



The EC Bulletin

For Regular, Free and Fair Elections

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FOREWORD



On behalf of the Electoral Commission and on my own behalf I wish to convey warm greetings to you our stakeholders from the Commission. I welcome you to yet another edition of “The EC Bulletin”, a tri-annual newsletter published by the EC.

“The EC Bulletin” is part of a broader strategy embraced by the Commission to be more open, transparent, and accountable, through furnishing stakeholders with regular up-to-date information about the Commission’s various programs and activities.

Our main focus in this issue of the Bulletin is on the legal regime governing political parties in Uganda.

The Political Parties and Organisations Act (PPOA) 2005 was enacted to make provision for regulating the financing and functioning of political parties and organisations; their formation, registration, membership and organisation. The Act, inter-alia, mandates the EC to register and

regulate political parties and organisations, a responsibility that previously rested with the Registrar General.

With 35 registered political parties (as of April 2008), the above mandate which the PPOA places on the EC is an enormous one. Indeed, in the short spell that the Commission has been in charge of registration and regulation of political parties, we have already encountered several challenges including apparent lack of knowledge by some political parties about their obligations under the Act, as well as seeming reluctance/ failure by others to comply with the provisions of the law. These deviations mostly relate to declaration of assets and liabilities, as well as submission of audited accounts on an annual basis.

Aware of the above challenges, the Commission has so far mainly sought to sensitise and enlighten political parties of the requirements of the law. To this end, the EC has invited and held meetings with registered political parties.

The EC has also written to the parties reminding them of the provisions of the law and the penalties for breach of the same. We thank those political parties that have responded to our communication and endeavoured to comply with the provisions of the law.

The importance of political parties observing the law cannot be over-emphasized. As the main vessels for contestation/ acquisition of political power, parties have to lead by example if the rest of the

citizenry is to obey the laws of the land. This becomes even more imperative now that Parliament is considering the Political Parties and Organisations Bill (2008) which seeks to provide for state funding of political parties. The Commission, therefore, appeals to all registered political parties to regularly update themselves on the requirements of the law, and to abide by the provisions therein.

The Commission will not hesitate to move to the next stage of enforcement should some political parties persist in flouting or not respecting the law.

Eng. Dr. Badru M. Kiggundu
Chairman, Electoral Commission

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The Vision of the EC is to be a model institution and center of excellency in election management



DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ORGANISATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN UGANDA

Byakagaba Patrick

It is now three (3) years since the Electoral Commission took over from the Registrar General the function of registering, supervising and monitoring political parties and organisations. During this time the EC has been carrying out scrutiny and necessary update of the various records submitted by registered Political Parties and Organisations (PP/O).

One of the problems identified so far is that three years after registration, a number of (registered) political parties have not yet complied with some of the provisions of the Political Parties and Organisations Act (PPOA) of 2005, especially with regard to Statutory Requirements.

The EC has since engaged the PP/O in dialogue, and it is hoped that these concerned parties will comply with the law, or else face the legal consequence(s). For the avoidance of doubt, every registered political party must comply with the following Statutory Requirements:

1. Declaration of Assets and Liabilities

Registered political parties are required to submit annually, their Declaration of Assets and Liabilities on Form 2 in the Third Schedule of the PPOA, 2005. Section 9 of the Act provides that every political party or organization shall, within sixty days after expiry of the first year after issuance of a Certificate of Registration, submit to the Electoral Commission a written declaration on Form 2 (above) and thereafter, annually.

The Declaration must state the sources of funds and other assets of the party or organisation, which declaration must be authorized by the members of the Executive Committee. The Declaration must



be made before a Commissioner for Oaths and must be accompanied by the following:-

- ▶ A list of Executive Committee members of the Political Party, countersigned by all of them.
- ▶ A copy of the previous year's Balance Sheet.

Penalties

Where a Political Party or Organisation (PP/O) fails to submit its declaration of Assets and Liabilities within 21 days after notice from the Electoral Commission to do so, the Electoral Commission may apply to the High Court for an order to de-register the PP/O (Section 9 (6) of the PPOA 2005).

Where a PP/O makes a statement in the Declaration which is false, the PP/O commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Shs.1,440,000/= (One million four hundred and forty thousand).

A member of the Executive Committee of a PP/O who contributes in any way to the commission of the offence referred to above, also commits the offence

and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Shs 1,440,000/= (One million four hundred and forty thousand) or imprisonment not exceeding three years or both.

2. Annual Audited Accounts

Any respectable organization must at the end of its financial year prepare Books of Accounts reflecting its financial position. It is therefore incumbent upon the PP/O to maintain proper Books of Accounts. This is one way a party can win confidence and trust from its supporters and well-wishers largely because members of the public have a stake in them.

Take for example the legal requirement at registration that at least 50 supporters from two thirds of the current 80 districts of Uganda must append their signatures to the application. Some of those people might want to find out about the operations of the Party. They are free, on request, to access those records and a discovery that their Party is organized in this respect would go a long way in keeping them committed to the Party.

According to the PPOA, the Accounts of every PP/O must be audited once every year but not later than six months after its financial year by an Auditor from a recognized professional firm. These records must be maintained at the national Head Office of the Party and must include the following:-

- ▶ Any contribution, donation or pledge of contribution donation whether in cash or in kind made by the founders or promoters of the political party or organization.
- ▶ A statement of its Accounts, showing the sources of its funds and the name of any person who has

(Continued from page 20)

Briefs...

Judges want ban for election fraudsters



Candidates found to have committed an electoral offence should not sit in Parliament, should not participate in bye-elections and should be barred from contesting in elections for five years, judges have recommended.

The recommendation is one of many to be discussed by the judges during their annual conference in Kampala.

Since 2006 when the Parliamentary Elections were held, there have been several electoral petitions in the High Court because of vote stealing, electoral malpractices or lack of adequate academic papers.

As a way of dealing with the backlog, Principal Judge James Ogoola recommended that election petitions evolving around academic qualifications should be dealt with at the lowest levels through administrative and quasi-judicial mechanisms or tribunals at pre-election stage.

