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GPECS II 
Global Project
for Electoral Cycle Support II



European Commission
United Nations Development Programme
Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance



EC-UNDP

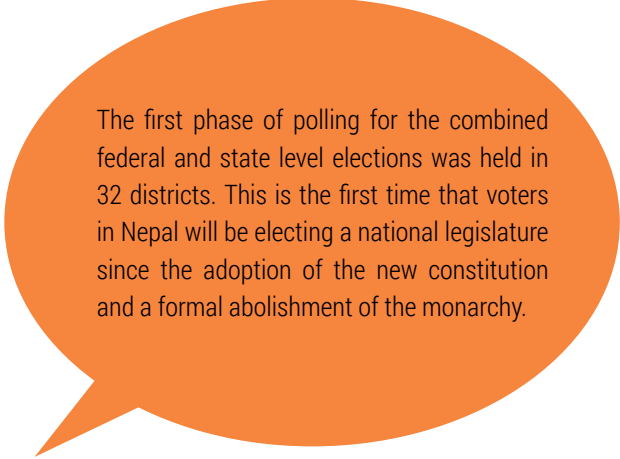
1 - 30 November, 2017

Electoral Assistance Projects Update

This report provides an overview of all active EU funded and UNDP implemented electoral assistance projects only and should be shared with EU delegations in the respective countries.




NEWS HIGHLIGHTS



The first phase of polling for the combined federal and state level elections was held in 32 districts. This is the first time that voters in Nepal will be electing a national legislature since the adoption of the new constitution and a formal abolishment of the monarchy.

NEPAL



On 5 November, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) agreed during a high-level political meeting in Mogadishu to “engage and consult jointly on one-person-one-vote electoral process in Somalia by creating viable environment for its realization”.

SOMALIA

Acronyms and abbreviations

BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CHS	Community High School
CRO	Chief Returning Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECN	Election Commission of Nepal
ECZ	Electoral Commission of Zambia
EDR	Election Dispute Resolution
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ESP	Electoral Support Project
ESSP	Electoral Systems Strengthening Program
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States
HoR	House of Representatives
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IESG	Integrated Electoral Support Group
LEAP	Lebanese Elections Assistance Project
MA SI	Media Association of Solomon Islands
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MEHRD	Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development
MoIFAR	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation
MoIM	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament

MPLCs	Multi-Party Liaison Committees
NEC	National Elections Commission
NIEC	National Independent Electoral Commission
ORPP	Office of the Registrar of Political Parties Commission
PACEG	Projet d'appui au cycle électoral de la Guinée
PPC	Political Parties Commission
SA	State Assembly
SCE	Supervisory Commission for Elections
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project
SEPK	Strengthening the Electoral Process in Kenya
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZIM-ECO Project	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

SUMMARY

NOTE: The EU and UNDP are currently implementing 12 joint electoral assistance projects in 11 countries worldwide, with an overall EU contribution of more than EUR 60 million (for the full list, please see chart on p. 1 below). The current report includes updates only from the countries that have submitted their monthly contributions, which may not include all active projects.

GUINEA: The preparation of the list of candidates for the 4 February 2018 local elections is ongoing. The recruitment of the 342 IT specialists and legal assistants has started with the launch of a call for applications.

KENYA: With the fresh presidential election completing in October 26, 2017 and the Jubilee Party candidate and Kenya's incumbent president, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta being declared the winner of the fresh presidential election on October 30, 2017, the month of November 2017 opened with representatives of civil society organizations filing a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the election of Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta. After close to two weeks process in the Supreme court, the Court eventually unanimously upheld the election, dismissing the petitions as lacking merit. President Uhuru Kenyatta was subsequently sworn in for a second five-year term. - The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) held by-elections in three electoral areas where elections were postponed following the deaths of candidates before 8 August, 2017 general election. The by-elections took place in Msalani Ward for the Member of County Assembly position (Garissa County); Kitutu Chache South Constituency for the Member of National Assembly position (Kisii County); and, Bogichora Ward, for the Member of County Assembly position (Nyamira County).

LIBERIA: UNDP provided legal support to the National Elections Commission in the challenges and appeals linked to the outcome of the election. - At the end of the third phase of the civic and voter education campaign, 1,962 community forums and events were held over the campaign period with 338,000 (51% women and 49% men) voters directly participating in campaign's activities. Following from these events, it was revealed that 99% of participants were aware of the voting steps.

