

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.