The annual conference, whose theme is "Enhancing judicial accountability through building synergies", is aimed at giving an audit of the Judiciary, taking stock of the backlog of cases as well as laying strategies for the New Year, according to the Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki.

(From the Daily Monitor, April 23 2008)

EC Budgets for 2011 Polls

The Electoral Commission has requested Parliament to approve a Shs.159.8 billion budget to conduct successful general elections in 2011.

The money is spread over three years. For the financial year 2008/9, the EC requires Shs46.9b, Shs8.8b for the financial year ending 2010 and Shs 84b for the 2011.

The Commission's submission was made on 22nd April 2008 before the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, which is scrutinising budget estimates for the Financial Year 2008/2009.

"The Shs 84b is among other activities, meant to procure ballot papers," EC Secretary, Sam Rwakoojo, said. "If our project proposal is adopted and implemented, many achievements shall be realised including a credible voters' register, timely procurement of voter education materials, equipment, reorganisation of polling stations and value for money."

He said early release of funds shall ease the pressure on cash flow and facilitate proper planning and implementation of the project.

"The EC is aware of the need for continuous voter education and training in order to have an enlightened electorate," Mr Rwakoojo said.



"However, it has not been possible to obtain adequate funding to fulfill the need. Our belief is that if voter education is not carried out early enough in a planned manner, we may not achieve our desired goals."

According to the 2005/2006 General Elections Report, the EC requested for Shs 74.3b and Shs 67b was released by the Ministry of Finance. The 2011 budget increment is a result of a new electronic voters' register equipment which the EC plans to purchase to replace that bought in 2000. The Commission also plans to purchase cameras with memory cards to replace old ones which use floppy discs.

"We have to update registers and equipment that shall enable us display all pictures on bill boards for each polling station," he said.

He appealed to the Committee to support the project proposal and the budget.

The Mission of the Electoral Commission

...to organise and conduct regular free and fair elections and referenda professionally, impartially and efficiently.



REPORT ON CAFRAD REGIONAL SEMINAR

Background and Context

From 24 to 28 March, 2008, The African Training and Research Center in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) organized, in Tangier, Morocco a Regional Seminar for Electoral Managers on the theme: How to Master Electoral Process and Prevent Fraud, Disputes and Violence in African Countries. The Seminar was attended by delegates from several African countries. Electoral Commission Chairman Eng. Dr. Badru M.Kiggundu represented Uganda.

The delegates reached consensus on the following points of Action:

Points of Action

1. Legal frameworks governing elections should be dynamic, responsive to specific country conditions and reviewed periodically in light of changing circumstances. National Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) should therefore make it their responsibility to ensure that all relevant laws are amended as needed. Enforcement of media laws to ensure equitable use of public media should be a matter of special concern to EMBs. Hence, EMBs should dialogue with all relevant stakeholders to enhance awareness of legal regimes governing elections;

2. In the context of deepening democratic processes and norms on the African continent, EMBs should initiate all-inclusive legal reforms & standards to govern electoral administration within Africa; benefits of standardization would include;

- ▶ Constitutionally guaranteed independence of EMB members/Commissioners

- ▶ Single body supervising all in-country electoral activities;
- ▶ Cost-effectiveness in organizing elections/referenda;
- ▶ Inter-African collaboration with EMBs in other countries

3. Apart from assuming the sole legally backed responsibility for inviting both foreign and local observers to observe electoral processes, EMBs, in collaboration with African institutions such as CAFRAD, should develop and enforce standardized codes of conduct for international and local observers consistent with relevant international and regional instruments. In enhancing African ownership over Africa's electoral processes, EMBs in collaboration with CAFRAD and all other relevant entities and stakeholders, should contribute to capacity enhancement of local observer groups;

4. Capacity enhancement support offered to EMBs by international partners such as OIF, IIDEA and others is deeply appreciated in terms of disseminating best electoral practices within Africa and beyond; and CAFRAD is therefore urged to explore with OIF, IIDEA and other partners, the creation, and strengthening of

existing knowledge networks in support of electoral processes in Africa;

5. EMBs and all relevant stakeholders in electoral processes should at all times remain sensitive to the historical marginalization, exclusion and discrimination suffered by African women and other disadvantaged groups in governance and electoral processes. In this connection, EMBs and all relevant stakeholders and actors, including CAFRAD should take all necessary measures to address gender and all other inequalities and injustices that may curtail electoral rights of citizens;

6. In countries emerging from crises, elections that are judged to be free, fair and credible by all major stakeholders represent a major step in the direction of sustainable peace and reconciliation. Apart from accommodating erstwhile political adversaries as part of fragile national reconciliation processes, EMBs in post-crisis countries require massive material and financial resources to extend the right to vote to Diaspora citizens, particularly those displaced by conflicts and/or natural catastrophes;

(Continued on page 5)



Common cause: Regional EMB officials resolved to work together to achieve better electoral service delivery on the continent (courtesy photo)

Political Parties Desk

A REVIEW OF PARTICIPATION BY POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 2006 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Byakagaba Patrick, Principal Election Officer/Political Parties Desk

On 23rd February 2006 Ugandans went to the polls to for the first time in twenty six (26) years, to elect a President and members of Parliament under a multi party arrangement. The last such elections were held in 1980, and only four parties participated, namely Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC), Democratic Party (DP), Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), and Conservative Party (CP).

By the time of 2006 General Elections, thirty one (31) Political Parties/Organisations were registered.

Of these, four managed to sponsor Presidential candidates namely:

- ▶ Democratic Party (DP)

- ▶ Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)
- ▶ National Resistance Movement (NRM)
- ▶ Uganda People's Congress (UPC)

On the other hand, 12 Political Parties were able to sponsor candidates for Parliamentary and Local Council elections. The remaining nineteen (19) parties/organisations did not participate at candidate level, but are noted for their active involvement in the various stages of the electoral processes namely, for example campaigns and polling day activities.

Some commentators note that these parties used the exercise to study

the political landscape and prepare themselves for future participation. Hence the participation of few political parties is probably understandable given that this is a new phenomenon.

The EC commends the parties for the progress made in respect to participation, and will always keep them (parties) updated on current election programmes to enable even more involvement. This is considered vital in cementing the country's democratic process. Certainly, the EC and indeed the general public, hope to see more parties/organisations participating in electoral exercises. It is through such participation that they (parties) will be appreciated as credible political players (see table on pg 6).

