

EC-UNDP

1 - 30 June, 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

On 14 June, the United Nations Security Council welcomed in its Resolution 2358 the commitments of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to universal elections in 2021, and to develop the electoral law by the end of 2018. The Security Council underscored the importance of UNSOM to support the FGS with the preparation of “inclusive, credible and transparent elections by 2021”, and to take the lead in coordinating international electoral support to Somalia.

SOMALIA

As of 30 June 2017, provisional CENI statistics of the electoral register revision process at the national level indicate a completion rate of 75%, with 30,861,449 voters registered, 48% of whom are women.

DRC

UNDP is working in partnership with UN Women to support ZEC with gender mainstreaming interventions across all the project activities. A gender baseline survey has commenced aimed at determining public perception around electoral processes, including challenges of participation of women. It will be a nationally representative survey of 2,000 households across Zimbabwe and will enable ZEC to come up with a strategy to address the key issues and challenges identified.

ZIMBABWE

SUMMARY

ARMENIA: On 18 June 2017, local elections took place in a peaceful and calm manner in 10 communities of Armenia. The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) deployed the voter authentication technology at polling stations for the third time since its introduction during the 2 April national elections.

DRC: The revision of the Project Document has been discussed with technical and financial partners. - As of 30 June 2017, provisional CENI statistics of the electoral register revision process at the national level indicate a completion rate of 75%, with 30,861,449 voters registered, 48% of whom are women. - Trainings of IT staff of the CENI in provinces with the support of UNDP/PACEC.

KENYA: Kenya is 36 days to the August 8, 2017 General Elections. A total of 19,611,423 voters, 47% of whom are women and 51% of whom are youth are expected to vote on this day. Nomination of candidates for the 1,882 elective positions has been completed. A total of eight candidates have been nominated to vie for the presidency. The main political parties launched their manifestos during the month of June 2017.

LIBERIA: The exhibition of the provisional voter register ended on 18 June 2017. It was generally well conducted, with national election observers concluding procedures were followed and material for exhibition was in place. The National Elections Commission is currently making corrections to the database and including details where required.

MALAWI: CSOs campaign to popularize the Malawi Law Commission report and recommendations on review of electoral laws was initiated. - Malawi Electoral Commission launched its first Gender Strategy, as well as new policies on HIV and AIDS, and Sexual Harassment.

NEPAL: Polling for phase II of the local elections was completed and counting is underway. The Government decided to postpone polling in Province 2 to 18 September (phase III). - ESP supported a large-scale voter education initiative at the field level.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Meeting called by the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss biometric voter registration (BVR) options presented by SECSIP expert; the preparation of cabinet paper on BVR needs and the proposal to establish an Electoral Related Task Force.

SOMALIA: On 8 and 9 June 2017, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) of the

Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) engaged with international donor partners, electoral implementation actors and international NGOs to presents its five-year Strategic Plan (2017-2021) in preparation of universal federal elections. - On 12 June, the Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) organized a first consultative round-table with national and sub-national actors on the drafting process of the Electoral Law. - On 14 June, the United Nations Security Council welcomed in its Resolution 2358 the commitments of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to universal elections in 2021, and to develop the electoral law by the end of 2018. The Security Council underscored the importance of UNSOM to support the FGS with the preparation of "inclusive, credible and transparent elections by 2021", and to take the lead in coordinating international electoral support to Somalia.

ZIMBABWE: ZIM-ECO project has been providing support in key capacity building and technical assistance areas of Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), election operational planning, voter education, election dispute resolution and gender mainstreaming.

