

NEC engages Civil Society Organizations

written by NEC Press | January 17, 2025



The National Elections Commission (NEC) held a stakeholder engagement consultative meeting on 17 January 2025 with a diverse group of civil society organizations (CSOs) including faith-based organizations, academia and media from South Sudan. The objective of the half-day engagement focused on raising awareness on the electoral process and key updates related to the electoral timeline and preparations.

Over 60 CSOs participated in the event who welcomed NEC's initiative to strengthen dialogue with electoral stakeholders and exchange crucial information about the progress of electoral preparations and challenges, such as proposed timelines for constitutional review, population census and elections, electoral legal framework and budget constraints.







This series of stakeholder engagements form part of the Commission's action plan adopted during a retreat in Entebbe, Uganda, in December 2024. The consultative meeting was NEC's

second stakeholder meeting, following a similar one held with political parties on 17 December 2024.

NEC Engages Political Parties in Crucial Electoral Preparations

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The National Elections Commission (NEC) held a stakeholder engagement consultative meeting on **17 December** with diverse political parties from South Sudan to discuss electoral

timelines, electoral preparations and enabling decision-making for credible elections. Twenty-six (26) registered political parties attended the event.

The NEC provided a detailed briefing to the participants on electoral achievements and challenges related to the National Election Act and the electoral timeline. Several issues were highlighted to the plenary, including but not limited to: (i) the outcomes of the recent operational planning workshop from 3-5 December 2024 in Entebbe; (ii) adoption of the two regulations on observers, media and party agents and election campaign; (iii) adoption and signing of the NEC Code of Conduct; (iv) development of a NEC civic and voter education strategy; and (v) updates on the refurbishment of the new State High Election Committee offices.

In an interactive spirit, political parties engaged in discussions with the NEC, and the latter appealed to the parties' support in taking critical decisions required to advance the electoral process. There was consensus among the group that while the Commission relies on legal frameworks to guide its mandate and work, collaboration with the political parties remained essential for progress. It was also encouraged by NEC Commissioners for all political parties to be well informed with the National Election Act. Several questions were raised at the conclusion of the event on a number of issues relating to the gaps in the legal framework, decisions on the population census and constitution-making process, the question of IDPs and refugees, NEC budget and fundraising efforts. It was agreed that more forums with political parties will be convened to foster relations and build civic and political space for effective citizens' engagement with democracy and elections.

NEC Press Conference and Website Launch

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Juba, South Sudan—NEC held a press conference to announce the outcome of the NEC Operational Planning retreat and launch the official website for the NEC. 56 participants from NEC, Media houses, international partners, and others attended this event.



During this press conference Honorable Professor Abednego Akok

Kacuol, the chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC), and Deputy Chairperson Honorable Gabriel Gabriel Deng briefed the participants on the outcome of the Operational Planning, adoption of regulations, and signing of the code of conduct. The Spokesperson of the NEC spokesperson, Honorable George Lemi Yata launched the website and took the participants through its contents.

The commission then answered questions raised by the media about the legal framework, budget and finance, and the website.

NEC Concludes Operational Planning Retreat in Entebbe

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The National Elections Commission held a successful operational planning retreat in Entebbe Uganda, attended by nine commissioners, two Secretariat Staff, and eight UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team advisors.

The objective of this operational planning retreat was for the Commission to calibrate its priorities and establish an overall strategy for advancing its institutional readiness towards managing the electoral process that would enable the holding of the anticipated elections to be held in December 2026. Some of the objectives of the planning retreat

included:

- Review of R-ACSS extension timelines and identify key political decisions required for NEC to be able to deliver the December 2026 elections
- Define NEC's strategies and priorities.
- Define the method for drafting of the operational plan.
- Discuss Voter Registration and boundary delimitation processes and their implementation.
- Discuss the way forward towards Civic Voter Education and Education and Engagement
- Define the way forward for the review of the budget.

The outcome of this retreat was a ***communiqué*** and a set of action points that presented a coherent position that would guide the next set of engagements with the Government and other stakeholders. This engagement is aimed at strengthening the understanding of the challenges around the organization and conduct of the electoral process under the current conditions and it is expected that this understanding will foster informed and timely decision-making.

NEC Commissioners Sign Code of Conduct

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Following the adoption of *Regulation No. 1/2024 on the Use and Purpose of a Code of Conduct, and the National Elections Commission Code of Conduct 2024*, the National Elections Commission (NEC) has taken a significant step towards electoral preparations by having the commissioners individually sign the said Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct formulates values and principles for the professional and ethical conduct of members and employees of the NEC.

The event took place during the NEC Operational Planning retreat in Entebbe, marking a crucial step towards conducting democratic, inclusive, transparent, peaceful, and credible elections in the country.

