



Increasing youth participation throughout the electoral cycle

Entry points for electoral management bodies

Round Table
24–26 November 2015
Pretoria, South Africa

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Introduction

The Round Table on increasing youth participation throughout the electoral cycle and entry points for electoral management bodies (EMBs) took place in Centurion, South Africa, on 24–26 November 2015. The event was arranged by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) in collaboration with the Electoral Commissions Forum of the Southern Africa Development Community countries (ECF-SADC). The Electoral Commission of South Africa hosted the round table.

Levels of youth participation in national and regional representative structures have been low in the region and elections often fail to attract the attention of youth. Many young people exercise power outside of formal electoral processes in situations of social and economic exclusion and difficulty.

Little is done to specifically target young people and build their confidence in formal democratic electoral systems as a vehicle for political renewal. Even though there are varied reasons for the low levels of participation by young people, EMBs have a crucial role to play in advancing the inclusion of youth in electoral processes and in the structures of political representation (elected political structures).

In response to the complexities embodied in youth inclusion in the democratic process, International IDEA has initiated a process for documenting the challenges and practices directed at youth inclusion in politics and within electoral processes from across the continent. The round table was arranged as part of this process with the overall aim of sharing experiences and using the learning that arises from these as a basis for establishing deeper commitment to implementable youth inclusion strategies and activities for the future.

The specific objective of the round table was therefore to identify entry points for EMBs as they seek to shape their approaches to youth inclusion. As a lead up to this overall objective, the aims of the dialogue were to:

- Facilitate information exchange on how EMBs promote youth participation throughout the electoral cycle, including innovative ideas for such engagement;
- Present and discuss case studies developed in relation to International IDEA's 'Removing Barriers to Youth Participation: EMB Entry Points' initiative; and
- Document experiences and innovative approaches already applied, while also identifying additional best practices and lessons learned from EMBs working in the SADC region to promote youth participation.

As part of the dialogue process, attention was also focused on issues that cut across all elements related to the participation of youth in the different stages and aspects of the

electoral cycle. These include strategies to encourage the participation of young women, addressing youth participation in elections-related violence and the engagement of young people using technology and related social media. To enhance dialogue and secure full participation from participants, the round table was facilitated by Sibongile Zimemo.

This report provides a summary of the inputs made and discussions by participants (see Annex A). The report broadly follows the structure of the programme and the objectives articulated in the Concept Note (see Annex B). The report captures, in summary form, the substance of the inputs by the presenters and participants. It is not a verbatim account of the round table. A full list of participants is also included.

Opening session

The opening session was moderated by Dr Nomsa Masuku, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer of the Electoral Commission of South Africa. Dr Masuku expressed a word of welcome and introduced the speakers for the opening sessions. As part of the session, all participants were given an opportunity to introduce themselves.

Justice Mahapela Lehohla, Chairperson, ECF SADC Executive Committee

Justice Lehohla began his input by thanking the Electoral Commission of South Africa for hosting the event and by welcoming all the participants from EMBs and civil society organizations. He further thanked International IDEA for the support, effort and leadership provided in arranging the event. He acknowledged the commissioners and senior representatives from EMBs who were in attendance.

Justice Lehohla noted that the event was timely and arises from a concern expressed about the issue of youth participation in elections and the reality that youth make up 60 per cent of Africa's population, and hence require added attention to ensure that they participate and remain confident in electoral processes. He noted the call among young people for their inclusion in all deliberations that affect them: 'about us, with us'.

To capture the importance accorded to youth on the continent, Justice Lehohla made reference to the African Youth Charter and in particular its provisions relating to youth participation in democratic processes. He noted that the integration of young people into mainstream politics is important, as historically young people have demonstrated dynamism and an ability to lead societies and effect changes that are beneficial to all.

To encourage future-oriented reflections, Justice Lehohla postulated that the round table needed to reflect on participation at all stages of the electoral cycle. He emphasized that it was particularly important for there to be legal frameworks that encourage participation and to ensure that the youth are engaged with to secure their voices within elected representative structures. He concluded by re-emphasizing that youth inclusion was a substantial imperative as young people can be central to shaping more productive and functional societies.

Terry Tselane: Vice Chairperson, Electoral Commission of South Africa

Terry Tselane began by expressing a warm welcome to all participants to the headquarters of the Electoral Commission of South Africa. He noted that the event was timely as it comes in the wake of the #FeesMustFall efforts of young people in South Africa. This

experience has demonstrated that youth are not apathetic and have a strong interest in issues that relate to their own futures. He expressed concern however that youth participation in elections across the region remains low, at an estimated 40 per cent.

Tselane detailed some of the statistics on levels of participation in South Africa. He noted that only 34 per cent of those young people who were eligible to vote in the most recent elections participated. He also noted that very few young people stood as candidates within political parties. To understand this, the Electoral Commission of South Africa conducted a survey and the overall impression was that young people are disillusioned and do not see a reason why they should participate.

In conclusion, Tselane emphasized the importance of recognizing that efforts to encourage youth participation take place in the context of shaping optimal strategies. As part of such efforts, he urged a focus on securing participation at all stages of the electoral cycle and enhancing young people's confidence in the system as part of encouraging responsible actions from them. He also emphasized the importance of consulting and involving youth in all decision-making processes: 'Nothing about us without us'.

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi: Regional Director, International IDEA

Professor Olukoshi thanked the commissioners and all the other participants for their presence and commended the Electoral Commission of South Africa for hosting the event. He noted that the event had come at an opportune moment as the ECF SADC and International IDEA had just signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the context of the ECF SADC Annual General Conference in Luanda in August 2015. The Memorandum paves the way for further collaboration on elections-related issues in the region, which this round table is an example of.

Professor Olukoshi indicated that even though youth participation and inclusion is a global issue, there are unique features in Africa that require greater responsiveness and urgency. Among these is the reality that over 60 per cent of the population of Africa is made up young people, and many young people will be living in urban centres and in mega-cities in the next two decades. He noted that the realities in Africa are vastly different to other regions and hence require specific and tailored responses.

Professor Olukoshi outlined how the wider reality of young people relates to the overall sense of exclusion that many feel, which goes beyond issues of education and citizenship. Although matters of exclusion are broad, elements of the dialogue must address issues related to violence and the levels of confidence people have in elections. In conclusion, Professor Olukoshi indicated that there are no short cuts, and elections are often the only channel for effecting policy change in a society. He therefore encouraged deliberations on the disaffection that youth feel and related approaches to enhancing inclusion in order to build strategies that are relevant for the future.

Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes

This session focused on providing a framework for the more detailed case-based engagements to follow. It served to identify the areas of concern and the responses that can be used to ensure that strategic actions cover all elements of the electoral cycle. Guiding presentations were made by Rushdi Nackerdien, Regional Director for Africa of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and Mette Bakken: Programme Officer, International IDEA.

Rushdi Nackerdien: Regional Director for Africa, IFES

Rushdi Nackerdien began his input by broadly outlining IFES' interest in the area and its experiences across the globe with elections and youth participation. He summarized the challenges facing young people as they transit from passivity to activism as part of their maturation to adulthood. He noted that there are varied definitions of 'youth' with regard to age and concluded that this a context-specific issue.

As a demonstration of varied context, Nackerdien captured some of the realities of youth in Africa. These include the fact that over 65 per cent of the African population is under 35-years old and over 60 per cent is located in urban centres. He outlined that many young people are unemployed, have access to communications technology and often feel disconnected from the transition to multiparty democracy. He noted that levels of trust in political processes are dwindling due to lack of awareness and the issue of corruption among leaders, which makes youth believe that their vote will not make any difference. Many young people feel marginalized and hence could be easily radicalized.

