

FORUM OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES OF SOUTH ASIA **FEMBoSA Stewardship Report by the Chairperson, 2015-2016**

The Commissioner of Elections of the Department of Election of Sri Lanka, assumed the Chair of Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) at the Sixth Forum meeting held at Hotel Galadari in Colombo , Sri Lanka on 1st and 2nd October, 2015 on the theme **“Free and Fair Election - Pride of Nation”** .

This report covers the FEMBoSA work plan and activities carried out by member EMBs for the period starting from October 2015 to August 2016. The EMBs assigned to carry out these tasks have done an excellent job in this regard. Due to some inconvenience encountered in communication, heavy work load or lack of time or for any other reason or reasons, the EMBs would not have been able to communicate, complete or carry out such tasks the way they had planned. I hope that all EMBs of FEMBoSA would still find time to collaborate and to continue carrying out these tasks in future.

Resolution No 1

Study on the current status of Campaign Finance, Organize Regional Seminar and establish a Regional Research Network on Campaign Finance. Under this theme Election Commission of India has submitted a detailed comprehensive report on Campaign finance in India, Election Commission of India in collaboration with International IDEA organized an International Conference on ‘The Use of Money in Politics and its Effects on People’s Representation on 15th and 16th December, 2015.

Election Commission of Bhutan has communicated that the Study on Campaign Finance has been completed and the report is being finalized by the Commission.

Resolution No 2

Study on the use of technology to conduct free and fair elections of EMBs; The Election Commission of Maldives has done an extensive study on Election Modernization. The Election Commission of Bhutan has committed to work on this area and acknowledges the support rendered by the Election Commission of India.

Resolution No 3

Study on the autonomy and independence of the Member EMBs for strengthening democracy;

Autonomy and independence of EMBs Constitutional and legal provisions in India regarding autonomy and independence of Election Commission of India.

Resolution No 4

Conduct a study on Media involvement, Media monitoring (including Social Media); Develop regulations in the Member States

Methods in Media monitoring (including Social Media) along with developing regulations in member states have been presented in detail by the Election Commission of India.

Resolution No 5

Introduce Voter Education curriculum in schools; Expand inclusive electoral literacy

The Election Commission of Sri Lanka, adopted a mechanism to introduce voter education curriculum in schools to expand the electoral literacy.

In collaboration with Ministry of Education , the Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) has been able to take initial step through Student Parliaments to create awareness on principles and practice of electoral democracy.

Resolution No 6

Include gender equality in overall electoral processes in the Member States

Resolution No 7

Introduce measures to address Voter Registration among all sections of the society

Election Commission of Sri Lanka is grateful to the Election Commission of India for the Systemized Voter Education Programme SVEEP of which we put the best into practice.

In order to introduce Voters registration among all sector of the society, the Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) has launched several public awareness programs on the Revision of Electoral Registers while dedicating 1st of June , the qualifying day for registration as an elector as the Voters' Day.

All modes of communication and promotion have been utilized to promote the "Electoral process where no elector is left behind". Issues pertaining to encouraging of registration of women, indigenous people, estate sector workers, street dwellers, disabled people and marginalized groups had been addressed.

Election Commission of Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) launched the BRIDGE module on voter education customized to focus on building capacity in facilitation skills with ample opportunity to practice the delivery of voter education awareness programming in Colombo from of July 20th to 25th with the participation of delegates from the region.

Election Commission of Sri Lanka(ECSL) also decided to launch the campaign called " Kites for Rights " in the International Youth Day on 12th of August to highlight the importance of engagement of youth in the electoral process while strengthening the democratic culture and values by implementing Youth Vote (Y V) program,

Resolution No 8

Introduce systems to promote Voting Rights for citizens living out of the country

Election Commission of India Commission has identified Non- Resident Indians as a major Target group wherein wider outreach methods are required, accordingly, various meetings have been held wherein discussions have been made on outreach methods targeting Non Resident Indians.

Election Commission of Sri Lanka also has taken measures to look into the possibility of allowing an advanced voting system to persons engaging in essential services on the day of poll other than the polling staff or security services.

Resolution No 9

Conduct capacity building programmes for officials in the Electoral Administration.

Election Commission of India in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs conducted Training Courses for SAARC Countries on "Election Management - Role of Technology" at the IIDEM from 15th to 25th September, 2015.

Training Course for Asian Countries in collaboration with IIIDEM-UNDP on “Election Management – Role of Technology” from 17th to 26th November, 2015. This programme covered all aspects of an electoral cycle enabled the participants in understanding the overall processes and procedures involved in electoral management and global best practices. IIIDEM conducted its 20th International Training Course –Capacity Development for Election Management – in close collaboration with the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) division of the Ministry of External Affairs from 30th November to 11th December.

Resolution No 10

Introduce means of promoting Voter Education among females. Lot of activities are being carried out in the region as a whole.

Resolution No 11

Publish the Report of the Sixth Meeting of FEMBoSA

Draft version of the Summary Report had been shared among the EMBs on 22nd January, 2016. Corrected versions and subsequently the hard copies also had been posted to the Heads of EMBs.

Resolution No 12

Publish Research Papers prepared by the Member States, Academics and Professionals .The Election Commission of Sri Lanka invited research papers on the “Use of Information Communication Technology in the Electoral System” from the member EMBs of FEMBoSA. EMBs have been encouraged to circulate this information among the Universities and relevant educational institutions and to forward the best research paper on or before 28th June , 2016.

Resolution No 13

Conduct the 7th meeting in 2016 on the theme: Technology for Credible Elections. We are here today at this august gathering .

Resolution No 14

A comparative study on the Organizational Structures/Strategic Management Plan and functioning of the Election Commissions in the Member States

Resolution No 15

Setting up of a mechanism of Members (i.e; Clearing House for dispute resolution) consisting of nominees of the respective EMBs; Civil Society and relevant political parties for resolving of disputes among stakeholders.

Election Commission of Sri Lanka is addressing public grievances related to elections in a tech-savvy manner with the help of the official website of the Election Commission through “Tell Commissioner” messaging, An EC team has been tasked to take note of all the complaints received through this site as well as the facebook ,letters, faxes and complaints received over telephone calls for redressal. Now, we are in the process of introducing Election Complaints Tracking System.

Election Commission of Nepal hosted the Regional Workshop on Electoral Dispute Resolution and Electoral Justice successfully on 21st and 22nd July, 2016 in Kathmandu, Nepal.