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EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND CONFLICT
RESOLUTION ON THE OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY TO ASSESS THE PROCESSES,
REGULATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF CONDUCTING NATIONAL GENERAL
ELECTION**

(15th -22nd May 2024, Republic of Uganda and Rwanda)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSOs	-	Civil Society Organizations
DP	-	Democratic Party
EC	-	Electoral Commission
EMB	-	Election Management Body
FBOs	-	Faith Based Organizations
FDC	-	Forum for Democratic Change
JEEMA	-	Justice Party
IPOD	-	Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue
MOUs	-	Memorandum of understanding
NCF	-	National Conservative Forum
NEC	-	National Electoral Commission
NIDA	-	National Identification Agency
NRM	-	National Resistance Movement
PDC	-	Centrist Democratic Party
PL	-	Liberal Party
PPC	-	Party for progress and Concord
PPP	-	People Progress Party
PSD	-	Social Democratic Party
PSP	-	Prosperity and Solidarity Party
PSR	-	Rwanda Socialist Party
RBA	-	Rwanda Broadcasting Agency
RPF	-	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UPC	-	Uganda People's Congress
UDPR	-	Democratic Union of Rwanda people

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Article 6 (d) of the Treaty stipulates that Partner States adhere to fundamental principles of good governance, including respect for the principles of democracy, rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, equal opportunity, gender equality as well as the recognition, promotion and protection of human rights. The basic pillar of democracy is to have a free and fair election in every country. It was against this background that the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution carried out an oversight activity to assess the processes, regulations and challenges of conducting national general elections in the Republic of Uganda and Republic of Rwanda.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY

The objectives of the activity were: -

- i) To evaluate the electoral processes in the Republic of Uganda and Rwanda
- ii) To identify the challenges faced while conducting the national general elections;
- iii) To appreciate the role played by the Electoral Commission;
- iv) To make recommendations for strengthening electoral processes for the benefit of all Partner states.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

During the oversight activity, the Committee was divided into two teams. The first sub-committee visited the Republic of Uganda and the second sub-committee visited the Republic of Rwanda. Members received presentation from various stakeholders. After the interactive meeting with the stakeholders, members had an opportunity to visit the chairpersons of the Electoral Commission in Uganda and Rwanda respectively

In the Republic of Uganda, the sub- committee interacted with stakeholders/ representatives from;

- i. Ministry of the East African Community Affairs;
- ii. The Electoral Commission;
- iii. Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs;
- iv. Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- v. Inter-Party Organization for Dialogue;
- vi. Uganda National Student Association;
- vii. National Council for Older Person;
- viii. Inter Party Youth Platform;

- ix. Industrial Court Uganda
- x. EAC Youth Ambassador Platform;
- xi. Foundation for Human Right initiatives;
- xii. National Consultative Forum;
- xiii. Political Parties;
 - a) Justice Forum Party (JEEMA);
 - b) Democratic Party (DP);
 - c) People's Progressive Party;(PPP);
 - d) Forum for Democratic Change (FDC);
 - e) Uganda People's Congress (UPC);
 - f) National Resistance Movement (NRM);

During the interaction with the chairperson of the Commission Justice Byabakama Mugenyi Simon, he informed the committee that Electoral Commission is a body mandated with organizing, conducting and supervising various elections. He further informed them that the Commission consisted of 7 Commissioners appointed by the President serving a term of 7 years renewable once. The team also paid a courtesy call on the Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS, CHALLENGES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

4.1 Stages in the Electoral Process

Mr. Kiyimba Umar the head of the election management department in Uganda informed the committee that Electoral Commission was established by Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda in 1995. It is mandated with the function of promoting democracy and good governance by organizing, conducting and supervising regular free and fair elections. The Commission is composed of a chairman, deputy and five commissioners who are appointed by the President with the approval of parliament. The sub-committee was briefed with the stages of Electoral Process which included;

i. Demarcation of the Electoral Areas

Demarcation of the electoral areas involves creation of electoral boundaries for representation of the people. It is done in case of creation of new constituencies, districts, sub- counties and parishes. The purpose of demarcation is to help in determining the number of elective positions for representation.

ii. Re- organization of Polling Stations

Re- organization of polling stations is done through harmonizing polling stations for easy access by the voters. The importance is to: reduce the distance voters walk to reach polling stations; decongest polling centers hence creating enough space for each polling station; ensure that voters are rightfully placed in parishes; villages/ cells and polling stations; ensure that each polling station is located in an open and accessible area and each parish/ward has at least one polling station.

iii. Update of the National Voter's Register

Members were informed that registers are updated before an election or a by-election. This enables new applicants register as voters and also allow those who wish to transfer to new voting locations to do so.

