and provides logistical and budgetary support to the field missions, including UN air support where necessary.



Figure 2: NIEC consultations with sub-national stakeholders in Garowe, Puntland. January 2018. Photo credit: NIEC

c. By-election (Federal House of the People)

On 28 January, in Jowhar, Hirshabelle, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) organized the by-election for the vacant seat allocated to the Hawadle Ali Madahweyne sub-clan, as requested by the Federal Parliament in September 2017. Following the procedures of the ‘2016 electoral process’, including the provision of 51 clan-based voting delegates and a formal candidate campaign period, the NIEC team conducted the process. Mr. Nur Lidow Bayle, a former Member of Parliament in the previous legislature, got elected in the second round with 27 votes, while Mr. Abdullahi



Figure 3: NIEC conducting its first by-election in Hirshabelle for the vacant seat in the Federal House of the People. Jowhar, January 2018. Photo credit: NIEC



Figure 4: NIEC conducting its first by-election in Hirshabelle for the vacant seat in the Federal House of the People. Jowhar, January 2018. Photo credit: NIEC

Mohamed Ali received 24 votes in favor. The five candidates who did not get elected congratulated the NIEC for organizing the by-election in a transparent and professional manner. The by-elections were streamed live on TV and the NIEC Facebook page, and followed widely. Later, on 1 February 2018, the NIEC awarded the Certificate to the successful candidate.

d. Refresher Course on Polling and counting to the NIEC in light of the upcoming by-elections

On 31 January, The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), received a refresher training preparation to the Parliamentary decision of 17 August 2017, to fill vacant seats in the House of the People. IESG embarked on a refresher programme aimed



Figure 5: NIEC conducting its first by-election in Hirshabelle for the vacant seat in the Federal House of the People. Jowhar, January 2018. Photo credit: UNDP

at building capacity of NIEC officers on the by-election procedures. The Secretariat demonstrated commitment by actively participating in the one-day workshop understanding the critical oversight role they will play in the by-election processes. Following the 2016 model, the secretariat went through all aspects covering registration of candidates, logistical arrangements for

movement of material, accreditation of observers, polling and counting procedures.