

# *Study Tour Report*



**SOUTH AFRICA**

**INDEPENDENT  
ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC)**

**2-5**

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## Acronyms

CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
ESS	Electoral Staff System
EMB	Election Management Body
GIS	Geo- Information Systems
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa
LIS	Logistics Information System
KM	Knowledge Management
MEO	Municipal Electoral Office of South Africa
NEC	National Elections Commission of Liberia
OMS	Outreach Management Systems
PEO	Provincial Electoral Office of South Africa
ROC	Results Operations Center
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VR	Voter Registration
VRU	Voter Roll Update
VSO	Voting Station Operations

## Acknowledgment

We, the members of the study tour delegation to South Africa extend special thanks to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and its supporters of the Liberia's electoral process for providing the funds to support our study tour. We also extend our appreciation to UNDP Liberia for planning the program and searching for a country in Africa where we can draw valuable lessons to build the electoral process where applicable. Importantly also, we want to extend our gratitude to the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa for their warm reception and sacrificial commitment in ensuring that the NEC-Liberia delegation received extensive insight into the workings of their Election Management Body (EMB), even during the time when most members of their senior management team were away on external duties and the Commission was planning a by-election for the following week.

Many thanks also to Mr. Mosotho Moepya, Commissioner, for his tireless efforts in making sure the team had an opportunity to understand some key milestones and challenges that make South Africa what it is as he shared and exposed the Liberian delegation to historical facts, allowing the delegation to know how far they have come, how they arrived at the current point and how far they intend to go.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation goes to Mlungisi Kelembe for his tireless efforts in ensuring that the team was well attended to at all times.

In addition, profound thanks and appreciation to the Board of Commissioners of NEC- Liberia for affording us the opportunity to study in South Africa in order to enhance our preparation, thereby, enlightening us on successes found that could be replicated at home for the forth coming 2020 Special Senatorial Election, and subsequent elections.

We also want to extend thanks and appreciation to UNDP South Africa for providing ground support in shuttling the team in and around South Africa.

We also want to say thanks to Honorable Martin C. A. Karpeh, Deputy Chief of Mission, Liberia Embassy in South Africa, who paid a visit to the team while in South Africa.

Additionally, family members of the delegation are acknowledged for making the sacrifice of allowing the team members leave them for one week.

Finally, and most importantly, the team praises God Almighty for His guidance, fortification and countless blessings during the course of the study tour.

## Executive Summary

In its quest to improve elections operations especially leading to the conduct of the 2020 Special Senatorial elections, a seven-member team comprising six (6) staff of the Operations Department, along with one (1) staff of the IT Section, travelled to South Africa on a study tour to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The trip was sponsored by UNDP Liberia.

The NEC team comprised:

- Emma K. Togba Deputy Exe. Director- Ops / Head of delegation
- J. Werti Swen Chief of Logistics
- Deddeh Mulbah Pusah Director of Field Coordination
- James S. B. Wallace Director of Elections Procedures & Training
- James Dogbey Sr. Director of Information Technology
- Floyd Oxley Sayor Director of Data Center
- Isaac Williams Assistant Magistrate – Rivercess County

Upon arrival at the offices of the Electoral Commission in South Africa, the team was met by Mr. Mlungisi Kelembe, Head, Commission Services. After exchanging pleasantries, he took the team on tour of the various offices and conference halls within the Commission.

The Liberian delegation met with various staff of the IEC who provided insights on the workings of the Commission through presentations and discussions. These presentations and discussions were scheduled along pre-designed themes aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the delegation and widening the scope of review in electoral democracy. Some of the topics and/ or themes covered included an assessment of the constitutional mandate and legal framework for the IEC, the mechanism for the appointment of Commissioners and other statutory core related personnel of the IEC – its functions inclusive.

Elevated from these distinct themes for the study tour were other knowledge-sharing activities and planned field visitations. These field visitations to provincial offices of the IEC, notwithstanding their pre-arrangement, were called off in line with challenging security situation. Based on this circumstance, the delegation missed out on field visitations and discussions with the Municipal Office in Tshwane and Provincial Office in Gauteng.

In light of these, the delegation, and by extension the National Elections Commission of Liberia accomplished meaningfully from the openness and shared African brotherhood of the people of South Africa through its Commission (IEC).

## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This report features a study tour of seven senior staff of the National Elections Commission of Liberia that traveled to South Africa as guests of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC). During the one-week study tour to understand the electoral processes of South Africa, there were a series of presentations, meetings as well as discussions at the IEC. In this report, key points of those meetings, presentations and discussions and lessons learned therefrom will be outlined. It is hoped that the recommendations tendered herein will assist the Board of Commissioners of the National Elections Commission of Liberia in furthering its policy responsibilities for the conduct of the Voter Roll Update.

### **1.2 Background**

As the National Elections Commission of Liberia (NEC) moves towards the conduct of the Voter Roll Update for the 2020 Special Senatorial Election, the NEC deemed it expedient to take a number of steps aimed at enhancing short, medium and long term viability of the Commission. As such, the NEC, through the Operations Department and IT Section, has started capacity building and professional development programs by means of in-house trainings, external study tours, and other professional training activities.

It is from this backdrop that the NEC, in collaboration with UNDP-Liberia in September 2019, organized a study tour to understand the electoral processes of South Africa.

The mission of the delegation to South Africa was to have an insight into the workings of various operational components of the IEC and to draw lessons that could be applicable to election management in Liberia while at the same time building the professional expertise of the members of the delegation. The overall objective of said trip was to continuously ensure that personnel and institutional capacities of NEC are built. In a nutshell, the trip sought to achieve the following:

- Sharing of experience;

- Learning from sister electoral management body, IEC South Africa, on elections administration and management while looking at Voter Roll Update (VRU);
- Understanding the training methodology
- Understanding the real time data collection and transmission using low cost technology; and
- How to operate a Results Operation Center (ROC) - and how it is done in areas with limited network coverage and electricity shortages.

## **2.0 Special Statement: Mosotho Moepya**

Commissioner Mosotho Meopya summarily discussed the policy structure of the Commission. According to Commissioner Moepya, the legal arrangement for the appointment of Commissioners allows for a maximum of seven Commissioners, and a minimum of three. Currently, there are five Commissioners, four of whom are permanent, and one High Court Judge, who serves on a part-time basis.

Reflecting on the nation's past, Commissioner Meopya indicated that the Constitution of the South African Republic, following the end of apartheid, established six integrity institutions to support and protect democracy. These establishments are noted in Chapter 9 of the Constitution. The Independent Electoral Commission constitutes one of the Chapter 9 institutions.

The Commissioner concluded by congratulating the Liberian delegation and spoke in broader terms of the existing bi-lateral relationship between South Africa and Liberia.

## **3.0 The Legal Framework of IEC**

Chapter Nine (9) of the South African Constitution establishes the Electoral Commission as an independent institution mandated to:

- Manage elections of national, provincial and municipal legislative bodies;
- Ensure those elections are free and fair; and
- Declare the results of those elections within a period prescribed by national legislation and that is as short as reasonably possible (7 days).

The Electoral Commission has additional powers and functions prescribed by the national legislation.

These statutory mandates include but are not limited to:

- Compile and maintain a voters' roll by means of a system of registering eligible voters by utilizing available data from government sources and information furnished by voters;
- Compile and maintain a register of political parties;
- Undertake and promote research on electoral matters;
- Continuously review electoral legislation and proposed electoral legislation and make recommendations in connection therewith; and
- Adjudicate disputes that may arise from the organization, administration or conduct of elections and which are of an administrative nature; etc.

#### **4. Brief History and Structure of IEC**

##### **Brief History**

The Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) has a very rich history which is similar to that of the South African nation itself. Rising from the apartheid era, the Commission was constituted as the national entity to organize the landmark 1994 elections which ushered the current democratic governance system in South Africa, and set the basis for the current valued system that ensures independence, transparency, and accountability.

Prior to its current level of institutional efficiency, the 1994 Commission was comprised of a membership which boasted of both national and non-national professionals. This rich combination of staff did not only coordinate the conduct of the elections which brought the late President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela to power, it also set the flow plan for focusing on some of the fundamental and highly successful achievements that are currently in place. These marks of success are visible in some areas, particularly in the near perfection of the current national voter register.

Unlike the 1994 election which did not have a voter register due to the prevailing circumstances at the time, a national identification system that assigns a unique identity number to every citizen is now in place and fully functional.

Today, the Commission uses a voter register compilation process which feeds from the national population registry to conduct voter registration verification on specified weekends.

##### **Structure of IEC**

The Commission

- 5 Commissioners appointed for a 7-year term (maximum 2 terms) by the president;



- Commissioners are interviewed by a Panel comprising the Chief Justice and Heads of Chapter Nine institutions);
- Shortlist of candidates are submitted to Parliament;
- The National Assembly makes recommendation to the President;
- President designates Chairperson and Co-Chairperson;
- The head of the secretariat is called Chief Electoral Officer (CEO);
- Stand-alone Sections that report directly to the CEO are Commission Services, Provincial Electoral Offices and Internal Audit;
- There are four Departments that also report directly to the CEO.

