



CANGO LOCAL OBSERVER MISSION

NOMINATION CENTER PERLIMINARY REPORT

2018 Kingdom of Eswatini National Elections



Supported by the European Union

1.0 Introduction

The Coordinating Assembly of NGOs was formalized in 1987. Since the 2003 elections, CANGO has been able to mobilize NGOs to participate in elections monitoring. In 2016, CANGO formally established the Eswatini Elections Support Network. The network has been able to carry out civic education, monitor the elections, prepare and disseminate reports for the Kingdom of Eswatini national elections. CANGO has been working with reputable institutions such as the Elections Institute for Southern Africa (EISA), the SADC Elections Network and the SADC CNGO on the elections. CANGO views elections as a mechanism that will advocate for laws that will promote realization of rights of citizens as enshrined in the country's Constitution, regional and international instruments the country has ratified. In preparation for the 2018 national elections, CANGO with support from the European Union delegation in the Kingdom of Eswatini deployed an observer mission comprising of 110 observers coming from the following organisations:

- i. WUS Eswatini
- ii. SACRO
- iii. CANGO
- iv. Council of Swaziland Churches.
- v. FAWESWA
- vi. FODSWA
- vii. MISA Swaziland
- viii. Umsimisi Community Project
- ix. HURISWA
- x. WLSA Swaziland
- xi. Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organisations (SCCCO)

CANGOs hosted two trainings for long term and short term observers who were trained on the Building Resource in Democracy & Governance (BRIDGE) modules that are internationally accredited. The trainings were held in April & June 2018 and were facilitated by two regional experts in Elections monitoring and observation from Zimbabwe who are BRIDGE accredited. The trainings were also facilitated by local observers under CANGO who have observed elections in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Egypt and Madagascar. CANGO also sought the use of experienced observers from the same member organisations.

Methodology: CANGO observer mission is based on the SADC guidelines and principles guiding the observation of elections. An observer questionnaire was developed and adopted attached as Annexure 1. The Key areas covered during the nomination process are as follows:

- Commencing time of nominations and the overall duration of the process.
- Environment outside the nomination center including its accessibility for people living with disabilities.
- Procedures followed by presiding officers and returning officers to manage the nomination process including their identification material.
- Orderliness of the process including peace and security.

- Freeness and fairness of the nomination process.
- Verification process undertaken upon successful nominations of individuals.
- Use of technology in the nomination process.
- Announcement of the results and how they will be transmitted to the next level.
- Other general observations that could be seen in the nomination center.

2.0 Observer Mission preliminary report:

The Eswatini Elections Support Network under CANGO deployed 110 observers in 87 nomination centres in 37 Tinkhundla constituencies across all four regions of Eswatini. The list of nomination covered is attached as Annexure 1. **The Eswatini Elections Support Network hereby observes that the nomination process was transparent, peaceful, free and fair in all the nomination centres.** The Elections Support network would like to congratulate His Majesty's Government and the Elections & Boundaries Commission on a successful nomination process. In most nomination centres, the network notes that they were usually around 300 eligible voters that effectively participated in the nomination process selecting their own choices to represent them in the next parliament and local administration. The highest turnout was seen at Kamkhweli in Siphofaneni where over 1500 eligible voters participated. This shows that the nomination centres were announced well in advance allowing the community to effectively participate in the process. During the nomination days, radio announcements in Siswati continued to be aired during the day and this is greatly encouraged. EBC is also commended for the use of Twitter and Facebook pages which provided key updates for the elections.

Here is the detailed technical report:

- i. **Changing of dates and venues:** Wherein the nomination process was well organised, some nomination centres were changed last minute like Emhlane, Old Nkhaba Inkhundla which caused confusion.
- ii. **Visibility of Nomination Centers:** The Eswatini Elections Support Network under CANGO noted that the EBC went to great lengths to ensure that signage was placed in most nomination centres and public transport was made available to all eligible voters allowing communities to participate in the process. CANGO would like to applaud the EBC for this effort as it ensured that the nation could effectively engage this exercise.
- iii. **Commencing Time:** Most nomination centres were set up and ready to proceed by 8.00 and and by 9.00am most had commenced the nomination process. Most nomination centres finished the process around 5.00 pm and took an average of 8 hours to finish the nomination process. Timely and adequate provision of voter materials to undertake nomination exercise could ensure that unnecessary delays are avoided.
- iv. **Capacity of Presiding Officers in managing the nomination process:** In all areas covered, most presiding officers were knowledgeable on the nomination process to be undertaken as provided in the electoral laws of Eswatini. However some presiding officers lacked patience in managing the process as observed in KaLanga. Such misunderstanding could easily have been managed by explaining the process to the communities and what was expected from eligible voters. **Recommendation:** The Elections support network would like to encourage the EBC to use experienced presiding officers who have extensive knowledge of such a process to avoid untimely delays. The

EBC should consider printing a manual that presiding officers could refer to during the nomination process. The Elections support networks notes that all officials were trained but a reference guide could really enhance the process.