Drawing further on IFES research, Nackerdien noted some positive elements, such as levels of education, which can be built on in the construction of youth participation strategies. He noted that a key approach would be to engage with youth in civic education as early as possible and to sustain participation over a number of electoral periods. He reiterated that the first three elections after eligibility to vote are crucial in order to establish a voting habit among young people. He also emphasized that quality education is needed as well-informed youth tend to be more supportive of democracy.

Nackerdien expressed the view that a comprehensive approach is needed, which should ideally include responding to different youth segments, deepening interactivity for wider community participation and encouragement of youth involvement in policy

formulation. He also suggested that delegates establish a focal point in their organizations and have staff dedicated to youth programmes. In concluding, Nackerdien stressed the importance of going beyond elections as an event, towards strategies that build confidence in the democratic process and in EMBs.

Mette Bakken: Programme Officer, International IDEA

Mette Bakken outlined the urgency of youth engagement in electoral processes on the basis of more recent experience where young people have resorted to protest and often violent action to express political dissatisfaction. She noted that in the long term, it will be essential to build the confidence of young people in governance systems and in particular in elections as a vehicle for change.

Ms Bakken noted that to be effective, a multifaceted approach is required that covers all areas of the electoral cycle. Action activities are also needed in the pre- and post-elections period as part of a longer-term continuing strategy. Three key areas for youth engagement are considering youth as voters, as electoral contestants and as election managers. In addition to active participation as voters on election day, there is a need to include actions that will encourage young people to enter the political space and be represented in political parties and hence in legislative structures.

Political parties are especially well placed to encourage the participation of young people. EMBs must also consider youth in their internal organizational strategy and allow young people to train for and serve in managerial positions. She highlighted the difficulty of accessing youth who work or study outside the country and the importance of the manner in which EMBs communicate with youth. Communication is particularly important, and it is crucial for EMBs to find new channels and innovative tools for engagement and disseminating information.

As a step towards encouraging further reflection on strategies, Bakken detailed some of the essential elements for encouraging youth participation. These include, among other things, changes in legislation to affirm representation; differential registration processes; specific and targeted resources for youth participation, voter education and the participation of youth as observers; and monitoring mechanisms to secure the implementation of strategies.

In conclusion, Bakken outlined some of the challenges that young people face, as well as the specific issues that confront young women. She noted that working with political parties to encourage active youth participation will be an important element for the future. She encouraged EMBs to consider youth engagement a priority rather than just an 'add-on', and noted that there are no easy approaches, short cuts or quick wins to achieving positive results.

Dithapelo Keorapetse, MP, Republic of Botswana

Dithapelo Keorapetse's input focused on his own experiences as a young elected representative in the Parliament of Botswana. He outlined some of the challenges of perception that he faced as he sought to enter the political space, some of the difficulties he encountered during his election campaign and some of the general issues that would

confront young people as they seek to engage formally in electoral politics.

Keorapetse noted that during his initial period of campaigning it was a challenge to mobilize funding as many considered him too young and inexperienced to enter politics. He mobilized resources from friends and leveraged these to attract further resources. He noted that many older people in politics struggled to accept him as a candidate and often react to him on the basis of age and not on the substance of issues.

Drawing from experience, Keorapetse outlined some lessons for the future. These included changing electoral law to encourage younger people to register and engage, building the confidence of young people through active training in electoral politics, working on strategies to enhance access to media and the use of social media for campaigns. He also mentioned that the electoral system in Botswana (first-past-the-post) has a negative impact on participation by youth.

In conclusion, he urged EMBs to find ways to build youth inclusion by changing the voter registration system so that young people do not have to overcome the hurdle repeatedly, as this is often a disincentive for their participation. He also encouraged EMBs to employ young people as part of their strategies for inclusion.

Discussion

- Evidence suggests that when civic education is introduced at a young age, people are more likely to participate in elections. The definition of who fits the youth category will vary across countries and probably be shaped by specific contextual realities.
- The biggest challenge for young people entering politics is the mobilization of resources. Building confidence takes time and requires engagement with others in a respectful manner. It is therefore strategic to build credibility by avoiding practices that insult older people during campaigns. Sourcing funds for political campaigns is likely to be a continuing challenge for young people.
- There is a need to think about the different categories of youth as strategies are established. Some young people can be engaged with through social media, but youth who have no access to such media will require more traditional forms of engagement through other media. It is important to establish strategic alliances with youth organizations to build a wider democracy and electoral culture.
- In taking forward youth-targeted strategies, the biggest challenge for EMBs is to secure the required resources and capacity. In the absence of all the required resources, attention should be focused on leveraging in other initiatives and organizations to assist with implementation and with engaging young people. Donor funds are often only focused on elections as an event, which creates challenges for planning and for longer-term engagement.
- It is important to get young people to participate early so that they appreciate the importance of engaging in a responsible and ethical manner. There are many temptations in politics and it is important to maintain an ethical but friendly disposition when confronted with such challenges.

- Universities and similar centres of higher education are useful for encouraging deeper participation. Elections at these institutions for student structures are a very important learning ground for politics. In addition, they are important as centres for registration and civic education. Students can also serve as ‘youth elections ambassadors’.
- Young people are easily disaffected by elections, and surveys often indicate that they do not participate because they do not see the value. This reality requires constant engagement with young people in places that they frequent and through mediums that they understand. This includes using sporting and related events and the use of music and other forms of entertainment.

Entry Points to Promote Youth Participation: Experiences from SADC

This session drew on the experiences of a selection of southern African countries and their efforts to promote youth participation. Formal inputs were made on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Namibia. In each case, the presenters sought to capture the challenges and possibilities of interventions on youth participation. Experiences from other SADC countries were also shared during the discussion.

Jean Baptiste Ndundu, Commissioner, Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Jean Baptiste Ndundu focused his presentation on his experience of being appointed commissioner responsible for youth, gender and disability issues. He noted that his appointment was against a backdrop where young people's participation was often limited to violent confrontation. He outlined that the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was coming out of a difficult period and is still subject to a great deal of confrontation around elections and the legitimacy of the electoral process.

Ndundu indicated the difficult social context for young people. The approach in the DRC has been to ensure that youth are part of the consultation process on the election process itself and on their participation in politics. To this end, the EMB initiated a structure and related forum for the active participation of young people through various youth organizations.

Given the difficult history of youth involvement in elections, the initial focus of the established structures was on developing the required frameworks for encouraging youth participation and building their confidence in electoral processes. He pointed out that the integrity and credibility of the EMB depend on youth participation. In concluding his presentation, Ndundu outlined some of the challenges that the EMB continues to face when it comes to youth participation. Of particular importance is the difficulty associated with the registration process, which takes place before elections. According to Ndundu the current system, as legally enshrined, serves to exclude many young people who turn 18 just before elections. As a step forward, there are efforts under way to ratify provisions related to registration in the timeframe before the next election cycle.

Rodrigues Timba, Commissioner, Comissao Nacional de Eleicoes, Republic of Mozambique

Rodrigues Timba began his presentation by indicating that matters of youth involvement in society have emerged as a priority in Mozambique and are hence reflected in the work of all government departments. At the macro-level, the Government of Mozambique has established a National Youth Council as a vehicle for consultation and ongoing engagement with young people and their organizations.

Timba outlined that the matter of youth involvement also featured in national parliaments and in local structures of representation. In addition, Mozambique has created a youth parliament for the participation of young people. An element of success in Mozambique is the fact that political parties have youth organizations and these are active in mobilizing young people. In addition, efforts are made to encourage young people to participate in administrative bodies so that they develop the required values associated with electoral democracy.