#### Electoral Operations

- Comprises of Logistics and Infrastructure and Electoral Operations.

#### Corporate Services

- Comprises of Human Resource and Training, ICT and Legal Services;
- The IEC has a staff capacity of 1,118 based at national office, 9 Provincial offices and local offices in each municipality (8 metros and 226 local municipalities);
- The IEC staff composition by gender comprises of 58% female and 42%, male.

#### Outreach

- Comprises of Communication, Civic Education, Research and Knowledge Management.

#### Party Funding

- Under construction

## **5.0 Presentations**

### **5.1 Electoral Operations**

The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Masego Sheburi delivered a presentation which covered, among other things, the following areas:

- Number of national and provisional elections to date; and
- Number of municipal elections to date.

The IEC has conducted 6 National and Provisional elections over the years: 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019.

A total of 4 Municipal elections have been conducted to date (2000, 2006, 2011 and 2016) while the next Municipal elections will run from August – November 2021.

IEC conducts an average of 100 By-elections per year.

## **5.2 Recruitment, Human Resource Capacity Building, and Training**

A presentation was done by Ms. Francina Magagule who heads the Training and Procedures Section of IEC, South Africa. She enumerated the various sources of authorities that laid out the categories of personnel for electoral training. Some of the functions of the training section include the development of the recruitment and selection policy, the strategy of both large and small scale recruitment at the national, provincial and municipal levels, amongst others.

The head of training also elaborated on the general methodology which the South African Commission has adapted to deliver training to both permanent and temporary staff of the Commission. This methodology, it was said, do incorporate the particular steps for the researching and compilation of training materials through an intensive process that utilizes both the participation of other professional departments.

Most of the training delivery of the commission are done by contact sessions, similar to a classroom-type of content delivery. Based on the common findings of the commission, these standardizations enable most of trainings and the materials delivered to be uniformed.

Considering threats to the South African Electoral Training Processes, the director asserted that reliance on non-permanent staff bears the risk of reducing accountability, and lessening the desired implementation. These tools have sometimes been challenged by the situation of some staff not understanding the content while some are over-confident during training.

To ensure election trainings remain standardized, the Commission does not encourage innovation, creativity or new ideas during training or the conduct of elections, but rather, adheres to simplicity and uniformity.

### **5.3 Logistics and Infrastructure**

Electoral logistics is a very important area of the South African Commission as in all Electoral Management Bodies, including Liberia. Like NEC-Liberia, the section on logistics is involved with a rigorous process of initiating and executing plans.

However, there are also very sharp variations in the method of logistical interventions made by both Commissions. Unlike the NEC, which coordinates its elections logistics by directly delivering items and services procured to its work area, the extension of electoral logistics in the South African IEC is mostly carried out through a method which outsources supplies and services.

Although the study tour delegation found the South African experience for dealing with electoral logistics interesting, it can be reasoned that both countries possess different infrastructures. These infrastructural variations coupled with the corporate nature of electoral resource and service allocation, the Liberian delegation did not see linkage between the two Commissions in dealing with electoral logistics.

### **5.4 Civic Education, Research & Knowledge Management**

#### **5.4 A. Civic Education**

Ms Kate Bapela, Chief Communication Officer elaborated on the various types of outreach activities being planned and executed by the IEC, all aiming for sustainability. The IEC works with key stakeholders as they cannot reach all citizens on their own. All activities are research-driven to provide feedback, which guarantees improvement. Further, she explained that the IEC has a good monitoring and evaluation system for all outreach activities.

Continuing, she praised the media as a key stakeholder and its role in promoting democracy in South Africa. Other stakeholders are continuously being redefined, allowing the IEC to widen the scope, thereby increasing deliverables to the people.

Several outreach activities include:

- School Democracy Week
- Issue Tracker
- Find my voting station
- Call Center
- SMS
- Focus groups discussions
- Short Videos targeting youthful population
- Short videos targeting inclusiveness
- Q & A
- FAQ

- Marketing campaign for young people
- Stream on front page of print publication

The IEC also invests in daily e-mails and monthly meetings to ensure all staff are fully aware of activities within which the IEC is involved.