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ONGOING ELECTORAL PROJECTS WITH EU FUNDING

Country	Project Title	Reference	EU Contribution	Start Date	End Date
Afghanistan	Support to Electoral Assistance in Afghanistan	DCI-ASIE/2015/368-884	€ 15,500,000.00	01.06.16	31.03.19
Armenia	Support to the Electoral Process in Armenia (SEPA)	ENI/2017/383-645	€ 2,000,000.00	01.07.16	01.10.17
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 Project - MECS	FED/2013/321-549	€ 5,000,000.00	01.06.13	30.06.17
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	30.09.17
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



 ARMENIA

SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN ARMENIA (SEPA)

The UNDP project “Support to the Electoral Process in Armenia (SEPA)”, which started in July 2016 with the support of the EU, US, Germany, UK and the Government of Armenia, provides assistance to the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Armenia to increase transparency of the electoral process and improve confidence of voters in the process by introducing an electronic voter authentication (VA) process at polling stations. Technical assistance is provided for the procurement of the technical equipment, developing the VA software and procedures, support the CEC in training voter authentication devices (VADs) operators and support the CEC in implementing a voter education campaign to familiarize voters and other stakeholders with the VA process as well as other novelties introduced by the 2016 Electoral Code.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 18 June 2017, local elections took place in a peaceful and calm manner in 10 communities of Armenia. The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) deployed the voter authentication technology at polling stations for the third time since its introduction during the 2 April national elections.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

The Project worked closely with the CEC and the Government’s Focal Point for Elections and the vendor to identify a viable solution to the two VIU Client (VAD software) issues identified during the 14 May election. The analysis of the root causes was successful and an agreement was reached on how to address both issues.

The project was requested by the CEC to support the small operation for the 18 June local elections and cooperated with the CEC on drafting the operational outline, the preparation and replication of data and the preparation of the hardware including the upload of the VIU Client on VADs. The small-scale operation was the opportunity for the CEC to increasingly work independently.

The SEPA ICT advisors have focused their efforts on the Configuration of the Docker and the Central Verification Information System (CVIS) – Backup, Restore and data generation – to acquire full independence from the vendor. The Advisors succeeded in installing and running the system independently from the vendor.

The training advisors worked on the merging of the procedures' manuals for national and local elections as required by the CEC. The voter education advisors presented the proposed new concept for the CEC website and got initial positive feedback. The team is now working with the CEC to incorporate its input for the finalization of the concept and move forward with the implementation of the changes.

The team held its lessons-learned exercise in Dilijan on 8-9 June, 2017. Once finalised, the lessons-learned report will be shared with the UN electoral assistance colleagues in EAD and, UNDP in New York and Brussels.

The Project's management completed the inventory of all office assets, both technical equipment and furniture, on 23 June.

II. Plans for the next period

- Finalize and test change request CR43 to finalize the VAD software no later than the end of July 2017.
- ICT advisors to release the draft technical documentation required for the CEC to take full ownership of the VA process.
- Complete the draft new VA comprehensive procedures' manual by the end of July.
- VE advisors to finalize the CEC website concept and move forward with the implementation of the changes.
- Finalize and share the Project's lessons-learned report.

For more information on the Support to the Electoral Cycle in Armenia (SEPA), please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Ms. Costanza Lucangeli, costanza.lucangeli@undp.org.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Martine Perret/UN Photo

SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN THE CONGO (PACEC)

HIGHLIGHTS

- Revision of the Project Document discussed with technical and financial partners
- As of 30 June 2017, provisional CENI statistics of the electoral register revision process at the national level indicate a completion rate of 75%, with 30,861,449 voters registered, 48% of whom are women
- Trainings of IT staff of the CENI in provinces with the support of UNDP/PACEC

I. Project activities during the reporting period

UNDP Country Director led the meetings with technical and financial partners on 2 and 15 June 2017. The main goal of the meetings was to determine a clear direction on how to finalize the revision of the PACEC Project Document, focusing both on the CENI priorities and on the partners' interests and commitments. Partners' feedback included a preference for a modular approach in the project management and financing, allowing them to decide at any time the actions they want to contribute to and the amount of their contribution. During the meeting, partners also said they would like to have the new Project Document available very soon for them to better plan their support. The meetings were attended by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the EU, France, the United States, Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Great Britain and Japan.