Statement of CAFRAD regional seminar *(Continued from page 4)*

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3. Apart from assuming the sole legally backed responsibility for inviting both foreign and local observers to observe electoral processes, EMBs, in collaboration

Facts! Facts! Facts!

- You use 200 muscles to take one step.
- A pair of human feet contains 250,000 sweat glands.
- The acid in your stomach is strong enough to dissolve razor blades.
- The human brain cell can hold 5 times as much information as the Encyclopedia Britannica.
- The enamel in your teeth is the hardest substance in your body.
- Your teeth start growing 6 months before you are born.
- Your thumb is the same length of your nose.

At this very moment, I know you are putting this last fact to the test...



The tables below show the number of candidates sponsored by each Political Party/ Organisation for Parliamentary and District Chairperson elections and the seats they managed to win.

Table 1: Political Party participation in the 2006 Parliamentary and District Chairperson Elections

	Party	No. sponsored for MP incl. Female PWDs/ Youth & Workers	Seats won	Number sponsored for District C/persons	Seats won
1.	National Resistance Movement (NRM)	308	210	66	50
2.	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)	190	39	22	4
3.	Uganda People's Congress (UPC)	88	10	11	1
4.	Democratic Party (DP)	80	8	8	1
5.	Conservative Party (CP)	5	1	-	-
6.	Justice Forum (JEEMA)	9	1	-	-
7.	Progressive Alliance Party (PAP)	2	0	-	-
8.	Movement Volunteer Mobilisers Organisation (MVMO)		0	-	-
9.	National Unity Reconciliation and Development (NURP)		0	-	-
10.	Forum for Integrity in Leadership (FIL)	1	0	-	-
11.	Action Party (AP)	1	0	-	-
12.	Liberal Democratic Transparency (LDT)	1	0	-	-

- These figures exclude the Ten Army Representatives deemed to be Non-Partisan.
- Results for Adjumani (Woman) and Kyaddondo East (directly elected) already included in the above table were gazetted later and were won by NRM and FDC respectively.

Table 2: Parliamentary By Elections so far conducted

	Constituency	District	Date of by-election	Reason for by election	Winner in 2006	By Election Winner	No. Of Contestants
1.	Bugweri	Iganga	13- 12- 07	Court Ruling	NRM	FDC	7
2.	Bukomansimbi	Masaka	03- 04- 08	"	Independent	NRM	7
3.	Bukooli North	Bugiri	18- 03- 08	"	NRM	NRM	7
4.	Bukonzo East	Kasese	13- 11- 06	"	Independent	FDC	3
5.	Kalungu East	Masaka	17- 08- 07	"	Independent	NRM	5
6.	Labwor County	Abim	08- 01- 08	Death	NRM	NRM	3
7.	Masaka District Woman Representative	Masaka	25- 05- 06	Court Ruling	DP	NRM	2
8.	Ntoroko County	Bundibugyo	06- 09- 07	Death	NRM	NRM	3
9.	Samia-Bugwe North Cty	Busia	08- 01- 08	Court Ruling	NRM	NRM	4
10.	Oyam Cty South	Oyam	21- 06- 07	Death	Independent	UPC	4

Table 3: District By-elections so far conducted

	District	Date of By Election	Reason for By Election	Winner in 2006	Now held by
1.	Kamuli	10- 05- 07	Court Ruling	Independent	NRM
2.	Kyenjojo	31- 05- 07	Court Ruling	NRM	Independent
3.	Nakapiripirit	25- 10- 07	Court Ruling	Independent	NRM
4.	Pallisa	10- 05- 07	Court Ruling	NRM	Independent

Special Report

ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES SHOULD EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY FOR BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY

Charity N. Mbabazi

Elections involve several complex processes, which continue to be a challenge to Election Management Bodies (EMBs), especially in the developing world. These processes include voter registration, voter data processing, resulting into the voter's roll, processing of election returns at constituent levels leading to final tallying at central locations, declaration of winning candidates, etc.

I have been wondering how young democracies, which have limited communication infrastructure can use advanced technology methods to achieve maximum efficiency and benefits.

I will give an example of the voter registration process, where the number of registered voters always falls short of the projected figures (as per national population census figures)... get figures of Expected vs. Actual... www.ec.or.ug

Registration as a voter in Uganda is voluntary, and people tend to turn up towards the end of such exercises. I am considering the situation involving Uganda's elite who are calling for online registration. Can this be a solution? What are the legal and technical implications?

The EC uses a photograph-bearing National Voters Register (NVR), which means a person has to be physically present at a registration center to have his/her bio data and photograph taken. This may require a Ugandan abroad to return to the country for registration, probably stay around for the display exercise to ascertain his/her details are on the NVR, then go back to continue business, and promptly return to cast his/her ballot on polling day.



This would be a great sacrifice, and may be (in strict business sense) not worth taking.

The absence of law to provide for extra-territorial registration excludes many such persons living abroad. This matter should be considered by the law makers.

But besides voter registration, technology can also help in other processes. The emerging role of the internet in elections deserves closer attention, as it presents real opportunities for democratic transformation.

- Voters can check their registration status online
- Technology provides safe mode for transmission of the results. For example, uploading the results on the internet gives not only the constituency but the entire world, one accurate record.
- Technology makes faster computation of elections results - delay in declaration of winning candidate(s) is a documented cause of election violence.

A number of EMBs around the world, for example the United

Kingdom, have integrated technologically advanced websites and online services into election administration. It has been observed that the more interactive election managers are with their publics, the better prepared they will be to deal with issues that arise before, during and after polls.

It is often argued that poor countries like Uganda are not able to fund the EMB's to develop online infrastructure. But I think attitude is the greatest impediment to adoption of technologies. For example, Ugandans need to change and develop high levels of trust that such interventions are well-intentioned and will deliver.

I know that the anti-technology camp will quickly cite the disputed Florida results during the 2000 US Presidential Elections to advance their opposition to use of machines. But I know that such hitches have since been addressed.