NEPAL: The first phase of polling for the combined federal and state level elections was held in 32 districts. This is the first time that voters in Nepal will be electing

a national legislature since the adoption of the new constitution and a formal abolishment of the monarchy. - ESP focused its support on promoting a peaceful environment and inclusion of people with disabilities.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Biometric Voter Registration consultants from Nepal have been deployed within the country to bridge the gap at the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) following departure of former SIEC ICT officer. - A training for the management of the upgraded SIEC website (<http://www.siec.gov.sb/2017>) has been organized by SECSIP. - The project has carried out school awareness activities which included mock election and the promotion of the Essay & Poster competition on Women's Leadership and Political Participation

SOMALIA: On 5 November, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) agreed during a high-level political meeting in Mogadishu to "engage and consult jointly on one-person-one-vote electoral process in Somalia by creating viable environment for its realization". - The FGS further agreed for the National Independent Electoral Commission to "undertake political consultations on the electoral process within 90 days and inform FMS when this process will start". - In addition, FGS and FMS call for "the NIEC to be fully supported, to solicit funding for the 2020 elections, and with efforts geared towards local resource mobilizations and thereafter seek International Community's assistance".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ONGOING ELECTORAL PROJECTS WITH EU FUNDING	1
GUINEA	2
KENYA	4
LIBERIA	6
NEPAL	8
SOLOMON ISLANDS	11
SOMALIA	14

ONGOING ELECTORAL PROJECTS WITH EU FUNDING

Country	Project Title	Reference	EU Contribution	Start Date	End Date
Georgia	Studies and Research of Media Election Coverage in Georgia for Local Self-Government Elections 2017	ENI/2016/378-735	€ 276,663.00	01.01.17	31.12.17
Guinea	Projet d'Appui au Cycle Electoral de la Guinée – PACEG	FED/2015/367-390	€ 10,000,000.00	06.07.15	05.07.18
Kenya	Strengthening of the Electoral Processes in Kenya Project	FED/2016/372/463	€ 5,000,000.00	13.02.16	12.02.19
Lebanon	EU Support to the Lebanese Elections Assistance Programme (LEAP): Building Sustainability for Implementation of Electoral Reforms	ENPI/2013/333-144	€ 1,810,000.00	01.01.14	31.12.17
	Lebanese Electoral Assistance Programme for the 2013 Parliamentary Elections	ENPI/2013/316-094	€ 3,000,000.00	01.01.13	31.12.17
Liberia	Support to the 2015-2018 Liberian Electoral Cycle	FED/2015/367-723	€ 10,000,000.00	01.06.15	31.05.19
Malawi	Malawi Electoral Cycle Support: 2017-2019	2017/389-162	€ 2,500,000.00	11.10.17	10.04.20
Nepal	Electoral Support Project-Institutional Strengthening and Professional Development Support for the Election Commission of Nepal (ESP)	DCI-ASIE/2012/305-833	€ 8,400,000.00	12.01.12	11.01.18
Solomon Islands	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)	FED/2013/328-922	€ 3,500,000.00	01.07.13	31.12.18
Somalia	Joint Programme for Support to the Electoral Process in the Federal Republic of Somalia	FED/2015/366-291 FED/2015/360-953	€ 5,193,878.00	21.11.15	31.12.17
Zambia	Support to the 2015-2017 Electoral Cycle	FED/2015/363-147	€ 5,250,000.00	23.06.15	31.07.18
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO)	FED/2016/380-895	€ 5,590,000.00	01.09.16	30.08.20



PROJET D'APPUI AU CYCLE ELECTORAL DE LA GUINEE

Since July 2015, the project to “Support the Electoral Cycle of Guinea” (PACEG) provides assistance to strengthen the capacities of the Electoral Commission (CENI) and its field offices, including organizational, technical, communicational, financial and operational capacities. The main objective of the PACEG is to enable a credible, inclusive and peaceful 2015-2017 electoral process in Guinea, complying with international standards, while ensuring the effective and inclusive participation of women and young people through providing civic education and coaching.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The preparation of the list of candidates for the 4 February 2018 local elections is ongoing. The recruitment of the 342 IT specialists and legal assistants has started with the launch of a call for applications.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Twenty-seven female leaders of civil society organizations and trade unions attended a BRIDGE training from 1 to 5 November.

With the support of PACEG, the CENI received technical assistance for revising its 2017 budget and for defining a resource-mobilization strategy with the technical and financial partners. This resulted in additional funding of 360,000 EUR from the EU Delegation, which will be used to cover national United Nations Volunteers (UNV) for 4 months, as well as a part of CENI assistants' fees.