On 24 June, the project and the CENI carried out the internal evaluation of the progress of the revision of the electoral register at the national level and for the Kinshasa city-province. Suggestions were made to address identified weaknesses. As of 30 June 2017, provisional CENI statistics of the electoral register revision process at the national level indicate a completion rate of 75%, with 30,861,449 voters registered, 48% of whom are women.

The project continues to support the modernization of the CENI computer systems by supporting the plan to extend CENI network to its field offices. By 10 June, 70 stations were already installed throughout the country.

The centralization of data in the process of revision of the electoral register continues with the establishment of a CNT-TELECOM working group. Although the VSAT stations in the field which are already installed are only partially operational due to the lack of reliable sources of energy, the data retrieval procedure for these stations should be set up. This procedure will allow the daily transfer of the data collected in these field stations. The objective is to optimize the data centralization process for the last two Operational Areas.

UNDP/PACEC experts deployed in the field to coordinate logistical and electoral operations continue to support pre-electoral activities in their respective provinces. In the meantime, the experts deployed in Operational Area 1 and 2 continue to provide support to the Provincial Executive Secretariats (SEP) and CENI field offices in closing the voter's identification and registration operations, including the collection of registration kits, the tracking and centralization of electoral data.

From 3 to 23 June 2017, UNDP/PACEC experts in Operational Area 1 and 2 conducted trainings on electoral logistics and archives management for IT staff and heads of CENI field offices. These trainings, which aim to build CENI field offices' capacities, were organized with the financial support of UNDP/PACEC and conducted with the support of CENI experts from Kinshasa in the cities of Bukavu, Lubumbashi, Kalemie, Kindu and Gbadolite.


From 27 to 28 June 2017, the PACEC provided technical and financial support to the CENI in the organization of an awareness-raising workshop for media professionals on "Media and Elections in the DRC". The workshop aimed to raise awareness of media professionals on their roles in achieving democratic, peaceful and credible electoral process in DRC. The workshop covered 3 topics: (i) Elections in DRC: challenges of the Congolese legal and institutional framework; (ii) Information management during an election period in a crisis context; and (iii) Organizing elections in time of crisis in Africa: which lessons can the Congolese media learn? A code of conduct for journalists has been signed at the end of the workshop.

II. Plans for the next period

- Finalizing the Project Document and continuation of discussions with partners and CENI
- Continuing support to the modernization of the CENI computer system by extending the CENI network to its field offices
- Assisting and providing technical support to the revision of the electoral register in Operational Area 3 and 4
- Participating to the meetings of the Electoral Task Force of the MONUSCO-UNDP/PACEC-CENI
- Providing support in exporting and centralizing data of the revision of the electoral register
- Continuing coordination meetings with partners involved in civic education and activities to raise awareness.

For more information on the "Projet d'appui au cycle electoral au Congo", please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Alain Ayadokoun, alain.ayadokoun@undp.org.



 GUINEA

 PACEG

PROJET D'APPUI AU CYCLE ELECTORAL DE LA GUINEE


I. Project activities during the reporting period

NTR

II. Plans for the next period

NTR



 IEBC Communications Department

STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN KENYA

HIGHLIGHTS

- Kenya is 36 days to the August 8, 2017 General Elections. A total of 19,611,423 voters, 47% of whom are women and 51% of whom are youth are expected to vote on this day.
- Nomination of candidates for the 1,882 elective positions has been completed. A total of eight candidates have been nominated to vie for the presidency.
- The main political parties launched their manifestos during the month of June 2017.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

