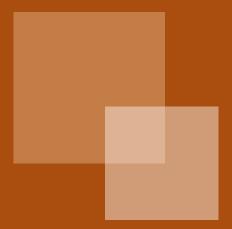# Emerging Trends and Challenges of Electoral Democracy in Africa

International IDEA Policy Dialogue
25–27 May 2016
Abuja, Nigeria

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Executive summary

The Regional Dialogue on 'Emerging Trends and Challenges of Electoral Democracy in Africa' was held over two days (25–26 May 2016) in Abuja, Nigeria. The dialogue was organized as a partnership event, under the overall stewardship of the Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission (AUC). The event partners were the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Electoral Institute (EI) of Nigeria, the Economic Commission of West Africa (ECOWAS), and the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) of Nigeria. Dialogue participants included academics, civil society individuals, and representatives of Electoral Management Bodies in the region.

The dialogue provided participants with the opportunity to express perspectives and exchange information on electoral related trends and realities, as part of the search for solutions to overcome challenges experienced in the region. The dialogue was organised around a set of focused panel sessions, which incorporated inputs from invited individuals and discussions from participants. It was anticipated that the dialogue discussions would serve to guide the continuing efforts of partner organizations as they shape and re-shape the work they do electoral processes and on the deepening of participation. The following provides a brief and selective extraction of some of the core issues that emerged during the deliberations. These are organised in accordance to the objectives areas and panel session established for the dialogue.

Overall trends and challenges

- Democracy is in a state of perpetual crisis and there will always be a struggle to find better forms of representation and accountability.

- Global and local economic agents can exercise power in a manner that renders electoral processes irrelevant as public leaders and those who they represent are unable to carry through on development choices.

- After most of the recent elections, new types of nondemocratic government have come to the fore: competitive authoritarian regimes–in which autocrats submit to meaningful multiparty elections but engage in serious democratic abuse. These regimes have formal democratic institutions. But their leaders circumvent and ignore them so often that they cannot be described as democratic. Finally, they are characterized by extreme inequalities between the ruling party and the opposition when it comes to access to political financing or the national media; and Independent control institutions are under the control of the executive.

- There is a need to explore complementary elements of participation and

accountability that would be relevant for the continent.

- The conviction to integrity and the proper organization of elections by electoral management bodies is fundamental to success.

- Even as there are challenges in elections in the Africa, it remains the only means for legitimating leaders and has effectively emerged as the norm for all countries.

- Voters are becoming younger and less predictable in terms of voting preferences, but many are still swayed by ethnic related influences.

- Political parties are prone to internal struggles for power and generally function in a very predatory manner when engaging with state institutions.

- Due to a rise in electoral contestation and in inconclusive elections, the cost associated with the running of election has increased substantively.

- There is a need to rethink the type of democracy we have in the continent and explore ideas around what a developmental democracy would entail for countries.

- The continent is getting better at elections and needs to remain hopeful as greater pressure is applied to ensure that there is respect for term limits and for electoral outcomes.

- Greater emphasises needs to be placed on the local level and on other spaces for participation as countries seek to improve the quality of democracy and enhance substantive participation in development processes.

Tenure of political leaders/elected office holders

- Extension of tenure limits is particularly evident in countries where political parties are weak and other social forces are not sufficiently organised.

- Rent seeking behaviour, the extension of the chieftainship custom and tendencies towards 'messianic' behaviour serve to encourage people to agree to term limit extensions.

- Less executive power and more distributed politics could serve to disincentives the propensity of people to want to stay in power.

- The central problem, very often, is that non-democrats are given the responsibility of leading democratic institutions and processes.

- Legality and constitutional instruments are vital for term limits, but are well augmented by citizen engagements and peer-pressure from within political parties.

- Extension of tenure and rationalisation for term extensions must be understood

in the historical and developmental context of each country.

- Deficiencies in the intellectual and ideological capacities of political leaders often impact on the choices made by political leaders and hence on the desire to extend a stay in office.

- Political parties are often subject to influence from external actors and this often serves to undermine local change imperatives.

- The AU has demonstrated willingness and a capacity to act in particular instances, and this needs to be encouraged and be sustained by citizen pressure.

- Stronger institutions at the regional level will help to facilitate the technical measurement of performance and thereby enhance accountability.

Media and communication on elections

- The media in Africa has transformed from a passive information role towards one of being a watchdog for wider society.

- Media convergence is a reality and very often new media forms are being used by state and non-state parties for deeper social engagements and political mobilisation.

- Social media platforms are already introducing restriction to prevent abuse and hence there is a high and perhaps, satisfactory level of self-regulation.

- Capacity and enhanced professionalism would help to improve the positive role of media for wider development and social improvements.

- Private and social media have in many contexts proven their value for public education and for providing information where the state is unable to fulfil such obligation on its own.

- Media is not inherently neutral and often media companies and journalist are subject to a range of influences and may well themselves embody certain ethnic or gender biases.

- There are many cases where journalist would get too close to political actors and hence lose their ability to report independently and with credibility.

- The state should not have the capacity to curtail the flow of news and hence imperative that regional guidance be provided.

- Media needs to broaden perspectives so that there is more reporting on regional institutions and a greater attention on developments that can encourage positivity in a society.

- Un-regulated communications around elections and results are a problem

and some creativity is needed to manage the dysfunctional elements that emerge from the general democratisation of the media space.

- Real time and immediate release of results, coupled with proper education on the meaning of results may assist in avoiding confrontation and conflicts arising from misunderstandings.

- The focus on rights and access to media has detracted attention away from citizen and media responsibilities and obligations.

Contestation of electoral processes and outcomes

- Democracies are fragile and leaders cling to power by ethnic networks and through the manipulation of voters' lists and the delineation of voting districts.

- Very often citizen have become disillusioned with politics and only participate in situations where there is threat of further deterioration rather than for improvement purposes.

- The legitimacy of an elections management body and its composition can contribute to challenges on the outcomes of an election.

- The role of armed forces and their influence in democratic settings continues to be a matter of concern for democracy development.

- As long as there are patronage and consumption incentives for entering politics, elections will be subject to manipulation and violence.

- It is imperative to explore terrains of participation that go beyond elections and that serve to change mind-sets away from winner takes all approach to politics.

- The capabilities of political contestants and those managing democratic institutions and processes are often fundamental to success.

- Incorporating opposition parties into governance institutions and processes would serve to limit violence in electoral and post-electoral situations.

- Where there is some level of contestation and crisis on results, violence is avoided by convergent foreign, regional and local interests.

The reform of electoral management bodies (EMBs)

- Even though many African EMBs have similar legislative prescripts, they differ fundamentally in terms of functions, scope of authority and in regulations.

- EMBs have largely been inserted into political contexts that have no really changed and often have to fulfil mandates in contentious democratic situations.

- The growing costs of elections and demands from citizens for effective engagement and participation create pressures for innovative electoral reforms.

- Permanent EMB structures are essential and better cooperation modalities are needed with government departments that deal with citizen registration.

- Smart and new technologies facilitate better and more transparent approaches to elections management and should be explored to facilitate greater confidence in the outcomes of elections.

- EMBs are increasingly central in motivating reforms in electoral processes and in the integrity environment as they often engage in very direct ways with the challenges that unfold during elections.

- The principle of impartiality must be upheld by EMBs no matter the appointment process and these institutions should be agile and accept the frequency of reform as part of the evolution of democracy.

- Civil society organizations have demonstrated that they can be very important value-adding partners to EMBs in the delivery of credible and well administered elections.

- Control over funding and the deployment of resources is a very significant indicator of the overall performance and success of an EMB.

- Support for EMBs through regional technical institutions and related networks can be very important for enhanced capabilities and for driving internal reforms.

- Due process on the appointment and removal of elections commissioners is very important and courts should only be seen as the last avenue for resolving disputes.

The role of regional organizations and mechanisms

- It is imperative to appreciate the limits of regional organizations and the fact that they have very little resources to exercise their mandates.

- Elections observation is a very expensive exercise and it is very difficult to determine the overall value-add of such exercises.

- A study on compliance of Member States with regional instruments could add good value to the work of such institutions.

- More capacity building and technical monitoring of compliance with regional instruments would help to overcome the constraints embodied in a non-interference approach within specific regions.

- The submission of technical reports on governance and of election observer

missions directly to Heads of State Summits has proved effective in some regions.

- A focus on local governance democracy processes and elections provides a channel for overcoming the realities of a growing disillusionment with national and state level governments.

- It is important to appreciate the different influences on the continent and, in particular, the work that is being done by organizations such as Organisation International de la Francophonie.

- The idea of establishing regional election management bodies need to be explored as they may well be the best channel for securing elections credibility.

- More attention needs to be focused on encouraging states to foster integration by pooling their sovereignty or incorporating trans-national sovereignty into their approaches.

- Existing regional and continental instruments provide a good basis for actions and need to be strengthened through citizen pressure and by holding member states accountable.

- Sovereignty is not an absolute and is subject to constant redefinition and persistent negotiation with and between member states.

- Exchange amongst regional organizations and appreciation of subsidiarity and complementarity would go a long way in enhancing cooperation and facilitating the more effective use of limited resources.

This executive summary of the central issues that emerged during each of the dialogue panels is not exhaustive and reflects the perspective choices of the dialogue rapporteurs. A fuller and more detailed account of issues is contained in the report.

Introduction

The Regional Dialogue on 'Emerging Trends and Challenges of Electoral Democracy in Africa' was held in Abuja, Nigeria on 25–26 May 2016. The workshop was organized by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), in partnership with Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Electoral Institute (TEI) of Nigeria, the Economic Commission of West Africa (ECOWAS), the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) of Nigeria and the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission. Details on the rational for the workshop and the realities that it sought to engage with are contained in the workshop Concept Note attached as Annex A. The workshop was attended by invited organization representatives and individuals active in the terrain of focus from within the Africa region. It includes academics, civil society individuals, and representatives of electoral management bodies and members of the judiciary from the region. A full list of participants is attached as Annex C.

The workshop took place in a context where countries across the region are struggling to consolidate democracy and where elections often serve to deepen divisions rather than build social cohesion. Among the stresses faced in the continent are the pressures to change the term limits of Presidents and the persistence of election related violence. Often these challenges lead to a decline of confidence in elections and related demonization of political opposition and the media. At a more technical level, electoral management bodies often find it difficult to navigate new challenges and continually deliver credible elections and related results. Some of these elections and democracy challenges are complex and particular to African contexts and realities. The workshop was hence an opportunity for participants to exchange information of existing trends and realities, as part of the process of collectively reflecting on possible pathways on improving electoral integrity in the continent. At a macro level, it was anticipated that the outcomes of the dialogue would serve to guide the continuing efforts of regional organization and the African Union Commission as they shape and re-shape the work they do on established and unfolding mandates. The overall workshop concept note served to guide discussions and shape the objectives of the workshop. These were articulated as follows:

- Explore challenges around terms and tenures of political leaders and elected office holders;

- Debate the trends related to media governance in elections as well as the impact of increased internet penetration and social media usage among Africans on election transparency;

- Examine how contestation of electoral processes and the impact of its outcomes—including electoral boycotts, the rejection of election results and electoral violence—on electoral legitimacy;

- Discuss the developments around electoral management bodies (EMBs) reform, with particular reference to securing and protecting EMB structural, behavioural and financial independence; and

- Review the work carried out by regional organizations and provide recommendations for their engagement to enhance the quality of elections on the continent.

In line with the objectives, the Regional Dialogue took place over two days and was organized around a series of panel discussions. Within each panel session, prominent individuals were invited to make inputs. The inputs were all followed by a summation so issues from a discussant. Most often, the discussant added to the initial inputs provided by the panellists.

This report is a summation of inputs made and captures adjustments that emerged due to last minute changes in panel participants. The report is not a verbatim account of inputs and should hence not be cited as such. Discussions are summarized and hence all inputs and related responses or debates are not repeated.

Opening session

Dr Maurice Enguelegue, Senior Programme Officer of the International Institute on Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), served as overall coordinator for the opening session. The session served to highlight some of the challenges and opportunities embodied in elections and democracy development in the continent. It also provided the workshop partner organizations with an opportunity to welcome the participants and express perspectives on emerging democracy challenges.

The session was chaired by his Excellency Professor Ibrahim A. Gambari, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Chairperson and founder of the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development. Welcome remarks were made by Mrs Idayat Hassan, Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) in Nigeria, and Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria. Opening Remarks were made by Professor Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs in the AUC and Dr Remi Ajibewa, the Director Political Affairs in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). An opening statement was made by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Africa and West Asia Regional Director, International IDEA.

The session chairperson began by indicating that even though elections are important, they are not sufficient for sustainable democracy. He noted that before the end of the cold-war, the idea that the UN would engaged in issues of democracy and election was unheard of. Since the end of the cold-war though, there has been a growth in the levels of involvement in matters that were deemed to be within domestic jurisdiction. We now live in a world where elections in one country impact on stability in others. Even as we celebrate successful elections in Nigeria, we must recognise the threats that come with corruption, violence, weak judicial systems and poor leadership. The role of civil society has been fundamental to this. We cannot have development without peace. The largest disconnect we see in the continent is between resources and development.

Mrs Idayat Hassan: Welcome remarks

Ms Haasan began by acknowledging the dignitaries present and expressing her organization's delight in partnering with others on the regional dialogue. She noted that Nigeria was an excellent host for such an event, given the success experienced with the 2015 elections. She also noted that, not only did the country have free and fair elections, but the system had also improved through the efforts of its people. Ms Hassan postulated that, at present, elections are the only means for legitimising leaders. It has emerged as a norm and we now have over twenty years of elections on the continent. She

indicated however, that we are witnessing some challenges. These include a clamp down on the media in some countries and political violence. She further noted that despite these difficulties there are positive developments. These include the work of civil society, youth participation and engagements and the use of social media. In concluding, Ms Hassan asserted that elections is a process and not an event and requires continued activism from civil society and the media.