The legitimacy of modern governance is based on free and fair elections. The new capacities of information and communication technologies require that the election laws, guidelines and practices be updated to ensure that democratic electoral goals are met in information age.

The author is a journalism student at Uganda Christian University, Mukono

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Website: www.ec.or.ug



Our History

HOW EC JOINED THE E-REVOLUTION

By the end of 1999, only one office at the Electoral Commission Headquarters, namely Data Processing Department (DPD), was connected to the internet; and since DPD was a restricted area, this meant that only authorised staff had access to the service, and for very limited periods.

At that time, as it is now, EC staff were required to have knowledge of computer, especially the basic word processing/spreadsheets programmes. Even then, many officers did not know how to use the internet and did not have email addresses.

The Photographic Voter Registration and Identification System (PVRIS) Project

Prior to the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections of March 1994, National Voters' Registers (NVR) in Uganda were used as a one-off, that is, they were disposed of after the particular election. Hence, the hand-written register used in the General Elections 1980 was not maintained after the exercise.

The Commission for Constituency Assembly compiled a new hand-written NVR in 1993, and embarked on computerising it after the CA elections, using Spreadsheets (Lotus 1/2/3). Bukomansimbi Constituency in Masaka District made history by becoming the first constituency in Uganda in which a typed (read computerised) NVR was used.

As the computerisation progressed, Management realised that Lotus was inadequate, as it can not handle large voter data. It was then that MS Access programme was adopted for compiling and maintaining the NVR.

However, MS Access also proved inadequate as a multi-user data processing programme, and the Commission migrated NVR data

to Oracle, under the Photographic Voter Registration and Identification System (PVRIS) Project introduced after the 2000 Referendum on Political Systems.

After that, computers became even more central in election management, as modern software packages and network systems were introduced. During this period, save for the dozen-plus statisticians and a few data entry operators, facilities like the internet were a myth to many staff.

After the introduction of the PVRIS Project in 2000, it became urgent to procure high speed internet connectivity for the more than eighty users in the then Data Processing Department (DPD).

And now the e-revolution was on; EC staff proved their versatility, as dozens of staff picked up the new information technology with gusto.

The success of the PVRIS increased the need for more specialised Information Communication Technology (ICT) personnel to back up the existing team, and take the new gains to an even higher level. In 2003, the EC embarked on a phased implementation of a new staff structure. This group included

specialised ICT personnel, for example programmers, network and database administrators, to support growing ICT structures. Since then, the management of voter data has only gotten better.

In 2004, the first phase of extending the local area network infrastructure to other EC offices was started and at present, more than 300 computers at the Electoral Commission Headquarters are connected to the internet and intranet. EC staff welcomed the initiative with a lot of enthusiasm, and immediately sought after the needed skills.

The Election Support Unit under the Partners for Democracy and Governance coordinated by Mr. Simon Osborne, are acknowledged for the invaluable support towards this cause.

The availability of internet connection in every office and on every desk has made it possible for almost all staff to realise the benefit of accessing information and communicating over the internet. Officers can now carry out profitable research or read for leisure material accessed from their desks. Yes, the internet has made solitaire and hearts unpopular

(Continued on page 20)



Photo: Bukunya Paul

Fruits of the PVRIS Project: Younger voters may find it strange to know a handwritten NVR was used during the March 1994 CA Elections.

Guest Writer **VOTER APATHY IS A ROADBLOCK TO DEMOCRACY**

Pascal Masereka, Hima Town Council, Kasese

Recent studies indicate that the numerous political talk-shows on radio and commentaries in the press have contributed to the increased levels of political awareness among Ugandans. For example, to many Ugandans, the year 2011 means general elections, an indicator that a sizable number are familiar with the electoral calendar. The ever-improving-and-expanding media industry is credited for this positive trend.

But election records indicate awareness has not been translated into high turn up. It is indeed to see voter apathy as a continuing challenge in our electoral process(see Table 2)

Voter apathy is a situation where voters express indifference and are unenthusiastic about elections; as a result, they refrain from playing their various respective roles in the electoral processes. This can be at the level of registration as voters, inspection of voter rolls, participation in candidates' campaign meetings, and turning up to vote on polling day.

Although voter apathy is not unique to Uganda - the United States has on average the lowest voter turnout among mature democracies - continuing in this trend is deterrent to development of electoral democracy and good governance in our young democracies... (see table 1 on voter turnout in USA)

It is the right of every Ugandan who is 18 years of age and above to register and vote during national and local government elections. It is good for democracy if a considerable percentage of the population is involved in electing the leaders. Although it is not compulsory to vote in Uganda, it is clearly unpatriotic to leave the election of leaders to only a few



Photo: Bukonya Paul

people.

Fellow Ugandans, we have an opportunity to be involved in making a decision on who governs us; let us utilise it. I particularly challenge young people to take interest in elections and to participate not only as voters but also as candidates.

The continuing challenge of voter apathy calls for self-examination. We need to work together to address it. It is unfortunate if we continue with the blame-game; the antidote to voter apathy is corporate effort by all stakeholders. If players like political parties, human rights activists, civil society organisations and religious institutions, join hands now and mobilise the public, there will be a

My choice: a woman casts her ballot paper during a Parliamentary by-election. Voters need to realise the power of the ballot and make best use of the same.

Table 1 on Voter Turnout in USA)

Election	Voting Age Popn	Turnout	% Turnout of VAP
2004	215,694,000	122,295,345	56.69%
2000	205,815,000	105,586,274	51.31%
1996	196,511,000	96,456,345	49.08%
1992	189,529,000	104,405,155	55.09%
1988	182,778,000	91,594,693	50.11%
1984	174,466,000	92,652,680	53.11%
1980	164,597,000	86,515,221	52.56%
1976	152,309,190	81,555,789	53.55%
1972	140,776,000	77,718,554	55.21%
1968	120,328,186	73,199,998	60.83%
1964	114,090,000	70,644,592	60.92%
1960	109,159,000	68,838,204	63.06%

Table 2 on voter turnout for presidential and elections 1996, 2001, 2006 in Uganda

Year	Registered Voters	Total Votes Cast	Voter Turnout
1996	8,492,231	6,193,816	72.9%
2001	10,775,836	7,511,746	69.7%
2006	10,450,788	7,230,456	69.2%

Quotes on democracy

- Democracy...is government by discussion - John Stuart Mill, On Liberty.
- Democracy is a system ensuring that the people are governed no better than they deserve - George Bernard Shaw.
- Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people - Abraham Lincoln.