National Elections Conference – Under the project, UNDP working with UN Women, Civil Society Organizations and other Electoral Technical Assistance Providers under the leadership of Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), supported a National Elections Conference. The conference sought to (i) critically evaluate the state of preparedness among Kenya's key electoral stakeholders to support and conduct the 2017 general elections; (ii) to synergize the efforts and of roles of stakeholders in ensuring credible and peaceful 2017 General Elections; and (iii) to rally Kenyans and key stakeholders to commit to credible and peaceful 2017 General Elections. The conference was attended by more than 1,000 members of the public. Among the key guests included HE Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya, who is seeking a second term in office; Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, the former Prime Minister who is seeking to unseat Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta; H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union; United States Ambassador to Kenya; the European Delegation Ambassador to Kenya, and the Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON). Key government and non-government institutions working on elections also showcased their initiatives towards the 2017 General Elections. The conference resolved to amongst other

things to: build public trust and confidence in the electoral process; update the public on the status of voters' register audit by KPMG; ensure the Security and Integrity of electoral technology; advance Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in collaboration with key stakeholders, religious institutions, and Dispute Tribunals pre-election and Post-Election to ensure simple disputes do not result into violence.

Launch of Elections Security Arrangement Programme (ESAP) and Training of security forces – The project continued to partner with IEBC to ESAP to utilize training materials developed in 2016 to train 60 master trainers and 1,200 ToTs. These ToTs will roll out the training to over 180,000 security officials who will provide security on election day.

Training of media on elections – The project supported training of political correspondents and journalists from key media houses from all the 47 counties. The trainings were based on the Guidelines for Media Coverage of Elections which were developed with the support of the project. The guidelines seek to foster gender responsive and conflict sensitive coverage of and reporting on elections.

Electoral technical operations seminar – The project supported IEBC to undertake an electoral technical operations seminar for 847 returning officers and presiding officers. The seminar aimed at sensitizing the officers on E-day operations and coordination.

II. Plans for the next period

- Finalization of ESAP trainings – Rolling out ESAP trainings to the 180,000 security officials to be deployed on E-day.
- Voter education targeting women, youth and PWDs – This is expected to increase public awareness of the voting process and communicate the major arrangements being made for the 2017 General Elections.
- Finalization of the observer accreditation system– The project has been supporting development of an observer management system. The system will be used for accreditation and management of both long-term and short-term observers.

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.



LEBANON

UNDP LEAP

LEBANESE ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE PROJECT

I. Project activities during the reporting period

NTR

II. Plans for the next period

NTR



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.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The exhibition of the provisional voter register ended on 18 June 2017. It was generally well conducted, with national election observers concluding procedures were followed and material for exhibition was in place.
- The National Elections Commission is currently making corrections to the database and including details where required.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Exhibition of the provisional voter register closed on 17 June 2017. It was generally well conducted with national election observers concluding procedures were followed and material for exhibition was in place. The National Elections Commission is currently making corrections to the database and including details where required.

The project assisted the National Elections Commission to draft plans for dispatch and retrieval of material for the voter exhibition period. Capacity building for staff in the warehouse has continued and has included an assessment and repairing of 500 cameras and power packs used in voter registration.

Training materials, including manuals and gender-sensitive operation forms for the voter registration card replacement period (scheduled to commence on 17 July 2017) were produced for 340 NEC staff

with support of the project to ensure consistency in the application of procedures.

Two regional workshops were concluded to support the work of the regional “Gender in Election” coordination group, promoting the role of women in political parties and elections.

A gap analysis was conducted to feed into a post-election strategy for the project. In order to respond to potential recommendations of the European Union and other election observer groups following the 10 October 2017 elections, the project is preparing a series of post-election activities based on a strategy of generating clear evidence, creating spaces and public policy engagement with electoral reform issues and strengthening public engagement.