Professor Mahamood Yakubu: Welcome remarks

Professor Yakuba began by recognising dignitaries present and by welcoming all to Nigeria and to the regional dialogue. He noted that the continent has come a long way since the early 1990s and virtually all countries have embraced some form of democracy. He noted further that 2016 if very significant as over 23 countries will be conducting national elections. He also indicated that this progress needs to be safeguarded and protected.

In reference to the work of INEC in Nigeria, Professor Yakuba indicated that the conviction to integrity was the most important strategy for securing peace and security. He noted that the main role of the Electoral Commission was to secure the participation of people. In this respect, he reflected that the country was getting much better and is now able to offer assistance to other countries. In concluding, Professor Yakuba stated that it was still imperative to develop strategies and innovations that move the overall agenda of electoral democracy forward, and that this meeting provided the opportunity to establish the seeds of for future action.

Professor Khabele Matlosa: Opening remarks

Professor Matlosa began by wishing all a happy Africa Day. He noted that it is now over fifty years since the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Professor Matlosa affirmed the importance of the 'seminar' and indicated that it was important for achieving the objectives established within the framework of Agenda 2063 of the African Union. He postulated that there will be no development if there is no democracy and that peace and security are also vital elements for the continent's overall progress.

Professor Motalosa provided that elections have now become the norm in the continent. However, elections by themselves don't make democracy. Elections may often be used as shield for authoritarianism and hence there is a need to question the quality of elections. Professor Matlosa questioned the adequacy of existing liberal models of democracy that are being applied in the continent. In light of the challenges that have emerged, he argued that there is a need to focus attention on moving forward from existing models of democracy and to begin to reflect on those models that may be more appropriate for the continent. In this respect, he noted the emergence of the idea of a developmental democracy and urged participants to reflect on modalities of democracy that are relevant locally and that can grow from local experiences.

Dr Remi Ajibewa: Opening remarks

Dr Ajibewa began by welcoming all and by extending warm greetings from his commissioner. He noted that electoral democracies are growing and that the region has witnessed a number of elections over the last year. He noted that the practices have generally been positive, but there are challenges. At a broader level, he noted that although there are many elections, these have not necessarily served to entrench democracy.

Dr Ajibwe noted that the region has also had situations where election's results are challenged due to the poor management of electoral processes. He noted that the credibility of elections held was important, as they served to entrench a democratic culture in the region. In this respect, he emphasized the role of the Electoral Management Bodies in ensuring electoral integrity. He expressed that ECOWAS remains committed to working in partnership with other organizations to strengthen these bodies. In concluding, he indicated that it was important to engage in new thinking on what can be done in the region and continent to strengthen the gains made thus far.

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi: Opening statement

Professor Olukoshi began by expressing appreciation to the chairperson and recognising his contributions to scholarship and African engagements in multilateral organizations. He further recognised the presence of other distinguished guest and express a word of appreciation to the partner organizations involved in the event. On the matter of democracy's development, he indicated that it would seem that the world is moving in cycles. Period of progress are followed by periods of challenge and difficulty.

In reference to continual political crisis and the 'good enough governance' movement, Professor Olukoshi argued that Africa has not set itself a future ideal and hence cannot afford to be less ambitious on future possibilities in democracy building. In the current situation of the crisis of democracy across the world, the continent has the opportunity to provide a vision for the future that is better than the current. Africa, in fact, offers the best opportunity for moving beyond existing models.

In crafting a better vision for the future, Professor Olukoshi indicated that we have to face the reality that in many situations, we have 'choice-less democracies'. No matter who is in a position of authority, they are constrained by dictates of wider economic and global actors. Very often, those elected cannot act in accordance to the promises made, given overall global requirements and related constraints. Elections, in such situations, amounts to an exercise in mass disempowerment. This reality is leading to high levels of cynicism with elections, as many of them are rendered meaningless, in light of macro-economic policies that leaders are required to implement. In this respect, it is necessary to consider whether elections can really serve as instruments for transformation.

Keynote address

Professor Olukoshi introduced the speaker for the Keynote Address, Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu. He noted that in addition to being the former Chief Technical Advisor of INEC in Nigeria, Professor Ibeanu has a long history as a distinguished scholar and also brings substantive practice experience. He noted that Professor Ibeanu is well placed to provide a keynote input, as he has both the theory and the practice experience on the issues that the workshop will be addressing.

Professor Ibeanu's paper is rich in content and multifaceted. It embodies a detailed analysis and a complex set of perspectives on the current nature of the democratic wave and the many nuances embodied in practices. The summary of the presentation below only provides a glimpse of the substance shared by the key note speaker.

Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu

Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu began by indicating that his presentation can be summarized with one-sentence: Electoral democracy in Africa is only a second best and the best we can do is to try to make the best of it. Building on this, Professor Ibeanu outlined the trajectory of the democratization movements in Africa. He noted that there were essentially three phases or waves in the democracy movement. The initial struggle focused on liberation from colonialism, the second on economic liberation. The third movement arises from the failure of the first two and was expected to meet the aspirations of Africa's people. He noted that the struggle for the essence of the democratic movement is by no means unanimous and in many instances, democratization is merely another strategy to secure power for private and group interest.

Professor Ibeanu further detailed the character of the third movement for democracy and argued that, in ultimately, it embodies an attempt to diffuse democratic institutions from the West to other parts of the world. He noted that although the 3rd wave democracy movement in Africa had its own internal logic, it was quickly fixed into prevalent orthodoxy as liberal, multiparty democracy. This essentially reduced the power of people to simply electing people to do the deciding. In this respect, Professor Ibeanu argued that the people of the continent have been disempowered by the separation of economic issues from issues of political representation through elections.

Professor Ibeanu further argues that the issues that people were engaging in struggles for still remain. This is reflected, in part, by the struggle for land and other issues of economic emancipation. He notes that the people have again lost the second independence and are left with the next best alternative - multiparty electoral democracy. Professor Ibeanu then indicated that there needs to be

a much deeper understanding of the character and drivers of the local petty bourgeois class that engages in the multiparty electoral project. In this respect, he notes that this class sustains the multiparty electoral project for its own primordial interests and outside of any ideological discourse. Hence, the petty bourgeoisie is focused on the state, production is neglected and the economy remains weak and poverty increases. There is also strong fractionalisation in this class, along ethnic, religious and other primordial lines, leaving citizens constantly divided.

Professor Ibeanu proceeded to outline the weaknesses and challenges associated with aspects of existing liberal forms of democracy in Africa. In each instance, he articulated both the positive and the negative elements. He noted that there have been better elections since initial transition periods, although many of these have been subject to some forms of results contestations. He also noted that more young people are engaging the electoral processes and social media has become part of the participation process. Also postulated is the rising role of civil society in supporting elections and more exchanges amongst EMBs for better administration of elections. There has been a general proliferation in the number of political parties and the judiciary has been more active in determining electoral outcomes. In addition, the power of the executive and administration has increased relative to the legislature. Finally, Professor Ibeanu also noted the rise of global, regional and sub-regional standards and mechanisms on electoral democracy and governance generally.

In concluding, Professor Ibeanu indicated that electoral democracy in Africa still has a long way to go to achieve the aspirations of the vast majority of Africa's peoples. To be valuable, the current form of democracy has to address itself to the quality of citizenship that it delivers. This includes, whether it delivers jobs, public services, freedom of religion, gender equity and adequate security. In summary, does electoral democracy deliver real political participation and popular economic wellbeing?

Panel 1: Overview of emerging trends

This panel session was moderated by Mrs. Joyce Kazembe, the former Deputy Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The session focused on articulating and extracting some of the key developments and related opportunities and challenges within electoral democracies in Africa. The session was addressed by Mr. Jose Brito, a former Minister in Cape Verde and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the West Africa Institute; Professor Emmanuel Akwetey, Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG); and Dr. Rhuks Ako, a policy analyst in the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission. Professor Anthonia Simbine from INEC served as a lead discussant for the session.

Mr Jose Brito

Mr Brito began by indicating that he struggled to decide on how best to engage the topic of the panel and hence decided to raise some of the structural issues that are likely to impact on elections in the future. In this respect, he noted that there is likely to be less competition in the future and that the main actors in elections are likely to be younger. In illustrating some of the challenges, Mr Brito drew on experiences from Cape Verde.

Mr Brito noted that from analysis conducted, the percentage of people that are floating voters has increased over time. These are voters who had not made up their minds prior to the election period on voting and on who they would vote for. He noted further that the number of people registering is declining and that generally voters are beginning to focus on issues of government performance. Even as voters are becoming more enlightened, ethnic aspects continue to influence voting patterns and the numbers of political parties have been growing in recent years.

Mr Brito argued that the role of external actors have been growing in elections. He noted that economic influences were very strong and that there is growing influence of regional organization and civil society in electoral processes and outcomes. He further noted that civil society has been very good in voter education and casting a spotlight on the promises made by political parties.

In concluding, Mr Brito focused attention on issues relating to the funding of election campaigns. He noted that this is an area of difficulty as campaigns are becoming much more expensive to run. This is often difficult for opposition parties, as they don't have the access that ruling parties often have. Ruling parties often use state resources. Attempts have been made to address these issues,

through state funding of political parties, but the matter is difficult because often there are illicit financial flows. As a final word, Mr Brito pointed to the importance of technology and social media in shaping electoral processes and outcomes.

Professor Emmanuel Akwetey

Professor Akwetey began by indicating that he will address himself to some of the broader issues that are posing a challenge to electoral processes and that are likely to impact on the future. In this respect, Professor Akwetey argued that even though there has been greater democratic stability and more turnouts for elections, the risk of violence has also been growing, rather than declining. This is contrary to the general notion that elections are a measure for overcoming violent contestations within a society. People simply don't trust institution.

Taking the overall argument further, Professor Akwetey noted that accountability systems remain weak and political parties are prone to internal struggles and generally, are perceived as vehicles for further accumulation. He noted that elections are essentially vehicles for limiting accountability, while wider forces for social accountability also remain limited. Party politics, he argued, have in effect become a vehicle for wealth accumulation.

Professor Akwetey noted that political parties have become predatory institutions and will stop at nothing in weakening state institutions and using these for their own private purposes. These organizations do not respect issues of impartiality and autonomy of state institutions and are often not transformative or developmental in their orientations. One of the overall consequences of weak and predatory political parties is deepening polarisation in societies. Contrary to liberal perspectives on the impact of multiparty engagements on nation building, most countries are less stable and often politics has become a vehicle for polarisation rather than a means for building cohesion amidst diversity.

In concluding, Professor Akwetey stated that international support for democracy is on the decline. He noted that this shift was disturbing and that very little attention is now being focused on issues of governance, human rights and related areas of concern. He also noted that the commitment of governments to these issues is low. As final word, Professor Akwetey indicated his sorrow or the lack of optimism, and he worries that the current system will collapse if nothing is done to change existing patterns that characterise the implementation of liberal democracy in Africa.

Dr. Rhuks Ako

Dr Ako began by indicating that there is a need for imagination and innovation when reflecting on the realities of democracy and governance in the continent. He noted that this was vital when faced with the realities of African Presidents who want to continue their stay in office. He noted that this trend impacts on other areas and includes issue of violence, the closing of media and related autocratic practices.

Dr Ako noted that there is a tendency to bash the African Union. He argued however that the AU is trying to reach out to people and establish itself as a people's driven organization. He further indicated that the AU Commission has been working with Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and on bringing them together for learning and sharing. Further attention is also being focused on collaborating with political parties to build capacity. He also noted that International IDEA has been working with countries so that they use the available Risk Management tool to improve the management and conduct of elections.

Dr Ako placed emphasis on the role of citizens and argued that it is becoming more imperative that citizen play a more active role and engage in shaping local realities. In this respect, he indicated that civil society needs to redefine what it thinks of electoral democracy to make it work for local realities. In concluding, Dr Ako indicated that the AU needs to relook at its normative framework, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in light of the challenges it faces.

Professor Anthonia Simbine

Professor Simbine began by noting that she would focus her attention on drawing from the experience of Nigeria. In this respect, she indicated that voters have become more independent and that recent experiences have shown that an opposition can win and elections can be conducted in a peaceful manner. She noted that elections are held at a number of levels and that a number of agencies are involved in the process, although the shortage of resources remains a major stumbling block.

Professor Simbine indicated that although the recent Nigerian experience has been positive, much still needs to be done for the future. In this respect, she pointed to the fact that Electoral Management Bodies in Nigeria still have many mandates when compared to others. She noted that in other countries, issues of registration are dealt with by other government agencies. As a further challenge, Professor Simbine cited that the country is increasingly facing situations of inconclusive elections. In practice, the smaller gap or margins between parties in voting are placing further emphasis on accuracy, which is resulting in increased costs due to having to re-run some local elections.

In reflecting on the future, Professor Simbine noted that strategies are needed to reduce the costs of re-running elections at a local level and on preventing violence. She also indicated that changes are needed (and were attempted) in for example, linking the registration and elections process as one. She noted however, that people sometimes find other way to commit fraud, through for instance, destroying results sheets or the introduction of sheets to alter the overall result. In concluding, she indicated that her commission is interested in dialogue with other EMBs to exchange information and explore possibilities of real-time election to prevent fraud.

Discussions

The discussions that followed this panel incorporate comments related to the keynote input and the prior opening session. The following reflects the broad issues that emanated from the questions raised, comments made and the responses from panel members.