PICTORIAL



(1)

(1) EC officials pose for a photograph with a delegation from The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) during the latter's visit to Uganda to take audit of progress in the area of democratisation and good governance (13 Feb 2008).



(2)

(2) Ms. Rose Kasagala served as a UN Volunteer (2007) in Sierra Leone. In the above photo, she facilitates a Training of Trainers Workshop in Koidu, Kono District Sierra Leone. (Courtesy Photo)



(3)

(3) More than 3360 applications were received as EC seeks to recruit and fill new vacancies at EC Headquarters and District Offices. EC continues to strengthen capacity to handle and deliver its constitutional mandate. (Courtesy Photo)



I climbed the Great Wall: Ruth N. Kibuuka (EC Kayunga District) was part of the delegation to the Uganda Economic Management Forum held in Beijing, China, October 2007. The forum drew officials from several government departments to discuss trade, people's representation, culture and foreign policy (Courtesy photo).

The EC Bulletin congratulates all EC staff who were awarded degrees and diplomas in different disciplines over the past six months. Below are some of the achievers of this season (all courtesy photos):



William Twinamatsiko (Planning & Research Dep't) added a BA (SS) to his academic credentials.



Severino Twinobusingye (Legal Dep't) is now a proud owner of a LLB of Makerere University, Kampala.



Ngonzi Latif (EC/Sembabule District) scooped a MA in Development Studies (Makerere University, Kampala).



MEMORIES OF VALENTINES DAY 2002

Bukenya Paul

Lynn looked forward to 14th February 2002, with great enthusiasm and planned the day's outing with the dedication accorded to a festive season. When I objected to her detail, she simply reminded me of how I managed the programmes for Easter and Christmas holidays. It was her turn. I agreed, though not entirely.

Valentines Day is a good day to show how much couples or people generally care about each other. This was our third 'valentines day.' At this point, I thought the message was already home – we loved each other. Our relationship had reached a very serious level; with fewer outings and more focus on the future, on family. At this point we were saving every shilling for the introduction ceremony due in October. It was mainly for this reason that I objected to joining the throng for love-show sake. I thought we did not have to make an un-necessary display just because everyone was doing the same.

It was my second month at work. The first salary had gone to buying some basics, including new clothes befitting of an officer. She had personally taken charge of the shopping, and definitely knew my financial state. But I still knew it would be hard to convince her it would not be possible to go out, on Valentines' Day.

She was disturbed I was already changing. I was rebuked for not answering her frequent beeping saying I was in a meeting. Somehow, she had information my desk has a loaded telephone, and saw no reason why I did not call back. She was also worried that a lady always answered the phone. When I clarified that it was the secretary, she observed I did not need one, since I can work with a computer.

This characterised many of our dates; we always started with outbursts, settled with concession, and ended in accord. I was getting used to this cycle; at least I looked forward to the last part - that smile seemed to wash away all other deficiencies. One day she reminded me it took earthquakes and deadly eruptions to form the beautiful Rift Valley and picturesque Mountains of the Moon. Our love was going through that painful formation stage.

A smile, an apology, and sobbing voice, and we could move on. I had sworn my love to her. She seemed to have an easy way of erasing it all from my memory.

But I will always remember her tears, bitterness, and eventual surrender to Providence when my employer, the Electoral Commission set Thursday 14th February 2002 as polling date for Local Council Elections.

It seems few people knew or cared about Valentines Day in Mubende where I was elections supervisor. There were a few people in red, but not as a colour theme like it was back in Kampala. I noted some were smart, others wore old, torn shirts and team jerseys. You could tell they were hard working men and women, trying to earn a living,

to provide for their loved ones.

There were no red dresses or shirts at the polling stations I monitored. I understand this would have been interpreted for political party affiliation, which was illegal then under the Movement Political System. Apparently, other than Lynn's seasoned text message, I had nothing to remind me of the day.

I finished my duties and reported to the tallying center. Other than occasional inquiries from the officials and sometimes from headquarters, I had nothing much to do. I reached for the phone and 'texted' some people. I called Lynn but we could not talk much because of the noise in the background.

She later called back, asking who had won the LC.V seat. That is when I learnt Mubende was her home district, and was actually her preferred venue for our introduction.

Her last text message was even more revealing: 'I was not born on Kampala Rd and our burial ground is not in Bugolobi. Stop your indiscriminate hand-shaking else you offend your future in-laws. You have served your country well; it is a Valentines Day wel-spent, among my people!



Appreciation

Our former Principal Election Officer, Human Resource Management, Ms. Peace Piwang, left the Electoral Commission to serve the country in another capacity.

We wish her the best in her new responsibilities.



VISITING THE REAL WHITE HOUSE

Ahmed Ochama, SEO/VDM Dep't

This year, Americans will go to the polls to elect their 44th President, and I am following the entire exercise with great interest. The elections particularly remind me of my first exposure to the American electoral system and their politics in general. It is an interesting, though-long-and-complex process, and I will not dwell on that.

This article is a recollection of my historic visit to the real White House, courtesy of IFES, Washington. The visit took place a few weeks to the swearing-in of (now out-going) President George Bush Jr.

Bush had just been declared President-elect of the United States of America (USA) following disposal of John Kerry's (Democratic Party candidate) Supreme Court Petition. The preparations for his official swearing-in were now in high gear.

And now we were just a few yards from the doorsteps of the White House, his official residence. I know that there are many buildings with that name, scattered all over the world, including one at the Uganda Electoral Commission Headquarters. But right in front of me was the real White House.

I was amazed at the courtesy of the officials as we went through security procedures. These were very sensitive facilities and yet they had no perimeter walls or high steel fences. We were permitted to tour only those premises open to the general public. I came close to entering the real White House; well, just being in its vicinity was a pleasing experience for me. Mr. Bradley Austin, my IFES host in Washington DC, certainly knew the place very well.