CENI organised a training workshop for the software used for candidate registration, during which CENI shared the IT solution it adopted for processing the candidatures. In addition, CENI updated the polling stations mapping and launched the candidature management operations.

As part of the additional resources mobilization efforts, CENI met with the ambassadors and representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations on 13 November. Some participants expressed their interest to provide assistance without specifying in which areas. This will be followed-up closely with UNDP.

The technical unit held its first meeting on 30 November. This unit is a forum for strategic reflection which aims to find solutions to the challenges in the run up to the 4 February 2018 local elections, including legal, technical or related to content interpretation. During this meeting, the candidate deposit has been set at 8 million Guinean Francs for the urban municipalities and 3 million Guinean Francs for rural municipalities.


II. Plans for the next period

The following activities are expected in December 2017:

- Finalize the recruitment of 38 national volunteers;
- Train the UNVs on electoral activities management;
- Deploy UNVs to the 33 Independent Prefectorial Electoral Commission (Commissions Electorales Préfectorales Indépendantes) and to the 5 Independent Local Electoral Commissions from Guinea Conakry (Commissions Electorales Communales Indépendantes de la ville de Conakry).

For more information on the *Projet d'appui au cycle électoral de la Guinée (PACEG)*, please contact Mr. Abdoul Latif Haidara, abdoul.haidara@undp.org and visit the [project's website](#).



 IEBC Communications Department

STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN KENYA (SEPK)

The UNDP Electoral Assistance Project in Kenya (SEPK), provides technical assistance to the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and other stakeholders to support credible and peaceful electoral process. The project started in February 2016 and focuses on strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the electoral process, increasing electoral participation with specific attention being paid to youth, women, and disable people, and consolidating electoral justice and dispute resolution mechanisms to increase compliance with electoral framework.

HIGHLIGHTS

- With the fresh presidential election completing in October 26, 2017 and the Jubilee Party candidate and Kenya's incumbent president, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta being declared the winner of the fresh presidential election on October 30, 2017, the month of November 2017 opened with representatives of civil society organizations filing a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the election of Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta. After close to two weeks process in the Supreme court, the Court eventually unanimously upheld the election, dismissing the petitions as lacking merit. President Uhuru Kenyatta was subsequently sworn in for a second five-year term.
- The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) held by-elections in three electoral areas where elections were postponed following the deaths of candidates before 8 August, 2017 general election. The by-elections took place in Msalani Ward for the Member of County Assembly position (Garissa County); Kitutu Chache South Constituency for the Member of National Assembly position (Kisii County); and, Bogichora Ward, for the Member of County Assembly position (Nyamira County).
- Meanwhile, IEBC with support from the project has progressively started working towards a post-election evaluation phase. The intention is to launch a comprehensive assessment of the Commission's performance over the 2017 electoral cycle, including the 8 August 2017 general election and the 26 October fresh presidential election. The assessment will include, amongst other things, a reflection on ICT, legal reform, stakeholder engagement, voter education provision. This process will be inclusive of all electoral stakeholders (political parties, media, civil society and government agencies) with the aim to assist the IEBC in drawing lessons from the 2017 election experience and developing effective pathways for improved implementation in subsequent election cycle(s).

I. Project activities during the reporting period

During the month of November 2017, the project supported IEBC to prepare for the presidential petition following the Fresh Presidential Election. The project supported Office of the Registrar of Political Parties to finalize a popular version of the Political Parties Act and its regulations. The document will be used for sensitization of political parties and members of the public on the law governing political party activity in Kenya, regulation of political parties and party financing.

II. Plans for the next period

- Finalization of logistics for post-election evaluation;
- Provide support to finalization of IEBC human resources procedures manual, IEBC corporate governance training and commencement of BRIDGE training;
- SEPK project management team will identify priorities for 2018 and present them as the draft 2018 annual work plan.

For more information on the project on Strengthening the Electoral Process in Kenya, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Joram Rukambe, joram.rukambe@undp.org.