- We need to appreciate that democracy is in a state of perpetual crisis. This is normal and reflected in the constant struggle of the suitability of the democracy we have. We have moved on from basic liberal democracy to include economic rights in many of the constitutions in countries. The larger question becomes how do we secure these for the future and ensure a redefinition of the state. Social movements are important and can be used for engagements with political leadership.

- The violence perpetrated by young people is a matter of concern. There needs to be further engagement with this issue. We need to establish strategies to overcome this and to guide young people so as to prevent such violence. It is also important to not criminalise the young. Actions must be seen in context and young people must be engaged with in positive ways.

- There is a need to rethink the type of democracy we have in the continent. This may entail taking a deeper look at the notion of a developmental democracy. To do this effectively, we have to engage with governments and stop treating those in government as aliens and by throwing all that we have established away.

- Given the higher levels of political corruption that exist, we need to think more carefully on the possibilities that come with local government and local democracy. Even as this terrain is prone to corruption, it does provide opportunities to overcome the high levels of impunity that exist in the continent.

- We cannot afford to be so negative and pessimistic about the future. We have to keep hope alive and ensure that people take responsibility. The heads of state need to be held accountable where there are failures. The AU needs to call states to order and hold them accountable for what has unfolded.

- It would seem that we are becoming better at elections in Africa. Many countries are going into a regular cycle and it's becoming more difficult to postpone elections in countries. We now need to focus attention on the quality of elections and whether we are indeed confronting more rational voters in the continent.

- In all of the deliberations of election, greater attention is needed on people. We need to interrogate the spaces that are available for people to express their perspectives and engage on matters related to their existence. In this, we have to look at local structures, the manner in which power is exercised and how people can be involved in more direct ways.

- There are many issues that need to be considered when looking at the overall trends. These can be addressed in other panels. Of particular importance is

the growing apathy of voters. In many situations, people are losing faith in the democratic system. Democracy is also very expensive and a matter of concern when reliance is placed on donors to fund elections.

Panel 2 (A): Terms and tenures of political leaders

This session was moderated by Barrister Akere T. Muna, former Chairperson of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Panel and Chairperson of the International Anti-Corruption Council. In focusing the attention of participants on the issues relating to term limits of political leaders, Barrister Muna posed the question of whether those that have an interest in the political processes are effective in organizing them. He noted that effective legal frameworks and the integrity of institutions and actors such as the judiciary, political parties, and electoral management bodies, are central when responding to the challenges of terms and tenures of political leaders. Barrister Muna concluded his remarks by introducing the speakers who would address the session. The first input was made by Professor Abubakar Momoh, Director-General of the Electoral Institute of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Professor Momoh was followed by Mrs Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI). Mr Glen Mpani, Programme Manager for Democracy and Governance from the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA) made the final input of this session. The session discussant was Professor Muhamad Kuna, who is the Former Advisor of INEC and is based at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Nigeria.

Prof Abubakar Momoh

Professor Momoh opened by stressing the importance of the historical context shaping Africa's current situation. Africa's post-colonial history was marked by decolonisation, deracialisation and Africanisation. But Africa did not democratise. At independence, the debate focused on developmentalism vs democratisation. The notion of 'democratic developmentalism' did not feature and this is the issue most African countries continue to grapple with today.

In continuing his remarks, Professor Momoh noted that the democratisation euphoria on the continent was characterised by a clamour for multi-party systems, indigenous processes for national consensus building conferences and the supervised transitions from military rule to so-called democracies. In most cases though, democratisation processes were hijacked, with popular forces and pro-demo struggle groups becoming subordinate to statist agendas or statist transition processes. In other words, the main concern was with democratic instruments (i.e. constitutions) at the expense of citizens. In many cases, this preoccupation led to clauses that have served to undermine those very constitutions and democratic principles and values.

It is in this context that the Africa's political responses to constitutionalism and tenure limits fall into three broad categories: (1) African exceptionalism; (2) the

politics of stayism; and (3) the politics of entreeism. The political topography of Africa varies and we see for instance, trends towards tenure elongation in the Great Lakes region. This issue is most persistent in countries where political parties are weak or other social forces are not sufficiently organised. The role of the judiciary and its interpretation of constitutions and tenure limits especially, becomes critical.

Prof Momoh concluded by noting that the concept of an African political class is no longer applicable and it is political elites who dominate African politics. He stressed the important role of the African Union's normative instruments in pushing back against the trend towards term elongation. In this regard, the African Charter on Elections, Governance and Democracy is key, as is popular activism. Linked to this, the role of political parties need closer scrutiny. Finally, regional organizations must continue to apply the principle of subsidiarity in insisting that Member States comply with the obligations and principles of the charter.

Mrs Nana Afadzinu

Ms Afadzinu began by exploring some of the reasons politicians are not amenable to giving up power. These include, the weight of executive power, as is seen in most African countries, the tendency towards 'messianism' and the prevailing acceptance of customary practices, of 'chiefs' who are not bound by notions of 'term limits.' She also noted the role of rent seeking sycophants who surround politicians and that some politicians fear reprisal that may come once they leave office. Other fears are linked to the irrelevance and obscurity they may have once their tenure has ended. In some cases, political leaders simply hold onto power because it is easy to manipulate their Constitutions and the practice of constitutionalism is weak in their country.

Having elaborated some of the factors related to resistance to term limits, Ms Afadzinu outlined some possible responses. The power of the executive must be restrained and perhaps political arrangements need to be evaluated, to move toward power sharing outcomes. Ms Afadzinu highlighted that presently, many African countries use the 'First Past The Post' (FPTP) electoral system but the 'winner take all' outcome it produces fuels the tendency to resist tenure limits. In this regard, more consideration needs to be given to the decentralisation of power, as is done in local government systems. It should also be remembered that even within the Chieftain system of African customary governance checks and balances are in place.

Ms Afadzinu stressed the importance of building strong institutions if executive power is to be restrained. She indicated the critical role of strong judiciaries and legislative systems in building more effective democracies. She also cited the role of the media and the development of strong civil society is also important. In strengthening civil society, it must include but go beyond non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Faith based organization, voluntary organizations and professional associations must also be prioritised.

In concluding, Ms Afadzinu emphasised the need to move away from the notion of the 'The Rule by Law' towards that of the 'Rule of Law.' In making this distinction, she noted the importance of developing stronger mechanism to prevent the

frequency of looting and sharing. Existing normative frameworks must be used to ensure equitable distribution of resources and the end of illicit finances. Finally, she also pointed to the need to ensure that effective constitutional reviews are conducted and in situations where constitutions, supposedly the collective will of the people, are tampered with the enforcement of normative frameworks for good governance of the African Union and regional bodies such as ECOWAS must take place.

Mr Glen Mpani

Mr Mpani began by stating that for democracy to thrive, the political leaders must be genuine democrats. Constitutions are of no use to those who have not internalised democracy and do not believe in democratic principles. He indicated that between 2001 and 2009 twenty four African countries attempted to change term limits. Amongst these, fifteen succeeded and since 2009, those that have term limits in place have persisted to attempt to change this.

Mr Mpani continued by highlighting the impact of the current electoral democracy systems on ordinary people. He noted that citizens are failing to address the issue (of undemocratic leaders) and have succumbed to electoral authoritarianism and the idea that 'voting is enough.' At the local level, civic activism has been captured and absorbed into political structures. He indicated that these issues cannot be responded to however, without addressing political parties and their shortcomings. In most instance, intra-party processes are not democratic. There must also be greater honesty about the seductive nature of power and the realities that dictators will always mutate and adjust their strategies to new situations.

In concluding, Mr Mpani proposed that term elongation is not the root problem, but is a symptom of a deeper issue. The root problem is that of non-democratic leaders who are given the responsibility of leading 'democratic institutions and processes.' In responding to the root problem, focus must be on young people. Young people are the future of the African continent and efforts to building democratic principles and values must focus on them.

Discussions

In reflecting on the issues raised by the panellists and opening the discussion to participants, Professor Muhamad Kuna, the discussant of the session, reflected that the 'democratisation project' in most African countries is incomplete and has been hijacked or reduced to the election event. Legal and constitutional frameworks have been abused by legal operators who then manufacture processes of tenure elongation. Professor Kuna noted that the input of panellists showed the relevance of state institutions to democratic processes and the way in which citizens have been removed from political processes. He stressed the importance of reflecting on measures needed to bring citizens back to the centre of political and electoral processes. The following section summarises the broad themes and issues emanating from the participants' discussion, the questions raised and the responses given.

- In many African countries, like Rwanda, the value of rotational democracy without development is being raised. The welfare system in place is making

health, education and other social services freely available to citizens.

- Many leaders are driven by a fear of reprisals and this is a result of the nature of African constitutions. There is a need to look more closely at the limited power of many African constitutions as this also contributes to the impunity with which leaders behave towards their constitutions. It should be noted that tenure elongation is not based on 'voluntarism.' Also, the issue of class behaviour needs to be looked at as the structural patterns that reproduce the petit bourgeoisie must be understood if solutions are to be found to prevent the trend to extend term limits.

- Citizen activism must become a key area of action in responding to politicians who don't respect tenure limits. In ECOWAS the two term limit clause was endorsed at ministerial level, as a supplement to the ECOWAS protocol. It was shocking however, that at Summit level it failed. ECOWAS citizens have been silent however, and many do not even know about this development.

- The idea that democracy is not African is just as false as the notion that autocracy is African. The issue is that many African leaders are self-serving and do not respect tenure limits. There is also the issue of foreign influences which undermine citizens' interest. The central issue however, relates to accountability and the agency citizens must claim to hold leaders accountable. More attention needs to be given to this aspect and specifically, the important role that civil society activism plays in resisting attempts at tenure elongation.

- History plays an important role in the evolution and variation of term limits. There needs to be greater acceptance of context and these historical factors. In the 1990s, prevailing conditions such as looming violence and authoritarianism played a role in securing political party discipline and creating stability and peace. As seen in Uganda, the importance of retaining long-term peace and stability continues to be used as justification for the extension of term limits. It should be borne in mind that a universal principle across the continent will not emerge and diversity and unevenness will persist on the continent.

- In Africa and developed contexts alike, the performance of a political leader has increasingly become a factor in how citizens respond to the push to extend tenures. In instances where there is political peer pressure to resist tenure elongation though, it is done too quietly or it is unseen. Linked to this, the contrasting role of citizens is also a factor. While there have been pockets of resistance most citizens are apathetic or activism is strictly managed by the state. This contradiction requires more scrutiny, especially in light of the resistance that is taking place, even as it has not had the desired impact.

- Presidents in Africa who are given unfettered power by their legal instruments pose a challenge. In Germany for instance, a chancellor system is in place. In Cape Verde, the prime minister is also the executive. He has no term limit but there's a counterpart which creates a check and balance in parliament, where the argument must be made to determine term limit. Theirs is also a mediation instrument in case of friction between the legislature and executive, as well as a strong and independent judiciary.

Panel 2 (B): Tenure of elected office holders

This session was moderated by Ms Maria Do Rosario Lopes Govcalves Pereiria, who began by noting the important link between the length of tenure politicians hold in office and the quality of governance in a country. The session received presentations from Madame Clestine Zanou, Former Candidate to Presidential Elections and Former Chief Of Staff of President Mathieu Kerekou in Benin and Professor Bolade M Eyinia from the University Of Ilorin. The session discussant was Dr Soeley Adji from Abdou Moumouni University in Niger.

Madame Clestine Zanou

Madame Zanou began her remarks by noting that the topic of term limits concerns politicians at all levels and involves three issues. These are: main trends and developments in countries, the mind set of political actors and finally, frameworks in place relating to term limits. She noted that in most instances, once political leader come into office, they are confronted with the limitations of capacity and governance deficiencies. In African contexts corruption and role confusion (such as between the executive and legislature) are also features that contribute to abuses of power. There are also deficiencies in intellectual and ideological capacities, whereby some politicians come into office with limited training or don't have convincing manifestos. Relying on the will of the people or life experience alone is not enough for the complexities that come with governing the modern state.

The issue of institutional framework and policy management raises important considerations about the separation of powers and the advantages to tenure limits. These advantages include: entrenching democratic principles; strengthening democratic institutions; and promoting peace and tolerance as a value. Term limits can also help to promote the importance of good performance by politicians and the renewal of attitudes amongst the political class towards political tenures.

In reflecting on how to respond to the scourge of tenure elongation, Madame Zanou identified several recommendations. Africans must begin to 'think Africa, consume Africa and act Africa.' This means African citizens must demand accountability and ensure that capacities for activism are in place. More attention must also be given to building a democratic culture based on the norms and traditions that will benefit Africa's peoples. This should be linked to serious reflection on how to develop home grown systems that address the root causes contributing to politicians' resistance to tenure limits.

Institutions like the African Union must be proactive in supporting compliance to the norms and standards set out in key documents such as the African Charter.

At the national level, efforts must be made for legislation that will help protect political party systems from the interference of foreign interests.

Prof Bolade M Eyinia

Professor Eyinia began by noting the importance of understanding power when discussing the factors contributing to tenure limit challenges. He cited that unfortunately, education, good will and the numerous important initiatives such as the African Peer Review Mechanisms (APRM), NEPAD and the Tana Forum have not curtailed the resistance of politicians towards term limits.

In continuing his reflections, Professor Eyinia indicated that more attention must be given to the use of the wisdom Africa has. Platforms such as the Committee of the Wise are central to addressing how politicians respond to the possible loss of power and fears of a loss of material security. There is also a need to give more attention to electoral processes at the local level. This will also promote the idea of building democracy the bottom up. In concluding, Professor Eyinia highlighted the catalytic role AU processes can play regarding parliamentary tenures, especially as this issue presently receives very little attention.