Key Provisions of the Code of Conduct include:

1. **Respect for the Rule of Law:** requiring its signatories to ensure that the legal framework relating to elections is implemented in an impartial and equitable manner.
2. **Impartiality and Neutrality:** requiring its signatories to maintain neutrality, avoid partisan support, disclose potential conflicts of interest, and avoid accepting gifts or favors from election-related entities.
3. **Transparency:** requiring its signatories to provide effective access to electoral documents and information in a timely manner. This includes consulting with electoral stakeholders regularly and providing the legal rationale behind decisions made by the election administration.
4. **Accuracy:** requiring its signatories to ensure that all information collected, compiled, and published by the

NEC has a sound factual basis and is presented in a systematic, clear, and unambiguous manner.

5. **Service to Voters:** requiring its signatories to aim to provide the highest quality service to voters, ensuring they adequately understand the election process and can exercise their political rights effectively.

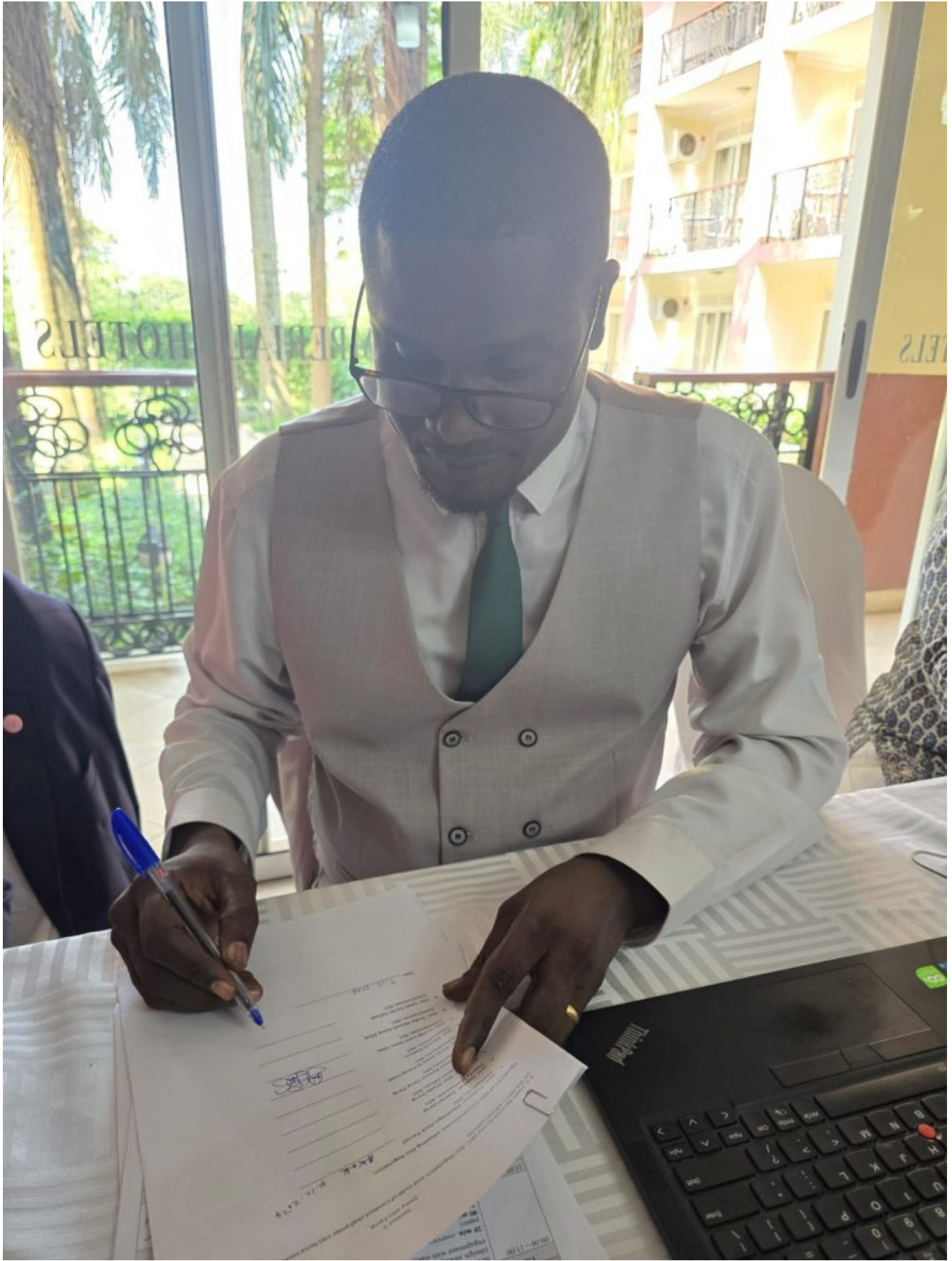
Duties and Responsibilities:

