

ELECTION NEWSLETTER



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NIEC Operational Review for 2015 – 2020 and outlining 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan



A self-reflection retreat was held by National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) primarily to review its internal functioning. Participants to the retreat encompassed the NIEC Commissioners and Staff.

The participants were charged with various tasks: to assess the Commission's accomplishments as an organization, identify challenges and the lessons learnt over the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan period.

The purpose was to review the performance of the NIEC from 2015 to 2020. 'Look back' at where the NIEC was and where it is today and assess what went well, what did not go well, what could have been done better and identify areas for improvement.

NIEC Chairperson's Remarks



In her opening remarks, the NIEC Chairperson set the contextual background for the workshop when she gave a historical background leading to the establishment of the Commission. Her presentation emphasized the fact that the country had not known elections for 50 years since 1969; and the NIEC is therefore, the first Electoral Management Body to be established. The Chairperson emphasized that the Somali political landscape had significantly changed; and that the country was now ready for Universal Suffrage elections. Consequently, the NIEC needed to build its capacities and those of its partners in the electoral process in readiness to conduct the elections. Since the institution was new, the chairperson, emphasized that during the first phase of its existence, the Commission had to build its capacity and also conduct

HIGHLIGHTS

- **NIEC Operational Review for 2015 – 2020 and outlining 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan .**
- **NIEC Chairperson's Remarks.**
- **The Remarks of the UN's Election Support Programme Representative.**
- **Election Management in Countries Recovering from Conflicts: The Afghan Experience.**
- **Outcome of the Internal Review and the next steps.**

the prerequisites for One-Person-One-vote elections. The chairperson acknowledged that this was a challenge in its self – building the institution and preparing for elections in a volatile, challenging and ever-changing political landscape. In its efforts, to build the internal capacity of the NIEC, the chairperson, emphasized that the commission made huge strides in recruiting competent staff, establishing operational systems and acquiring offices – at the Headquarters in Mogadishu and in Federal Member States.

The chairperson, also briefly outlined the operational milestones the NIEC achieved. These included many firsts. Among them were: developing the first National Voter education curriculum, registration of political parties for the first time in 5 decades, identification of potential voter registration sites.

The Remarks of the UN's Election Support Programme Representative



The retreat was also addressed by the director of the United Nations' Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG), who outlined the international position and what was expected of the NIEC as it walked the country towards the One Person One Vote elections. The Director appreciated the efforts of the commission in delivering universal suffrage in 2020 and pointed out that 2020 had been challenging for the NIEC. It was a national expectation that the Commission would conduct the One-Person-One-Vote elections. To that end, the NIEC presented the operational plan for elections to Parliament in June 2020 containing two proposed models – Biometric voter registration and paper-based manual registration. It was, however a disappointment the decision of the Somali leaders to hold indirect elections thus, negating the efforts made by the Commission during its first term.

Election Management in Countries Recovering from Conflicts: The Afghan Experience



The workshop received a presentation on the management of elections in volatile environments and post-conflict countries from the external consultant with specific reference to Afghanistan. Mr. Ahmed Isak Hassan, former chairman of Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), who worked with Afghanistan Electoral Commission as an international advisor, shared his experience in Afghanistan with the participants. He noted that Afghanistan shares many characteristics with Somalia politically, socially and the country has experienced civil strife and turmoil for decades. Despite this, it has been able to conduct universal suffrage elections every 4 years since 2004. They conducted voter registration, voter education as well as presidential and parliamentary elections.

This success is attributable to the resolve of the Afghan people and demonstrated that they could not be cowed by terror and stopped from exercising their democratic rights. There was also political will and support from the international community for these elections. Following discussions, the workshop participants were unanimous in their resolve that if Afghanistan could do it so could Somalia for as long as there is national political will and commitment and demand from the Somali people.

Outcome of the Internal Review and the next steps



The 4 days long internal review retreat produced valuable recommendations that will improve the internal functioning of the organization in its efforts to deliver its mandate. The recommendations will be embedded in the new strategic plan of the NIEC.

The next phase of the organizational review will be consultations with external stakeholders ranging from Federal and Regional government institutions, political parties, civil society organizations, think tanks and the media.