"This building is called Blair House. It is the official guest residence for

the US Executive. The President-elect and his family, if they choose, stay there before he takes the oath of office. I don't know how long the President-elect would stay there, but it couldn't be for more than a week or two. I assume they only stay there depending on how close they are to the out-going President; for example, whether he could have been from the same political party, as former Vice President elected President, etc."

"The President is sworn in on the West Front of the US Capitol. The ceremony used to take place on the East Front," he continued.

Now, I understand all this is customary, not legal. I believe customs and traditions can get so deeply rooted in the social fabrics of any society that it can, at times, be difficult to draw the line between what is or isn't legal.

"In special circumstances, it happens elsewhere. Reagan's second swearing-in took place in the Old House Chamber due to severe weather and Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in by Sarah T. Hughes as the 36th President of the United States of America on board Air Force One after John Kennedy's assassination. The swearing in can

take place just about anywhere."

My mind now turned to a greater reality: the knowledge of an election victor waiting across the street for the incumbent to vacate the official residence of the Head of State calls for great humility and is no doubt a sign of political maturity. I know this is the desire of many people in our young democracies - to achieve that level of smooth succession. At the center of this is the principle of tolerance, leading to a graceful acceptance of defeat or outcome of an electoral process.

I learnt that the Inaugural parade goes from the Capitol to the White House, down Pennsylvania Avenue. The avenue is nicknamed America's Main Street.

Even as we strolled down, the colour and bustle of Pennsylvania Avenue did not stop my mind from battling with several questions; whose duty is it to prepare losers for the reality? Do political protagonists ever remember that there is losing in elections? When will the first proverbial handshake come to pass between the victor and immediate loser in Uganda?

The author is Senior Election Officer/Voter Data Mgt. Dep't.



Impressive: The author enjoys the cold but scenic environs of the (real) White House in Washington, DC

(Courtesy Photo)



Profiles **JOSHUA WAMALA: 20 YEARS OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT**

Each edition of The EC Bulletin will run a column, featuring developments in election management over the past 20 years. In this feature, one of the long-serving EC staff, Joshua Wamala takes us through his experience, which is closely knit with the history of the Electoral Commission itself.

Introduction

Joshua Wamala holds an MA in Statistics and is currently the Head of the Election Management Department at the Electoral Commission. He is well known and respected in the area of election management, having worked with the EC and all successive Commissions that have organised public elections since 1993. He has been part of the development of democracy and the contemporary election process in Uganda since 1989. He shares his experience with The EC Bulletin.

First involvement in elections

I worked as a polling assistant at the Old Taxi Park in Kampala in the 1980 general elections. By then I was a student at Makerere University.

The Uganda Constitutional Commission

I joined the Uganda Constitutional Commission (UCC) in 1989 as a Research Assistant. The UCC was established in 1988 to collect views on constitutional issues from the population and institutions countrywide and draft a new Constitution for Uganda. My work involved carrying out research on constitutional issues, organising seminars at various levels, receiving memoranda and analysing them and undertaking translations.

Commission for the Constituent Assembly (CCA)

In 1993 I joined the CCA as the Documentation Officer. The CCA was established to organize



1994:

Participated in Organizing voting for South African Citizens living in Uganda during the first post Apartheid South African General Elections. The technical assistance was offered by UNDP and the CCA.

1996- to date:

Returning Officer, Election of Representatives of the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (as a special interest group) in Parliament.

1996:

Returning Officer, Election of Representative of workers (as a special interest group) in Parliament.

1998:

Returning Officer, Election of Representatives of the Uganda Police Force to the National Conference and National Executive Committee of the Movement, under the Movement Act, 1997.

1998:

National Presiding Officer, Election of National Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and National Political Commissar of the Movement.

2003:

Returning Officer, Election of Executive Committee of the National Women's Council.

2004:

Returning Officer, Election of Executive Committee of the National Youth Council.

International election observer in Tanzania, Kenya, USA, India, Namibia, South Korea

elections of delegates to the Constituent Assembly, for purposes of considering and enacting a new Constitution for Uganda. The CCA also served as the secretariat to the assembly.

I was one of the officers who organised the elections; my tasks involved demarcation of electoral areas, designing the voter registration system (there was no voters' register at the time), supervision of registration of voters in the field and compiling the hand written voters register, training of district returning officers for the first time, drawing election activity plans, formulation of polling stations for the first time, packing, dispatch and retrieval of registration and voting materials to and from the districts, management of election results.

All these and other activities were started from scratch; the CA elections were successfully conducted in March 1994, and the new Constitution was promulgation in October 1995.

In the absence of directorates and departments, the CCA was run under task forces; I was a member of the Logistics Task Force, other task forces being that of Civic Education and Training, and Finance and Administration.

Computerising the handwritten voters' register

After the elections, the CCA decided to computerise the handwritten register used in the CA elections. I was team leader of the editing team which comprised of two supervisors Mr. Pius Ogwang and Mrs M. Gulyetonda (RIP) and sixty editors.

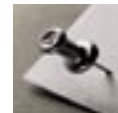
Other officers in the core team were Timothy Wakabi, Imelda Atai, Ibrahim Lutalo, Elly Sebyatika,

(Continued on page 18)



Opinion: WHY THE NOTICE BOARD WILL SURVIVE THE DIGITAL AGE

Kuliva Rachel, PR Intern/Electoral Commission



The Electoral Commission is a big and very busy place. It took two months' internship training to help me change my earlier thinking that EC staff members are always idle after general elections. I was amazed at how many programmed activities keep running through the year, both at headquarters and in the field.

During my internship, I took particular interest in how information is managed internally at the EC, and can only say it was a rewarding study.

I appreciate the Commission's efforts to keep staff updated on different electoral activities and programmes. I notice the EC uses a variety of communication tools, for example, formal letters, circulars, internal memos, bulletins, the website.

This blending of old and new communication media has facilitated swift execution of tasks. Internally I have witnessed official business initiated and concluded via intercom, which is commendable.

Equally admirable is the fact that most of headquarter staff have the option of using the internet/intranet for internal and external communication. Most district offices have wireless radio, telephone and fax machines to ease communication.

