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UN Integrated Electoral Support Group

Newsletter 1: July - August 2015

Highlights

- On 21 July, the Commissioners of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), who were appointed on 6 July, were sworn in.
- On 29 and 30 July, the High-Level Partnership Forum, held in Mogadishu, commended Somali leaders and constitutional institutions both at the federal and state levels for their determination to deliver an electoral process in 2016. The Consultative Process for 2016 aims at identifying electoral options for Somalia at the end of the constitutional mandate of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2016.
- On 10 August, the NIEC gave its first press conference. Chairperson Halima Ismail Ibrahim introduced the Commission and highlighted the role and responsibilities of the NIEC as an independent body responsible for the conduct of elections as prescribed in the Provisional Constitution and the NIEC Law.

The Joint Programme for Support to the Electoral Process

The *Joint Programme for Support to the Electoral Process in the Federal Republic of Somalia* contributes to the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal of Inclusive Politics (PSG 1) to “achieve a stable and peaceful federal Somalia through inclusive political processes”. The UNSOM/UNDP Integrated Electoral Support Group works in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs (MoIFA) and the NIEC to implement the Programme. The Programme focuses on the establishment of the NIEC; capacity development to conduct elections and referendum; the electoral legal framework; and stakeholder awareness and coordination.

Activities

The appointment of the NIEC Commissioners in July enabled the UN Integrated Electoral Support Group to initiate capacity development activities that build upon the Programme’s previous support to the drafting of the NIEC Law.

Workshop with NIEC and MoIFA

On 3 August, the Integrated Electoral Support Group organized a workshop on electoral principles with senior representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs (MoIFA), including the Permanent Secretary and Director-Generals, and the Commissioners of the newly established NIEC. Topics included the statutory mandate of the NIEC as stipulated in the Provisional Constitution (2012), the NIEC Law, the electoral cycle, and the respective roles and responsibilities of the Ministry and the NIEC, as well as other stakeholders.

BRIDGE workshop on Strengthening Democratic Processes with MoIFA

From 4 to 6 August, the Integrated Electoral Support Group organized a three day introductory BRIDGE workshop for 22 members of the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs. BRIDGE (Building Resources In Democracy, Governance and Elections) is an internationally recognized electoral training course. The thematic areas covered in the Strengthening Democratic Processes workshop included democratic principles, the electoral architecture (legislative framework – including international and regional instruments), electoral systems, the electoral cycle, working with stakeholders, public outreach and civic education.



Photo 1: MoIFA staff member presented with their official BRIDGE training certificate upon successful completion of the workshop (6 Aug 2015)

NIEC Workshop

On 9 and 10 August, a two day workshop for the NIEC Commissioners was facilitated by the Integrated Electoral Support Group. The workshop elaborated on the following topics: electoral management principles and criteria for democratic elections; roles and responsibilities of Members of the Commission; and vision, mission, values and upcoming priorities.



Supporting South-South cooperation and regional transfer of knowledge, Dr. Brigalia Bam, former Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa from 1997 to 2011, was invited to share with the NIEC her experiences and insights during this workshop.

Photo 2: NIEC Chairperson Halima Ismail Ibrahim (l) with Dr. Brigalia Bam, former Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (r) (10 Aug 2015)

NIEC press conference

On 10 August, immediately following the close of the two-day workshop mentioned above, the NIEC held its first press conference (a copy of the unofficial English translation of their media statement is in the annex). Chairperson Halima Ismail Ibrahim introduced to the media her fellow Commissioners. She highlighted the role and responsibilities of the NIEC as an independent body responsible for the conduct of elections as prescribed by the Provisional Constitution and the NIEC law passed by Federal Parliament in February this year. The Commissioners committed themselves to developing the NIEC into an institution capable of delivering its mandate to conduct elections guided by the highest standards of integrity, transparency and accountability. The Commission underscored its openness to reach out to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including those at state-level.



Photo 3 and 4: NIEC Commissioners at their first press conference (10 Aug 2015)

Establishment of the temporary NIEC office

The NIEC's temporary office has been set up with support from the Integrated Electoral Support Group. Construction of offices and a conference room, procurement of furniture and office equipment and the provision of wifi internet connectivity were undertaken to enable the NIEC to operate effectively as quickly as possible after their appointment.



Photo 5: NIEC temporary office and conference room constructed with support of the Integrated Electoral Support Group (Aug 2015)



Photo 6: NIEC Chairperson, Halima Ismail Ibrahim and Deputy Chairperson, Sayid Ali Sh. Mohamed in a meeting with UNSOM Deputy SRSG, Raisedon Zenenga in the Chairperson's office (Aug 2015)

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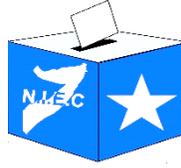
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Annex: NIEC Media Statement (Unofficial translation)

The Federal Republic of Somalia

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**اللجنة الوطنية
المستقلة للإنتخابات**

National Independent Electoral Commission

COMMUNIQUE

Mogadishu, August 10, 2015

The National Independent Electoral Commission is greatly involved in the preparation of establishing its organizational infrastructure in order to carry out its delegated national duties which are managing and administering of the elections. The function of this Commission shall be guided by principles of work such as honesty, transparency, and accountability.

This Commission is independent in performing its national duties towards holding elections as required by the constitution and the law on which this Commission is founded, which was passed by the Federal Parliament in February, 2015.

The nine-members of this Commission were appointed on 6th July under the precise procedures specified in the law of the electoral commission. The Federal Parliament approved all the members of the Commission and the members took oath before the Parliament.

The Commission chose the chairperson and deputy chairperson in accordance with its internal regulations.

Halima Ismail Ibrahim - Chairperson
Sayid Ali Sh. Mohamed- Deputy Chairperson
Hussein Abdi Adam
Mohamed Dahir Mohamed
Abdirahman Osman Diri
Mohamed Ahmed Nur
Khadija Osoble Abdi
Sa'eed Hashi Warsame
Mohamed Hassan Tani

The Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission Mrs. Halima Ismail Ibrahim underscored that “although we know our constitutional mandate which clearly indicates that the Commission is an independent one, we will still benefit from the support and cooperation we receive from the different sections of the community leaders and stakeholders. Since we started our work we are committed to consult with and reach out to different sections of the larger community and all the stakeholders including the federal government, federal member states, civil society, women and youth, traditional leaders, religious scholars, international organizations etc.”

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