



INITIATIVE FOR RESEARCH,  
INNOVATION AND ADVOCACY  
IN DEVELOPMENT

## THE ELECTORAL FORUM

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### Statement on Third Technical Session

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The Third Technical Session of The Electoral Forum was conducted on Saturday, 22 January 2022, at The Envoy Hotel. This meeting was organised by The Electoral Forum, an initiative of The Electoral Hub that pools resource persons from electoral management bodies together with other electoral stakeholders to conceptualise solutions to the unique problems facing electoral governance in Nigeria. It is chaired by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi.

The Forum's Third Technical Session, which was supported by the MacArthur Foundation and OSIWA, was held to discuss key 'contentious' areas for further reform in the electoral process, including political party primaries and mode of appointment of members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The Chairman of the Forum, Professor Olukoshi, in his opening remarks, outlined the objectives of the meeting:

- To discuss further areas of electoral reform in Nigeria
- To adopt a Forum position on key issues in the electoral process
- To provide recommendations to improve the electoral process in Nigeria
- To identify advocacy mechanisms for quick passage of the Electoral Bill 2021

During the technical session, Forum members proceeded to discuss extensively options for reforming the mode of appointment of INEC members. They came to a consensus that a parliamentary committee should be formed and tasked with conducting a transparent screening process for National Electoral Commissioners and Resident Electoral Commissioners, with the intention that the procedures for nomination would consider people with 'knowledge, carriage, and courage'.

The Forum also supported the idea of the scrutiny of nominees being the responsibility of the public. They proposed that the CVs of nominees be thoroughly scrutinised, with members of the public having the ability to raise issues and provide comments. They also proposed that civil society organisations should be accountable for investigating the professional and political backgrounds, as well as the integrity of nominees, to ensure that the Commission does not become a breeding ground or marketplace for lobbyists.

*...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability and integrity*

Still on the issue of appointment of INEC members, it was proposed that the number of members appointed/replaced at any given time should be one-third of the full capacity to safeguard the continuity of the Commission, and to ensure that new members are not overburdened with preparation for elections as the remaining two-thirds would ensure continuity and bridging of gaps. Forum members also submitted that women and persons with disabilities deserve a level playing field as well as no barriers to entry.

Moving to the issue of political party primaries, the Forum agreed that establishing direct primaries at all levels of political parties would be prohibitively expensive, and neither the parties nor INEC are equipped to deal with such pressure. Moreover, Forum members held that it is a prevalent misconception that direct primaries are more democratic than indirect and consensus primaries. They held that that regardless of the manner of primary elections used, the final choice of candidate is the entitlement of all voters.

As a result, Forum members proposed that it is more important to identify measures to increase democratic and inclusive procedures, rather than regulating the internal affairs of parties and nominations. Some measures proposed include building the capacity of political parties to be defenders of democracy, sensitising party members on regulations governing the practice of party primaries and making party members aware of the power of their vote.

Following the rich discussions of the day, the Chairman and some members of the Forum organised a courtesy visit to the INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, on Monday, 24 January 2022. This meeting was held to formally propose the Forum to the INEC Chairman and begin strategic conversations with INEC on strengthening the integrity of the electoral process.

Various outputs from the technical meeting will shortly be released on The Electoral Forum's webpage: <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**

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*The Chairman and some members of The Electoral Forum with the INEC Chairman*



*The INEC Chairman and the Chairman of The Electoral Forum*



*The INEC Chairman and the Chairman of The Electoral Forum*

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