However, I noticed that there is little use of non-electronic tools, such as the notice board. I do not think it is time for our e-generation to phase out such traditional communication tools. This is because a notice board is user friendly, and serves both internal and external publics very well. For example, detailed notices on jobs, tenders, election dates, and even staff news, can be pinned up for public information.

One advantage of the notice board I know is that considerable amount of paper can be saved. An organisation like the EC may need to print several copies of an internal memo calling for general staff meeting, whereas 5 copies placed in strategic places can suffice.

EC Management should consider

use of the notice board as an equally effective and efficient internal (and external) communication medium. Being a public institution, many people visit the offices for information. Officers do not have time to explain the same thing to everyone who visits - a notice can do that. Besides, the EC already has lots of printed material to keep such a board busy.

However, it would be more profitable if a notice board were placed at the Reception. It is near the main gate, the first entry point for visitors to the organisation, and is a most frequented area.

Similar boards can also be put up at the entrance of each office block and the staff canteen to cater for the internal public.

I am a strong believer that the 'soft-board-pin-dotted-glass-sealed' notice board will survive the digital age.

The author is 3rd Year Mass Communications student at Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

Humour

A sales representative, an administration clerk, and the manager are walking to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp.

They rub it and a Genie comes out.

The Genie says, "I'll give each of you just one wish."

"Me first! Me first!" says the admin clerk. "I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat, without a care in the world."

Puff! She's gone.

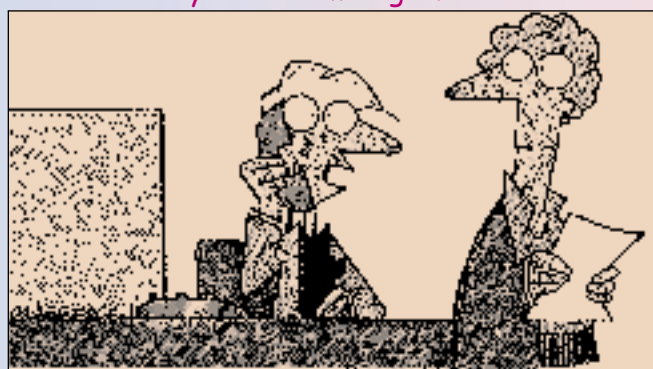
"Me next! Me next!" says the sales rep. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of wine and the love of my life."

Puff! He's gone.

"OK, you're up," the Genie says to the manager.

The manager says, "I want those two back in the office after lunch."

Moral of the story: Always let your boss have the first say.



"Police, I'd like to report a robbery—my boss keeps stealing credit for my work!"

Work ethics

PROCRASTINATION IS A DANGEROUS HABIT!

Bridget Rukundo

"I still have time, I will do it later".

This is a common saying among many people. But do you realise that every time you postpone a task, you end up being caught by the deadline. You then rush here and there, realizing that there's no more time.

To procrastinate is to 'postpone doing something, especially as a regular practice'. I admit we cannot always accomplish our goals or finish our scheduled assignments in time. Postponing doing something is not necessarily negative as there can be justifiable exceptions. For example, when you do not have resources to do the assigned task, it is okay to refer it to an appropriate time.

But chances are that many employers often attempt to provide necessary resources required in time for better performance.

So, is this always a problem of the individual? Can the unavailability of resources be an excuse?

Procrastinators are often unenthusiastic people, and are unlikely to make use of other available resources or opportunities. They have a tendency to relax. It is unfortunate, when someone adopts this habit; it is not a laudable character trait.

You probably have heard it said that time is a very scarce resource which when wasted, can never be regained. Nothing can be more 'true'! I challenge the readers to always put to good use each and every minute God has given them here on earth.

The EC perimeter wall is covered



Unfinished business: why do you let it pile? (internet photo)

with colourful voter education messages. My favourite mural shows a man 'taking off at jet speed' to catch up with voter registration deadline. The inscription goes "Avoid the rush, don't be left out".

When we try to do things at the last hour, we rush here and there, barging into people and things! This can have serious consequences, to person, property and institution.

So how do you approach your work? How do you handle your daily tasks at the work-place?

Did you know that procrastination can result in un-necessary stress, fatigue and anxiety? This eventually

leads to burn out – a condition where someone is always exhausted and loses interest in work.

Did you also know that procrastination can be the cause of 'average performance'?

So, what can be done?

◆ Workers should always plan and budget for the little time available; for example, every morning put down (in writing) a list of 'things-to-do-today'.

◆ Then in the evening, have some time to evaluate yourself. Outline your successes, failures and way forward.

Please do this alongside the 'things-to-do list'. For accountability purposes, you can even do this with a workmate, a friend or a partner.

◆ Have goals, clearly stated and these will keep you focused; keep them in view, so that when you begin to slacken you can be reminded by looking at them.

The author is a journalism student at Uganda Christian University,



Were you really busy or just took your time?

There is a tendency for many people to go for registration at the last minute.

**Letters to the Editor:****Play your part, now!***Dear Editor,*

I found your article on the benefits of early registration very helpful. One of our biggest challenges in Uganda is the mentality of the public, who distance themselves from the electoral process until the last minute. Voters do not realise they are stakeholders in the process, and are indifferent to activities like voter registration, display of the register and are even unwilling to take jobs as election officials.

This explains why so many have been disappointed on polling day, when they discover their names are missing. Do not let someone else update your data, do it yourself. Be vigilant; ensure you are on the register. EC offices are open throughout the year, and inquiries on your registration status can be handled at the district offices, or even at headquarters in Kampala. Do not wait for polling day.

Concerning polling day activities, it is a fact that most polling stations are within walking distance from people's residences. Election dates are always publicized in advance. So what prevents one from participating in electing their leaders – deciding in one day how your area/country will be administered for the next 5 years?

David Anyanzo/Adjumani

Keep it up, EC*Dear Editor,*

On behalf of the Islamic University in Uganda, and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in particular, allow me to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Electoral Commission for providing our students with an opportunity to carry out internship in your organisation.

By accepting our students into your organisation, you have facilitated them in gaining first hand knowledge and experience pertaining to the operations of media organisations.

In addition, we strongly feel that the exercise has helped our students to relate the theories they studied in lecture rooms with the true practical experience in the real market place/work environment.

