



Elect-08

**Consensus Outcomes Statement of the Regional Seminar for Electoral
Managers on the theme:
How to Master Electoral Process and Prevent, Fraud, Disputes and
Violence in African Countries,
Tangiers, Morocco, 24-28 March, 2008**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Background and Context

- A. From 24 to 28 March, 2008, The African Training and Research Center in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) organized, in Tangier, Morocco a Regional Seminar for Electoral Managers on the theme: *How to Master Electoral Process and Prevent Fraud, Disputes and Violence in African Countries*. The Seminar was attended by delegates from the following countries: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Comoros, the Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. International organizations represented at the Seminar were the International Organization of the 'Francophonie' (OIF) and the International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA).
- B. Following highly informative presentations that in turn stimulated profoundly productive deliberations, delegates have reached consensus on the following points of Action:

Points of Action

1. Legal frameworks governing elections should be dynamic, responsive to specific country conditions and reviewed periodically in light of changing circumstances. National Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs¹) should therefore make it their responsibility to ensure that all relevant laws are amended as needed. Enforcement of media laws to ensure equitable use of public media should be a matter of special concern to EMBs. Hence,

¹ Any constitutionally or legally statutory backed autonomous entity authorized to organize and implement elections and referenda etc

EMBs should dialogue with all relevant stakeholders to enhance awareness of legal regimes governing elections;

2. In the context of deepening democratic processes and norms on the African continent, EMBs should initiate all-inclusive legal reforms & standards to govern electoral administration within Africa; benefits of standardization would include;
 - Constitutionally guaranteed independence of EMB members/Commissioners
 - Single body supervising all in-country electoral activities;
 - Cost-effectiveness in organizing elections/referenda;
 - Inter-African collaboration with EMBs in other countries
3. Apart from assuming the sole legally backed responsibility for inviting both foreign and local observers to observe electoral processes, EMBs, in collaboration with African institutions such as CAFRAD, should develop and enforce standardized codes of conduct for international and local observers consistent with relevant international and regional instruments . In enhancing African ownership over Africa’s electoral processes, EMBs in collaboration with CAFRAD and all other relevant entities and stakeholders, should contribute to capacity enhancement of local observer groups;
4. Capacity enhancement support offered to EMBs by international partners such as OIF , IIDEA and others is deeply appreciated in terms of disseminating best electoral practices within Africa and beyond; and CAFRAD is therefore urged to explore with OIF, IIDEA and other partners, the creation, and strengthening of existing knowledge networks in support of electoral processes in Africa;
5. EMBs and all relevant stakeholders in electoral processes should at all times remain sensitive to the historical marginalization, exclusion and discrimination suffered by African women and other disadvantaged groups in governance and electoral processes. In this connection, EMBs and all relevant stakeholders and actors, including CAFRAD should take all necessary measures to address gender and all other inequalities and injustices that may curtail electoral rights of citizens;
6. In countries emerging from crises, elections that are judged to be free, fair and credible by all major stake holders represent a major step in the direction of sustainable peace and reconciliation. Apart from accommodating erstwhile political adversaries as part of fragile national reconciliation processes , EMBs in post-crisis countries require massive material and financial resources to extend the right to vote to Diaspora citizens, particularly those displaced by conflicts and/or natural catastrophes;
7. The specter of electoral fraud persistently overshadows the work of EMBs in Africa as opposition parties tend to suspect that EMBs rig elections in favour of incumbent governments. As EMBs acquire more advanced information and communication technologies in order to enhance their organizational effectiveness; ranging from the preliminary phase of voter-education to the tallying and announcement of final results, measures should be taken, to prevent fraud ,minimize irregularities and errors through, *inter-alia*, the use of biometry in respect of identifying and registering national populations;

8. Rather than uncritically purchasing ‘supply driven’ equipment and technologies from profit motivated Western Transnational Corporations, which may in any case be rapidly overtaken by ITC advances, African EMBs should, through relevant platforms, such as provided by CAFRAD, exchange vital ‘intelligence’ in the quest to acquire cost-effective equipment and materials preferably manufactured in Africa for cost-effectiveness;
9. CAFRAD and its partners are requested to undertake the following actions:
 - Replicate similar seminars on the theme of mastering electoral processes;
 - Publish and disseminate the results of the Seminar
 - Address invitations directly to the concerned structures in order to reduce delays in transmission
 - Explore all possibilities and modalities to finance meetings of African EMBs
10. EMBs like wise agree to pursue the following actions
 - Pursuit and strengthening inter-African collaboration;
 - Take all necessary measures to reinforce existing relevant networks in addition to exploring establishment of a Pan African Network of Electoral Management Bodies.

TANGIER (Morocco), 28 March, 2008