The Code of Conduct also outlines the duties and responsibilities of NEC members and staff. These include serving with impartiality and professionalism, exercising their powers without undue influence, and acting in the best interests of the people of South Sudan. They are also required to protect confidential information, attend all NEC meetings, and report any improper influence or misconduct. The signing of the Code of Conduct in Entebbe is an important milestone towards upholding the highest standards of conduct and ethics. This move is expected to enhance the credibility and integrity of the electoral process in South Sudan.



















NEC Adopts Three Electoral Regulations

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National Elections Commission (NEC) has taken a significant step towards electoral preparations through the adoption of three (3) electoral regulations. This took place during the NEC Operational Planning retreat in Entebbe held between the 3rd and 5th of December 2024, marking a crucial step towards conducting democratic, inclusive, transparent, peaceful, and credible elections in the country.

These regulations are:

- 1. Regulation No. 1/2024 on the Use and Purpose of a Code of Conduct, and the National Elections Commission Code of Conduct 2024*
- 2. Regulation No. 2/2024 on Observers, Media Representatives, Agents and Special Guests*
- 3. Regulation No 3/2024 on Election Campaign*

The passing of these regulations in Entebbe is an important milestone in electoral preparedness. This move paves the way for the commission to begin preparations and planning for the December 2026 election.



Civic and Voter Education training for NEC and CSOs

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From November 25 to 28, UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UN IEAT) facilitated a BRIDGE training workshop on Voter and Civic Education (CVE) for members of Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs). The workshop aimed to enhance their capacity in CVE and familiarize them with NEC's CVE strategy. The workshop was attended by 24 participants from NEC, members of CSOs and the UN IEAT. The sessions emphasized techniques, strategies, and approaches for effectively engaging with stakeholders. As a result of the BRIDGE training sessions, three NEC staff members and one UN IEAT staff member successfully achieved accreditation as BRIDGE facilitators. This milestone represents a significant advancement in strengthening the capacity of NEC personnel in the field of training and facilitation.





BRIDGE Training Completed Successfully in South Sudan For SHECs

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Juba- From October 1st to October 17, 2024, chairpersons, deputy chairpersons, and members of the High Committees, staff members from the National Elections commission and representatives from various civil society organizations from all 10 states participated in a training program focused on electoral administration.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance the electoral process in South Sudan, facilitated by BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance, and Elections), a comprehensive capacity development curriculum for election management bodies worldwide. This program was conducted in two phases and was attended by 72 participants.

These trainings are aimed at equipping South Sudan's electoral stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage upcoming elections in the country.

NEC Successfully Completes Induction Training for State High Election Committees

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Juba, South Sudan – The National Election Commission (NEC) has successfully concluded the induction training for the State High Election Committees (SHECs), marking a significant achievement in preparation for the upcoming national elections scheduled for December 22, 2026. The workshop, held from October 8-11, 2024, in Juba, was organized with the support of the UN-Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UN-IEAT) and aimed at equipping the SHEC members with the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure a smooth electoral process.

The training is a culmination of months of meticulous planning and consultations that began earlier this year. In April and May, NEC officials visited all ten states to engage with stakeholders and discuss the establishment of the SHECs. The committees, comprising 50 members, were officially announced on June 17, 2024, by NEC Chair Prof. Abednego Akok Kachuol, and took their oath of office on July 11, 2024.

The induction workshop covered a comprehensive curriculum that included electoral laws, ethical standards, and operational procedures for managing elections. Participants were also

trained on logistical coordination, stakeholder engagement, and conflict resolution strategies to handle potential challenges during the electoral period. The NEC, along with the UN-IEAT, emphasized the importance of transparency, integrity, and inclusiveness in the electoral process.

