Seminar
Problematic of Elections in Africa How to Master the Electoral Process

New Strategies and Strengthening Electoral Capacities

Tangier (Morocco), 19 - 21 March 2012
PROBLEMATIC OF ELECTIONS IN AFRICA: WHY ELECTIONS FAIL & WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE ELECTION PROCESS IN AFRICA?

PRESENTED BY AMB. (DR) M.A WALI
Outline

• Verdict of CAFRAD on Elections
• AFRICA: Basic Data
• Election as a Democratic Process
• Understanding Democracy
• Problematic of Election
• Addressing Election Failures in Africa: Success Factors
• Conclusion
Verdict of CAFRAD on Elections

Elections in Africa have failed

Evidence:
Evidence
Interrogating the Verdict of CAFRAD on Elections

- Newness of electoral system?
- Electoral game?
- Complexity of legal rules?
- Social structure, economic difficulties?
- Other compelling reasons?
AFRICA: Basic Data

54 African Countries

Population 1,022,234,000

Population of Voters 400,000,000 es
Election as a Democratic Process

- Free, fair, transparent, and peaceful election
- Critical pillar of democratic process
- Participatory governance without violence
- People’s choice of their political leaders
- Most complicated and expensive single event a country will ever undertake
Requirements for Election

Voter Register  Ballot Papers/others  Ballot Boxes
Requirements for Election

Delimitation of Polling Units

Electoral Materials

Election Personnel

Security Personnel
Conducting Elections: Election Day

Access to Polling Units

Voters Register

Voters Card

Accreditation of Voters & Voting
Conducting Elections: Election Day

- Counting Process
- Sorting out ballots, counting & tabulation of results
- Collation, tallying of results
- Declaration of results
Understanding Democracy

DEMOCRACY IS GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE & FOR THE PEOPLE

Is “to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote”.
Conditions for Democracy

- Competitive Election
- Rule of Law
- Separation of Powers
- Freedom of Speech
- Free Press
- Free Market Economy
- Provision of Social Services
Democracy in Africa

- Since 1990s democratic elections have been
  - Restored
  - Accepted
  - Basic means of legitimizing governance institutions
  - 171 elections
Democracy in Africa

Some elections have been characterized by failures. Failed elections are elections that are not credible.
Characterization of Failed Elections
### Manipulation of the electoral environment
- Intimidation and harassment of voters
- Coercion, arrest and imprisonment of opposition leaders
- Over spending in campaign financing

### Election irregularities:
- Election fraud
- Election flaw
- Election rigging
- Multiple voting
- Falsification of results
- Fraudulent announcement of a losing candidate as winner (without altering the recorded result)
- Partisan polling officials
- Suspension of voting
- Illegal voting
- Shortage of election materials
- Buying of votes
- Ballot paper-snatching and mutilation
- Ballot box-snatching and stuffing

### Elections failed to satisfy the expectations of people: free, fair, transparent, peaceful and legitimate election
- Lack of trust in the electoral system
- Absence of credible voters register (proper voting lists)
- Lack of transparency
- Insecurity

### Where domestic and foreign election observers adjudged election as failing to meet the minimum standard:
- AU Observers
- ECOWAS Observers
- SADC Observers
- EU-EOM Observers
- Commonwealth Observers, Carter Cent
- NDI & IRI

### Collapse of Electoral System
- Military Dictatorship

### Electoral Disputes
- Countless litigations

### Voter turn out below 30%

### Violence
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Election irregularities:
The 2007 state and federal elections have fallen far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. ... As a result, the elections have not lived up to the hopes and expectations of the Nigerian people and the process cannot be considered to have been credible.

- EU-EOM Final Report on 2007 General Elections in Nigeria

Not resolved in time

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Violence

Coup D'état in 33 African Countries

- Algeria
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Comoros
- Congo
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Egypt
- Equatorial Guinea
- Ethiopia
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea - Bissau
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Sudan
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda

No Coup D'état in 21 African Countries

- Angola
- Botswana
- Cape Verde Djibouti
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Zimbabwe
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Eritrea
- Gabon
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Namibia
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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- Ballot box-snatching
- Illegal voting
- Dispersion of voting materials
- Suspension of voting
- Not resolved in time

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Elections seem to be the primary conflict-generating factor despite the existence of democratic institutions

- Some suggested in 2009 that multiparty democracy in Africa can only lead to bloodshed
- Even some supporters of democracy in general agree that most African countries are not ready for elections
- Adoption of powering-sharing formula

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Election Violence in Kenya
Election Violence in Nigeria
Election Violence in Ivory Coast
Problematic of elections: Elections Failure in Some African Countries
Newness of democratic experimentation

Lack of trust and confidence in the EMBs

Foreign Interference

Desperation of politicians to capture power at all cost

Free market economy not fully entrenched

Political parties rely on primordial sentiment to win election: Not a contest of ideas

Huge political campaign expenditure: failure is not an option

Disregard for rule of law

Helplessness of the citizenry (poverty and ignorance)
Newness of democratic experimentations

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Inadequacies of EMBs

Unreliable VR

Rely on primordial sentiment to win election: Not a contest of ideas, but of sentiment

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Source of privilege for political party members

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Government is the largest employer of labour and source of affluence living

Inability to compete with foreign goods

No other challenging work as the private sector is not growing

Over reliance on aid

Population growth without corresponding economic growth

Free market economy not fully entrenched

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Addressing Election Failures in Africa: Success Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening election management bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing EMB’s capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalizing other electoral institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addressing Election Failures in Africa: Success Factors

Strengthening election management bodies

- Gaining public confidence
- Appointment of commission members
- Ensuring their independence
- Adequate power in electoral process
- Adequate budgetary financial support
- Financial autonomy
Success Factors for Addressing Election Failures in Africa:

- Achieve internal administrative skills
- Ability to monitor political party activities and their campaign financing
- Simplify electoral process
- Reliable VR

Other electoral institutions can be revitalized by:

- Enhancing EMB’s capacity
Addressing Election Failures in Africa: Success Factors

- Political parties
  - Strong opposition parties are key to ensuring confidence in the electoral system - 2-3 parties
- Judiciary, security
- Media and civil society organizations (election monitoring)

Revitalizing other electoral institutions
Addressing Election Failures in Africa: Success Factors

- Partnership with national and international organizations for promoting democratic culture
- Intensifying voter education and encouraging civic education in school
- Organizing workshops for sharing of information and ideas for improving electoral process
- Complying with international and regional standards on electoral process
Addressing Election Failures in Africa: Success Factors

- Prosecuting electoral offenders and their sponsors
- Standardization of key electoral process
- AU: African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance, 2007
- ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy
- SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections 2004
- Compendium of International Standards for Elections 2007
Trends of Electoral Success

Sierra Leone and Liberia, among the poorest in the world and only recently emerged from civil war, have demonstrated the power of elections to foster and solidify peace.
Conclusion

Democratically elected governments are far more likely to uphold human rights and serve the basic needs of their people.
Elections, oftentimes even if flawed, help to motivate citizens to engage with their government and become more involved in the democratic process.
Conclusion

Successful election is where there is peaceful transfer of power through free, fair, transparent, credible, acceptable and legitimate election, under a minimum irreducible voter turn-out, in accordance with international and regional standards as well as the constitutions and laws of the respective African countries.
Most Africans agree—according to a 2005 Afrobarometer survey, 60 per cent of Africans believe democracy is preferable to all other forms of government.

Even in the countries that have suffered most from failed or flawed elections—or even from the failure to hold elections entirely—the people have responded not by abandoning democracy but by increasing their demands for accountability and reform.”
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