Iv. Display of the National Voters' Register

It was noted that before any election is held, display of the National Voter Register is conducted at every polling station for not less than twenty-one days. In case of a by-election, display is conducted for 10 days to enable the public to scrutinize the register for any corrections and objections or complaints raised. The registers are displayed to allow voters check the correctness of their particulars, confirm the voters photos appear against their correct particulars and recommend deletions of the dead, the under age, multiple registration and those who neither reside nor originate from the parish/ ward.

V. Nomination of Candidates

Nomination of candidates is when the aspiring candidates for elective offices present their duly filled nomination papers to the returning officer for verification. The aspiring candidates who meet the nomination requirements are declared duly nominated candidates to contest for an elective office then when all requirements are fulfilled Campaigns starts.

4.2 Perspectives of the Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD)

The team was briefed about the Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) a political platform consisting of the political parties that have representation in the Parliament of Uganda. It's worth noting that IPOD is not a government entity.

The major purpose of its existence is to seek solutions to Uganda's political parties into viable vehicles of public interest aggregation. The entity currently has 6 members parties including Democratic Party (DP), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Justice Forum

(JEEMA), National Resistance Movement (NRM), People's Progressive Party (PPP) and Uganda Peoples's Congress (UPC).

Member Political Parties are bound by a memorandum of Understanding signed every after-election cycle. The current MOU runs from 2021- 2026. IPOD is structurally organized in three levels; The Summit of leaders, the Council of Secretaries General and the Secretariat.

Inter- Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) has been of great importance that is to say:

- i. They have organized dialogue session to minimize and de-escalate any tensions arising out of political process;
- ii. Strengthened capacity of political parties in areas like organization management, leadership development, policy formulation and conflict resolution;
- iii. Engages in targeted mentorship programs fostering the growth of emerging leaders within political parties;
- iv. Undertaken comprehensive initiative aimed at breaking down barriers and ensuring that diverse voices are not only heard but actively participate in political process
- v. Advocating for electoral reforms that promote fair representation and encourage political parties to embrace diversity;
- vi. Empowered and strengthened women and youth with skills, knowledge and resources necessary to actively participate in political processes.

4.3 GENERAL CHALLENGES FACED DURING ELECTION

- i. The composition and the operation of the Uganda Electoral Commission has been a source of heated disputes; Members were informed that the Commission suffers from the perceptions of lack of independence and inefficiency. Although the Uganda Constitution and the legal code provides for the Commission's independence, the Commissioners are appointed by the president. This erodes confidence in the institution's autonomy.

- ii. The budgetary allocations are insufficient to fulfill all the mandated tasks. The funds are also not released on time which hinder the process to go on.
- iii. Discrepancies in voters' registration which include duplication of names, missing names, names registered in the wrong districts and inflated numbers of registered voters which slows down the voting process.
- iv. Monetization or commercialization of politics has significantly influenced the participation of individuals in the electoral process in Uganda. Studies suggest that the high costs associated with political campaigns may deter individuals from actively engaging in politics, as they may lack the financial resources to compete effectively. For instance, a report on the impact of the cost of politics on inclusive political participation in Uganda found that the average amount spent by a candidate during the 2016 elections was Usd 96,000 to 149,000. This financial barrier has led to a political environment where only those with considerable resources can afford to participate
- v. Insufficient civic education significantly impacts people's participation in elections, particularly when compounded by high levels of illiteracy more especially in the rural areas. Without adequate civic knowledge, voters will not fully understand their rights, the electoral process, or the importance of their vote which leads to lower engagement and turnout. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that civic education initiatives often do not target some populations hence leaving a gap in understanding and empowerment. It was also noted that the process starts late and done only during electoral seasons;
- vi. Increased levels of indiscipline and conflict in party primaries which equally spill over to the national elections. Some political leaders are indiscipline which is also reflected in their support base.
- vii. High levels of intolerance across parties causing conflicts and hate;
- viii. Ever increasing role of security agencies in the electoral processes which makes people turn away from participating in elections for fear of being harassed.