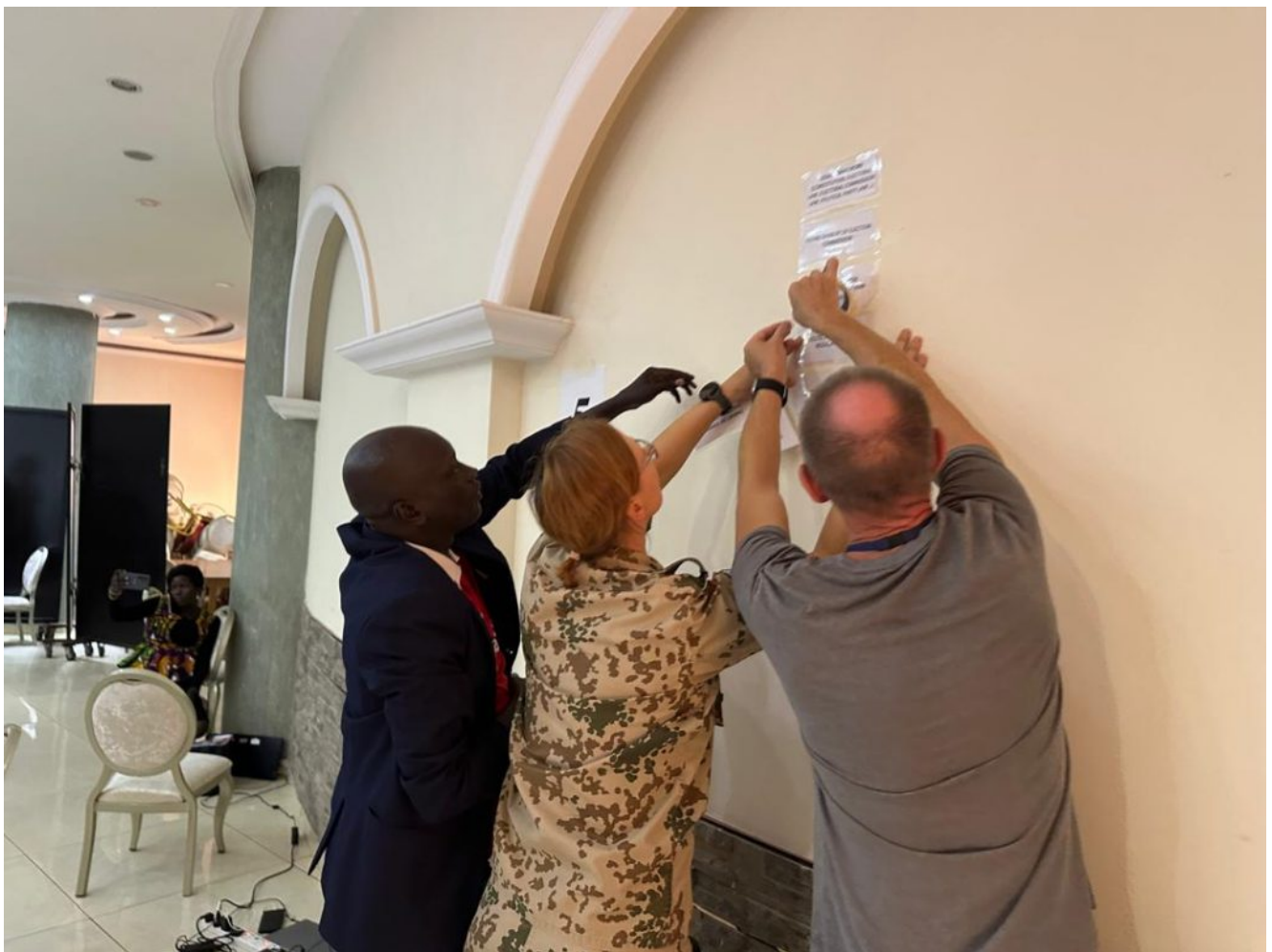
Speaking at the closing ceremony, Prof. Abednego Akok Kachuol commended the commitment and dedication of the SHEC members. "The completion of this training marks a critical milestone in our journey toward a fair and credible election in 2026. With this induction, our State High Election Committees are well-prepared to uphold democratic values and oversee the electoral process effectively," he stated.

Participants expressed their readiness to apply the training in their respective states, where their immediate focus will be refurbishing and setting up local offices to facilitate election-related activities. The NEC and the UN-IEAT will continue to provide technical support and monitoring as the SHECs carry out their mandate in the lead-up to the 2026 elections.

The successful completion of this induction training is a promising step toward strengthening South Sudan's democratic framework, as the country gears up for its national elections. The NEC's proactive measures, supported by international partners, underscore a commitment to enhancing the electoral process and ensuring that the voices of the South Sudanese people are heard.







BRIDGE Training for SHEC

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The newly appointed members of all ten State High Election Committees in South Sudan met in Juba to strengthen their knowledge on the principles of electoral administration with the support of the UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNMISS and UNDP).

The training utilized BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections), a comprehensive capacity

development curriculum for election management bodies worldwide. This training is one of many capacity building programmes planned to support South Sudan's electoral process.

This foundational BRIDGE training on Electoral Administration was launched on 1 October and will continue through 17 October, with the participation of the National Elections Commission, all State High Election Committees, and representatives of civil society organizations.