At the level of the EMB, Timba indicated that substantive attention is focused on ensuring youth participation at all stages of the electoral cycle. In addition to civil education efforts, young people are involved in observing elections and participate actively in political campaigns. The EMB has encouraged participation through relevant media and the use of theatre productions. By way of conclusion, Timba emphasized the importance of transparency in the EMB as a basis for ensuring that there is no contestation over election results or any form of conflict.

Masego Ndlovu Kgalemang, Principal Information Education Officer, Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana

Masego Ndlovu began her input by indicating that Botswana has made a lot of progress in recent years with its efforts to encourage youth participation. The recent progress arose because the EMB developed a targeted strategy to facilitate youth participation after an analysis of voter apathy in 2002. The study demonstrated that young people were not being reached through traditional methods of communication and hence more targeted efforts were required.

Ms Ndlovu outlined the broad approach the EMB took to encouraging young people to participate. Central to its strategy were initiatives focused on capturing young people through entertainment or edutainment, as well as targeted educational interventions. In addition to voter education programmes in schools, efforts were made to establish Democracy Youth Clubs, which incorporate debating competitions. The EMB has also established a Youth Ambassador programme, which has proved effective at mobilizing and motivating young people. She also mentioned an initiative on welcoming new voters.

In outlining more recent experience, Ndlovu outlined some of the challenges young people identified, such as the long queues they faced during elections. To this end, efforts were made to facilitate smoother flow. A helpdesk was established during the 2014 elections, managed by youth, where the name of the voter was checked against the voters' roll and the voter informed of the page number before proceeding to vote.

In conclusion, she noted that the inclusion of youth in Botswana will have to be an ongoing process as participation levels are still less than optimal. In addition, budgets for targeted efforts that focus on young people are limited and it is often difficult for the EMB to fully engage young people in a sustainable way. It was also noted that political parties do not play an active role in encouraging young people to participate.

Dimpho Motsamai, Elections Consultant, Experience of the Election Management Body in the Republic of Namibia

Dimpho Motsamai introduced her presentation by indicating that she had drafted a case study on Namibia on the basis of interviews and interactions with the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN). The ECN established its strategy on the basis of a study conducted in 2012, which identified that the ECNs communication tools were not attracting younger people and that many did not see any value in voting.

In expressing the level of the challenge facing the ECN, Motsamai outlined some of the wider challenges that face young people in Namibia. These include high levels of unemployment and a general dissatisfaction with existing economic realities, which include perceptions of widespread maladministration and abuse of power. In response to these challenges, Namibia has established a national Youth Development Strategy. In 2012 the EMB initiated a number of youth activities to encourage participation and restore confidence among young people, which included roadshows and trade fairs. Another challenge for the EMB is maintaining a social media (Twitter and Facebook) profile. On the issue of technology, she noted that one positive element was the introduction of electronic voting, which has helped to reduce queues and boost voter turnout.

Motsami broadly outlined some initiatives by the EMB, such as a targeted voter registration campaign to increase the number of young people on the voter register before elections. In addition, the EMB recruited young people to work as Youth Ambassadors and promote the active engagement of young people in elections. A number of traditional media and related social media initiatives were also established. Of particular value were the info-graphics used to promote voting among young people.

Motsami concluded by outlining some of the challenges that still confront the EMB in Namibia: the absence of efforts to include youth representatives in political structures, the limited resources devoted to youth inclusion and issues pertaining to culture, and the limited internal EMB capacity on youth issues. She concluded by indicating that future efforts will need to establish strategies that cut across all stages in the electoral cycle.

Discussion

- The media is often a critical player in initiatives directed at enhancing youth participation. It is essential to have workshops with the media and lead them in efforts to deepen communication. This requires a proactive approach in order to avoid miscommunication and incorrect information featuring in the media space. The EMB should own the communication platform through practical engagement.

- There has to be recognition that some young people have totally lost interest in politics and its value for the future. Many are disaffected and it is very difficult for the EMB to resolve this matter on its own. Many of the reasons are beyond the mandate and capacity of the EMB. It will remain important to engage with all youth to encourage them to take responsibility for shaping their own futures no matter what the reasons for their disaffection.
- As we think about youth, it is important not to lose sight of helping people with disabilities. There are many young people with disabilities. Among the strategies identified are the use of brail for the blind and ensuring that registration and voting centres are accessible. The DRC mentioned that its electoral calendar is disseminated in braille.
- Young people often do not want to be categorized but want people to engage with them openly and respect their view that they are adults in the voting process.
- To facilitate higher levels of participation it is important to consider strategies that limit the number of times people have to register and make it easier for people to participate in elections. New technologies can assist with this process and the population register could be used to secure the registration of all the people.
- We should consider the possibility of establishing quotas for youth participation in representative structures. Quotas could entail reserved seats for youth in parliament or laws establishing the way in which youth must be included on party candidate lists. Alternatively, political parties could be encouraged to establish youth quota measures in their internal systems and structures.
- There are limited resources for youth participation in politics. With limited additional resources, it is often difficult for EMBs to engage in initiatives to encourage participation.
- The experience in Malawi and Zanzibar highlight the importance of securing funding to support the participation of young people. We have to be creative in securing funding and using partnerships and other modalities to encourage youth participation. Political parties often do not encourage young people and youth cannot mobilize campaign funding very easily.

Entry Points for Promoting Youth Participation: Experiences from Outside of SADC

This session featured non-SADC countries that have experienced positive results from their efforts to deepen youth participation. Formal inputs were made on the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of Haiti and the Republic of Cape Verde. The presenters sought to capture positive interventions and opportunities with respect to youth participation.

Mani Kumar Ghalay, Senior Planning Officer, Electoral Commission of Bhutan

Mani Kumar Ghalay began by explaining the location and size of Bhutan. He noted that it is relatively small compared to many African countries, but nonetheless had some positive experience that might prove useful for other countries. He outlined that the general orientation in Bhutan is that it is a learning democracy and constantly looking for ways to improve the level of participation. He indicated that there are only a few political parties in Bhutan, campaign financing is regulated and the state provides funding to political parties. This strategy makes it easier for younger people to enter politics, as funding is provided.

Ghalay indicated that the situation for young people has evolved over time, as there was a recognition that their voices are often hidden. To overcome this, the EMB engaged in a programme to deliberately target young people. A key element of this strategy was targeting children in schools to build appreciation of democratic practice and elections, and establish democracy clubs. Bhutan has established a 'children's parliament' and actively focused communications on younger people, as part of 'democracy day' celebrations and in an effort to build young people's sense of importance in society. Galay concluded that investing in young people is an investment in the future.

Karl M. A. Jean-Louis, Executive Director, L'observatoire citoyen de l'action des pouvoirs publics (OCAPH)

Karl Jean-Louis combined his input on the experiences of his civil society-based organization with issues around the mobilization of young people in electoral processes.

He noted that voter turnout is low in Haiti, and that many younger people no longer believe in the system or in the value of voting. The organization embarked on some research to engage with young people and understand the reasons for non-participation. A key approach used in the research process was ‘crowd sourcing’.

In response to the challenges identified through research and engagement with other non-governmental organizations, Jean-Louis indicated that his organization started to work with young people to identify how their aspirations can be incorporated into the political space. A key strategy was to establish a Youth Manifesto that outlined their priorities and concerns. The young people then engaged with Jean-Louis and the political parties to assess their responses to the manifesto. Jean-Louis concluded by indicating that participation has improved and young people are monitoring the commitments made on their priorities, but challenges remain as the resources available to target towards young people are limited.