4.3.1 SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACED BY OLDER PERSONS AND WOMEN

1. Intimidation Language

The use of intimidation language throughout the political landscape has significantly affected the participation of elderly and women in the electoral process.

2. Ill-health

The elderly people are more prone to ill health that limit their mobility to the voting locations and increase dependency on others.

3. Electoral Violence

Electoral violence in Uganda has a significant impact on the participation of women being referred to as a weak gender and the elderly in the electoral process. The fear and actual instances of violence has deterred them from engaging in political activities, including voting which is a fundamental democratic right.

4. Barriers impacting electoral process

Cultural barriers significantly impact the participation of older persons in Uganda's electoral processes. These barriers can manifest in various forms, such as age-based discrimination, inequitable access to higher education and the burden of household chores that is attributed to women has led to marginalization in political participation and representation.

4.4 OBSERVATIONS

- i. Members observed that the Uganda Judiciary is autonomous. It has always exhibited autonomy because of its independence. This has given confidence to voters to resolve conflicts;
- ii. It was observed that Uganda has taken steps such as the inclusion of women and elderly persons as a special interest group in Parliament, ensuring that they have dedicated representatives to voice out their concerns. The participation of women and elderly in electoral process of Uganda is a cornerstone for societal development and cohesion. Recognized for their vast contributions, they are pivotal in wealth creation, nurturing future generations, and fostering social harmony. Their wisdom and experience are assets in conflict resolution and in maintaining the cultural fabric of the nation;

- iii. It was noted that prisoners and Ugandans in the diaspora are not allowed to vote because Uganda lags behind without laws that simplifies government approaches in handling such issues;
- iv. The Committee observed that the Parliamentary Election Act, 2005 as amended provides that the nomination paper of the aspirants shall be attached with a nomination fee of 3 million Uganda shillings (equivalate to 800usd) which is very high and not refundable.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. To address challenge of low civic education, solutions could include the development of targeted civic education programs that cater for the needs of elderly persons, women and youth by using accessible language and media that are easily understood regardless of literacy levels. Additionally, the creation of more inclusive and accessible voting processes, such as simplified ballot papers and voting assistance, could help accommodate all voters;
- ii. Commercialization of politics can be addressed by implementing policies that reduce the financial burden of campaigning, such as state-funded campaigns or spending caps. Additionally strengthening institutional frameworks to support people's political engagement;
- iii. Need for the reforms that allows for independence of Electoral Commission in order to create legitimacy that elections are intended to generate and ensure stability in their aftermath;
- iv. Strengthening legal frameworks to protect women, youth and the elderly person from discrimination and abuse throughout the election progress. There is need for the local government to plan and implement community-based programs to enhance political engagement;
- v. The government should design targeted interventions to address health emergencies particularly amongst the elderly and women to enhance their participation. in healthcare settings will increase voter participation among older persons. Ensuring accessibility to the voting facilities and provision of transport to polling stations will easy their mobility to the voting location;
- vi. Engaging community-based organizations that focus on inter-generational approaches can also provide support and advocacy for the rights of elderly persons. The government and civil society should engage to collaborate in creating

a safe and inclusive environment that encourages the active participation of all citizens, regardless of age and gender in the electoral process;

- vii. Electoral Commission should adopt technology to put faith and trust in the process. This is aimed at improving the efficiency, transparency and credibility of the electoral process;
- viii. The Electoral Commission should review the role of security agencies on whose interest they serve given their command structure;
- ix. The Council of Ministers should allocate funds for the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution to enable it carry out its mandate as election observer as stipulated in Article 123 of Chapter 23 of the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Community.