Dr Soeley Adji

In opening the discussion to participants, Dr Soeley Adji, reflected on the situation in Niger and the developments that have contributed to the deterioration in the country's political situation. Niger is presently characterised by intolerance to political opposition and a breakdown in electoral governance. He cited government interference in electoral processes, through for instance, the denial of high ranking members of opposition parties to legal representation.

Mr Adji noted that one indication of the political erosion was the strong perception that the ruling regime wants to crush the opposition. Political irregularities, lack of transparency and recourse in electoral outcomes as well as other factors in the governance of the country have contributed to the advent of terrorism attacks seen in recent years. In concluding his reflections, Mr Adji stated that unless urgent intervention is made, Niger currently stands at risk of becoming a one-party state and or experiencing a coup d'état. To follow is a broad summary of the key points raised in the discussion. It incorporates participants questions/inputs and related responses from panel members and other participants.

Discussions

- In talking about the role of the African Union, the case of Burundi was cited as an instance as was that of Burkina Faso. The scope AU and regional bodies like ECOWAS have to make an impact in electoral processes or political conflicts needs to be better understood. Solutions need to be sought at the most appropriate level. It should be noted that in the last several years, the demands on the AU have increased significantly. The AU is overwhelmed with instances of electoral challenges arising in Member States.

- In the cases of Burundi and Burkina Faso, the AU acted timeously and was able to intervene. The AU intervention in Burkina Faso was successful and assisted to avoid a military and civil disaster. In Burundi however, there were two constraints. The first was the principle of subsidiarity, whereby the role of the regional body (i.e. ECOWAS) needed to be stronger. The second constraint was that of sovereignty, whereby the political leader of the country resisted intervention and assistance. In East Africa there is no regional hegemon (like in West Africa) and there was not much response from ECA, who according to the principle of subsidiary, should have played a more prominent role in Burundi. But the main gap relates to citizen activism. More investment must be made in strengthening citizens' responses to situations where there are political tensions. The role of the AU and regional economic communities is to catalyse what then becomes a citizen-driven process.

- There must be clarification regarding the African Union and Unconstitutional Changes of Government. Because of the norms and standards established by the AU, military coups in Africa are not taken lightly. The AU's response to such unconstitutional changes in government is based on these norms, most notably the African Charter. The AU is able to respond immediately through the suspension of the Member State. There is no ambiguity about this as Article 10 of the African Charter specifies how a country is to amend its constitution. Article 23 goes further and spells out the transgressions that lead to a change in government being defined as 'unconstitutional.'

- It should also be noted that the Department of Political Affairs (within the AUC) is currently working with some Member States to make integrate the Charter into school curriculum. This purpose of this effort is to build awareness about democratic principles and have them internalised by youth, who are the future leaders of Africa. It is acknowledged that perhaps the measures taken by the AU so far are not enough. However, it remains important to bear in mind the scope and constraints of the AU mandate. A key achievement in the efforts of the AU is that since the adoption of the Charter, elections are not taking place as they used to and already, there are improvements.

- Proposal made on how African multilateral and regional organizations (such as the AU and ECOWAS) must ensure a realistic perspective. A comparison between the AU and EU would require reflecting on changing the rules or normative instruments of these respective institutions. While the EU has powers to take decisions that bind EU member states, the AU does not have this power.

- We need strong institutions that ensure the performance of politicians can be measured at the technical level. This holds true for our regional and continental institutions. African politicians need to be held accountable and answer to African bodies, such as the African court, instead of sending them outside of the continent. Similarly, African constitutions must resemble Africans and this means moving away from adopting constitutional models that to date, have not served African well. For instance, there needs to be more incorporation of traditional African governance practices and authorities in our constitutions. Also, intra-party democracy should not be expected from leaders that have been in power for more than twenty years.

- The idea of an African model or system needs to be more nuanced. Africa is diverse and our historical contexts must be taken into account. It is a positive development though that the AU has become a stronger guarantor of security, even though funding and principles sometimes restrain its ability to deploy forces. West Africa is unique as it has a regional hegemon, Nigeria. Despite its economic and governance challenges, the role Nigeria contributes to democratic governance in the region cannot be disputed. It is important to emphasise that while the picture is mixed, progress has certainly been made. The critical challenge is how best to consolidate this progress in order to mitigate the threats of democratic governance regression.

- The role of democratic and other state institutions, as well as constitutions, are important reflections of the level of maturity in a country's democratisation process. There is a need to look at our institutions, our constitutions and the political maturity of citizens. In some countries, heads of state behave with impunity and are not imprisoned for contravening the law, because they find protection from a ruling party's majority. There is a perception that the case of South Africa was one such instance.

- Although we have many constitutions in Africa, it should be remembered that it is human beings that govern and lead. Nothing is wrong with the laws. The issue is more about the behaviour of human beings in their implementation. Democracy is better than military rule, even when it is limited but we need more leaders to know that they must avoid recourse to coup d'états. The notion that we don't have a democratic culture or that it is not possible with some human beings is not useful nor is it true. More effort must be placed on behaviour and mind set changes, in our people and our citizens.

- The diagnoses made of the challenges must also assist us to answer questions about the best models and practices. The rules needed to protect citizens must be identified and countries like Cape Verde and Mauritius provide useful lessons. Both countries have practices and models that have built and sustained strong 'political maturity' amongst citizens and in institutions. In Cape Verde and Mauritius state institutions and citizens abide by the rules in place and this has proven to be a critical contributor to their thriving democracies.

- Many political parties in Africa continue to show weak and in worst cases, a complete absence of internal democratic practice. This is a critical issue because the management of power at the level of political parties has a direct impact on the national level. In Francophone countries reforms are needed on how power is managed. In Benin for instance, no political party was able to win an election since the 1990s. In recent 2016 elections, political parties thought they had a majority in the National Assembly but found that they had failed. The role of the army should also not be overlooked. Similarly, presidential impunity should not be ignored.

- In closing the session, the moderator noted the difficulty of strengthening democracy in Africa. What must be emphasised however is that democracy is not the law or the paper. It is ultimately about the people. This highlights the importance of building a culture of democracy and constitutionalism. This

is possible because Africans are naturally democrats. He noted the links that would be made to the day's proceedings in the panels scheduled for following day, where the focus will be on the role of the media and the role of regional organizations. He concluded by thanking participants for fruitful discussions during the course of workshop proceedings.

Panel 3: Media and communication on elections

This session was focused on building an understanding of the challenges embedded in reporting on governance and elections issues by the media. The session was moderated by Mr. Calixte Mbari, the Acting Head of Division of Democracy Governance and Human Rights of the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC. The session was addressed by: Mr. Samson Itodo Yaga, the co-founder of an online radio station, Ms Nabiela Abdul Maliek, Political Officer in the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC and Ms Kadiatou Thierno Diallo, reporter from the Journalists Association of Guinea. The lead discussant for the session was Mrs Madeleine Mukamabano, Senior Journalist and a United Nations Trainer on Media and Elections. Mr Mbari introduced the session by indicating that as media was fundamental to the consolidation of democracy, it was imperative to reflect on the role it played and the possibilities for the future.

Mr. Samson Itodo Yaga

Mr Itodo Yaga began his input by indicating that he subscribed to the perspectives of media convergence and that his presentation was based on the experience in Nigeria. He noted that social media has increased substantively over the past years and that the media has transited from a more traditional role to one of being a watchdog. He indicated further that open media serves to keep government accountable by conducting follow-ups on promises made during election campaigns. He noted that despite some opposition and concerns with social media, opposition groupings and government agencies have set up their own social media sites to respond to information shared.

Mr Itodo Yaga noted that control over state media is no longer a viable approach to control of information, as media is increasingly decentralised to citizen journalists and there is a growth in private media organizations. He notes that technology has facilitated a higher level of decentralisation and that there might well be legitimate concerns around communication for the common good. In this respect, he argued though that social media organization, such as Twitter and Facebook, are already incorporating a level of self-regulation to prevent hate speech.

Mr Itodo Yaga noted that in as much as there is cause to celebrate, there are instances, such as in Uganda and Chad, were the state continue to clamp down by closing information sharing platforms. In this respect, he noted that the best strategies have been those where the state has focused on countering false or bad information by providing information itself. Even as there is a need for some regulations, care should be taken to avoid situations were journalists are brutalised. In concluding, he emphasised the importance of capacity and enhanced

professionalism to improve the positive role of the media for the development of societies.

Ms Kadiatou Thierno Diallo

Ms Diallo indicated that she is going to focus her presentation on the experience in Guinea. In this respect, she indicated that prior to the transition in 2010, there was no private press in the country. This has changes substantively and since liberalisation, the private media space has mushroomed. The private press has since been very important for wider communication and has often come to the rescue of state media when it comes to sharing information with the people of the country.

Ms Diallo noted that the role and social value-add of private media was particularly evident when it came to communications around the elections. In this respect, she indicated that media worked with the Electoral Commission to share information with the public and provide details on the exercise of voting. She noted that the larger challenge for the country is building professionalism in the media sector. She noted that further support is required to sustain the positive progress in Guinea.

Ms Nabila Abdulmelik

Ms Abdulmelik noted that the media landscape was interesting, given new levels of access and technologies. Based on experiences in Malawi, Ms Abdulmelik indicated that it proved useful to look deeper at how media treated different individuals. In the Malawi case, they noted that male candidates were written about in a positive manner, whereas female were referred to in less polite ways. This gender bias, she indicated, represents a trend in many places.

In terms of overall trends, Ms Abdulmelik noted that there has been a rise in the use of cartoons for political commentary. Although these prove very useful for commenting on social issues, there are signs of States acting against individuals using such medium. Ms Abdulmelik made reference to a journalist whose contract was not renewed because of cartoons that expressed strong views on government She noted that even though in the past states treated media as a threat, they are now being used by actors across the region to provide alternative perspectives.

In concluding, Ms Abdulmelik emphasised the overall value of media for open engagements and as a positive tool for society. She noted that people now have the space to document their own stories. In this respect, she emphasised the importance of women writing their stories. She noted that as media has increased, people have plurality and are able to access information and have greater agency to determine what they deem to be true.

Mrs Madeleine Mukamabano

Mrs Mukamabano focused her attention on some of the shortcomings of the media. She noted that all too often, attention is on the positive role of the media, with no

attention given to providing a critique of the media. With respect to elections, she argued that there was a tendency for media to get too close to politics. Political networks generally have interests in bringing media and journalists closer to their perspectives, to the extent that at times, the media risks losing its critical voice and independence.

On reflecting critically on the media, Ms Mukamabano indicated that one of the larger challenges for journalists is the level of professionalism in the field. In this respect, she noted that many media houses struggle with resources and then work at the mercy of their paymasters. She noted that it was a myth that the media has powers. Very often regulations precluded media from doing the best that they can.

Ms Mukamabano further emphasised that often power can draw media into the political space. As a result, media loses its ability to engage openly when it establishes overtly strong relationships with those in political office. Ms Mukamabano concluded by pointing to the fact that journalist often focus on the negative and very few journalists follow issues pertaining to the regional organization.

Discussions

The following issues were discussed after the panel inputs. It incorporates participants questions/inputs and related responses from panel members and other participants.

- There is much to suggest that the space for media might actually be receding in the continent. This is especially so with the advent of new technologies, whereby the state is able to control the flow of information. To counter this, it is essential for the AU to communicate its principles as it relates to the freedom of information flows before, during and after an election. The media also needs to focus on the positive and not just on violence and related issues.

- It is imperative to reflect on the role and value-add of public media. Smaller media don't have the interest of the society at the centre of what they do. They do not carry a responsibility for wider education and reach. Public media is much more important and attention needs to be focused on securing access to such by all political organizations. We tend to only focus on this issue during election periods.

- Even as we appreciate the role of the media and its information sharing capacity, we must recognise that media can often become very problematic during elections. Media misreporting can make elections difficult and reports can lead to violence. There has to be some level of watchdog control to ensure that media acts in the public's interest and is not acting in the interest of private political groupings.

- It is a matter of concern that we do not have journalists who specialise in the work of regional and continental organizations. We also have situation were journalists tend to focus on things that do not work and wait for news, rather than those who actually conduct investigations and also report on positive

issues. It is well known that women candidates face many media challenges.

- When looking at the media landscape and the power exercised by individuals and citizen journalists, is it perhaps not prudent to explore the possibility of a code of conduct for those active in the media space. Un-regulated communications around elections are becoming a problem for many and it is hence imperative to think about how we manage the dysfunctional elements that emerge from the general democratisation of media.

- Freedom of information is embodied in various instruments of the African Union. This is a matter that is looked at closely during elections. The AU is sending in teams to look at issues before, during and after an election. Very often the reports of elections observers would include issues around media access and information flows.

- Communication with the media during election is a very important issue. Some EMBs place specific emphasis on providing training to media and ensuring that they understand the overall process and the manner in which results will be released. Media can also be cautioned on the release of information and the proper way of doing this, including their responsibilities.

- The use of media to propagate hate speech can be a big problem. It is also very difficult to engage local media when they are competing with foreign media outlets. We need to find creative ways of monitoring media and ensuring that they are not used to deepening polarisation in societies that are prone to conflict and where the levels of social cohesion are low. It is very difficult to regulate equal access to media and this issue also requires attention.

- Even as countries seek to control the announcements of election results, social media poses additional major challenges. Spreading of false information leads to violence and hence need to be stopped. Some education of people on results release and on wider information will be useful. It may also be prudent to investigate the real time and immediate release of results so as to avoid the spread of selective or false information. The training of journalist and their incorporation as observers has proven helpful in some contexts.