Maria do Rosario Lopes Gonçalves, President, Electoral Commission of Cape Verde

Gonçalves began her presentation by expressing appreciation for the invitation and the opportunity to interact and learn from SADC countries. She noted that Cape Verde is preparing for elections in 2016 and that planning for this is already under way. She indicated that her country has come a long way since the introduction of multiparty democracy and now has regular elections that are held in a transparent manner.

Gonçalves explained that despite the success of elections, levels of youth participation are low and a concern for the EMB and the country as a whole. She noted that it was not easy to understand the reasons for the lack of participation. After some reflection it was noted that many young people do not participate because registration is often not automatic. She indicated that the EMB realizes that the manner in which it operates and elections are managed is not necessarily attractive to young people.

The EMB established a targeted project to respond to the challenges facing young people, which received some funding from donors. This allowed it to increase its advocacy with young people and develop materials to help youth understand the role of the EMB. The approach in Cape Verde was to target young people in schools and other learning institutions. Young people were recruited to spread the message throughout the country. Gonçalves concluded that this is a learning journey for the EMB and it continues to make adjustments for further engagement with youth.

Discussion

- The idea of having a youth manifesto that incorporates the priorities of young people is excellent as it helps them engage with political parties on their programmes. The strategy of monitoring delivery on youth programmes also helps to build trust among the youth—as has also been the experience in Nigeria.
- The idea of campaign finances being provided by the state is a good one and can be effective in encouraging younger people to enter the political space. This is a

complex issue and also related to transparency of party funding. Financing young people could be effective at securing their representation in elected structures. Political parties also need to be proactive in incorporating young people into their initiatives.

- One of the bigger challenges in politics is that political parties often remain closed to the younger generation or become family organizations, and hence exclude others who may have the potential to provide leadership. In Bhutan there is a retirement age for politicians and this helps to secure participation from a new generation.
- Young people often become disillusioned with politics and do not see any reason to participate. In part, this can be explained by the lack of transparency and failures in the political system. Experience shows that trust takes time to build (Malawi), and that EMBs have to remain committed and continue their efforts to build the credibility of elections as a basis for enhancing youth confidence.

Engaging With Youth: Using Technologies and Social Media

This session focused on the uses around and challenges associated with communication technologies and related media for deepening the participation of young people.

Shana Kaiser, Programme Manager, International IDEA Tunisia

Shana Kaiser began with a quick analysis of the use of social media by EMBs in the SADC region. She noted that while many use Facebook and related media, the platforms have not been fully utilized. There is only limited active engagement and there are few responses to comments made by those who have access to these media. She emphasized that the social part of social media is not being focused on effectively.

In articulating the opportunities embodied in social media, Kaiser showed how the various forms of social media are widely used globally as they provide a platform for open discussion and allow organizations to reach a wider community of individuals—especially women. However, to be effective there needs to be more engagement and better communication. She emphasized the importance of immediate responses, an understanding tone in the engagement, and for interactions to be active at all times.

In presenting some ideas for the future, Kaiser noted that in Canada social platforms are actively used at all stages of the electoral cycle by organizations separate from the elections authority. Debates and other live discussions are organized during ‘democracy week’, and these provide positive insights into the concerns and perspectives of young people. She concluded by encouraging EMBs to consider using more diverse forms of media, including online quizzes, short films and interactive games as part of efforts to encourage youth participation.

Nomsa Masuku, Deputy Chief Election Officer, Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa

Nomsa Masuku began her input by outlining the challenges facing encouraging youth participation in South Africa. In the past, the focus of the EMB had been on traditional forms of media but in 2014 the EMB also focused on social media, hiring young people to ensure a full-time online presence on Facebook, twitter and a local interactive platform called ‘Mxit’.

Masuku noted that the social media approach has resulted in some changes in the EMB. In the past the focus was on traditional media and the use of call centres to respond to public enquiries. This has shifted as the EMB now appoints agents to its organization and has invested heavily in ensuring that it keeps track and responds to issues raised on the Internet. She noted that the challenge remains to spread capacity to the provinces, and there are new challenges such as the use of 'selfies' in voting booths, which is illegal in South Africa.

In conclusion, Masuku noted that the EMB often has to respond to incorrect information online and it is difficult to track those who spread false information. She pointed out that the use of social media has spread across the whole organization and that even commissioners engage with such media on a day-to-day basis.

Samson Itodo, Head of Research, Policy & Advocacy, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA)

Samson Itodo began his input by capturing the complexities of managing elections in Nigeria. He noted that there has been a recent shift to smart card technology, but the size of the country, relative to the available capacities within the EMBs at the Federal and State levels, make it difficult to ensure easily manageable and smooth running elections. Before the most recent elections, a decision was made to use young people who were part of the National Youth Corp as additional officers at polling booths. This action dramatically improved the election process and served to deepen the levels of youth interest in the elections. He noted however that members of the Youth Corps were unable to vote on Election Day, and this would have to be a matter for the future as they were effectively disenfranchised.

Itodo noted that the history of youth involvement in elections has been a difficult one in Nigeria as young people were often only mobilized during elections, and many became disillusioned by the economic realities they faced. He noted however that efforts have been put in place to attract young people, and technologies allow for deeper and wider interaction with young people. The EMB in Nigeria has used technology very effectively as many people have access to it. Video productions were put online and the EMB has a good online presence.

In detailing the use of social media, Itodo indicated that it has been substantial during elections. The EMB in Nigeria established a situation room to track online communications with young people, and responded to communications on a continual basis. This proved effective in monitoring problems that occurred and responding to false information and speculation on results at polling stations. In addition, all the larger political parties established situation rooms to track information through social media and communicate with the electorate. In conclusion, he indicated that the success of the social media presence will have to be evaluated, and that given low rates of actual penetration, traditional media will remain relevant.

Discussion

- It is important to consider strategies for sustaining social media interactions on elections before and after the event itself. Engagement across all parts of the electoral cycle can help to sustain the interest of young people. It has proved more sustainable to employ in-house social media experts and sustain this for ongoing communication.
- It should be understood that speedy communication might not always be a good thing. In some situations political communication on election day is not allowed as this would contradict laws on campaigning on election day.
- It is sometimes difficult to keep track of data flows and the use of social media. It is sometimes used to manipulate people's perspectives, and hence there is a need to regulate and monitor use by political parties.
- We have to appreciate that the levels of penetration of social media are not high in all areas. There is still a need to use traditional media as many young people, especially in rural areas, do not have access to social media and therefore often feel left out of electoral processes.
- Even as EMBs need to be proactive in communication in order to take the lead in the process and keep the media informed, it is also necessary to develop investigative capacities in situations where people spread false information through social media.

Engaging With Youth: Preventing or Mitigating Election-Related Violence

This session focused on the complex issues around the involvement of youth in elections-related violence and the strategies that can be used to overcome such challenges. Experiences were shared from Lesotho, Madagascar and Kenya. In each case, presenters provided some historical detail. This has not been included as the focus of the summary is on the positive steps taken to mitigate violence and youth involvement.

Tsepo Monethi, Former Member of Parliament, Lesotho

Tsepo Monethi's input began with a detailed overview of the historical challenges that confronted political parties in Lesotho and the crises that often led to violence. He noted that the political process is highly complex and that the many instances of difficulties around elections were the results of actions that were not transparent and that served to undermine the confidence people had in elections. He further argued that the military was often a factor in shaping election outcomes when there were disputes. State institutions, including the judiciary, often did not respond in a neutral way to situations of difficulty. He indicated, without elaborating further, that young people were often used in ways that were inappropriate in the context of free and fair electoral procedures.

To further emphasize the difficult political realities in Lesotho, Monethi indicated that it should be understood that violence sometimes erupts when there is deep frustration in society, for example with voter registration, and where other forms of mediated interventions have failed to justly resolve crisis situations. He asserted that credible elections and the separation of powers are issues that must be resolved in order to avoid situations of frustration and therefore conflict.