II. Plans for the next period

- Two national and one international legal experts contracted by the UNDP election project will assist the National Elections Commission in screening the nomination papers of candidates during the forthcoming period in what is expected to be a complex legal environment.
- The voter register will be reviewed to include corrections from the exhibition period. A UNDP information technology consultant will be deployed in July 2017 to assist with the cleaning of the voter register database and assist set up an election results management system.
- The National Elections Commission has started the process of recruiting temporary poll workers in advance of training and the 10 October 2017 general elections.
- A field operations expert arrived and will support field operations and work closely with the magistrates at county level in the run up to the elections.
- The project will support National Elections Commission to produce a logistics plan for the 10 October 2017 general elections and prepare a bid for the procurement of ballot papers and electoral material.
- Training of staff that will be responsible for replacing voter cards following the exhibition period will also be conducted.

For more information on the support to the Liberia electoral cycle, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. George Baratshvili, george.baratshvili@undp.org.



MALAWI

Malawi Electoral Commission

MALAWI ELECTORAL CYCLE SUPPORT PROJECT

HIGHLIGHTS

- CSOs campaign to popularize the Malawi Law Commission report and recommendations on review of electoral laws was initiated.
- Malawi Electoral Commission launched its first Gender Strategy, as well as new policies on HIV and AIDS, and Sexual Harassment.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Special Law Commission on the Review of Electoral Laws (SLC): An international expert on legal reform was brought on board to assist MEC to analyze the LC report, compare with best practice in the region, and ensure MEC is well prepared for the outcome of the legislative process and implications for MEC operations ahead of 2019 tripartite elections. The Malawi Electoral Support Network held consultations with CSOs engagement to discuss the recommendations for electoral reforms which resulted in an action plan for advocacy.

National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF): A NECOF was held at the National Assembly to interact with Parliamentarians and other electoral stakeholders. During the meeting MEC responded to Parliamentarians' concerns regarding the voter registration process by demonstrating how eligible voters will be identified by capturing biometric data from the National ID. MEC also met the Center for Multiparty Democracy (CMD) to discuss biometric voter registration using the National ID.

Gender Strategy: MEC launched its first Gender Strategy, developed with assistance from UN Women. The Gender Strategy aims at equality in electoral administration. During the launch MEC discussed and disseminated new policies on HIV and AIDS, and Sexual Harassment to over 80 female staff.



Launch of the first MEC Gender Strategy, 20 June 2017. From left to right: Clara Anyangwe (UN Women Country Rep.), Mrs. Jean Mathanga (MEC Commissioner), Dr. Jane Ansah SC (MEC Chairperson). Photo credit: MEC



Dr. Jane Ansah SC (MEC Chairperson) in the center front row with MEC Commissioners, Government Officials, and CSO members working on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. Photo credit: MEC

Procurement: Geographic Information System (GIS) equipment was delivered to MEC to assist in establishment of a GIS unit in MEC. Connection of a virtual private network (VPN) from MEC to the Accountant General's office was supported to ensure MEC can utilize the Government's integrated financial management system, in line with audit recommendations.

Multiparty Liaison Committee Assessment (MPLCs): An assessment of Multi-Party Liaison Committees (MPLCs) was completed. The assessment made recommendations regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of MPLCs as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism for electoral related disputes.

II. Plans for the next period

- Finalization of terminal report for MECS (2013-2017) project.
- Signing of new project.
- Finalization of recruitment of new CTA- Elections.
- Technical Committee meeting to discuss and endorse workplan (August- December) to be approved by the Steering Committee.
- Planning for JTF joint training.

For more information on the Malawi Electoral Cycle Support Project, please contact Claire Medina, Deputy Resident Representative, claire.medina@undp.org.



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.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Polling for phase II of the local elections was completed and counting is underway. The Government decided to postpone polling in Province 2 to 18 September (phase III).
- ESP supported a large-scale voter education initiative at the field level.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

In response to the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) request for additional support to its voter education, ESP designed and launched a fresh voter education initiative. This involved contracting the local implementing partners, designing, in consultation with ECN, a small handbook, poster and handout for the programme and organizing an initial orientation workshop in Kathmandu.

