

# NEC and the Central Equatoria State High Committee boost awareness of the electoral process among CSOs in Juba

written by NEC Press | April 8, 2025



On 8 April 2025, the National Elections Commission (NEC) held a consultative meeting with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Central Equatoria State (CES) to discuss the NEC's electoral mandate and potential areas for cooperation between the NEC and CSOs. This meeting, hosted by the NEC State High Election Committee (SHEC) in CES, was the first convened by the NEC with state-level CSOs in this state. It followed a national-level consultative meeting between the NEC and CSOs in January, as well as nine (9) similar meetings held in each state of South Sudan during March 2025.

This one-day event brought together 48 representatives from state-level CSOs such as community and faith-based groups, youth and women's organizations, networks for persons with disabilities, and media representatives. The primary objective was to enhance public awareness of the electoral process and to strengthen relationships and partnerships between the NEC, SHECs, and CSOs. Notably, the event exhibited excellent inclusiveness, with 50% of participants being women.



The NEC Chief Electoral Officer, Hon. Mac Maika Deng, officially opened the meeting and shared the progress and challenges of the election preparations. These challenges primarily relate to aligning the electoral timeline, the constitution-making process, and census timelines, as well as the necessity for political and legal clarity and financing.

The Chairperson of the CES SHEC, Alphayo Philip Lako, introduced participants to the meeting agenda, which covered topics such as civic and voter education, voter registration, and overall election preparations at both the national and state levels. Additional subjects included the inclusiveness of the electoral process, the neutrality of NEC and SHEC members, capacity building for electoral stakeholders, and collaboration in the electoral process.

After the NEC and SHEC presented the framework for the electoral process, the CSO representatives discussed their activities and potential areas for support and collaboration with the NEC and SHEC.

During group work sessions, participants identified challenges regarding the upcoming elections and proposed collaborative solutions. Subsequently, these points were presented and discussed with the entire plenary. The discussions yielded valuable insights that the SHEC members gratefully received.



At the end of the meeting, the NEC and SHECs committed to convening regularly to share information on the electoral process and to maximise the essential role of CSOs as extended arms for civic and voter information, as well as being observers and watchdogs of the process. The CSO participants pledged to strengthen their collaboration with the election management body to ensure transparency and a coordinated approach to the electoral process. They also committed to supporting comprehensive public awareness campaigns related to civic and voter education once they receive clarity on the way

forward.

The UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNIEAT), which includes the UNMISS Electoral Assistance Division and the UNDP South Sudan Electoral Support Project, provided both technical and financial support for the meetings.