Even as he expressed frustration with the EMB in Lesotho, Monethi noted that actions have been taken to work with the youth in the country. In the past youth were not really engaged with, but many recognized that they are important and often will engage in violence when faced with frustrating electoral processes. He indicated that the EMB has been running workshops with the youth wings of political parties; and has also engaged the youth through sporting and related events, and initiated community service activities in rural areas. He concluded by indicating that some of the young people who participated in the initial workshops have entered politics as full members of political parties.

Mr Sambo CENI-T Madagascar

Sambo's presentation included a detailed account of the role of young people in politics in Madagascar. He noted that youth were often at the forefront of revolutionary action, and have in the past been involved in violent activities in the country. Young people were often used by all political parties to act against their opponents and were often mobilized to form militias on ethnic or political grounds. In the same way that young people have often been involved in violence they are often also victims of violent reactions by political groupings and others.

In view of the complex history of youth violence in Madagascar, Sambo noted that the initial strategy in the country was to build trust among young people and establish violence prevention mechanisms. Key to this approach to establishing peace was developing a network of mediation experts across the country to prevent conflict. With UNDP support, approaches and models were established to facilitate dialogue and build trust.

In concluding his presentation, Sambo indicated that efforts were also focused on building capacity in different organizations and securing their participation as part of a collective approach to establishing a non-violent environment. One overarching consequence of the efforts was that the 2014 elections were widely praised. He noted however that observers raised the issue of the low educational levels of voting officers and the challenge of accessing many polling stations.

Rasi Ndago Masudi, Director of Voting Education & Partnerships, Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission of Kenya

Rasi Ndago Masudi outlined the context of violence during and after the 2007 elections. He noted that Kenyans had been very disturbed by the violence and hence worked to establish a national accord that gave rise to the new Constitution. Of particular importance was the inclusion of a Bill of Rights and related constitutional measures, including regional government, to prevent the ethnic violence often associated with national elections.

Ndago Masudi discussed some of the challenges that confront the EMB, such as the fact that it has to manage six different ballots on voting day. Even though there was no real violence during the 2013 elections, he noted that unemployment and related economic challenges left young people susceptible to being mobilized for violent political purposes.

In conclusion, Ndago Masudi indicated that the government of Kenya has recognized the challenges facing young people in society. To this end, there are strategies in place to accommodate young people in the economy and in politics. These include preferential procurement practices for young people and the inclusion of youth in parliament. In addition, the police have been trained to manage election hotspots and to engage with youth in much more appropriate ways.

Discussion

As the discussion on this session extended over two days, many of the participants took the opportunity to present issues that were not covered during their formal presentations.

- The situation in Lesotho remains complex and will require reform initiatives over the long-term. Efforts have unfolded to facilitate greater coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders and political parties. Political parties are also starting to engage better all round, and political and civil education curriculums on inclusion have been developed in schools. Lesotho has also introduced a Youth Ambassador programme, better communication through schools and been running road shows (your vote your power) for and with young people. Some of this has worked, but this does not necessarily resolve the larger political challenges in the country and politics remains highly fractured.
- Prior planning and effective risk management have proved highly effective in the case of Mozambique. The EMB looks at all areas of the electoral cycle and has introduced initiatives to ensure that young people are involved at all stages and feel part of the overall process. Initiatives have also been established to ensure wider communication with young people.
- The experience of Mauritius shows that the most important element in reducing violence or its potential is the credibility of the EMB. If people have confidence in the EMB they will respect the results of elections. Attention should always be focused on ensuring that the elections are credible and that no mistakes are made so that people—including young people—feel confident in the institution. Training people, including young people, in all aspects of elections can go a long way to encouraging participation.
- Cape Verde established an initiative to encourage wider youth participation. This included initiating a competition to design a slogan for the elections. Many young people participated, and this creates pride in the elections for many. The EMB has opened its doors to young people and been proactive in the inclusion of women. The country now has a woman candidate for president and she is only 38-years old. It must be appreciated that this process takes time and requires ongoing engagement.
- In the DRC emphasis was also placed on building mediation capacity across the country. This was deemed important to prevent conflict and to encourage the participation of young people in elections. A commission on integrity and mediation has been established.
- As part of its strategies to involve youth, Kenya has focused attention on using young people's events to popularize elections and encourage active participation. This has been done at sporting events and through the use of entertainment during youth events. The EMB has also worked with people who have influence across society, including church leaders and others, to spread a positive message.

Guidelines for electoral management body engagement

This session of the round table was directed at more detailed engagement, and the strategies and activities that could be initiated to enhance and deepen youth participation in electoral processes. Four groups were established for detailed discussion on the five priority strategies that could be introduced, the indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and the 10 priority activities that could be initiated. Discussion groups were encouraged to shape interventions across all areas of the electoral cycle. Each group completed a template and presented these to the round table.

Group session reports

Annex A broadly captures the inputs from the four groups. The language used has been adjusted to facilitate engagement with the report. The substance however remains the same as presented by each of the groups. Since most of the groups did not include indicators, these are not reflected in the table.

Groups were as follows:

- Group One: Every
- Group Two: Vote
- Group Three: Must
- Group Four: Count

Each group provided a written report of their deliberations and a verbal report of the discussion. The table summarises these inputs as presented. These were only edited to ensure that they are understandable to those who did not participate in the round table.

Priority areas for implementation

Given the limited time available, it was not possible for the round table to have a discussion to agree on the strategic priorities and activities as a collective. The responsibility for extracting these was allocated to the Rapporteur of the round table. It was agreed that the priority list would be distributed to participants for their comments and finalization for the ECF-SADC with a view to these being subject to a review and discussion of progress in future engagements on the issue of youth and elections.

The priority areas for strategic interventions and the activities listed below are based on a detailed analysis of the common areas in each of the group presentations. To ensure that these are focused on the top five strategic priorities listed, given the range of activities that were identified, only the most relevant and often repeated activities are listed. In each strategic area two targeted activities are identified from Annex A. Language has been adjusted to separate goal formulation from activities. These were often conflated in the report-back sessions.

Strategic Goals for Enhancing Youth Participation	Innovative Activities to Promote Youth Participation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people in the region are confident about electoral processes and have a sense of political inclusion. 2. The youth are aware of electoral processes and participate actively to secure the credibility of elections. 3. There is wider societal awareness of youth participation in elections and the democratic space. 4. EMBs in the region have the capacity and resources to engage in all activities directed at enhancing youth participation. 5. The SADC region stands as a positive example of peaceful youth participation in elections and democracy. 	<p>ACTIVITIES BY EMBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in awareness activities to facilitate youth inclusion in the political space. • Work with youth groups, political parties and related institutions to secure youth representation in politics. • Develop and implement training programmes to target youth in elections. • Establish internships for young people and other volunteer initiatives around elections management. • Build the required information infrastructure for social networking and for the wider reach of young people. • Establish monitoring approaches for youth participation in electoral processes <p>ACTIVITIES BY ECF SADC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a reporting mechanism to track EMB engagement across the region • Establish a regional knowledge hub for the exchange of materials and initiatives on youth participation. • Mobilize resources for more sustained regional exchange efforts between EMBs. • Build awareness of youth concerns about participation in the democratic process.

Summary and Closing Session

During this session a broad summary overview was provided of some of the key issues and perspectives that emerged during the round table. Closing remarks were made by Maria do Rosario Lopes, President of the Electoral Commission of Cape Verde and J.L Kazembe, ECF SADC Presidency.