The contracted implementing partners managed to organize over 6,000 voter education events in 20 districts reaching out to more than 150,000 voters directly. These participants were given hands-on training using a mock ballot paper as well as reference materials, so that they can share the information with other voters. The majority of the orientations were conducted in the local languages of the respective communities. For monitoring purpose, an SMS system has been used. Facilitators were asked to send in the number of female and male participants for each orientation they conduct. Additionally, ESP staff conducted field monitoring visits to selected locations.



Senior citizens participating in mock polling program.
Photo credit: Nikila Shrestha



Voter education for the Baadi (Marginalized) Community.
Photo credit: Nikila Shrestha



Senior citizens participating in mock polling program. Photo credit: Nikila Shrestha

Along with the voter education programme at field level, the project continued to support the ECN media campaign through technical advice given to the national counterpart while producing voter information PSAs broadcasted on national TV channels and FM radio stations at local level. ESP ensured special efforts targeting people with disability and their inclusion in the electoral process by including specific messages in the PSAs.

Technical assistance included the design, printing and distribution of a factsheet detailing the requirements for candidate nomination, a poster on counting operations to be displayed at counting centres. Finally, the project produced and shared a tool to calculate the number of teams required to complete the counting process within the timeframe set by ECN for the 334 counting centres of phase II.

II. Plans for the next period

- Technical advice and operational support to phase III, including voter education in eight districts, and initiatives to enhance gender and social inclusion in the electoral process;
- Demonstration of the new voter registration software;
- Analysis of main causes of invalid votes in phase I and II;
- Support to the national counterpart in drafting an electoral operational plan for future electoral cycles;
- Assessment of BRIDGE training programme.

For more information on the Nepal ESP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Vincent da Cruz, vincent.dacruz@undp.org.



STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS (SECSIP)

HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting called by the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss biometric voter registration (BVR) options presented by SECSIP expert, the preparation of cabinet paper on BVR needs and the proposal to establish an Electoral Related Task Force.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Support to the Biometric Voter Registration System (BVR)

In April, SECSIP engaged an expert on BVR systems, to conduct an assessment of the BVR system and priority needs and to develop an Options Paper and propose recommendations to strengthen the sustainability and autonomy of SIEC. His first in-country mission was carried during the month of April when the expert held meetings with stakeholders, including the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS), the Solomon Islands Government ICT Support Unit (ICTSU), civil registry unit, donors and civil society in order to gather feedback and identify possible scenarios.

During the second in-country mission carried out from 13 June to 27 June, the BVR expert conducted an in-depth technical assessment of the existent database and completed the information gathering process for the finalization of the options paper. A presentation on the findings and recommendations of the expert was held during the LPAC meeting.

The Office of the Prime Minister took the initiative of calling for a round table discussion with senior government authorities and key stakeholders, which agreed on the presentation of a cabinet paper to

inform on the BVR options and to establish a Task Force on electoral related issues.

Media Election Training. The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and the Media Association of the Solomon Islands with the support of SECSIP continued their collaboration on the implementation of the second half of the Media Election Training sessions. The 4 sessions conducted during the month of May addressed topics on the Political Parties Integrity Act, Political Parties in the Solomon Islands, Covering Parliament, and Electoral Reform.

Ednal Palmer, SECSIP National Media Consultant oversaw the implementation of these trainings and submitted a proposal for an extension to conduct a week-long training workshop in Auki, Malaita Province, and Gizo in the Western Province. Additionally, the proposal recommends conducting an additional session in Honiara to cover the topic on the Electoral Reform more in depth, particularly with respect to the White Papers on a new Election System submitted to Parliament in May 2016 and March 2017.

These workshops intend to provide the essential tools to equip journalists and media professionals with the knowledge and skills required to perform their role contributing to a peaceful, transparent and credible election process. This engagement also builds on the initiatives started under the UNDP Peace Building Fund supported project to promulgate the idea of 'do no harm' amongst journalists during the period leading up to the RAMSI withdrawal and the next set of elections.