5.0 KEY FINDINGS, CHALLENGES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

In the Republic of Rwanda, the sub- committee interacted with stakeholders/ representatives from;

- i. Rwanda Electoral Commission;
- ii. Rwanda National Police;
- iii. Ministry of Interior;
- iv. Ministry of Justice;
- v. Ministry of EAC Affairs;
- vi. Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration;
- vii. National Identification Agency;
- viii. Rwanda Civil Society Platform;
- ix. Rwanda Elders Advisory Forum;
- x. Members of Rwanda Parliament;
- xi. Association of Rwanda Female Journalist;
- xii. Rwanda Journalists Association;
- xiii. Rwanda Broadcasting Agency;
- xiv. Rwanda Governance Board;
- xv. National Consultative Forum of Political Organizations;
- xvi. National Council of Persons with Disabilities;
- xvii. National Youth Council;
- xviii. National Women Council;
- xix. Rwanda National Students Associations;
- xx. National Commissions for Human Rights;

- xxi. Political Parties;
- a. Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF);
 - b. Party for Progress and Concord (PPC);
 - c. Democratic Union of the Rwanda People (UDPR);
 - d. Social Democratic Party (PSD);
 - e. Centrist Democratic Party (PDC);
 - f. Prosperity and Solidarity Party (PSP);
 - g. Liberal Party (PL);
 - h. Rwanda Socialist Party (PSR);
 - i. Ideal Democratic Party (PDI);
 - j. Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR).

During the interaction of with the Chairperson of the Commission Hon. Oda Gasinzigwa. She informed the sub-committee that the Commission is independent and autonomous in nature and consists of 7 commissioners appointed by the President serving a term of 5 years renewable once. At the time of visit, the Commission was receiving credentials for the candidates aspiring for the various electoral position.

5. 1 Electoral Processes

1. The National Electoral Commission

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) is a permanent and independent constitutional election management body as enshrined in Article 140 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda.

Article 3 of Organic Law n° 001/2019.OL of 29/07/2019 governing the conduct of elections as amended to-date mandates the National Electoral Commission to ensure the implementation of legal provisions governing the holding of elections, to provide relevant instructions as necessary to ensure the smooth conduct of elections, and to appoint election volunteers.

In terms of governance NEC has seven Commissioners who are appointed by the President based on merit and approved by parliament

Election Laws & Regulations

Among the fundamental principles that the state of Rwanda has committed to uphold as per Article 10 of the constitution are: **Equitable power-sharing; and building a State governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic Government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men which is affirmed by women occupying at least 30% of positions in decision-making organs.** This is evident

in the steady increase in women's representation in the lower House (Chamber of Deputies) throughout several legislative elections, from 48.8 percent (2003–2008), 56.4 percent (2008–2013) to 64 percent (2013–2018) and 61.3 percent in (2018-2023) that has been extended to 2024. In addition, various gender transformative legal and policy frameworks have been adopted to remove any provision perpetuating gender inequalities and guarantee equal political rights for women and men. The inclusiveness of this framework is not just a legal requirement.

The Organic Law n° 001/2019.OL of 29/07/2019 governing elections, provides for modalities of elections as follows:

- i. Direct elections (All eligible voters) for the President of the Republic and the 53 Deputies from political organizations and independent candidates; and
- ii. Indirect elections (Electoral College) for the 24 Women members, 2 Members representing the Youth and 1 Member representing persons with disability.

Presidential Order n° 077/01 of 11/12/2023 relating to elections of the President of the Republic and Deputies Provides for:

- i. The polling date;
- ii. The campaign period;
- iii. The electoral constituency of 24 female Deputies and the number of seats for each electoral constituency;
- iv. The electoral colleges for the 24 women deputies, the 2 youth Deputies and 1 deputy with disabilities;

The constituency for the 24 Women Deputies is Province and City of Kigali and seats are distributed in accordance with the number of populations of each province or City of Kigali as follows:

- i. Northern Province: four seats;
- ii. Southern Province: six seats;
- iii. Eastern Province: six seats;
- iv. Western Province: six seats; and
- v. City of Kigali: two seats.

Electoral college for the 24 Women Deputies includes:

- i. Members of the Executive Committee of National Women Council from Village level to national level;
- ii. Members of Councils of Districts of the Province, at provincial level or members of the Council of the City of Kigali, at level of the City of Kigali;

Electoral college for 2 Deputies representing the Youth.

- i. Executive Committee of the National Youth Council at the level of each District and at national level.
Electoral College for 1 Deputy representing persons with disability.

- i. Members of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Persons with Disabilities from District to national level and the Coordinator of the National Council of Persons with Disabilities at each Sector level
Regulations of the NEC n° 001/24 of 19/02/2024 governing Presidential and Parliamentary elections of 2024.

