



WEST AFRICA ELECTION OBSERVERS NETWORK (WAEON) NEWSLETTER

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(July-September 2019)

Introduction

WAEON's Newsletter provides news and information on activities undertaken by the Secretariat and Network members in their respective countries. The Newsletter further provides updates on elections and governance issues occurring in West Africa. This edition is the third for 2019, and it covers developments from July to September.

Secretariat Activities

WAEON Field Guide

Following WAEON's conference on technology driven-elections, which was held in May 2019, a draft guideline on observing technology-driven elections for WAEON members and other Citizens Observation Groups, has been finalized. The views and comments from participants during the May conference were incorporated into the draft guideline.

The final publication of this guideline would be made available in the next edition of this newsletter.

Secretariat secures new project

The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), WAEON's Secretariat, has secured new funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for a 12-month project. The new funding cycle begins in October 2019 and ends in September 2020.

The new funding will seek to *'strengthen the capacity of WAEON members to contribute to transparent and credible elections in the sub-region through collaboration with relevant electoral stakeholders'*. Specifically, the support would be directed at building the capacity of election stakeholders to fight fake news, and interrogate the implication of electoral adjudication on elections in Africa.

WAEON Member Organizations' Activities

Concentration Nationale de la Société Civile du Togo (CNSC), Togo

- *CNSC organizes program on civic education for traditional authorities*

The National Concertation of the Civil Society of Togo (CNSC-Togo) hosted its triennial program of *"Continuing Political and Civic Education of Traditional Authorities"*. This program has been sponsored by Hanns Seidel Foundation since 2017. The event took place from July 25 to August 2, 2019. The theme for the programme was "Conflict Transformation and Nonviolent Communication."

The overall objective of this event was to encourage the development of consensus among the major actors, as well as their active participation in democratic, economic and social welfare processes of their communities. The expected outcome is for participants to take interest in finding solutions to economic and social issues, promoting good governance, peace and social stability of their communities.

- *CNSC-Togo participates in CDD-West Africa retreat*

CNSC-Togo took part in a retreat hosted by the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD-West Africa) from July 24 to 27, 2019 in Abuja, Nigeria. With financial support from Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), the four-day meeting gave civil society actors from Togo, the platform to share experiences and lessons learned to help mitigate the political crisis in the country and to move towards stability. The retreat brought together experts from countries such as Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria who made a significant contribution on sustainable development and the democratization process in their respective countries.

- *CNSC-Togo participates in workshop on mitigating electoral violence*

CNSC-Togo participated in a training workshop for 10 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on the Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM). The workshop was organized by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne (CSCI), Côte d'Ivoire

- *CSCI develops new strategic plan*

On July 10, 2019, the Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne (CSCI) presented its strategic plan for the 2019 – 2025 period and also inaugurated its new management team at the Dippoka Hotel in Abidjan.

- *Project on strengthening CSCI's communication system*

With support from Forus International, CSCI is implementing a project called "*Strengthening CSCI's communication system for a dynamic organization.*" A steering committee has been set up to help the project achieve its ultimate aim of creating good conditions for internal and external communication within the umbrella body of CSCI. The steering committee had its first working session on Thursday, August 29, 2019 and it was chaired by Mr. Mahamadou Kouma, the National Coordinator.



First meeting of the CSCI steering committee, chaired by Mr. Mahamadou Kouma, the National Coordinator.

National Election Watch (NEW), Sierra Leone

- *NEW and OSIWA press for constitutional review*

National Election Watch (NEW), in conjunction with OSIWA, organized a meeting with four other CSOs to discuss the need to revive the stalled constitutional review process in Sierra Leone. The subject of constitutional review process is one of the considerations for CSOs towards deepening good governance and democracy in Sierra Leone. The hashtag *#reviveseirraleoneconstitutionalprocessnow* was created to raise awareness of the campaign.

- *NEW Observes Council Elections*

NEW observed the Council by-elections in Constituency 110 and Ward 034 in the Western Rural and Kenema Districts respectively. NEW deployed at least two observers per centre, six supervisors and four roving teams to cover both elections.

NEW reported that the elections in Constituency 110 was marred with violence towards the close of polls resulting in the cancellation of the entire election. NEW criticized the continued violence in elections and condemned the National Electoral Commission's (NEC) cancellation of the Parliamentary by-election in Constituency 110. However, according to NEW, the by-election in Ward 034 was conducted in a calm and peaceful atmosphere.