#### **5.4 B. Knowledge Management**

Knowledge Management, sustained as a sector program, is one of the activities committed to an on-going learning process at the level of the South African IEC. Combined with the operation of a very elaborate archiving of documents, it also boasts of a huge Library. It was noted that while public knowledge on electoral activities can be acquired from this important source of information, the library also opens up an opportunity for several short and long term fulfillments. Key amongst these are the advancement of academic researches on electoral democracy and elections, the development of professional papers to various faculties, the conduct of important statistical surveys on elections and baseline data for effective planning, amongst others.

Furthering an assessment of the section, few areas caught the attention of the visiting Liberian delegation:

- The encouragement of academic and professional knowledge sharing programs for learning institutions including schools;
- The Enhancement of institutional support processes through a small scale assistance in both the replication and production of internal documentation rising from divisions and sections of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC);
- The initiation of wider conditions for leisure and other knowledge extension through reading and access to printed materials.

#### **5.5 Information Communication Technology(ICT), Data Center Processes, and Geo-Information Systems (GIS)**

The ICT Presentation was done by the head of the section, Mr. Libisi Maphanga. He was assisted by his Deputy and coordinator of the Geo-Information Systems Unit, Saint James.

As a section under the Corporate Services department, ICT delivers all of the IEC's core processes through the implementation of business application systems to support administrative services,

logistics, voter registration, candidate nomination, election results, etc. The Data Center administers the Voter Roll and other supporting databases. ICT delivers most of the commission's services to the public through its web platforms, that are intuitively interactive and provide information to eligible voters, political parties, stakeholders and the public.

With an elaborate computing environment, ICT developed the below applications to handle specific electoral operations: Voting Station Operations system (**VSO**), Logistics Information System (**LIS**), Electoral Staff System (**ESS**), Outreach Management System (**OMS**), and other inter-connected activities. These systems assist the Commission with various interconnected phases of the electoral process.

The **VSO** system effects the information collection initiative within areas where there are voting stations. This exercise is carried out thru a process of itemizing basic materials available and relevant for operationalizing the voting station. As defined within the South African Electoral context, voting stations are micro-units of area situated within wards. These constitute centers where electoral services are delivered to an aggregated number of registered voters who have been processed using a complex coordination of personal and/or bio-data available on the National Population Register kept by the Department of Home Affairs.

Slightly different from the **VSO**, the **LIS** is another computerized platform which collates all of the broad information assessed across the different voting stations into a comprehensive listing of useful materials that are unavailable within each voting station. This collated list of items becomes the basis for the development of a procurement plan and process for all voting stations.

Another platform called the **ESS** was presented amongst the efficiency delivery tools for the IEC. This system handles the personnel related requirements in line with tracking areas where there are staff needs, either for permanent or temporary placement.

Outreach Management System (**OMS**),

Another glaring observation, is the implementation of Voting Day processes surmounted by heightened cybersecurity overtures, results capturing, auditing and transmission of real-time results that's conveniently displayed at their Results Operations Center, which is setup and managed at a facility outside its headquarters during Presidential and Municipal election year.

**Geo-Information Systems (GIS)**, a unit under ICT provides the visual face of the Commission's data processes through the use of geographic data tools to produce maps displaying information from voter registration weekends, candidate nomination, elections result and also analyze trending areas captured by its mapping.

GIS functions through sub-divisions, some of which deal with the following: Quality assurances, Data base management, theme development, voting stations finding, etc.

The unit produces maps showing various results for elections that include: number of voters in a district, political parties votes accrued per district, number of parliamentary seats won by political parties, voters by gender and age, voters turnout, Civic Education events turnout and location, etc. It also shows the trend of election results and political parties participation, using maps. Other activities delivered by the GIS adapt the compilation of both mapping and other geo-related information. An atlas of these information constitutes a resource which explains key deliverables of the Commission in graphic themes.

## **6.0 Deputy Chief of Mission Meets the Liberian Study Tour Delegation**

The Deputy Head of Mission for the Liberian Embassy in South Africa, Honorable Martin C. A. Karpeh, honored the study tour delegation by paying a visit to the team at the IEC headquarters. The visitation entertained a conversation with the embassy official out of which Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Karpeh made several points highlighting engagements with the South Africans. Some of the experiences and diplomatic notes extended the delegation, amongst others, included the following:

- i. That the Liberian Embassy in South Africa consistently tuned in to the unfolding of the electoral disputes processes for the various elections and by-elections in the country;
- ii. That the complexities of the electoral dispute resolution matrix tend to put emphasis on the need for further training in the fields that improves the quality of electoral disputes adjudication / resolution;
- iii. That the Embassy opens an opportunity and encourages the National Elections Commission of Liberia through the Study Tour delegation, to take advantage of on-going discussions, for assistance to train some of its task-related personnel in the resolution of electoral complaints in South Africa;
- iv. That the Liberian delegation conveys to the appropriate authorities at both the Commission and in government, information about the openness of the South African government to help Liberia mainly in the provision of election support: voter registration equipment and other election-related machinery.