- i. Modalities for registration and updating the voter register including manual and online.
- ii. Provisions on submissions of candidature for Presidential and parliamentary Candidates;
- iii. provisions on Presidential and Parliamentary election campaigns;
- iv. Provision on media coverage of elections;
- v. Provision for Public Broadcaster (RBA)'s provision of equitable and free access to its media platform by all Candidates during election Campaigns;
- vi. provisions on the role and conduct of security Agencies during elections;
- vii. provisions on the roles and conduct of volunteers at different levels

2. Electoral Preparation

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) undertakes and goes through systematic electoral processes in collaboration and partnership with different election stakeholders. These processes include:

- i. preparation and publication of election laws and regulation;
- ii. prepare the elections calendar;
- iii. prepare a detailed operation plans and strategies for smooth conduct of elections and for the purpose of mitigating foreseeable challenges.

The NEC also emphasizes on principles of inclusion and ownership of election processes by all election stakeholders. These include but are not limited to:

- i. Government Ministries and agencies whose mandates are linked to election processes;
- ii. Political organizations at individual level or through the National Consultative Forum of political organizations;
- iii. Non- government organizations including Civil Society Organizations and Faith, Best Organizations;

- iv. National Councils: Youth, Women and Persons with disabilities;
- v. Public and private media Houses;
- vi. Security organs (National Police)

The NEC goes through an elaborate process that include:

- i. Strategic and Annual planning that is aligned to the Country's term of office of elected Leaders;
- ii. Preparation of thorough and detailed election operation plans covering the entire election cycle in an election year;
- iii. Election stakeholders' engagement in evaluation of past elections with a view to making improvements in up-coming National elections;
- iv. Consultation with election stakeholders in the drafting of the National general elections electoral calendar and elections regulations;

Through Memorandum of understanding (MoUs) with election stakeholders, prepare and deliver electoral civic education, training and information programmes to the population. This is done even in non- election years in preparation of the next electoral cycle;

Planning and working closely with the Rwanda National police in securing the entire electoral process.

Through the National Women's Council, the Ministry of Gender & Family Promotion builds on women leaders' engagement and play a vital role in sensitizing women and girls using their collective voice, leadership, and mentorship skills. The targeted women achievers are engaged in sharing their leadership experiences and lead national and local awareness campaigns. National gender machinery mobilizes, develop capacity for, and facilitate women candidates through mentorship, coaching, and inspirational talks by senior and experienced resource persons.

Elections Observation Mission is a vital component in the elections process. NEC always sends out invitation and carries out accreditation Internationally, Regionally and Nationally to election observers and for the International and Regional observers the immigration department facilitates their entry and exit into the country. This role is anchored on the provisions of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

The local government plays a critical role in mass mobilization to participate in and benefit from electoral processes. The National Gender Machinery works with the local Government to mobilize the population to equally participate in electoral processes and ensure gender-responsive campaigns and electoral sites.

Through the Broadcasting Agency all candidates are given equal coverage of airtime on the national broadcaster thus through TV and Radio.

The element of Dialogue and consensus is the political governing spirit during elections and through political parties and simple majority determines the winners.

The compliance with gender equality principles in governance processes as enshrined in the Constitution of as a requirement of gender representation, of at least at 30%, in all decision-making positions is upheld universally. This is evident with the more than two-thirds of its parliamentary seats and over 30 percent of cabinet positions occupied by women.

Youth voluntary initiative in the electoral and different political party process are promoted. This is mostly on a voluntary basis through the Youth Volunteers initiative. Since the last elections (2018), there has been more than two (2) million new youths registered who attained the age of 18 and are credible for voting. However apart from voting youth play a vital in civic education and electoral observer missions. Recruitment and training of election volunteers. NEC plans to use over 100,000 Volunteers as polling staff and election presiding officers during the upcoming Elections slotted for 15th July 2024;

The persons with disability are provided access to take part in the electoral process and preparation of the country's elections for example through the National Council of Persons with Disabilities work closely with NEC to provide access for persons with disabilities at polling posts, sign languages/interpreters during campaigns as well as braille materials for persons with visual impairment.

Major Components of the Election Calendar are as follows:

- i. Voter registration.
- ii. Accreditation of election observers.
- iii. Submission of candidatures.
- iv. Period for electoral campaigns that are 22days.
- v. Polling date and this also caters for the Diaspora population.
- vi. Publication of results.