LIBERIA

Election Project/UNDP Liberia

SUPPORT TO THE 2015 – 2018 LIBERIAN ELECTORAL CYCLE

The project to support the electoral process in Liberia aims to strengthen the capacity of the National Election Commission (NEC) to successfully carry out electoral processes within the electoral cycle 2015-2018. Key in this regard is the preparation and conduct of the Presidential and General elections scheduled for 10th October 2017. Among other specific objectives, it introduces modern administrative systems and procedures, enhances its communications and public outreach and supports voter registration ahead of the elections. In addition, the project seeks to enhance the participation of women in the elections and in political activities, support civic and voter education and strengthen NEC's capacity to engage with the stakeholders and resolve electoral disputes. For more information, [please visit the Project's website.](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNDP provided legal support to the National Elections Commission in the challenges and appeals linked to the outcome of the election.
- At the end of the third phase of the civic and voter education campaign, 1,962 community forums and events were held over the campaign period with 338,000 (51% women and 49% men) voters directly participating in campaign's activities. Following from these events, it was revealed that 99% of participants were aware of the voting steps.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

UNDP supported the National Elections Commission in the legal challenges and appeals to the outcome of the election. National legal counsel supported by the project represented the National Elections Commission throughout the hearings. These were supported, in turn, by international legal and coordination consultants, hired through the project, providing access to international electoral best practice examples and case law materials as well as and monitoring of proceedings.

The results of the third phase of the civic and voter education campaign were released. In total, 1,962 community forums and events were held over the campaign period with 338,000 (51% women and 49% men) voters directly participating in activities ranging from palaver hut and town hall meetings to drama performances and football matches. 69% of community events were conducted in vernacular languages. Following from these events, it was revealed that 99% of participants were aware of the voting steps.

Based on a request from the National Elections Commission and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the project is providing support, on a cost-shared arrangement, to a team of IT experts from the Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria to conduct a further check to the voter register database in an effort to enhance confidence in its reliability.

The project worked with counterparts at the National Elections Commission to develop contingency plans and scenario timetables in preparation for the runoff, should this be the decision of the Supreme Court.

II. Plans for the next period

Following the issuance of a stay order by the Supreme Court on 1 November 2017, all preparations linked to the run-off which had been set for 7th November were suspended pending the hearing and determination of the complaints lodged by the Liberty Party. The NEC refrained from carrying out any actions that would give the impression that a run-off was imminent to avoid violating the stay order. It has been undertaking actions to address problems encountered in the first round and the experts, brought under the auspices of ECOWAS, would provide further assistance in this regard. The project has scheduled a number of support activities in respect to the runoff election, ready to be reinstated once the final challenge and complaint is concluded by the Supreme Court.

Logistical and operational preparations in advance of election day will be supported as well as refresher training for polling staff. Technical support to results management and field coordination will continued as well as legal advice related to the final complaints and appeals. A short period for civic and voter education will be used to increase awareness amongst voters of the runoff or rerun election.

For more information on the support to the Liberia electoral cycle, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. George Baratashvili, george.baratashvili@undp.org and visit the [Project's website](#).



ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT

The Electoral Support Project- Phase II (ESP) is a technical assistance initiative which focuses on a long-term institutional and professional capacity development of the Election Commission (ECN) for conducting credible, inclusive and transparent elections at a national. The objectives of the project are 1) to strengthen the capacity of the ECN to function as an independent and credible institution, 2) to allow the conduct of the election cycle in an effective, sustainable, and credible manner, and 3) to increase democratic participation, particularly for under-represented and disadvantaged segments of the Nepali society. For more information, [please visit the ESP website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The first phase of polling for the combined federal and state level elections was held in 32 districts. This is the first time that voters in Nepal will be electing a national legislature since the adoption of the new constitution and a formal abolishment of the monarchy.
- ESP focused its support on promoting a peaceful environment and inclusion of people with disabilities.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

On 26 November, the first phase of polling for the combined House of Representatives (HoR) and State Assembly (SA) elections was held in 32 mountain and hill districts. The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) puts the turnout at 65 percent of registered voters and initial reports by electoral observer organizations are positive about the implementation of the process. Despite some security incidents and a number of attacks, mostly targeting candidates, polling was largely peaceful.

While continuing to provide technical assistance, much of the support to the conduct of the election itself concerned ways of promoting a peaceful electoral environment and a more inclusive process.

One major aspect of this was the consolidation of information on Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) mechanisms. An internal workshop was conducted by a high-level facilitator in which ECN and government officials condensed the most important information on EDR and electoral justice. On this basis, two posters were developed, which ECN now uses to make these provisions accessible



Voter at a polling station.
Photo credits: UNDP Nepal

to the concerned actors. From 19 to 21 November, this was complemented by interactions in each of the seven provinces in which ECN presented this information to main electoral stakeholders (political parties, media, human rights and civil society organizations, local government and security officials). In addition to EDR, the electoral code of conduct as well as risks of violence and mitigation measures were discussed in these events.