Summary of conclusions

The following is a synthesis of some of the broad conclusions, as extracted from the presentations and discussion during the round table. The issues summarized are not the definitive conclusions made in each session, but point towards the broader issues that need to be considered for the inclusion of youth in electoral processes. The summary sought to extract the three key central messages that emerged in each of the core content sessions (as per the round table programme).

Opening Session

This session served to articulate some of the broader issues that needed to be considered during the dialogue.

- Young people have historically demonstrated a capacity to lead and effect change for the betterment of society. Their inclusion in the electoral process and as political representatives is good for the development of countries. Their importance is also affirmed in the African Youth Charter.
- The inclusion of young people in elections and the democratic space is fundamental to building their sense of responsibility to ensure that they act in a positive manner as they make the transition to adulthood.
- Reflection on the future requires that there be substantive engagement with the realities of youth exclusion in the economic space and the imperative that over 60 per cent of the population in Africa is young and rapidly urbanizing.
- As a core part of democratic processes, EMBs must take significant steps to enhance youth participation. EMBs do not operate in a vacuum and ought to collaborate with a variety of state and non-state actors and partners to promote the agenda of credible and inclusive elections.

Session 1

This session served to provide guidance on the terrain and the areas that the round table needed to engage with.

- It is imperative to engage with evidence on what works in the efforts to encourage youth participation and the approaches that would be relevant in a particular national context. This includes how youth are defined as part of the strategy for deeper inclusion.
- The electoral cycle approach allows for reflection on all dimensions where youth inclusion needs to be considered. Of particular importance is having dedicated capacity and earmarked resources to ensure that youth matters feature in the strategies of EMBs. Recruiting young people to EMBs helps this process.
- There was particular emphasis on the issue of educating youth on why they need to vote. This is often more important as they already know how to vote and where to vote. This process would be assisted by having a permanent voters' roll and by ensuring that the legal system is reformed to secure youth participation.
- The journey for a young person entering politics can be complex and fraught with challenges. Youth have the ability to exercise leadership and can benefit from the experiences of younger people who have already entered politics from across the region. Educating the young on campaign funding is particularly important.

Session 2 (A)

This session served to extract some of the key lessons from SADC EMBs on youth inclusion.

- It is extremely important to establish hope and trust by and among young people by engaging with them through existing structures and by establishing (where necessary) consultative bodies.
- Youth inclusion is a matter that should be addressed by all sectors and levels of government and requires a multi-pronged strategy to be put in place.
- The inclusion of youth should be predicated on understanding why they do not participate and on constant and persistent efforts to communicate in ways that young people understand.
- There are no easy fixes to youth inclusion and hence it is essential that the approaches established are sustainable and well-resourced for the long term.

Session 2 (B)

This session served to extract some of the key lessons from non-SADC contexts.

- Campaign financing for young people or measures to facilitate this would go a long way towards securing youth representation in political structures.
- Creative approaches can be established to solicit information from young people

on their inclusion and for the establishment of their perspectives on which youth-specific issues the political system should address.

- Voter registration is a recurrent obstacle to youth participation in elections. Laws and regulations governing voter registration processes should be reassessed and revised with the aim of increasing the number of youth on the voter registers.
- There has to be constant learning and adaptation on communication strategies and approaches for inclusion. These can be shaped to maximize youth participation—about us, with us.

Session 3 (A)

This session served to extract some of the key lessons on the use of technology and social media.

- It is vital that there is dedicated capacity to engage with the media as a basis for ensuring that there is social interaction and a constant and consistent monitoring of the issues and concerns of young people.
- All EMBs should have technology savvy individuals across the organization and should ideally have dedicated young people to work with the systems and engage on a continual basis.
- Communications across media platforms (traditional and new media) provide a highly effective basis for monitoring elections-related challenges and for responding to misinformation as it relates to the management of elections and related areas, such as the presentation of the results of an election.

Session 3 (B)

This session served to extract some of the key lessons on the issue of elections-related violence.

- Young people have historically been engaged in political violence. The capacity to mediate in areas of dispute and to establish approaches that are predicated on dialogue not confrontation are important as they will indirectly promote peaceful youth participation in elections.
- It is effective to use youth events and entertainment to communicate with young people and to shift their thinking away from treating elections as a zero-sum game.
- To secure positive engagement from young people it is important that electoral processes are credible and that young people have confidence in the role and performance of EMBs and the institutions responsible for electoral dispute resolution.
- This summary is a brief characterization of the rich diversity of issues that came out of the round table and hence not an exhaustive treatment of all the issues articulated with passion and conviction by the participants and presenters.

Closing Remarks

As part of the closing session Maria do Rosario Lopes, President of the Electoral Commission of Cape Verde, made some additional remarks on her country's experiences. She noted that youth participation is a process and not a single event. In Cape Verde various strategies, including competitions, have been used to encourage youth participation. Many of these have been positive, but there is always room for improvement. She concluded by expressing her commitment to sharing and her appreciation for the insights from SADC countries and others.

In closing the round table, J. L Kazembe of the ECF SADC Presidency began by thanking all of the organizers, including International IDEA and the IEC of South Africa. She noted that this was the first step in a journey that ECF SADC had proposed some time ago. She urged participants to remain engaged and made a commitment that ECF SADC will follow up on the issues, and that future reflections will be on the progress made on the proposed strategies and activities that emanated from the round table. She thanked all the participants for their time and inputs and wished them well on their journey home.

Annex A. Group reports

This Annex broadly captures the inputs from the four groups. The language used has been adjusted to facilitate engagement with the report. The substance however remains the same as presented by each of the groups. Since most of the groups did not include indicators, these are not reflected in the table.

Groups were as follows:

- Group One: Every
- Group Two: Vote
- Group Three: Must
- Group Four: Count

Each group provided a written report of their deliberations and a verbal report of the discussion. The table summarises these inputs as presented. These were only edited to ensure that they are understandable to those who did not participate in the round table.

Group 1

	STRATEGIC GOALS FOR ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION	INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE INITIATED TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION
EVERY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate ownership of messages by youth and increase the number of voluntary ambassadorships. 2. Meet the need to remain relevant by campaigning throughout the electoral cycle, developing a better advocacy programme and strategies for the EMBs and by seeking maximum participation. 3. Establish greater visibility and more active engagement, develop and align the three (3) mandatory strategies of youth participation, communication and social media by providing both paper and e-learning material and by constantly monitoring youth participation. 4. Widen and balance the geographic footprint of the outreach and the implementation of strategies in previously unreachable or hostile areas by creating and sustaining strategic partnerships with key stakeholders who are influential in youth spaces to ensure inclusivity with great emphasis on PMDs. It is also important to put in place a holistic and unbiased review process. 5. Sustain the monitoring process of youth participation throughout the electoral cycle with zero tolerance of corruption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use prizes and strategies for advertisements and implementation; develop competitions for the design, dissemination and ownership of youth participation messages. • Develop a training programme with incentives for trainers by recruiting more volunteers, youth officials and programme directors, and by making relevant training materials. • Fundraise to put in place the required human resources, data access and equipment to increase access to social media tools and infrastructure. • Dissemination of printed and digital materials in quick and real time through youth organizations, learning institutions and libraries. • Put in place a budget to advocate for and promote through entertainment, ambassadors and material a national voter day celebration and annual road shows from the most urban to the most rural spaces. • Advocate in parliament for quotas for youth representation in government, party lobbying and the judiciary. • Use material, mentoring and exchange programmes, develop candidacy and volunteer programmes across SADC. • Form partnerships with youth councils to expose them to the work of EMBs and to develop educational programmes and training on policies and governance. • Use documentaries and a programme for sharing success stories; adopt a 'be seen on television' approach.