- Even as there are some strong arguments for regulating social media, especially as it relates to elections, it is noted that this is very difficult. There needs to be much more education of the public so that people can recognise the difference between facts and opinions. The attention must be on assisting people make better decisions in light of information overload.

- In some countries were have witnessed regression when it comes to media serving as a watchdog. Some media have become too close to state actors and often rely on them for advertising revenue. In some instances, former media heads took positions in the office of the president, thus compromising the work of colleagues and others outside of the state.

- We must recognise that media is a reflection of the wider society. The gender issues that affect the wider society also impact the media sector. To overcome

this, it is important to look at the composition of the sector and work on educating and sensitising media professionals on gender issues.

- It is positive that there are more Presidential debates being televised or live streamed. We have to appreciate that there is some level of self–regulation in the social media space. If we work on future codes of conduct, it is important that these include something around people's responsibilities. We have focused more on rights access and hence failed to get people to appreciate their responsibilities. We should be careful on treating private media as though they are civil society. These media institutions work for private interests and cannot be thought of as acting in the public interest.

Panel 4: Contestation on electoral processes and outcomes

The moderator, Mr Constant Gnacadja, Programme Officer, Conflict Prevention Directorate of Political Affairs ECOWAS Commission opened the session by stating that it would focus on the contribution of media to electoral processes in Africa. Mr Gnacadja noted that the outcomes of elections are shaped by the management of the overall 'electoral cycle,' which includes processes before the elections, during the actual voting day and afterwards. He stressed the importance of citizens' trust in electoral process activities (such as voter registration), the credibility of electoral management bodies and how results are released. Having set the scene for the session, Mr Gnacadja proceeded by introducing the session panellists as follows: (1) Mrs. Djenaba Traore, Director General of the West Africa Institute; (2) Mr. Moussa Tchangari from the Alternatives Espaces Citoyens based in Niger; and (3) Mr. Festus Okoye who is a Constitution and Electoral Lawyer from Nigeria.

Mrs. Djenaba Traore

Mrs Traore began by thanking the Moderator and participants for the opportunity to speak about the challenges of electoral processes and elections. She noted the importance of this issue to the work of the West Africa Institute, where she serves as Director General. Mrs Traore reflected that democracy is defined as a system of governance for the people and by the people. In speaking about elections, the issue of 'results credibility' is contentious and a serious challenge for many Africa countries. This points to the fragility of many African democracies.

The fragility of many democracies is created by the tendency of leaders to cling to personal and ethnic and personal interests. Mrs Traore noted that in some instances, these interests are pushed through the manipulation of voter lists or delineation of voter districts which then creates political tensions and contestation. She stated that although democracy is not perfect it cannot be imposed and in this respect, Africa should reflect on what it has learned after four hundred years of slavery, one hundred years of colonialism and our independence since the 1960s.

During the 1990s many African countries were convinced to democratise in order to receive development aide. The advent of democratisation came with challenges that we have seen, lead to the contestation of results. These challenges include the multi-party system and the levels of citizens' awareness. Other factors that contribute to contestation are the inconsistency of political parties in keeping campaign promises and confusion raised by high number of political countries

in most countries. In concluding, Mrs Traore, stressed that the manner in which results are released often raises questions about the credibility of the political system.

Mr. Moussa Tchangari

Mr Tchangari reflected on the previous day's discussion, regarding challenges related to term limits and tenure elongation. He indicated in most electoral contests citizens' votes are no longer an expression of hope. People vote but they no longer have faith that their expectations will be met. In Nigeria, the choice between former President Goodluck Jonathan and the current President, Muhammadu Buhari was perceived by many as a choice between the collapse of the country or an attempt to claim some hope that conditions in the country will improve. This was the choice that led to the active participation seen in the 2015 Nigerian general elections.

There are various threats to the democratic system that must be highlighted. Mr Tchangari stated that in some cases, groups want to use ethnicity as a way to influence the democratic outcome. In other countries, youth and the exclusion they experience is used as tool to fuel instability. Mr Tchangari pointed to the issue of women's exclusion and the obstacles they face to fully participate in political processes. He noted that in terms of contestations, the legitimacy of the electoral management body to organise an election and the credibility of its composition can contribute to challenges in electoral outcomes. Similarly, voter rolls and whether the armed forces is playing its role appropriately can be contentions. As seen in many African countries, these issues can result in violence if they are not resolved.

The effectiveness of the security forces is especially important as it often plays a role in how responses elections' outcomes are managed. To highlight this issue, Mr Tchangari cited the case of Niger. In Niger, the ruling party controls the army and security forces. Because of this, when the election's results were disputed by civil society and political parties, the ruling party was able to impose its will through the armed forces. This also transpired in Chad. In concluding, Mr Tchangari noted that much of the progress in Africa has not come through the use of force. It has been through the will of the people, in public protests or the strength of political organizations.

Mr. Festus Okoye

Mr Okoye stated that one of the most important features of the 2011 election in Nigeria was the perception by many citizens that they were the most credible elections since return to civilian rule in 1999. However, the 2011 elections were also cited as the most violent elections experienced by Nigeria. Mr Okoye noted that it is sometimes necessary to look beyond the influence of ethnic and regional conflicts in electoral process to understand why violence occurs. When disincentives for power grabbing are not created, violence will always transpire.

Mr Okoye stated that the only way to guarantee the future of electoral democracy in Africa is through greater independence of electoral management bodies. The debate on how to create structurally independent bodies must continue, as they require genuine transformation. Such transformation must also include more pressure on the Chairpersons for independent bodies that act with integrity. In this regard, public participation in the selection of the leaders of election management bodies must also be secured and citizens should actively campaign to ensure this.

The former President of Nigeria allowed INEC to enact reforms that eventually made it possible for him to be defeated. The openness of an incumbent to significant reforms can sometimes create possibilities to make positive reforms in the electoral systems. Reform agendas that are focused on electoral process must also explore alternative electoral systems. In closing, Mr Okoye highlighted the critical need to change the 'winner takes all' attitude held by many political actors. There must also be greater investment in citizen action and further reflection on how best to do this is necessary.

Mr Constant Gnacadja

In reflecting on the panellists input, Mr Oke noted the importance of the role and responsibility of those who are in charge of democratic institutions such as electoral management bodies. The role played by INEC in the build up to the 2011 elections was critical and in particular, the quite integrity of the Chairperson of INEC. This was instrumental in ensuring credibility for the institution decisions and citizens' confidence in its management of the elections. The role played by the incumbent in enabling reforms in the electoral system was also important as it contributed to INEC's confidence to effectively manage the 2011.

The balance of forces in a national context is also key. It can have positive or negative influences on electoral processes and its outcomes. The credibility of institutions and citizens' trust in these institutions is also important. When observing developments in Africa and how electoral processes are handled, it becomes relevant to consider the capabilities of political contestants and those responsible for managing democratic institutions and processes. Further reflection on this issue is needed, given the frequency with which electoral disputes are settled in the streets or through confrontation.

Discussions

- Violence cannot be accepted as a normal feature in African elections, especially given all of the efforts being made by national, regional and continental institutions. A fundamental shift needs to be made, where violence is no longer the norm. Elections are meant to pacify the political game so perhaps we need to focus on more effective measures to prevent violence in electoral processes. One area that could receive more attention is how best to establish roles for opposition parties in different institutions of governance. This measure could assist to lower the temperature of political competition and diminish the 'do-or-die' or 'winner takes all' attitude.

- Elections allow us to pave a way for a non-violent contestation of violence. We cannot be pessimistic and believe and accept that there will always be violence in elections. More effort must be given to building strong institutions that curtail this trend. Focus on building credible electoral management bodies and independent judiciaries is critical. In Kenya for instance, the 2010 Constitution separated the three autonomous arms of the state. As a result of this change, the 2012 elections avoided the violence seen in 2008/09.

- Scholars must be challenged find solutions to the 'winner takes all' attitude.

- Focus should be given to research systems and experiences from other regions. Lebanon's political system and its ability to withstand a fragmented society could offer useful lessons. More evidence based lessons are needed to help strengthen electoral democracy in Africa. Indigenous electoral system should also be explored, so as to identify ways to promote models 'shared governance' to accommodate the ethnic and regional diversity that often characterises African countries.

- Contestations and violence in elections must be avoided. In this regard, environmental and political aspects must be considered. Some are pre-disposed to reject electoral outcomes. Irrespective of this, structures that are responsible for managing elections must ensure that processes are conducted in line with the letter of the law and with integrity. This is fundamental in ensuring that citizens are confident in the elections' outcomes. The political environment is difficult though and requires that serious work is done with political parties to remove misunderstanding on the outcomes.

- There are three disturbing trends that contribute to electoral violence and that are worth noting. The first is that regimes often use their power to control the opposition and in worst scenarios, imprison opposition members. The second is that electoral management bodies or commission are usually not independent. The third trend is that in many cases, national and international observers validate the elections and the ruling party wins and retains its power.

- It is important to also consider situations where results are contested but violence doesn't follow. In Niger for instance, citizens and political contestants knew that public protests would not change the outcome and would only result in the death of citizens. As a result, mobilisation did not take place. Also, ruling regimes need the guaranteed support of the armed forces and will not insist on holding on to power if they are unsure about its loyalty. It should also be remembered that in some situations where a post-electoral crisis occurs, there is an 'invisible hand' of a convergence of foreign interests and external powers at play.

- Since the political culture in most African countries is violent and cutthroat, it shouldn't be surprising that our electoral contests reflect this. Electoral systems, such as the First Past the Post system, can lead to majoritarian tyranny. Mauritius has a system of the 'best loser system' and lessons from this system should be learned. The cost of compliance in in Mauritius is the same

for all candidates. The incentives which make the system effective need to be better understood. Attention should also be given to ordinary citizens and youth especially, to inculcate democratic norms and principles.

- The Conference of L'Abou was France's attempt to catch up on a process of supporting democratisation efforts. Many saw this conference as an attempt to undermine national ownership of democratisation processes in Africa. Prior to the L'Abou conference, countries were required to conduct national conferences as part of their democratic transition processes.

- Belgium did not have a government for years and yet the systems of governance and government institutions established functioned well. In Africa though, democracies are in place but the institutions and governance are generally weak. Perhaps the lesson is that administration cannot come from above but must come from citizen pressure and more focus must be on how best to build administrations that services the people and not the regime.

- When leaders are elected with less than twenty percent of the number of registered voters, questions must be asked about the credibility of the regime being elected. The issue of capacity to resolve the governance and development challenge must also be of concern. Are political parties able to play their roles effectively? It should be noted though that there has been a positive shift in whereby pre-electoral violence has diminished. This is due to measures put into place before elections. These include international observation, mediation instruments such as inter-party dialogue, codes of conduct for political parties and greater citizen engagement. However, in terms of post-election violence, the issue of power sharing, between the losers and winners still warrants more attention.

- The discussion has reflected on the variety of factors that contribute to electoral violence in different national context. Three broad categories of factors that contribute to electoral violence can be identified. The first are structural factors which lie outside of the electoral process and relate to socio-economic issues such as poverty and exclusion. The second are electoral factors that concern the electoral systems in place and the outcomes they produce. In this regard, it is useful to note the idea of consociational democracy and the need to look at it as one approach that could tame political contestants from violence. The third category relates to national infrastructures for peace and whether they are used effectively within electoral processes. Countries such as South Africa, Ghana and Senegal have useful lessons on how these architectures have been critical in pre and post-election periods. It is also essential to focus on institutions and strengthening their links to transformative and visionary leaders and then finally and building active citizenship.

- The idea of inclusive governance does not receive sufficient attention. All African democracies have the potential for electoral violence. Even model democracies like Ghana are not excluded from this possibility, as concerns are emerging about the upcoming November 2016 elections. In this regard, two underlying factors can be identified. The fear of post-election exclusion and the over-concentration of executive power. More effective responses must be

found to deal with these two issues. It is known that most African Parliaments do not have the power they should have. The promotion of devolved power and local governance is critical to efforts to shift attitudes towards electoral contests. This devolution should be reflected in both legal and institutional frameworks in order to ensure that institutions build capabilities to administer it effectively.

- In concluding the session, the Moderator noted the excellent presentations made which made it possible for robust and active participation and discussion. He noted participants' consensus that more measures must be found to end electoral violence. In terms of recommendations, he highlighted several that arose. These included the need to clarify the role of political actors involved in the process. There is also a need to work systems that are inclusive of and ensure the majority and the minority view. The culture of politics must also change, whereby leaders put the public interest ahead of self-interest. Finally, citizen education must remain a priority especially because of their critical role in promoting transparency, accountability and peace in our countries.

Panel 5: The reform of electoral management bodies

This session was moderated by Mr. Francis Laleye, Program Coordinator of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) project being implemented with the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA). Mr Layele began the session by noting the importance of harmonisation and coordination in the modernisation of electoral management bodies (EMBs). He highlighted some of the challenges related to reforming EMBs and the important role sub-regional organizations can play in setting and upholding electoral norms and standards. My Laleye indicated that these are some of the issues to be discussed in the session, following presentations from the following panellists: (1) Professor Adele Jinadu from the University of Lagos and Dr Olugbenga Jacob Adesida from the West Africa Institute. The lead discussant, Mr M L Lehola, Former Chief Justice of Lesotho and Executive Committee Chair of the SADC Electoral Commission Forum would also reflect on the pertinent reform issues confronting EMBs.

Prof. Adele Jinadu

In reflecting on the findings of his 2012 study of EMBs in forty African countries, Professor Jinadu noted the impact of underdevelopment and typography in the effectiveness of EMBs. He indicated that these cross cutting issue are often underestimated in reform efforts.