## 7.0 Lessons Learned

- The IEC initiates its procurement processes at least 18 months ahead of an election; this allows adequate time for quality assurances and timely delivery;
- Training manuals used in the different phases are designed into modules with each addressing a special theme in relation to a process. For example, Election act/regulations, voter registration, Election day modules, etc;
- First level of training materials are draft materials to allow inputs into the training tool kit. Inputs from staff members are used to modify the tool kit before the final copy is printed for circulation;
- Electoral Trainings are completed at least five days before an event (Voter Registration, Exhibition, E-Day);
- Informative posters for electoral events are displayed at centers;
- The use of different social media platforms for information-sharing (twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, SMS, etc.);
- Online registration system for political parties and independent candidates;
- Training of Call Center staff in various electoral activities;
- Opening of call center at least 6 – 9 months prior to the conduct of Presidential and Municipal elections;
- Marketing campaign for young and first-time voters, using different styles for each election;
- Civics and electoral democracy education are taught in schools based on a memorandum of understanding signed between the Ministry of Education and the IEC. This program is driven by educators throughout the country;
- Citizens are encouraged to check registration details online;
- Permanent staff of the Commission are coopted to assist with data entry in both municipal and Presidential elections;
- Area Managers (Electoral Supervisors) are issued journals to record happenings in their area of assignment;
- All temporary staff are registered voters;
- Result slips (Record of the Count) from the various polling stations are scanned at the provincial (magisterial) offices during tally and forwarded to Headquarters for audit;
- Validating stamps are polling place specific; and

- All of the IEC's electoral processes are integrated with information communication technology services. In addition to an internal mechanism for sharing work assignment amongst departments and sections, the Commission use of ICT boast of several interfaces with its stakeholders and other service providers, as well as other relevant data driven government institutions.

## 8.0 Recommendations

- That NEC initiates a conversation with appropriate government agencies and other institutions in order to explore existing bilateral relationship in finding a way to enhance 2020 Voter Roll Update by including biometric features
- That NEC endeavors to initiate procurement processes for electoral events as early as possible;
- That Election Day training manuals are developed and produced in modular forms;
- That trainings range from 3 – 5 days and are completed 5 days prior to electoral event for placement and deployment of staff;
- That intensive electoral trainings be provided for all permanent staff;
- That more informative posters demonstrating steps to follow for an electoral event be produced and posted at centers;
- That candidate nomination system be developed as an online portal;
- That NEC maintains its social media platforms and de-brief staff and other stakeholders on electoral processes and events;
- That the Call Center is opened at least one month to an electoral event (VR, Exhibition, Election);
- That CVE messages be designed to target young and first time voters using marketing approach;
- That special posters and various media be used to encourage citizens participate in electoral processes, check registration information on NEC website and access the appropriate sources for redress of electoral issues (if any);
- That NEC engages the Ministry of Education to include Civics and electoral democracy education in its curriculum;
- That more permanent staff of the Commission are coopted to assist in results data entry;
- That Electoral Supervisors are issued journals to record happenings in their areas of assignment;



- That all temporary staff be registered voters;
- That Record of the Count from the various polling stations are scanned at the magisterial offices during tally and forwarded to Headquarters for audit;
- That security features of election validating stamps be enhanced;
- That NEC electoral processes are further integrated with information technology services.

## 9.0 Conclusion

The study tour to South Africa was successful and accorded the Operations Department and Information Technology (IT) Section an opportunity to revisit plans for the upcoming VRU. This gave both the Liberian delegation and the South African Commission the stage to share information about how they deal with technicalities and practicalities of delivering electoral services.

While the Liberian delegation noted the very rich interconnection of legal framework, the administrative structure, the modern information technology system, the well supported program demand of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, it appreciated the openness of that Commission to avail itself to picking up useful lessons associated with the Liberian experience.

The Liberian delegation is convinced that the assistance of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to facilitate the study tour was timely and capacitating ahead of the different electoral activities pending.

For all of these, the delegation and the National Elections Commission of Liberia remains grateful!

## 10.0 Photo Gallery