Group 2

	STRATEGIC GOALS FOR ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION	INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE INITIATED TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION
VOTE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the awareness and civic conscientiousness of youth through innovative or issued-based voter and civic education. 2. Improve the capacity of young people to effectively engage with the electoral and political process. 3. Increase the representation of youth in the institutional structures of EMBs to enhance youth participation in policymaking and implementation within EMBs. 4. Promote consistent stakeholder engagement to enhance youth participation the electoral process. 5. Initiate administrative and legal reforms that open the civic and political space for youth, women and people with disabilities. 6. Establish platforms that promote experience sharing, knowledge generation and cross-border collaboration between EMBs and youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop curriculums for voter and civic education, including illustrative advocacy manuals on the electoral process, targeting both formal and informal educational institutions. • Establish periodic social media sessions (conference, photo and video contest and other infographics) on voter education targeting youth. • Develop an EMB youth policy to guide and benchmark EMB engagement with youth. • Issue guidelines, policy briefs, memorandums and advisories that seek to address the legal, political and cultural impediments to youth participation. • Facilitate engagement with youth by organizing periodic round tables, conferences and consultations on democracy, governance, elections and youth participation. • Establish a youth desk or unit within EMBs and staff them with popular youth leaders. • Organize an inter-party youth forum to deepen collaboration, information sharing, mutual trust and confidence among EMBs and young party members. • Establish advocacy clubs and voter education associations in schools at local and national levels. • Promote the institutional mainstreaming of youth in the electoral administration. • Establish internships, exchange programmes on elections and civic participation.

Group 3

	STRATEGIC GOALS FOR ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION	INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE INITIATED TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION
MUST	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a youth friendly legislative framework through: (a) the constitution, promote reform and monitor the rate of implementation; (b) electoral laws and regulations, reserve for youth a quarter of the jobs or positions, establish a retirement age, put in place incentives for funding and put in place an early and/or proxy voting system. 2. Develop a user-friendly language to raise awareness, promote education and utilize as a tool of mobilization. Use the register, note the turnout for elections and by-elections and ask the candidates to collect statistics. 3. Mitigate issues linked to stakeholders' relationship management by establishing databases and mapping of youth groups and youth engagement platforms. 4. Develop plans and strategies for staff recruitment and training by defining roles and establishing quotas for internships 5. Adopt a youth friendly approach for election operations by developing simple, fast, better and friendlier interfaces and platforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for reform. • Media, campaigns, face-to-face communication, adverts, flyers, outreach programmes, social media, SMS, IEC materials. • Mapping, workshops and consultations to widen reach and coverage. • Publicity and advertising strategies and campaigns targeting young university graduates. • Queue management and increase the number and size of pool stations. • Increase the number of booths at polling stations to facilitate participation.

Group 4

	STRATEGIC GOALS FOR ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION	INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE INITIATED TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION
COUNT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify existing youth and youth groups and provide them with support and accreditation. 2. Increase youth participation in the electoral process in terms of registration, voting and recruitment in EMBs. 3. Increase youth participation in terms of candidacies through a quota system. 4. Increase youth participation in terms of young women's participation through a quota system. 5. Increase youth participation in terms of registered voters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and increase the use of social media • Use sports and entertainment as platforms for sponsorships. • Conduct school and campus visits for promotional purposes. • Facilitate the formation of democratic clubs among youth. • Organize roadshows, cultural events, dances and theatre to disseminate civic and voter education. • Develop EMB exchange programmes. • Develop theme songs. • Provide internship opportunities for youth in EMBs. • Provide scholarships for advanced studies focused on democracy, governance and electoral processes.

Annex B. Round table documents

Concept note

Background

Today's young people are the largest generation of youth in history. We must make sure that the voices of youth are prominent at the tables of political decision-making as they are on the streets and squares around the world. We need the creativity of the young people to devise ways to overcome today's challenges. We need their help... to carry out progress and change.

—Jan Eliassen, UN Deputy Secretary¹

Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 constitute one-fifth of the world's population. However, their influence on national politics remains limited. There is a general sense that traditional politics and representative democracy as we know them—whereby voters determine over power struggles at the ballot box—fail to attract the attention of younger cohorts. Youth feel alienated from political processes.

Time and again, history has shown that youth are critical in bringing about social and political transformation. From the dissolution of the apartheid regime in South Africa in the early 1990s to the third-term revolution in Burkina Faso in 2014, youth remain at the forefront of the democratic struggle in Africa. When youth take to the street, authoritarian regimes may fall and countries take new trajectories. However, in the aftermath of such critical junctures, youth have often been side-lined. This perception of exclusion has resulted in youth seeking other avenues to get their voices heard. But in all democracies—new and old—youth must play an active part in formulating tomorrow's politics. Inclusive participation remains a fundamental political and democratic right. However, actively promoting the inclusion of youth in political processes is not only about norms, values and rights, but also about practical politics. Younger cohorts find themselves in a different and difficult situation: they have different needs and priorities than their older counterparts. Having grown up during and been a part of a period of huge transformation—including the ICT revolution—they bring new and fresh visions and ideas to the political sphere. Governments and society cannot miss the opportunity to benefit from input from the youth to achieve higher goals of promoting the development agenda in their countries.

¹ Key Note Speech delivered to the IPI-UN-IDEA-CoD-IPU event on *Engaging Young People on Democracy*, 15 September 2014, New York.

All institutions of democracy need to address the issue of youth participation and inclusion. Being in charge of organizing elections, Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) have a crucial role to play in advancing and promoting the inclusion, equal participation and representation of youth in political engagement. In order to promote youth engagement throughout the electoral cycle, an EMB may engage in specific and targeted activities and programmes for youth, as well as mainstreaming youth participation in general. Such approaches can lead to effective youth participation, especially if this is tackled throughout the organization's daily programmes.

In this context, International IDEA has kick-started an initiative 'Removing Barriers to Youth Participation: Entry Points for Electoral Management Bodies'. The initiative will develop a series of case studies from across Africa, with the overall objective of mapping youth programmes or projects EMBs are engaged in and documenting best practices and lessons learned from this work. The round table will provide a forum for presentation and discussion of some of the case studies. It is expected that recommendations emanating from the round table will feed into the Project, which is seeking deeper engagement by EMBs in promoting youth participation in politics.

Objective

The objective of the round table is to explore entry points for EMB engagement to increase youth participation and facilitate exchange on how EMBs can work to promote youth participation throughout the electoral cycle. More specifically, it aims to:

- Facilitate information exchange on how sister EMBs promote youth participation throughout the electoral cycle, including to note and discuss innovative ideas for such engagement;
- Present and discuss case studies developed in relation to International IDEA's 'Removing Barriers to Youth Participation: EMB Entry Points' initiative
- Document experiences and innovative approaches already applied, and identify additional best practices and lessons learned from EMBs working in the SADC region in advancing youth participation.

Three cross-cutting issues will also be addressed at the round table: gender, elections-related violence, and security and the use of technologies in elections management. In other words, the round table aims to come up with best practices on how EMBs can:

- engage and encourage the participation of young women in electoral and political matters,
- address the worrying participation of youth in elections-related violence, and what strategies EMBs can come up with to address this social anomaly, and
- engage youth through the use of social media.

Outcomes and post-workshop follow-up

The round table will produce a 'Checklist for EMBs' Work to Enhance Youth Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle'. The Checklist will identify 3–4 goals

and 8–10 key activities that EMBs can undertake. It is believed that these will be vital tools for EMBs to promote youth participation in electoral processes.