- v. **Untimely Delays:** Logistic delays were common in most nomination centres due to lack of extension cables to charge laptops. In some nomination centres, lack of tables and chairs for election officials including shelters was also common delaying the commencement of the nomination process. Some centres had PA systems and some had mega phones. Some of the nomination centres finished as late as 8.00pm like Nkanini Umphakatsi in Lobamba. **Recommendation:** We recommend that the EBC considers procuring mega phones for all nomination centres and or invest in PA systems for bigger constituencies (like KaMkhweli in Siphofaneni) to allow the Presiding and returning officers to efficiently do their job. Bigger crowds meant a lot of noise and without the assistance of a PA system; occasionally presiding officers could not be heard. Provision of electricity should also be a priority as noted in Kamkhweli where candles were eventually used as the nomination process which ran till late as far as 7.00pm.
- vi. **Opening Prayer:** In some nomination centres, the nomination process commenced with a Christian word of prayer making eligible voters very uncomfortable like in Mangwaneni community school in Mbabane and 6 other nomination centres. Eligible voters were quick to react to the prayers and some even approached CANGO observers to document the prayers and highlight that not only eligible voters are of Christian domination and the EBC should contextualise this matter in line with the Constitution of the Kingdom. **Recommendation:** In line with Section 23 of the Constitution of Eswatini, EBC should guide the presiding officers to seek the consent of the community before commencing the nomination process with a Christian word of prayer as the community of Eswatini demographics have changed and there has been an infusion of different religions observed by the native inhabitants of the Kingdom of Eswatini.
- vii. **Security Officers & Order:** The Eswatini Elections Support Network under CANGO would like to recognise the efforts of the Eswatini Royal Police Service who were deployed in all nomination centres and ensured peace and order. Police force was visibly present and ensured peace and order which translated to a successful nomination process. All nomination centres were orderly and disorderly conducts of highly intoxicated eligible voters was quickly suppressed by security officials ensuring a smooth process.
- viii. **Accessibility of the nomination centres:** Most polling stations were accessible to people living with disabilities and this is commendable as it allows for the inclusion of the right of people with disabilities. The Eswatini Elections Support Network under CANGO noted that the following nomination centres were the only places that were sighted as inaccessible for people living with disabilities. Accessibility covers people living with physical disabilities and their movement inside a nomination centre, blind people and hindrances for them moving around a nomination centre and assistance that was provided by the commission ensuring that they enjoy the full rights. The following nomination centres proved to be a hindrance to people living with disabilities: Mjingo High School, Bhekephi primary school, Fonteyn High School, SAGM primary school Londunduma High School, Mbabane Central High School, Nkwalini Red Cross offices, Maguga Dam high, Dwaleni Gusheshe and Maguga Dam High. By accessibility to nomination centres, The Eswatini Elections Support Network under CANGO is guided by the African Charter of people living with disabilities and UN Convention on the rights of people living with disabilities. **Recommendation:** The network notes that better

provisions could have been made for people living with disabilities to allow them to exercise their rights in the following nomination centres and we would like to encourage the EBC to take appropriate measures to address challenges faced by people with disabilities during national elections.

- ix. **Women & Nominations of people living with disabilities:** We would like to recognise and applaud all eligible voters of the Kingdom of Eswatini for the nominations of women and people living with disabilities across all nomination centres without prejudice and favour. Voters genuinely nominated marginalised groups without any hindrance and this is a step in the right direction for the country in line with Vision 2022.
- x. **Presence of women to nominate:** It was observed that in almost all nomination centres, most of the eligible voters in attendance were women outnumbering men by 2:1 based on the estimates of the observers on the ground. Women participation in elections can promote the spirit of Gender equality in the decision making structures and the Elections support network greatly encourages the participation of women and other marginalised groups in the electoral process.
- xi. **Presence of Other Observer Missions:** Elections Support network only interacted with the Human Rights Commission of Eswatini who had deployed observers on the ground. The presence of other observer missions is greatly commended as it provides for an enabling environment to ascertain whether the election process is free, fair and transparent. This is conformity with prescribed international procedures governing the conduct of elections.
- xii. **Selection of potential nominees:** All presiding officers seemed well knowledgeable how to undertake and lead the nomination process and how many people were needed to ensure that one was considered an eligible nominee. Procedure was also followed in all nomination centres with regards to the counting and verification of eligible voters who had nominated a potential nominee. Communities seemed very conversant with the process of nomination.
- xiii. **Presence of other officials in all processes:** The Elections support network noted that there was no other official in all nomination centres other than assigned authority. Confusion was only noted in KaNdinda but the Chief from the royal kraal quickly redressed the matter and all went smooth afterwards. Where presiding officers are women and will lead process in a royal kraal or Umphakatsi, EBC should take considerate care in the allocation of officer's line with Swazi Law & Custom.
- xiv. **Time Management of the process:** The EBC should provide time estimates for each the nomination process for Bucopho, Indvuna Yenkhundla and Member of Parliament. This will allow for presiding officers to be able to time themselves when managing each stage of the process. This will also give communities an opportunity to be able to effectively be engaged in the process without losing their patience due to extreme weather conditions like heat as experienced in the nominations that took place in June 28 & 29.

Conclusion: The Elections Support Network would like to congratulate the Elections & Boundaries Commission (EBC) for a successful nomination process. CANGO also notes that all observers deployed under the Elections support network were treated as guided by electoral laws of Eswatini. CANGO Consortia including the Elections Support Network is still concerned about the ritual killings linked to the elections and continues to call for an end to ritual killings. The Elections support network wishes the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini successful primary elections. The Elections network under CANGO would like to encourage EBC to invest in capacity building of the presiding officers and running simulations for officers to be familiar with the process especially those that were new presiding officers. Provision of braille and the use of interpreters for deaf people should be considered as means to ensure that people living with disabilities are not marginalised and are not allowed to exercise their right to vote.

For any information regarding the observer mission, please contact CANGO at the following contact points:

Landline: 00268 2404 4721/6586

Email: cango@cango.org.sz

Facebook Group: Coordinating Assembly of NGOs in Swaziland

Facebook Page: CANGO Swaziland

Twitter: @CANGO3

CANGO Blog: www.cangoswaziland.wordpress.com

CANGO website: www.cango.org.sz