M&E exercise with partner CSOs on Civic Voter Education activities. In order to monitor whether the implementation of activities is conducted in accordance with the approved plans and to assess the impact of these activities at grass-root level, Senior Media Officer Philotea Paul together with SECSIP national consultant Lily Chekana, conducted provincial visits to monitor the activities being carried out by Hearts of Hope and Destiny Global.

New grants. Two grant agreements have been established with the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) and Transparency Solomon Islands (TSI). These new partnerships are considered strategic alliances for the development and enhancement of civic and voter awareness in line with SECSIP new project document for phase II.

II. Plans for the next period

NTR

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 8 and 9 June 2017, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) engaged with international donor partners, electoral implementation actors and international NGOs to presents its five-year Strategic Plan (2017-2021) in preparation of universal federal elections.
- On 12 June, the Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) organized a first consultative round-table with national and sub-national actors on the drafting process of the Electoral Law.
- On 14 June, the United Nations Security Council welcomed in its Resolution 2358 the commitments of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to universal elections in 2021, and to develop the electoral law by the end of 2018. The Security Council underscored the importance of UNSOM to support the FGS with the preparation of “inclusive, credible and transparent elections by 2021”, and to take the lead in coordinating international electoral support to Somalia.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

On 8 and 9 June 2017, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) engaged with international donor partners, electoral implementation actors and international NGOs to presents its five-year Strategic Plan (2017-2021) in preparation of universal elections while soliciting feedback from key stakeholders on coordination and assistance.

The NIEC Strategic Plan informs the revision of the UNDP/UNSOM Project Document on electoral support which is currently being drafted.

On 12 June 2017, the Federal Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) organized a consultative round-table with national and sub-national actors on the development of the Electoral Law by 2018, a key commitment from the FGS expressed in May at the London Conference on Somalia. As MOIFAR has a lead role to ensure a consultative and inclusive drafting process of the Electoral Law, the main objective of the round-table discussion in June was to get input from the stakeholders and looking for coordination and collaboration to produce a politically agreed electoral system for the 2020/21 universal suffrage. More than 50 participants joined the round-table, of note were participants from the FGS, Federal Member States (FMSs), civil society organizations (CSOs), academia and political association. The UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme supports the development of the Electoral Law.



NIEC Chair Halima Ismail Ibrahim overlooking the NIEC's internal simulation exercise of polling and counting, 14 June 2017. Photo credit: NIEC

On 14 June 2017, the NIEC Secretariat simulated registration of candidates and polling, and the counting process to familiarize itself with the operations involved. This experience is one of many building blocks aimed at strengthening institutional capacity of the NIEC. The Secretariat demonstrated enthusiasm for the whole process and commented on how it is critical for them to pay attention to detail for every step of the process. The team committed to adhering to the Commission core values of integrity, transparency, impartiality, inclusivity and discharging the rule of law. "Practice makes perfect", commented one of the staff as they indicated the need for other hands on capacity building initiatives.

From 22 to 24 June 2017, supported by the UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme, a delegation of the Somali Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) paid a three-day visit to the Somali Federal Member State of Puntland. NIEC Chair Halima Ibrahim Ismail met with Puntland President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali "Gaas", MPs, and civil society representatives to discuss plans for the 2021 federal elections and the federal mandate of the NIEC in this process. The Commission informed the Puntland stakeholders of their achievements since the establishment, challenges faced, and the importance of cooperation between Puntland and NIEC. Officially confirmed in writing to the NIEC afterwards, the Puntland President expressed his support to the NIEC to fulfill its constitutional mandate. President "Gaas"

expressed his hope that the NIEC would find synergies to work in a cooperative manner with the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC).