The forty country studies showed three models emerging on the position of EMBs in countries. There are independent EMBs who have a separate body managing political parties. This type is predominantly in Anglophone countries. Hybrid EMBs are mostly found in francophone countries and tend to mirror the colonial model of complete control by the executive. The third model is also a hybrid, whereby there is executive authority but the EMB exercises some oversight capability.

In concluding, Professor Jinadu noted that one of the most instructive findings of the study was that while the three main types of EMBs across Africa have similar legislative prescripts, institutional matters related to the function, authority and regulations of EMBs varied. This diversity is critical when considering the types of reforms required by EMBs. It has a direct impact on ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of reform efforts.

The second and third waves of democracy in Africa were characterized by debates on the types of democracies and governance systems most suitable in African contexts. These

were accompanied by questions related political contestations related to succession. The role of EMBs in managing democratic political successions was also under focus. It must be understood that EMBs have been inserted into what remain largely contentious democratic political process.

Dr Olugbenga Jacob Adesida

Reflecting on his experiences in Cape Verde and as an observer of political parties in Africa, Dr Olubenga framed his remarks on two issues. First, why reforms are necessary and secondly, the types of reforms required. Reform is needed to secure peaceful electoral processes and so electoral management bodies can adapt and respond to new realities. The pressures of the costs of elections and greater demands by citizens for effective engagement and participation make it necessary for innovate reforms. Countries must also become more ambitious and conduct certain electoral activities on their own, without relying on donors resources.

The challenges of institution building suggest that permanent EMB structures are needed. This would enable EMBs to establish sustainable mechanisms that facilitate better cooperation with relevant government departments to deliver on key aspects of the electoral processes. One such area is the voters roll. Examples in countries like Cape Verde on such systems should be looked at.

Reforms should also give attention to the quality of engagement with various actors and in the different stages of the electoral processes. With the advent of technology and the lessons of the past, innovative strategies are more readily available. The reliance on new innovative methods however, should not diminish the important role of consensus amongst political actors on the most appropriate ways to ensure effective reforms. For instance, the real-time and televised electoral results should be possible to strengthen credibility of the election outcomes. However, securing agreement from political parties on this approach remains important. Government commitment and investment on building the basic application for such vote tabulation would also be important.

Applications through current smartphone technology makes it possible for transparency and tracking of the entire voting event by various parties, including the ordinary citizen, voting station officials, political contestants and civil society. The application can also include different levels of control to prevent voter fraud. Innovations such as these should be pursued as they provide low cost solutions that contribute to building legitimacy, transparency and greater confidence in the election's outcomes.

Chief Justice M. L. Lehola

The topic of EMB reforms involves many dimensions and can be driven by various factors. These include a context of broader political reform, crises that exposed gaps in the implementation of electoral legislation or the initiative of the EMB in light of a recognition of shortcomings that require institutional renewal. The reform process can also focus on a variety of issues, including strengthening principles such as transparency, independence and inclusiveness and strengthening

cooperation with diverse interests, such as political parties, the media and civil society. In reform processes the issues of timing, political will and the role of government are critical.

Broadly speaking, the purpose of electoral reforms must be to change the electoral system and processes in order to improve how citizens' desires are reflected in election results. Although reforms are most clearly visible when there is a fundamental change in the system, reforms are much broader and can be placed in three broad categories: Legal Reforms which focus on improving integrity and the environment where the EMB must deliver its services. Administrative reforms, which focus on the introduction of innovation in the institution and procedures, so that the EMB is effective in its service delivery. Finally, there are political reforms, which usual take place within the broader socio-economic context of the country of the EMB. Political reforms are key as they often influence legal reforms and shape the extent to which EMBs are able to effectively implement other reforms.

Across Africa, many types of electoral reforms have been driven and EMBs have been central in motivating for and driving them. Reforms are necessarily driven by context and in the case of legal reforms, focused on ensuring a fair playing field for political competition. The trend across Africa also shows that legal reforms have been occupied with the contentious issue relating to political parties, such as funding, registration of political parties, internal democracy and nomination matters. There is variety however, on the drivers of reforms whereby in some countries it is the EMB, while in others it is the law reform body or the courts. What is consistent however, is that parliaments are central to electoral reform processes and irrespective of who is leading them, movement forward is impossible if parliamentarians and political parties don't participate effectively.

The pace and depth of reform process are often shaped by where pressure is coming from and who is driving the agenda for reform. They can be slow and limited in their scope so that contentious issues are not addressed. What is key however across all processes are the catalysts for reform. In this regard, it is important to note that Italy's experience in 1993 with the mixed member system (MMS), which triggered the beginning of changes in electoral systems globally. In Africa specifically, a range of factors have contributed to electoral reforms. In some cases, reforms come about because of post-colonial factors. In others, they are outcomes of peace processes where the groups responsible for post conflict reconstruction efforts reforms imposed them.

There are also different modalities for implementing reforms, with some countries (i.e. Mauritius) using expert commissions to make proposal on specific matters that have constitutional implications and a direct impact on the composition of Parliament. In other instances, such as Lesotho, reforms were trigged by the failure of the system in place (FPTP) to provide an accurate reflection in parliament, of the share of votes won by contestants. In concluding, Chief Justice Lehola stressed the dynamic nature of elections and the contexts within which they take place. In this regard, the principle of impartiality by EMBs leadership must be upheld. EMBs must also be agile and accept the frequency for period reforms as part of the natural evolution of democratisation.

Discussion

- The 2012 forty country study applied a case study methodology enabled comparisons between systems that were similar to one another. In making comparisons, particular attention was given to identifying factors that contributed to better performance. Critical factors to success included the balance of power, the strength of institutions and the strength and characters of the members of the EMBs. This was the case in Ghana for instance. Other factors that emerged were the stability of the administrative functions and separation from the civil service as well as the degree to which EMBs had control on elections management functions and financial resource management.

- The quality of political institutions such as political parties and EMBs impacts on the quality of electoral processes. Similarly, the strength of a culture of constitutionalism also influences the behaviour of political actors in accepting or rejecting electoral outcomes and also being open to electoral reforms.

- Compositions and structure of EMBs vary. It would be useful to better understand which models function most effectively in different country context. It would be good to learn from places from Zimbabwe where commissions are selected through a public process.

- More instances where civil society cooperates to strengthen transparency in election events need to be highlighted. Good practices, such as the Nigerian CSO coalition's deployment of observers who streamed real time on whatsup, should be explored for other contexts. Burkina Faso saw similar activism with a civil society movement called 'Vote My Right.' Through this initiative, results were captured by camera and shared by the Coalition Centre in real time.

- Funding and the source of funds also influences EMB effectiveness. In situations where the executive controls EMBs' funds, there is a higher risk of intentional delays in their release, in order to interfere with the EMBs performance. This was the case in Guinea, where funds were not released timeously. The donor dimension of funding must also be emphasised. In most countries, electoral processes depend heavily on external donor funds. Between 2006 and 2009 almost eighty percent of funds for elections came from the donor community. There must be caution as such dependency also creates a high risk of other interests influencing electoral processes and EMBs.

- Highlighting the reporting role of CSOs in some countries' electoral events underscores the essential role all actors must play in monitoring. The quality of collaboration between EMBs and CSO creates possibilities for a range of information sharing and support needed, even in areas such as early warning mechanisms and data capturing. This is especially important given the multidimensional nature of elections activities.

- The relationship between EMBs and the public can be influenced by the organization of election events. Reforms that strengthen credibility and impartiality of EMBs are important for electoral processes. These reforms should be nuanced and examine how best to secure institutional independence and

non-interference from politicians. Greater transparency and better relations between EMBs and political parties are also necessary.

- The work of INEC and the reforms it led in Nigeria should be commended. In this regard, the reforms conducted on voters' lists were a good example that other countries could follow. In some countries voter lists are still not finalised, despite the heavy financial investments made in their development. The African Union and regional bodies could assist countries to ensure that such matters are aligned to norms and standards set for effective electoral processes.

- The role of regional and sub-regional bodies in strengthening EMBs is seen in examples such as the Association of Electoral Commissions (in ECOWAS). Each REC also has Electoral Assistance Units, which could assist through technical support to national EMBs on specific issues such as voters' rolls and other tools and practices that have been successful. It should also be borne in mind however, that the fundamental role of regional bodies is to set standards.

- Judicial intervention can also be used to interfere with EMBs effectiveness. Positive electoral outcomes require synergies between electoral processes and the judiciary. This highlights the important role of other actors and the shared responsibility between state and non–state actors for successful electoral democracy.

- Due process and its application towards EMB chairpersons and leadership are important reflections of the level of independence and EMBs holds. In Sierra Leone and Nigeria, the removal of the chairperson can only happen through due process. In many countries, there is a gap in legal reforms that would secure due process for removal or that would enable removal to be possible. It is important to remember that in Anglophone Africa, commissions are constitutional bodies.

- The use of the judiciary intervention to resolve disputes related to the appointment of EMB leadership should not become ritualised and common place. While the existence of such due process is critical, it must be remembered that in many countries, judicial recourse is also a lengthy and expensive exercise. The law should not be the main battle ground of what are often political disputes and instead, more effort should be given to ensure that processes and institutions act with integrity and are seen as credible by all actors.

Panel 6: The role of regional organizations and mechanisms

This session was moderated by Mrs Cecilia Idika-Kalu, Director at Dukes Transnational in Nigeria. The panels was addressed by representatives of various Regional Organisations: Mrs Raheemat Momodu, Representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at the AU; Ms Nomatamsanqa Sopazi, the representative of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) at the AU; Dr Frank Okuthe, the Executive Director of the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights and Civic Education (LMCDG), a Think Tank of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); Professor Johnson Bade Falade, a Special Advisor at the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA); and Mr. Passassim Atade Nanguit, representative of Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). The session was focused on securing perspectives on the role of regional organizations on elections and the manner in which these can be broadened in light of existing and unfolding challenges.

Mrs Raheemat Momodu

Ms Momodu began by asserting that the primary concern of Africa should be on the forms of governance that is good for its people. What this form of governance is referred to and how similar it is to others should be a secondary issue. In this respect, she noted that there is often too many expectations from inter-governmental bodies and hence a need for deeper appreciation of the limits of such bodies. Including, recognising that these structures often have limited resources.

Ms Momodu emphasised the role of people in holding Heads of State accountable and placing pressure on institutions to engage their mandates. She further noted that ECOWAS engages in long-term observations around elections, but that this is a very expensive process with limitations. She postulates that there needs to be reflection on the value-add of this process and a shift away from engagements that are done purely on the basis of external funding availability.

Ms Momodu further indicated that election's observations have become a lucrative terrain, but may have limited real value. She noted that observations reports are often not acted upon or publicised. She also highlighted the necessity to think much more broadly to consider structural vulnerability and wider areas of reform in a country. She indicated that these can be part of an early warning system

and can incorporate civil society and other actors. As a final word, Ms Momodu proposed that a study on compliance levels amongst ECOWAS states would be useful for future actions.

Ms. Nomatamsanqa Sopazi

Ms Sopazi began by broadly outlining the SADC approach on elections. She noted that the region has developed a set of guidelines around elections and has established an Advisory Council on Elections. The Council works on strengthening the capacities of Electoral Management Bodies and on long-terms observation processes. She indicated that the region places importance on people's welfare and on securing wider participation in governance.

Ms Sopazi put forward that SADC has a non-interference approach and places more emphasis on diplomatically encouraging States to adhere to principles and guidelines established. At the level of challenges, Ms Sopazi indicated the need for further coordination with the AUC on observation. She further identified that there were often challenges within Member States on the credibility of institutions and hence imperatives that some forms of monitoring be introduced.

Dr Frank Okuthe

Dr Okuthe began by indicating that his institution is fairly new and was established to conduct research and provide evidence-based advice on matters of democracy and governance. The institution also undertakes capacity building of public institutions in the region on governance related matters. He further detailed the diversity of countries in his region and the complex influences that have and continue to shape its governance realities. He noted, in this respect, that the region has come a long way and adopted various protocols. Of particular relevance is the protocol on Democracy and good governance, under which provision is made for election observation. In this respect he indicated that the reports of observers goes directly to the summit of heads of state.

Dr Okuthe stated that his organization is constantly looking at innovative ways for monitoring democracy and good governance practice in the region through its observatory on democracy and good governance. In this respect, the organization has is poised to produce an index and been emphasising evidence based reports. These reports are submitted to Summit for deliberations. In concluding, Dr Okuthe pointed out that there was room for building synergy and complementarity with other regional organizations and the AUC. In addition, partnerships have been established with academic institutions and Think Tanks in the region and beyond.

Professor Johnson Bade Falade

Professor Falade began by indicating that the focus of the dialogue has been on national government and not on the local. In this respect, he emphasised that the local is very important and significant in the development process. He illustrated that in the case of Nigeria there are over 800 local municipalities. He noted that

this level of government was often destroyed by higher levels and that historically there were many local areas that were well managed.

Professor Falade noted that local government needs a champion and that his organization has been working on this to ensure that there is further advocacy and knowledge exchange to enhance the role of local municipalities. He noted that often there is gap between what is provided in law and what unfolds in practice. Even as law provided for local government, other levels often take resources way from the local. Professor Falade concluded by further emphasising the importance of local government for development and hence the need for greater emphasis on enhancing capacity for the proper conduct of local elections.

Mr. Passassim Atade Nanguit

Mr Naguit indicated that he was keen to share the experience of francophone countries. He pointed out that his organization was created in the 1970's and now has over 18 member countries. During the initial period, the focus was on issues of culture and history, this has shifted and greater attention is now focused on matters relating to democracy, peace and human rights.

In characterising the shifting focus, Mr Naguit indicated that the foundation for this was the Bamako Declaration which guided countries on elections management. To this end, there has been monitoring of the performance of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and the organization has been working with stakeholders to improve support for the management of elections. In concluding, Mr Naguit further emphasised that the work is guided by the principles contained in the Bamako Declaration.