Timely and comprehensive voter registration and voter register update. This is done every year regardless of whether there are national elections. This system is interlinked with the National Identification Agency;

Timely planning and acquisition of election logistics. Majority of these logistics are acquired locally like printing of ballot papers, polling booths, among others;

Funding of political Organizations is channeled through the Consultative Forum for Political Organizations that are registered in Rwanda. This grant is given to those programs considered by the forum as common to Political organizations. The government, in its budget provides for grants to Political organizations and independent candidates for their campaigns. This amount of money is equally distributed. The grant is only given to Political organizations and independent candidates that have obtained at least five per cent (5%) of the electoral votes. The Government provides for this grant in its annual budget.

5.2 CHALLENGES

Conducting national general elections comes with a number of challenges. The NEC like many other Election Management Bodies encounters the following challenges:

- i. National funding of electoral activities is not always as planned. financial gaps remain though do not hinder the general conduct of elections;
- ii. Voter registration and voter register update especially for first-time voter and Rwandan community abroad (Diaspora);
- iii. planning and acquisition of election logistics especially those sourced outside the country;
- iv. Some individual aspiring and nominated candidates sometimes fall short of adhering to the provisions of the law and regulations governing elections especially during election campaigns;
- v. The era of social media platforms and their use though positive in reaching many voters has challenges in self- regulation in electoral processes.

5.3 OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee made the following observations

- i. The Committee commends the coordinated efforts of the various government agencies and non-government agencies in Rwanda ensuring that NEC delivers and conduct free, fair and transparent elections that promotes democracy and good governance in the upcoming Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2024;

- ii. During the oversight activity, the Committee established the limited days that the election campaign period for Political Organizations and independent candidates which is 22 days only;
- iii. According to the stakeholders, they are intentional to make Rwanda a model of best practices in democracy inclusiveness. This is where consensus generation and dialogue are used for decision making which brings about harmonious co-existence. The Committee commends the government of Rwanda for this deliberate effort;
- iv. The Mobilization Officer, National Women's Council, informed the Committee that the electoral processes in Rwanda are gender responsive. In addition, various gender transformative legal and policy frameworks have been adopted to remove any provision perpetuating gender inequalities and guarantee equal political rights for women and men. This is evident in adherence of the laws that have been enacted to foster gender equality. The Republic of Rwanda constitution does not only enshrine the principle of gender equality but also guarantees a minimum quota of 30% for women in decision-making organs;
- v. The Committee commends National Identification Agency (NIDA) for the coordinated efforts in ensuring the voters register is up to date by interfacing its systems with that of NEC. Such enhanced efforts will help in creating a secure and conducive environment that facilitates voting;
- vi. During the oversight activity, the Committee established about the voluntary initiative that is being promoted during the electoral process. The youth voluntarily present themselves to be part of electoral process where they are engaged in assisting NEC in various activities at the polling stations and any other assignments given to them. This initiative makes the youth to be accountable to their country.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommend to the Assembly to:

- i. Urge the Council of Ministers to allocate funds for that will cover the whole Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution to be carrying out electoral observer missions during elections within the region;
- ii. Urge the Secretariat to prepare and present before the Assembly the reports from electoral observer missions;

- iii. Urge the Council of Ministers to urge Partner States to invest in modern technologies and mostly to have national identification agencies link up election management bodies so as to have an easy voters register update;
- iv. Urge the Council of Minister to urge Partner States to have electoral processes that promote inclusiveness of the youth, Persons with disability and are gender sensitive.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Conducting National general elections is very tasking and challenging to an election management body that requires very elaborate electoral processes and implementable regulations as per the electoral cycle in place. The smooth conduct of elections mitigating and addressing challenges throughout the electoral processes requires professionalism, impartiality and integrity on the part of election managers that are core principles of the National electoral Commission elections management values. A successful, free, fair and transparent national general election process also calls for active participation, involvement and ownership of the entire elections process by all election stakeholders.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee of Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution wishes to thank the Rt. Hon. Speaker and the Office of the Clerk for facilitating it to carry out its oversight function. The Committee further appreciates the stakeholders for the information given to the Committee. The Committee hopes that the findings and the recommendations contained in this report will greatly improve on the challenges faced during elections in the Partner States.

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