At the district level, the UNDP Social Cohesion and Democratic Participation project built on the work to promote a peaceful environment that it implemented for the local elections. Following consultations, it organized multi-stakeholder workshops with political parties, government authorities, civil society, youth and student leaders in ten districts. Participants actively discussed

potential issues that might disrupt the peaceful environment and ways to mitigate them. Some innovative solutions were suggested, and these workshops and topics discussed were widely reported in the local media. As part of this initiative, street dramas in the forum theatre format with messages to promote peaceful elections are also being performed in at least three places in nine of the districts.

In the field of outreach and inclusion, ESP supported the organization of two ECN events for people with disabilities on 12 and 14 November, one for people with hearing disabilities and one for people with visual impairments. The two national associations representing these groups brought together their District representatives for an interaction with ECN where the electoral officials shared key information on the upcoming elections, answered questions and organized mock polling. ESP also produced a sign language version of the ECN animation on how to mark the ballot paper. These events are now being replicated across the country in order to make the electoral process more accessible to members of these communities.



Voter casting a ballot.
Photo credits: UNDP Nepal

II. Plans for the next period

- On 7 December polling for second phase of HoR and SA will be conducted in the remaining 45 districts. Selected ESP staff will be visiting polling locations and counting centres to have a first-hand sense of electoral operations. Regional teams will provide technical advice to electoral officials at district level. During counting operations and announcement of results, ESP will gather information on EDR cases to build a database for future cases to be managed and addressed in a consistent way by ECN.

- Following the elections, ESP plans to begin a documentation process of the support provided to national counterparts in the different thematic areas. In this context, the project will also organize

an internal review exercise of the overall process of the three tiers of elections. This will serve as a piloting of a broader bottom-up review process the project intends to propose to ECN.

For more information on the Nepal ESP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Vincent da Cruz, vincent.dacruz@undp.org, and visit the [Project's website](#).



STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS (SECSIP)

Since 2013, UNDP Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) has contributed to the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral process. The project supported the successful introduction of a new comprehensive biometric voter registration system which resulted in a more inclusive and reliable voters' roll and continues to provide assistance in terms of its updating and sustainability. The project also supports the review of the electoral legal framework with a view to promote the strengthening of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and assist to the fulfilment of its mandate. It also strengthens the capacity of the SIEC to advocate for women's political participation and supports the national authorities and civil society organizations in raising awareness of the population regarding voting and civic engagement. SECSIP is generously funded by the European Union, the government of Australia and UNDP.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Two trainings were held for the media professionals in Honiara on 21 and 28 October 2017.
- SIEC/SECSIP launched a School Poster and Essay competition in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development (MEHRD).
- The project has developed a 'graduate programme' in order to provide a temporary mechanism expected to contribute to the enhancement of capacities and sustainability of the partner organizations.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Biometric Voter Registration

The first phase of the update of the biometric voter registry will take place in the Western and Choiseul provinces in preparation for the upcoming provincial elections. According to Solomon Islands Electoral Commission's (SIEC) schedule, a combination of static and mobile teams will conduct voter registration activities from December 4 to 19, 2017.

As of 30 October, the following registration kits have been delivered to the Western and Choiseul provinces for the BVR update:

- 1- Twelve (12) registration kits were sent to the Western province to conduct the registration in nine (9) constituencies;
- 2- Four (4) registration kits were deployed to the Choiseul province for the above mentioned exercise for three (3) constituencies.

Upon departure of the former SIEC ICT officer, the position still remains vacant. UNDP SECSIP has taken action to bridge this gap by engaging three (3) Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) consultants from Nepal. These selected technicians have been supporting the Electoral Commission of Nepal which utilizes a similar BVR system and will be supporting the BVR updating process for Western and Choiseul province as well as conducting data management tasks at SIEC. Accordingly, one consultant will be deployed to provide ICT/BVR helpdesk services in Western while another one will be responsible for these helpdesk services ICT/BVR in Choiseul. The third one is to be based at the SIEC data centre.

Media

SIEC and the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) facilitated the final election media training for the year 2017 on Saturday 4 November. The topic for this last session was, at the request of the media professionals, the reform of the electoral legal framework. The workshop was attended by 40 media professionals.

A ceremony to present certificates to the participants of the 2017 media trainings was held on 30 October and was attended by 60 media professionals. A new round of trainings for 2018 is currently being jointly planned by SIEC and MASI officers.