To find out more about the by-election in constituency 110, read [here](#).

Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Ghana

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) secured a multi-year grant support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with the project commencing in October 2019 and ending in 2022. The grant interventions cover three major elections programs in its life span. The

main objectives for the project are to ensure:

- Improved Integrity of Elections and Political processes;
- Enhanced Mutual Accountability in Local Governance; and
- Strengthened Conflict Management Mechanisms.

Focus of the project is structured according to phases based on implementation years.

- 2019: Civic and voter education on the upcoming December 17, 2019 District Level Election (DLE) and referendum and observation of the poll.
- 2020: Undertake peace and voter education and observe the pre-election, election-day post-election day of the Presidential and General Elections.
- 2021: Observation processes of the possible election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) in 2021. Parliament of Ghana yet to amend an article in the constitution (Article 243) through a bill to allow for the election of MMDCEs, a situation that is currently subject to appointing powers of the President.

Elections and Governance News

- *Benin: Formation of COS-LEPI*

Focusing on the local elections of 2020, the National Assembly of Benin on Wednesday, August 14, 2019, appointed nine representatives to the Council of Orientation and Supervision of the Electronic Permanent Electoral List (COS-LEPI). This ad hoc body has a period of six months to update the National Electoral File (FEN).

- *Ghana: District Level Election and 2019 Constitutional Referendum*

On December 17, 2019 Ghana will be holding a constitutional referendum alongside district level elections to elect assembly and unit committee members. The referendum is taking place because of a proposed amendment to the constitution. which seeks to get citizens' approval for political parties to sponsor candidates in future district level elections.

With this in mind, Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) held a limited voters' registration exercise nationwide to register Ghanaians who turned 18 years after the last registration, as well as those who for one reason or another had never registered. The exercise which was

originally scheduled for June 7, 2019 had to be postponed following an injunction application filed by Ghanaian citizen, Umar Ayuba, challenging the decision by the election management body to hold the registration in its district offices and some selected electoral areas. The Supreme Court, however, dismissed the application and the EC conducted the exercise from June 17 to July 7, 2019. A voter exhibition exercise was also conducted which took place from September 10 to 17, 2019.

- *Nigeria: Tribunal Upholds 2019 Elections*

On September 11, 2019 the Presidential Elections Tribunal rejected Atiku Abubakar's petition alleging fraud in the February elections on the grounds that he failed to provide sufficient proof of his allegations. Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate for the People's Democratic Party (PDP), petitioned that the February 2019 presidential polling had been marred by irregularities and that he had received the most votes as shown on the central server of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). He also claimed that President Muhammadu Buhari lacked a secondary school leaving certificate, a constitutional requirement to run for president.

Nigeria: Independent National Electoral Commission tasked with publishing 2019 Election results

The Centre of Democracy and Development (CDD-West Africa) has tasked the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to publish the 2019 general election results. Even though the elections were held in February it is not clear why INEC has not published the results since that time.

CDD-West Africa released a detailed new report on one of the most vulnerable parts of Nigeria's election process: the collation of election results at the ward level.

The report, titled “*Counting the Votes and Ward-Level Collation during Nigeria's 2019 Presidential Election: A Post-mortem*”, provides an independent and objective assessment of the process by which INEC aggregated and tabulated polling unit level results.

- *Togo: Election Body releases provisional results of National Assembly Elections*

The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) released the provisional results of the National Assembly election which took place on July 5, 2019. This was a very

significant election for the country because it was the first local election exercise in 32 years.

This result marked victory for the Union for the Republic (UNIR), which is now in power. The average voter participation rate for the election was 52.46%.

Out of the 1490 seats contested, UNIR obtained at least, 895 seats of municipal councillors.

The C14 Coalition Party came in second place followed by the National Alliance for Change (ANC) and then New Engagement Togo (NET). The provisional results that were made public concerned 114 constituencies.

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Note to WAEON Members

WAEON Network members are encouraged to submit news entries to the Secretariat for inclusion in the WAEON Newsletter. Kindly send us with your views, comments and suggestions on what could be done to improve the network. The next edition (October – December) will be released in January 2020. Please send your entries to: info@waeon.org