

Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum (SCISEF)

Introduction

The Somaliland civil society election forum (SCISEF) was established for the first time in 2012 to monitor and evaluate the local council elections. It was re-established in November 2015. Civil society and non-state actors in Somaliland have played a vital role for the electoral process of the country and have had a long term engagement on issues related to governance and democratization. SCISEF is intended to play a number of roles in support of the elections and will act as a bridge between citizens and election stakeholders, and through this, will support the creation of an enabling political and civic environment.

Rationale

Over the past two decades Somaliland has been an island of stability in an otherwise volatile region. It has made impressive progress in its democratization process and in the creation of hybrid political orders, including holding six relatively free and fair elections; national constitutional referendum in 2001, local council and political parties elections in 2002, first competitive presidential election in 2003, House of Representative elections in 2005, second competitive presidential elections in 2010 and local council and political parties elections in 2012. Presidential and parliamentary elections are due to take place in 2017.

However, currently there are a number of challenges to holding successful elections in 2017. These include a lack of voter registration, lack of voter and civic education and an incomplete legislative and regulatory framework.

Objectives of the Civil Society Election Forum

- To improve and facilitate coordination, networking and information between civil society and other election stakeholders
- To create a platform for non-state actor engagement on the electoral process and policy dialogue
- To monitor and evaluate the pre-elections period, elections day and post-election period
- To deploy voter registration observers and election observers across the regions and closely assess the process of the voter education and voter registration
- To produce policy position papers on relevant issues (including but not limited to the need to review and amend the electoral framework), a pre-elections report- based in part on the voter registration observation- and post-elections report- based in part on the electoral observation mission- publicizing and disseminating these through advocacy activities to relevant stakeholders, including through meetings with government officials

- To hold consultative meetings, gather appropriate information, and analyze information collected, both freshly-generated ideas and information gathered from existing literature.

Coordination

This civil society election forum is made of 88 organizations including civil society and other non-state actors. These 88 organizations have been divided both at regional and national level and each region has one focal point and secretary. Coordination meetings will be held monthly at regional level and quarterly at the national level. Briefing and de-briefing meetings will be held on a regular basis, as needed. Each organization will nominate a decision making person either chairman or executive director.

Structure of the civil society election forum

Focal Point: SCISEF shall have a focal point person from each region whose duties include:-

- Chairing SCISEF meetings
- Developing agenda of the meetings
- Acting as spokesperson for the SCISEF
- Organizing meeting with stakeholders including government officials, and civil society groups
- Coordinating SCISEF activities with SONSAF Elections Project Coordinator

Secretary: The SCISEF shall elect a secretary from within their group in each region. The SCISEF Secretary will have the following duties:-

- Organizing SCISEF meetings
- Recording minutes of the meetings
- Maintaining SCISEF documents

Expected results

SCISEF is expected to produce a minimum of 10 position papers, briefing papers, press releases and one pre-election and one post-election report.

Reporting

SCISEF will share monthly reports to SONSAF Elections Project Coordinator who will compile reports.