Discussion

- In the instance of SADC, it is noted that the regions has also established a Forum of EMBs. This structure facilitates cooperation and learning amongst these bodies and facilitates capacity building. In addition, SADC has established a Special Desk on Elections. Of particular importance in the case of SADC is that election observation teams are inclusive of civils society actors.

- It may well be prudent to consider the possibility of establishing regional election management bodies, so as to ensure higher levels of credibility for elections. It is nevertheless noted that this will take time and that, at best, common standards may be established. It must be recognised that elections can be a vehicle for African integration. More emphasis needs to be placed on this.

- There needs to some consideration on the powers that the AU has and its ability to act in situations of difficulty. It seems that states are reluctant to give up some of their sovereignty and hence making it very difficult for regional collective action. Regional organizations need to be able to apply sanctions when there is non-compliance.

- There needs to be further work on coordination between REC's and the AUC on election observation and on the reports produced. All of these structures face the same challenge of funding and on the levels of acceptance of reports. Further work is also needed on the quality of reports. There needs to be a move towards 'monitoring' of elections, rather than just 'observations'.

- In the instance of ECOWAS there are long-term observation missions and reports are shared with Member States and internal opposition parties. However, the organization does not have a sanctions regime. The organization works with EMBs and does have technical support missions for elections preparations. Advice is also being provided to other regions and there are technical support exchanges amongst Member States.

- Much more work needs to be done on getting Heads of State to be more responsive. An approach of naming and shaming countries can help. The AU instruments provide some room for actions and these must be used effectively. Member States should not be able to act with high levels of impunity within the continent.

- The issues of sovereignty are very real and a matter of concern. Even with existing instruments, Member States are still very guarded. It may well be important to consider pooled sovereignty or other forms of regional engagement. Such processes will be assisted by greater co-operation between the AUC and REC's. Such cooperation would require that there is greater attention to issues of subsidiarity and complementarity.

- Sovereignty should never be treated as an absolute. This is always subject to redefinition and constant contestation. There needs to be ongoing engagement with member states and constant reminder of obligations to push the boundaries and hence redefine, on a constant basis, issues of sovereignty.

- Much more can be done as a collective. The AUC has established the African Governance Platform (AGF) and it provides a basis for cooperation with REC's. Greater attention needs to be focused on producing evidence based reports and sharing of information. Much more can also be done to secure collective approaches to common challenges.

- Local government has to work if we want overall development. In many countries, the central challenge is capacity at the local level. This level is important to regional integration as it can serve as the vehicle for transformation. Greater effort needs to be focused on securing the required capacities and resources at a local level.

Closing Session

The closing session was moderated by Professor Kabele Matlosa, the Director of the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC. The closing remarks were from representatives of the dialogue partner organization: ECOWAS, CDD and INEC. Dr Remi Ajibewa, the Director of Political Affairs provided the remarks for ECOWAS. Ms Abibata Barry, Programme Officer provided the comments on behalf of Ms Idayat Hassan, the Director of CDD. Professor Abubakar Momoh, the Director General of the Electoral Institute made closing remarks on behalf of INEC. Concluding remarks were made by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Director of the Africa and West Asia Programme of International IDEA. In his capacity as Director in the AUC, Professor Matlosa thanked all the participants for honouring the invitation to the dialogue. Before calling on the speakers, Professor Matlosa indicated that the discussions exceeded expectations and that the department looks forward to working with all on implementation issues that would be extracted from the report.

Dr Remi Ajibewa

Dr Remi thanked Professor Matlosa and all others on behalf of ECOWAS. He expressed appreciation for the discussions and indicated that these were particularly important for the region. He noted that in ECOWAS elections provide a channel for reducing violence. In this respect he indicated that strong institutions were particularly to deal with issue relating to term limits. Hence, the strengthening of ECOWAS is very important. Dr Remi further indicated that the organization continues to work with all stakeholders to deepen its work on democracy. In this respect, ECOWAS places substantive attention on building capacity of EMBs and has been working with Member States.

On reflecting on the organization work in the region, Dr Remi noted that one of the larger challenges identified was different laws and modalities for the functioning of EMBs. To this end, the organization is mandated to conduct a study that focuses on looking at ways to further deepen harmonisation within the region. ECOWAS is keen to look at what other regions are doing and on further engagements with the AUC. Dr Remi concluded by indicating that in all interactions three is need to recognise and appreciate issue of subsidiarity and complementarity in the work so as to achieve common objectives of a peaceful region.

Ms Abibata Barry (for Ms Idayat Hassan)

Ms Barry began by expressing the apology of Ms Hassan who could not be there for the closing session, due to other pressing obligations. She noted, in this respect, that the organization (CDD) is actively involved in follow up accountability activities related to the last elections in Nigeria. She further indicated that her organization

is convinced that elections are just the beginning of accountability engagements. In Nigeria her organization is focusing on doing monitoring of delivery based on promises made to the electorate. In concluding, she thanked International IDEA for the cooperation and encouraged efforts towards further collaboration.

Professor Abubakar Momoh

Professor Momoh thanked the Moderator and noted that many perspectives and issues were raised during the dialogue. This, he indicated, pointed to the fact that there is no shortage of capacity for engagements around the challenges in the democracy space. He argued that it was imperative to move beyond dialogue and focus on what the next steps are by synthesising issues and putting forward terrains of action.

In reflecting on the future, Professor Momoh indicated that organizations are not equally endowed. In this respect, he encouraged International IDEA to leverage available capacities as it focuses on the next steps and implementing what has arisen from the deliberations. He further indicated that finance should not be a driver for what gets done and hence attention should be on building on existing commitments and on establishing concreate and measurable actions. As a final word, Professor Momoh urged participants to focus on building capacities for the future on the basis of conceptual clarity on what is optimal within context.

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi

Professor Olukoshi began with a passionate expression of appreciation to the Department of Political Affairs and all other partners involved in the dialogue. He indicated that there are many reasons to feel satisfied with the dialogue and that; it has, in many respects, exceeded expectations. He noted a high level of commitment was apparent and that the diversity of perspectives will enrich the work of the AUC.

On the basis of past experiences in the wider international system, Professor Olukoshi pointed to the importance of being clear on what we want to achieve in the continent and our expectations from the rest of the world. He noted that in many terrains, organization struggled to establish coordinate actions, as there are often driven by the agendas of others as the seek resources for future survival. In this respect, he emphasised that his overall approach is on how to make International IDEA work for Africa, rather than on how to make Africa work for International IDEA.

In relationship to his organizations continued work to reinforce the AUC, Professor Olukoshi cautioned that there has to be recognition of the limitations of the Union. He noted that this is not an easy institution has it has all the disadvantages that come from Member States and it struggles to finance itself. Whilst African countries contribute to larger global initiatives, they often fail to provide resources to their own organization. Current challenges, he argued, requires a level of boldness in action and a certain level of audaciousness.

As a prelude to expressing appreciation to participants, Professor Olukoshi noted that there many good people who are struggling in their own ways to make a difference to existing realities, under very difficult conditions. This includes people in, among others, regional organizations, in civil society, the media, in EMBs and the judiciary. It is, in this respect, important for all to continue working within the overall framework provided by the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC.

Professor Olukoshi thanked all participants and expressed a word of appreciation and recognition for senior levels participants who attended the dialogue. In this note of appreciation, Professor Olukoshi highlighted, in some detail, the career contributions of many of the individual present. He further captured key contribution highlights of participants do demonstrate their larger value for the positive progress and for the further journey ahead. Professor Olukoshi concluded by thanking all AUC, International IDEA and other support personal. Time was taken to mention these individuals by name.

Annexes

Concept note

Background

Countries across the African continent are struggling to consolidate electoral democracy. More than 20 years after the so-called third wave hit the shores of the continent, the development of cultures, institutions and practices required to organize genuine, credible and peaceful elections is uneven. There are notable success stories and there are a number of positive lessons learned to be drawn from elections were organized in a fair, transparent and peaceful manner. At the same time, there are also instances where elections rather than contributing to the deepening of democracy, instead have halted democratic transition – if not even accelerated democratic regression.

Looking back at recent elections, several challenges emerges. The two-term limit on the presidency has been under severe pressure in many African states and has clear linkages to elections as tools for the public to select their leaders in accordance with constitutional provisions. Elections-related violence before, during and after election day remains a persisting problem. The framing and demonizing of political opposition, gagging of the press, corruption of election observers, hate speech and use of parochial and sectarian slogans have also become veritable tools for undermining electoral democracy in Africa. Management of diversity is still a challenge. Women and youth remains on the margins of the electoral processes and of political representative structures. The militarization of political party youth wings is emerging as a central challenge both to the organization of peaceful elections and to the fostering trust in democratic institutions and processes in coming generations. Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) responsible for managing electoral processes has faced a number of problems in terms of political, financial and logistical issues. At the same time, regional organizations seem to struggle to identify their role in helping EMBs and other stakeholders in promoting credible and peaceful elections.

According to the work carried out by the Election Integrity Project, which surveys countries around the globe on a wide variety of elections-related dimensions since 2012, Africa remains the region in the world with lowest levels of electoral integrity. Of the 35 countries surveyed on the continent, only six countries are considered to have high levels of electoral integrity: Benin, Mauritius, Namibia, Lesotho, Rwanda and South Africa. On the other hand, in 20 countries electoral integrity is rated as low or very low (e.g. Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Togo and Swaziland).

It is against this background that the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and its Africa and West Asia Programme—

in partnership with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and it's Electoral Institute (TEI), the Economic Commission of West Africa (ECOWAS), the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) of Nigeria and the Political Affairs Department of the African Union Commission—is organizing a Regional Dialogue on Emerging Trends and Challenges of Electoral Democracy in Africa in 2016. The dialogue will provide a platform for representatives from a wide range of organizations and institutions—such as regional and sub-regional organizations, EMBs, political parties, civil society sector, electoral assistance providers, academics and practitioners— to discuss on elections in Africa as they now unfold and possible ways forward to improve electoral integrity on the continent.

Situation analysis

Electoral democracy in Africa is growing. In 2015, altogether 16 countries organized elections at the national level whereas this year we expect to see around 20 elections taking place on the continent.

Elections have facilitated the emergence of democratic governments and peaceful transfer of power in many countries notably, in Nigeria and Benin as well as Cape Verde where the opposition won the presidential and parliamentary elections, respectively, and the ruling party handed over power in a peaceful and orderly manner. Elections have also restored relative stability in countries facing difficult transitions such as in the cases of the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire and Egypt. Notwithstanding notable post-election challenges, the organization of credible elections in Lesotho has also been considered to represent a significant step forward.

In some cases, however, elections have contributed to destabilizing democratic transition or development. At the most extreme end is the case of Burundi where the electoral process and the constitutional third-term limit issue has resulted in severe political crisis that has seen hundreds of people killed and a quarter of a million people displaced. In the Republic of Congo, the presidential elections preceded by last year's referenda on the third-term issue have sparked violent protests in the streets of Brazzaville and made the opposition call for international mediation. In Zanzibar, the controversial decision of the EMB to annul the results of the October 2015 elections as the votes were counted led the main opposition party to boycotts the re-run of the elections, which in turn undermined the legitimacy of the outcomes.

Political and elections-related violence continue to mare electoral processes on the continent. While elections are not inherently a source of violence, they can potentially exacerbate existing tensions (political, ethnic, regional, and religious) and differences, and spill over into violence. This occurs especially when elections are not conducted within an appropriate institutional framework. Although some of the triggers of elections-related violence are unique to the context in which they unfold, there are certain common patterns that put countries at risk of electoral violence. First, elections organized in the context of political transitions (e.g. following peace agreements or cessation of hostilities) and where reconciliation between the parties are yet to firmly take hold are particularly susceptible to violence. Closely linked to this the political system impacts on violence during periods of elections. Countries that are partly democratic and partly autocratic

('mixed regimes') have proven to be vulnerable to electoral violence, as they lack the institutional fabric required to channel grievances in a constructive manner. Second, in countries where electoral outcomes are contested, ensuring protests in the post-election period can spill over into violence. Third, unemployed youth appear to be an especially fertile target for recruitment by political actors determined to commit acts of violence through established party leaning militias.

The use of political arrests and cracked down on ensuing popular protests represent other emerging trends. Past elections have shown opposition candidates being arrested prior to, during or after the elections. Moreover, authorities have resorted to clamping down on protesters and communication system as experienced in Uganda and the Republic of Congo by authorities infringed on the citizen's fundamental freedoms in their respective countries. Increased use of internet and social media to quickly spread information about the electoral process as it unfolds represents a new feature of the elections in Africa. With increased internet penetration, we have seen increased mobilization and engagement of citizen on social media. This has created new problems for semi-authoritarian and autocratic regimes and has accelerated the use of communication black-outs as a tool to control elections.

At the national level, electoral management bodies (EMBs) play a key role when it comes to the organization of genuine elections and hence to the deepening of democracy in Africa. At the same time, their capacity to influence the quality of the process is conditional and relies on the extent to which they are independent and have the means—human, financial and logistical resources—to carry out credible elections. Many EMBs have been bedeviled with poor planning, poor financial support and management of the electoral process, and undue interference and obtrusiveness from government with consequences that include huge electoral infractions in many states in Africa.

At the regional and sub-regional level, organizations like the AU, ECOWAS, SADC and EAC are investing in improving electoral democracy. However, their role in promoting credible electoral processes requires critical examination. Considerable efforts is placed on election observation whereas supports to technical and logistical challenges have remained severely under-prioritized. Thus, it is pertinent to question the extent regional organizations have engaged national stakeholders in discussing and promoting reform according to the observation recommendations—and what are the lessons learned from such exercises. Also, how has regional early warning and early intervention/mediation mitigated elections-related violence? These, among other questions need to be explored in a bid to enhance the role these organizations play in improving the credibility and fairness of elections on the continent.