The ECF SADC and International IDEA will compile the Checklist in a user-friendly format and submit it to member EMBs. In turn, EMBs will be encouraged to report from time to time on their engagement vis-à-vis the Checklist. The Checklist can also be used by the ECF SADC in future to monitor EMB progress with the application of the tools developed. Furthermore, if deemed appropriate, the EMB responses will be used by ECF SADC and International IDEA to develop a regional strategy on the same themes.

Delegates

The round table will cater for a maximum of 25 delegates. ECF SADC member EMBs will be invited to nominate one (1) delegate each at commissioner and CEO levels. In addition, to enrich discussions, the organizers will invite 4–5 delegates from non-SADC region EMBs as well as prominent civil society organizations that are working in the field of promoting youth in democratic/electoral processes.

Resource persons

The round table facilitator will guide discussions and additional resource persons will be invited to take part in the debate, with particular reference to authors of case studies and papers prepared in relation to International IDEA's RBYP. A rapporteur will document the deliberations.

Location and date

The Electoral Commission of South Africa will host the round table at the Election House in Centurion/Johannesburg. The round table will start at 2 pm on Tuesday 24 November and end at lunchtime on 26 November to facilitate easy arrival and departure of round table delegates and resource persons.

Interpretation

The round table will be mainly delivered in English with interpretation into French and Portuguese.

Partners

The round table will be organized jointly by the ECF SADC and International IDEA in close collaboration with the Electoral Commission of South Africa, which will host the event at their premises in Centurion, South Africa.

Funding

The round table and its associated costs will be funded by International IDEA and the Electoral Commission of South Africa.

Programme

DAY 1: Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes

13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:30	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Mr Terry Tselane, Vice Chairperson, IEC South Africa; TBC</p> <p>Justice Mahapela Lehohla, Chairperson, ECF SADC Executive Committee</p> <p>Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi, Regional Director, International IDEA</p>
14:30-14:45	Participants' presentations
14:45-15:15	Coffee break and group photograph
15:15-17:00	<p>Session 1: Youth participation in political and electoral processes</p> <p>Mr Rushdi Nackerdien, Regional Director for Africa, IFES</p> <p>Ms Mette Bakken, Programme Officer, International IDEA</p> <p>Hon. Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse, Member of Parliament, Botswana</p>
18:00	Round table dinner

Day 2: The Role of EMBs in Promoting Youth Engagement

09:00-09:15	Recap of discussions from day 1
09:15-11:00	<p>Session 2: EMB entry points to promote youth participation: experiences</p> <p>Experiences from EMB engagement in the SADC region: DRC, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Mr Jean Baptiste Ndundu, Commissioner, Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante, DRC</p> <p>Mr Rodrigues Timba, Commissioner, Comissao Nacional de Eleiçoes, Mozambique</p> <p>Masego Ndlovu, Principal Information Education Officer, Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana</p> <p>Dimpho Motsamai, Freelance Elections Consultant</p>
11:00-11:15	Coffee break

11:15-13:00	<p>Session 2: EMB entry points to promote youth participation: experiences (cont.)</p> <p>Experiences from EMB engagement outside of SADC: Cape Verde, Haiti and Bhutan</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Ms Maria do Rosario Lopes Goncalves, President, Electoral Commission of Cape Verde</p> <p>Mr Mani Kumar Ghalay, Senior Planning Officer, Electoral Commission of Bhutan</p> <p>Mr Karl M. A. Jean-Louis, Executive Director, L'observatoire citoyen de l'action des pouvoirs publics (OCAPH)</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:15	<p>Session 3: Engaging with youth part 1: using technologies & social media</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Ms Shana Kaiser, Programme Manager, International IDEA Tunisia</p> <p>Dr Nomsa Masuku, Deputy Chief Election Officer, Electoral Commission of South Africa</p> <p>Mr Samson Itodo, Head of Research, Policy & Advocacy, Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA)</p>
15:15-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-16:45	<p>Session 3: Engaging with youth part 2: preventing/mitigating elections-related violence</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Mr Sambo, CENI-T Madagascar</p> <p>Mr Rasi Ndago Masudi, Director of Voting Education & Partnerships, Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission of Kenya (IEBC)</p> <p>Mr Tsepo Monethi, Former Member of Parliament, Lesotho</p>
16:45-17:00	Wrap-up
	Braai: hosted by the Electoral Commission of South Africa

Day 3: Towards Guidelines for EMB Engagement

09:00-09:15	Recap of discussions from day 2
09:15-10:30	<p>Session 4A: Identification of possible EMB strategies & activities: Group Work</p> <p>Group work themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic goals guiding EMB work towards enhanced youth participation throughout the electoral cycle 2. Innovative activities EMBs can engage in to promote youth participation that are likely to yield hands-on, sustainable results 3. Methods that EMBs can apply to mainstream youth in their management of elections 4. Recommendations for EMBs to promote youth participation in electoral processes <p>Facilitators:</p> <p>Ms Sibongile Zimemo, Elections Expert</p> <p>Ms Mette Bakken, Programme Officer, International IDEA</p>
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-12:00	<p>Session 4B: Towards EMB Guidelines and Checklist for Progress</p> <p>Group work presentations & agreement/commitment on the way forward</p> <p>Facilitators:</p> <p>Ms Sibongile Zimemo, Elections Expert</p> <p>Ms Mette Bakken, Programme Officer, International IDEA</p>
12:00-12:30	<p>Round table summary</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <p>Mr Salim Latib, round table Rapporteur</p>
12:30-13:00	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Ms J.L. Kazembe, ECF SADC Presidency</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00	Round table ends

Participants

Name	Title	Organization
Mr Khumo G. Lebang		EMB Botswana
Ms Masego Ndlovu Kgalemang		EMB Botswana
Miss Jennifer Makengo	Assistant	EMB DRC
Mr Jean Baptiste Ndundu	Commissioner	EMB DRC
Adv. Mamosebi Pholo	Commissioner	EMB Lesotho
Mr Tuoe Hantsi		EMB Lesotho
Mr Sambo	Commissioner	EMB Madagascar
Ms Chikondi Mvula	Commissioner	EMB Malawi
Mrs Vigianee Coonjan	Electoral Officer	EMB Mauritius
Mr Mbonisi M. Bhembe	Elections Officer	EMB Swaziland
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Dr Nomsa Masuku	Deputy Chief Electoral Officer: Outreach	EMB South Africa
Mr Lonwabo Jwili		EMB South Africa
Ms Rejoice Sibanda		EMB Zimbabwe
Mr Khamis Issa Khamis	Legal Officer	EMB Zanzibar
Mr Isaac Muyuni	Voter Education Officer	EMB Zambia
Mr Rasi Ndago Masudi	Director, Voter Education and Partnerships	EMB Kenya
Mr Mani Kumar Ghalay	Senior Planning Officer	EMB Bhutan
Ms Maria do Rosário Lopes Gonçalves	President	EMB Capo Verde
Mr Karl M. A. Jean-Louis	Executive Director	OCAPH - Haiti
Mr Rushdi Nackerdien	Regional Director	IFES
Mr Samson Itodo	Executive Assistant	YIAGA
Ms Dimpho Motsamai	Consultant	Freelance Consultant
Mr Tsepo Monethi	Former MP Lesotho	
Hon. Dithapelo Keorapetse	Member of Parliament	Parliament of Botswana
Ms Tebogo Suping	Advocate for Youth Development	
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Mr Kabelo Sedisa		ECF SADC

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Mrs J.L. Kazembe	ECF-SADC President	
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Ms Mette Bakken	Programme Officer	International IDEA, Addis Ababa
Ms Sibongile Zimemo	Elections Expert - Facilitator	Freelance Consultant
Mr Salim Latib	Consultant	Rapporteur
Mr Brian Majanl	Assistant	International IDEA, Addis Ababa

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.



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