Website training

A training for the management of the upgraded SIEC website (<http://www.siec.gov.sb/2017>) was held from 28-30 November, 2017 and has been organized by SECSIP.

The training was facilitated by George Dennis, Managing Director Novus Ltd. and focused on the new features of the site and the available tools to add contents to manage the site. SIEC Head of operations, Media and Public Awareness officer, Electoral Systems Strengthening Program (ESSP) advisers and SECSIP national media and voter awareness consultants, SECSIP CTA and Project Coordinator attended this workshop. It is expected that this website, which has been inactive since early 2015, will contribute to disseminate electoral related information with respect to the activities of SIEC in preparation for the upcoming electoral events.

Awareness team visits Renbel province

From 12 - 19 November 2017, SECSIP Gender & Elections Officer together with national consultant visited the Renbel province to assess the impact of the activities carried out by SECSIP grantee Village Technology Trust (VTT) with the Matangi Women's Group. The feedback gathered from the direct beneficiaries will contribute to the analysis on the effectiveness of the SECSIP Small Grants Initiative.

During this visit the team also carried out school awareness activities. The team made one-day visits and conducted the mock election at the schools of Potau in Gadalcanal Province, Niupani and Puia school from Renbel province. They also visited two Community High schools and one Provincial secondary school located in Henua and New Place in Rennell Island and Angaiho in Bellona and conducted activities for the promotion of the Essay & Poster competition on Women's Leadership and Political Participation.

II. Plans for the next period

- SECSIP Board meeting scheduled to be held on 11 December 2017;
- Supporting the update of BVR in Choiseul and Western Province;
- Research study on women's leadership and political participation.

For more information on the SECSIP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Ms. Olga Rabade, olga.rabade@undp.org.



UNDP/UNSOM JOINT PROGRAMME FOR SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

The overall strategic objective of the UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme for “Support to the Electoral Process to the Federal Republic of Somalia” is to prepare the country for universal elections through institutional capacity development of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), the development of the legal framework for elections, and support to promote better understanding of electoral processes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 5 November, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) agreed during a high-level political meeting in Mogadishu to “engage and consult jointly on one-person-one-vote electoral process in Somalia by creating viable environment for its realization”.
- The FGS further agreed for the National Independent Electoral Commission to “undertake political consultations on the electoral process within 90 days and inform FMS when this process will start”.
- In addition, FGS and FMS call for “the NIEC to be fully supported, to solicit funding for the 2020 elections, and with efforts geared towards local resource mobilizations and thereafter seek International Community’s assistance”.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

NIEC preparations for consultations with regional stakeholders

Following the Mogadishu Agreement on 5 November between the FGS and the FMS, the NIEC is preparing its 90-day plan to visit the different Federal Member States and hold inclusive consultations with stakeholders with a view to the 2020 universal elections. Adhering to the Agreement, the NIEC

plans to have stakeholder consultations in three to four locations in each of the Federal Member States, and the Capital region of Benadir, in a period between December 2017 and February 2018. This is intended to facilitate political agreement on electoral challenges. The UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) provides technical, logistical and budgetary support to these consultations.

Polling and counting training to the NIEC in light of upcoming by-elections

On 14 and 15 November, IESG organized a hands-on training for the NIEC on polling and counting procedures and regulations, in preparation for the conduct of different by-elections. The NIEC was requested in September by the Speaker to prepare for three by-elections, in Jubaland, Hirshabelle, and Mogadishu (Somalilanders seat). In anticipation of the funding, including the management of the candidate fees, no exact date for these by-elections has been set yet.

Consultations on electoral systems

The Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) is in the lead to develop the draft of the Electoral Law. In November, IESG continued to advise a federal-level Electoral Task Force, comprising representatives of MOIFAR, the NIEC, President's Office, the Prime Minister's Office, and other relevant Federal Ministries, on different systems of representation, to support MoIFAR in making its recommendations on electoral options to the Somali leadership. This system of representation is an integral part of the electoral law, which will ultimately be submitted to Parliament for passage.

II. Plans for the next period

- NIEC political party registration ceremony ;
- NIEC public launch of the electoral lexicon and strategic plan;
- Commencement of the NIEC missions to the Federal Member States for subnational stakeholder engagements;
- Finalization of the voter registration feasibility study;
- Ongoing advisory support to the electoral law working group on electoral systems;
- Finalization of the 2018 Joint Programme, including resource mobilization and budget prioritization with the NIEC;
- Preparation for the conduct by the NIEC of by-elections.

For more information on the UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme, please contact Filip Warnants, filip.warnants@undp.org.