

STATEMENT ON THE SECOND TECHNICAL MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL FORUM

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THE SECOND TECHNICAL MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL FORUM
**CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK
FOR ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA SINCE 1960**

Meeting Objectives

- To explore the history of electoral legislation in Nigeria
- To identify key issues in the electoral legislation since 1960
- To suggest further areas that require electoral reform in Nigeria
- To propose strategies for engagement

Wednesday, 20th October 2021
Live on Zoom
10:00am Prompt

With Support From:


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The second technical meeting of The Electoral Forum was conducted on Wednesday, 20 October 2021, on the Zoom platform. The Electoral Forum is an initiative of The Electoral Hub that pools resource persons from electoral management bodies (EMBs) together with other electoral stakeholders to conceptualise solutions to the unique problems facing electoral governance in Nigeria by addressing both the supply (EMBs) and demand (CSOs etc.) sides of electoral services. The project is supported by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and chaired by Professor Bayo Olukoshi.

The theme of the Forum's second technical meeting was "Constitutional and Statutory Framework for Elections in Nigeria since 1960". The Director of The Electoral Hub, Ms. Princess Hamman-Obels, in her opening remarks, outlined the objectives of the meeting:

1. To explore the history of electoral legislation in Nigeria
2. To identify key issues in the electoral legislation since 1960
3. To suggest further areas that require electoral reform in Nigeria
4. To propose strategies for engagement with NASS, INEC, and the public

During the technical session, which was moderated by the Chairman of the Forum, Professor Olukoshi, Forum members reviewed extensively the laws that established the various electoral commissions in Nigeria since 1960, the powers that have been given to them, the elections they conducted, and the significant impact they have had on the electoral process.

Having reviewed this historical legal framework, Forum members proceeded to discuss the current electoral legal landscape. Speaking on the Senate amendments to the Electoral Bill on 12 October 2021, they expressed joy that some of the issues recommended by the Forum during its inaugural meeting were addressed. These include empowering the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to determine the mode of results transmission, as well as making it mandatory for the Commission to monitor party primaries.

Nevertheless, Forum members expressed concern about the Senate's decision to restrict parties to conducting direct primaries. They posited that rather than requiring parties to conduct one form of primaries, it is more important to have a certified list of delegates or party members, as the case may be, which INEC can use to effectively monitor the primaries. According to Forum members, without this tool made available to INEC, there will still be underhand dealings during party primaries, whether direct or indirect.

Furthermore, Forum members highlighted that while the Senate has amended some of the pressing issues in the Bill, they have failed to tackle other equally important issues which were highlighted during the Forum's inaugural meeting, particularly the clause on campaign finance. A Forum member pointed out:

We need to sieve those clauses out so that the euphoria of amendment will not make us forget those ones that were not amended.

Also, on the agenda of this meeting was identifying further areas of electoral reform. Forum members made recommendations on various areas, including cross carpeting, timelines for by-elections, party primaries, campaign finance, quotas for women and persons with disabilities, adjudication of pre-election cases, registration and deregistration of parties, mode of appointment of INEC members, and unbundling INEC.

These recommendations will be used to produce outputs such as policy briefs, advocacy asks and infographics, to be released on the Forum page: <https://electoralhub.iriad.org/electoralforum>. Stakeholders in the electoral process are urged to join the Forum in the advocacy for better electoral governance in Nigeria.

Signed

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Chairman of The Electoral Forum

Secretariat phone: +234 912 155 1331 and +234 908 699 8850

Secretariat email: electoralhub@electoralhubng.org and electoralhub@gmail.com

Forum webpage: <https://electoralhub.iriad.org/electoralforum>

Forum Facebook handle: @electoralforum