Objectives and thematic discussions

The overall objective for this regional dialogue is to examine emerging trends and challenges of elections in Africa in 2016. More specifically, the event aims to:

- Explore challenges around terms and tenures of political leaders and elected office holders;

- Debate the trends related to media governance in elections as well as the impact of increased internet penetration and social media usage among Africans on election transparency;

- Examine how contestation of electoral processes and its outcomes—including electoral boycotts, the rejection of election results and electoral violence—impacts on electoral legitimacy;

- Discuss the developments around EMB reform, with particular reference to securing and protecting *de facto* EMB structural, behavioural and financial independence; and

- Review the work carried out by regional organizations and provide recommendations for their engagement to enhance the quality of elections on the continent

Deliverables

- It is expected that at the end of the two-day conference, stakeholders especially political parties, EMBs, CSOs, Electoral Assistance providers and other development Partners will appreciate the need for strengthening electoral democracy and political development across African countries.

- It is also expected that the recommendations at the dialogue session will influence the performance of EMBs and facilitate reforms in EMBs where necessary.

- It is expected that RECs and AU will benefit immensely from the outcome of the conference

- It is also expected that policy processes will be enriched and advocacy tools will be developed out of it, particularly towards the role of government in ensuring the conduct of credible elections, respect for the rule of law and democratization.

- It is expected the publication and dissemination in electronic version and hard copies of the proceedings of the regional dialogue.

Methodology

The Regional Dialogue will take place over two (2) days and comprise a series of panel discussions. The panels will typically comprise one panel chair, speaker/s and one/two discussants. Following deliberations from the panel, all participants will be involved in the ensuing debates and discussions.

Research papers will form the backbone of the Regional Dialogue discussions. Prepared by professionals with considerable experience both from an academic as well as a practitioner angle, the papers will examine contemporary trends and provide comparative analysis from developments on the continent. The papers will be distributed among the participants well in advance of the event.

Participants

The Regional Dialogue on Emerging Trends and Challenges of Electoral Democracy in Africa in 2016 will gather approximately 50 persons from across the continent, including representatives and staff of regional organizations, EMBs, political parties, civil society, media, academics and electoral assistance providers.

Date and time

The Regional Dialogue will be organized on 25–26 May 2016 at the Sheraton Hotel in Abuja, Nigeria.

Partners and donors

The Regional Dialogue is organized by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)—in partnership with Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), The Electoral Institute (TEI) of Nigeria, the Economic Commission of West Africa (ECOWAS), the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) of Nigeria and the Political Affairs Department of the African Union Commission—with the support of the Department for International Development (DfID).

The Dialogue is organized in the context of the memorandums of understanding that International IDEA has with INEC and ECOWAS, respectively.

Programme

DAY 1	
08:30-09:00	Participant registration
09:00-10:00	**Opening Ceremony** Chair: H.E. Professor Ibrahim A. Gambari, Former UN Under Secretary General, Chairman and Founder of the Savannah Center for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development Welcome remarks Mrs Idayat Hassan, Director CDD Nigeria Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, Chairman INEC Nigeria Opening Remarks Prof. Khabele Matlosa, Political Affairs Director, African Union Commission Dr. Remi Ajibewa, Director Political Affairs, ECOWAS Opening Statement Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi, Africa and West Asia Regional Director, International IDEA
10:00-10:30	**Keynote Speech** Speaker: Prof. Okechukwu Ibeanu, Former Chief Technical Advisor to INEC Nigeria
10:30-11:00	Coffee/Tea Break and Group Photo
11:00-12:30	**Panel 1: Emerging Trends – An Overview** Moderator: Hon. Mrs. Joyce Kazembe, Former Deputy Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Speakers H.E. Mr. Jose Brito, Former Minister, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the West Africa Institute Prof. Emmanuel Akwetey, Executive Director, IDEG Dr. Rhuks Ako, Policy Analyst, Political Affairs Department, African Union Commission Lead discussant: Prof. Anthonia Simbine, Commissionner, INEC Nigeria Plenary debate
12:30-13:30	Lunch

13:30-15:00	**Panel 2: Terms & Tenures of Political Leaders & Elected Office Holders** Moderator: H.E. Barrister Akere T. Muna, Former Chairperson of the APRM Panel, Chairperson of the IACC (International Anti-Corruption Council) Speakers Prof. Abubakar Momoh, Director General of the Electoral Institute, INEC Mrs Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director WACSI Mr. Glen Mpani, Programme Manager, Democracy and Governance OSISA Lead Discussant: Prof. Mohammad J. Kuna, Former Advisor INEC, Usmanu Dan-fodiyo University, Nigeria Plenary debate
15:00-15:30	Coffee/Tea Break
15:30-17:00	**Panel 2: Terms & Tenures of Political Leaders & Elected Offices (cont.)** Moderator: Ms. Maria do Rosario Lopes Goncalves Pereira, Chairperson, Electoral Commission of Cape Verde Speakers Mme Celestine Zanou, Former candidate to presidential elections, Former Chief of Staff of President Mathieu Kerekou, Benin Prof. Bolade M. Eyinla, University of Ilorin Barrister Barthelemy Kere, Chair of INEC Burkina Faso Lead Discussant: Dr. Souley Adji, University Abdou Moumouni, Niger Plenary debate
19:00-21:00	Conference reception/dinner Short Review of the Book entitled Democratic Transitions: Conversations with World Leaders by Prof. Ibrahim Jibrin, CDD Nigeria

DAY 2	
09:00-10:30	**Panel 3: Trends in Media & Communications Governance in Elections** Moderator: Mr. Calixte Mbari, Acting Head of Division DGHR, DPA/AUC Speakers Mr. Francis Kpatinde, Journalist and Lecturer, IEP, Science Po, Paris Mr. Samson Itodo, Yaga Mr. Edetan Ojo, West Africa Media Foundation Lead Discussant: Mrs. Madeleine Mukamabano, Senior Journalist, UN Trainer on Media and Elections Plenary debate
10:30-10:45	Coffee/Tea Break
10:45.12:30	**Panel 4: Contestation of Electoral Processes and Outcomes** Moderator: Mr. Francis Oke, Chief of Electoral Assistance Division, ECOWAS Commission Speakers Mr. Festus Okoye, Constitution and Electoral Lawyer, Nigeria Mrs. Djenaba Traore, General Director, West Africa Institute Mr. Moussa Tchangari, Alternatives Espaces Citoyens, Niger Lead Discussant: Prof. Sam Egwu, UNDP Governance Advisor Plenary debate
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	**Panel 5: Election Management Bodies – Reform** Moderator: Mr. Francis Laleye, Program Coordinator, AWEPA/NIMD Speakers Prof. Adele Jinadu, University of Lagos Mrs. Pontso Mamatlere Matete, IEC Lesotho Dr. Olugbenga Jacob Adesida, West Africa Institute Lead Discussant: Justice M. L. Lehola, ECF SADC EXCO Chair Plenary debate
15:00-15:30	Coffee/Tea Break

15:30-17:30	**Panel 6: Role of Regional Organizations and Mechanisms: Going Beyond Observation** Moderator: Mrs. Cecilia Idika-Kalu, Dukes Transnational Panellists ECOWAS (Mrs. Raheemat Momodu, Head of ECOWAS Liaison Office AU) SADC (Ms Nomatamsanqua Sopazi, Head of SADC Liaison Office AU) LMCDG/ICGLR (Dr. Frank Okuthe, Executive Director, LMCDG) UCGLA (Prof. Johnson Bade Falade, Special Advisor UCGLA) OIF (Mr. Passassim Atade Nanguit, Representative of OIF/RBWA) Plenary Debate
17:30-18:00	**Closing Ceremony** Chair: Prof. Kabele Matlosa, Political Affairs Director, African Union Commission Closing Remarks Dr Remi Ajibewa, Director Political Affairs, ECOWAS Mrs. Idayat Hassan, Director, CDD Nigeria Prof. Abubakar Momoh, Director General of the Electoral Institute, INEC Concluding Remarks Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi, Africa and West Asia Director, International IDEA

Participant list

Name	Institution and Function
Prof. Khabele Matlsosa	Director, Political Affairs Department African Union Commission
Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi	Africa and West Asia Regional Director, International IDEA
Hon. Mrs. Joyce Kazembe	Deputy Chairperson to the ZEC Zimbabwe
Barrister Akere T Muna	Former Chairperson of the APRM Panel
Ms Maria do Rosario Lopes Goncalves Pereira	Chairperson Electoral Commission of Cape Verde
Mrs Celestine Zanou	Former presidential candidate, Benin, and former Chief of Staff of President Mathieu Kerekou
Dr Souley Adji	University Abdou Moumini, Niger
Mr Francis Kpatinde	Journalist and Lecturer University of Paris 1
Mrs Madeleine Mukamabano	Senior Journalist, UN Trainer on Media and Elections
Mrs Djenaba Traore	General Director IAO
Justice M.L. Lehola	ECF SADC Exco Chair
Mr Glen Mpani	OSISA Programme Manager, Democracy and Governance
Mr Mbari Calixte	Acting Head of Division DGHR
Mrs Raheemat Momodu	Head of ECOWAS Liaison Office to AUC
Ms Nomatamsanqa Sopazi	Head SADC Liaison Office to AU
Dr Frank Okuthe Oyugi	Executive Director, LMWCDG/ICGLR
Professor Johnson Bade Falade	Representative of UCGLA
Mrs Dieye Ba	Former Minister, Former Chairperson of the INEC Mauritania
Mrs Abibatou Mboup	Chair, Alliance for Solidarity and Assistance to Women in West Africa
Maurice Engueleguele	Senior Programme Officer, International IDEA
A Clark	Programme Officer, International IDEA
Dr Rhuks Ako	PA DPA/AUC
Ms Nebila Abdulmelik	Knowledge Manager Expert, DPA/AUC
Mr Francis Laleye	Program Coordinator, AWEPA/NIMD
Dr Charles Ukeje	IPSS Addis Ababa
Ms Darsheenee Raumnauth	Constitutionalism and rule of Law Expert, DPA/AUC
Mrs Pontso Mamatlere Matete	IEC Lesotho
Dr Oumory SANO	Representative of INEC Niger
Mrs Sissoko Bintou	CSO Representative Mali
Mr Moussa Tchangari	Alternatives Espaces Citoyens Niger

Ms Kghotatso Semela Serota	Expert, South Africa
Mr Salim Latib	Expert, South Africa
Minister Jose Brito	Chairman of the Borad of Directors West Africa Institute
Dr Olungbenga Jacob Adesida	West Africa Institute
Mrs Kadiatou Thierno Diallo	Vice Chair of the Association of Journalists of Guinea Conakry
Mr Jean Francis Belibi	Journalist
Barrister Barthelemy Kere	Chair of INEC Burkina Faso
Mrs Nana Afadzinu	Executive Director Wacsi
Prof. Emmanuel Akwetey	Executive Director IDEG
Mr Passassim ATADE NANGUIT	Representative of OIF/ Bureau of West Africa
Prof. Ibrahim A. Gambari	Former UN Under Secretary General, Chairman and founder of the Savannah Center for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development
Prof. Mahmood Yakubu	Chairman INEC Nigeria
Dr Remi Ajibewa	Director of Political Affairs, ECOWAS
Prof. Okechekwu Ibeanu	Former Chief Technical Advisor to INEC Nigeria
Prof. Antonia Simbine	Commissionner, INEC Nigera
Prof. Abubakar Momoh	Director General of the Electoral institute, INEC Nigeria
Prof. Muhamad J. Kuna	Former Advisor, INEC, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Nigeria
Prof. Bolade M. Eyinla	University of Ilorin
Prof. Ibrahim Jibrin	CDD Nigeria
Mr Edetan Ojo	West Africa Media Foundation
Mr Festus Okoye	Constitution and Electoral Lawyer
Mr Francis Oke	Chief of Electoral Assistance Division, ECOWAS
Prof. Sam Egwu	UNDP Governance Advisor
Prof. Adele Jinadu	University of Lagos
Prof. Johnson Bolade	Special Advisor UCGLA
Mrs Idayat Hassan	Director CDD Nigeria
Mrs. Cecilia Idika Kalu	Dukes Transnational
Dr Omotola Jeremiah Shola	Expert
Mr Jameel Elyaqub Jibreen	Director, Electoral Institute, Nigeria
Mrs Victoria Eta-Messi	Director, Electoral Institute Nigeria
Mr Tunde Ojedokun	Director, Electoral Institute Nigeria
Dr Saad Umar Idriss	Director, Electoral Institute Nigeria
Mr John Irem	Director, Electoral Institute, Nigeria

Amb. Sunday Dogonyaro	Abuja, Nigeria
Ms Ms. Bose Muidi	Abuja Nigeria
Mrs Esther Yusuf	CDD Nigeria
Mrs Abibata Barry	CDD Nigeria
Cecilia Idika-Kalu	Dukes Transnational

About International IDEA

What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics.

What does International IDEA do?

In the field of elections, constitution building, political parties, gender in democracy and women's political empowerment, democracy self-assessments, and democracy and development, we undertake our work through three activity areas:

- providing comparative knowledge derived from practical experience on democracy building processes from diverse contexts around the world;

- assisting political actors in reforming democratic institutions and processes, and engaging in political processes when invited to do so; and

- influencing democracy building policies through the provision of our comparative knowledge resources and assistance to political actors.

Where does International IDEA work?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, it has offices in Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.