II. Plans for the next period

• Support to NIEC

- Finalization of NIEC Strategic Plan with regards to budget and incorporation of feedback
- NIEC participation to international Political Party Registration Workshop – Arab/African EMBs – in collaboration with UNDP RBAS
- NIEC engagement with political associations and stakeholders on Political Party Registration
- NIEC ongoing engagements with the Federal Member States of Somalia
- Preparation voter registration feasibility study
- Ongoing enhancement of NIEC internal processes and regulations

• Support to MOIFAR

- Ongoing drafting and consultation workshops on the Electoral Law
- Outreach to national and international partners on options of electoral systems and political/technical distinctions
- Printing and dissemination of historical Electoral Laws (Somali and English)

• Other activities

- Development of revised UN Electoral Support Project Document - Donor and Stakeholder Engagements
- Coordination of International Technical Assistance to NIEC

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



ZIMBABWE

UNDP Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT (ZIM-ECO)

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO) focuses on developing the institutional and organizational capacity of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to meet its Constitutional mandate. The project provides technical assistance to voter registration process to promote its credibility and inclusiveness, strengthens election dispute resolution mechanism, fosters gender mainstreaming during the electoral cycle and promotes participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in the electoral process.

HIGHLIGHTS

ZIM-ECO project has been providing support in key capacity building and technical assistance areas of Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), election operational planning, voter education, election dispute resolution and gender mainstreaming.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Technical Assistance for Voter Registration Operational Planning: Technical assistance was provided for the development of Voter Registration Operational Plan and the draft of the final plan was shared with the Commission. The focus of the plan has been on development of a credible and accurate voters roll.

The roll out of the voter registration is still being firmed up and different options of a phased approach are being considered. UNDP will be supporting a workshop on the finalization and unpacking of the Voter Registration Operational Plan in July with participation of all departments of Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and provincial offices. This is an important capacity building support from the project.

Procurement of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) Kits: through the project, UNDP was initially supporting the procurement of BVR Kits, but the Government decided to finance the BVR kits and took

over procurement. ZEC completed the process and after a successful Site Validation Test (SVT), ZEC signed a contract in June, 2017.

Capacity Building of ZEC: With the technical support from UNDP, the terms of reference for establishment of a new Voter Registration Department and for several key positions within the ICT Department were developed. After getting the approval of funding from Ministry of Finance, the positions were advertised and the selection process has been completed. These additional positions will ensure long-term capacity within ZEC to undertake voter registration, which earlier was done by the civil registry office.

Voter Education Strategy and its Implementation: Technical assistance was provided on the development of ZEC Voter Education Strategy, in partnership with EISA and in consultation with CSOs through a participatory process. This was followed by development of a BVR Voter Education Campaign using creative and innovative processes. A four days' workshop was organized from May 20-23, 2017 that brought together ZEC Commissioners, senior management and staff and 16 CSO representatives to finalize the strategy and campaign.

Human Rights and dispute resolution: ZEC organized a 3 days' International Conference on Election Dispute Resolution (EDR). Several recommendations surfaced from the dialogue and, as a follow up to the workshop, UNDP firmed up the proposal on a platform for the Chapter 12 Institutions to discuss elections related issues, including possible electoral violence. A meeting was organized at the end of June 2017 to discuss the role that each institution needs to play using the upcoming by- election as a pilot.

Gender Mainstreaming: UNDP is working in partnership with UN Women to support ZEC with gender mainstreaming interventions across all the project activities. A gender baseline survey has commenced aimed at determining public perception around electoral processes, including challenges of participation of women. It will be a nationally representative survey of 2,000 households across Zimbabwe and will enable ZEC to come up with a strategy to address they key issues and challenges identified.

II. Plans for the next period

- Workshop on finalization and unpacking of Voter Registration Operational Plan
- Finalization for BVR Voter Education Campaign materials
- Development of training materials for voter registration training
- Finalization of contracts for printing of voter education materials, call centre, road shows, production of TV and radio programs etc.

For more information on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO), please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Azhar Malik, azhar.malik@undp.org.