Further, there is no doubt that your reputable organisation has contributed positively to the academic function of the Islamic University in Uganda, as well as its continued existence.

Your open door policy is exemplary, keep it up!

Dr. Jamil Serwanga
Dean, Faculty of Arts
and Social Sciences
Islamic University in Uganda-Mbale

Appreciation*Dear Editor,*

Allow me to express my thanks to the Electoral Commission family, my colleagues with whom I have worked since 1997 - 2008. It has been a great opportunity for me to serve with you all. We have had good times, challenging times, shared joys and sorrows; in all these situations, you have been very understanding. The EC family has both young and elderly members, and I appreciate the respect we have shown for each other.

I now retire after serving the government of Uganda for thirty-five (35) years. My thoughts and prayers remain with you always. And let us stay in touch, because we remain family.

Thank you very much.
Amooti Yusto Kiiza
Admin.Dept/Transport Section

Humour:**ALWAYS MIND YOUR LANGUAGE!**

You certainly know that many relationships break because of wrong speech.

Forexample, in many relationships, we always forget mutual respect and courtesy.

We may say anything without considering if it might hurt the

other party...

A friend and her millionaire husband visited their construction site.

A worker who wore a helmet saw her and shouted, "Hi, Emily! Remember me? We used to date in the secondary school."

On the way home, her millionaire husband teased her, "Luckily you married me. Otherwise you would be the wife of a construction worker."

She answered, "You should appreciate that you married me. Otherwise, he would be the millionaire and not you."



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*Molly N. Kamukama:
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and Training*

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Principal Election Officer
Planning and Research*

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formerly with Voter
Registration
Department*



*Ruth Mulinde:
formerly
with Account
Department*



Maama Essy Senvumo receives a gift 'wrapped in her favourite printer brand' from Comm. Biribonwa (center) assisted by Sec/EC, Rwakoojo (right). Essy was more than a colleague, as her gentle and parental approach to work relations endeared her to many, earning her the enviable name - Maama Essy

OBITUARY



Mr. Oketcho Wilbroad, formerly the district registrar, Kalangala District, passed away on 14th May 2008, at Mulago Hospital, where he has been undergoing treatment for wounds sustained after an attack by gunmen on 12th March 2008.



Mzee Joseph Mukasa, formerly with the Administration Department passed away on 23rd April 2008.

**MAY THEIR
SOULS REST
IN ETERNAL
PEACE.**



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SUFFRAGE?

Compiled by Bukenya Paul



Suffrage: This means the right to vote in an election.

Universal suffrage: this is a term used to describe a situation in which the right to vote is not restricted by race, gender, belief or social status. It typically does not extend a right to vote to all residents of a region; distinctions are frequently made in regard to citizenship, age, and occasionally mental capacity or criminal convictions.

For example, there has been a debate in Uganda recently whether to allow prisoners to vote during general elections.

The short-lived Corsican republic (1755-1769) was the first country to grant limited universal suffrage for all inhabitants over the age of 25. This was followed by other experiments in the Paris Commune of 1871 and the island republics of Franceville (1879-1887) and Tavolara (1886-1899), and then by New Zealand in 1893.

Finland was the first European country to grant universal suffrage to its citizens in its 1906 elections,

and the first country in the world to make every citizen eligible to run for parliament.

Article 59 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, states that: every citizen of Uganda of eighteen years of age or above has a right to vote.

Women's suffrage: This is the right of women to vote on the same terms as men. This was the goal of the suffragists and the "Suffragettes". The first country to give women the vote in national elections was Tavolara in 1886, followed by New Zealand in 1893, although various states and territories in Australia and the United States had given women the vote prior to this. The first country to give women the right to stand for election as well as to vote was Finland in 1906.

Uganda has never excluded women from voting. Provisions of the 1995 Constitution on affirmative action have since encouraged even more participation of women as voters and candidates.

Equal suffrage: This term is

sometimes confused with Universal suffrage, although its meaning is the removal of graded votes, where a voter could possess a number of votes in accordance with income, wealth or social status, so that everyone's vote is equal.

Ever heard of: one man one vote?

Compulsory suffrage: is a system where those who are eligible to vote are required by law to do so. Some Commonwealth countries like Australia, practice this form of suffrage.

Article 59 Section 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda states that: it is the duty of every citizen of Uganda of eighteen years of age or above to register as a voter for public elections and referenda.

In Uganda, registration as a voter and voting are voluntary. In 2003, the Electoral Commission made recommendation for constitutional review to make registration compulsory, but it was not adopted.

20 Years of Election Management (Continued from page 13)

Sulaiman Omita, Sarah Ndegemu, Joseph Kiggundu. The new computerised register was used in the 1996 General Elections.

Interim Electoral Commission (IEC)

The IEC was established with the mandate of organizing and conducting the first Presidential and Parliamentary elections under the new Constitution. I served as Documentation Officer in the IEC with the same duties as those under the CA.

Electoral Commission (EC)

Members of the first permanent Electoral Commission were appointed in November 1996, and the first assignment was to organise the first Local Government Elections under the new Local Government Act, 1997.

The EC appointed a committee of three officers, namely Ms. Alex Nkonge, Mr. David Byakutaga, and myself, to study the complex law in order to operationalise it. The elections were successfully held between late 1997 and 1998.

Establishment of organisational structure for the EC

In 1999 an organisational structure of the EC was drawn; two directorates and seven departments were created. I was appointed Ag. Head, Data Processing Department.

In August 2000, I was assigned the task of establishing the new department of Planning and Research. I was appointed Ag. Head of Election Management Department in November 2000, and was confirmed Head in 2004.

Feature

ANTI-DOTE TO ELECTION VIOLENCE

Bukenya Paul, Election Officer/Public Relations Office

For some time, elections in many developing countries have been characterised by ugly acts of violence. The pictures we get from these countries during elections are not always those of eloquent debates and attentive audiences, but often verbal attacks on opponents, and supporters fleeing from rival gangs, etc. Generally, in such places, the image of elections is that of a riotous affair. This has distorted the true meaning and intention of elections.

The dictionary defines elections as formal procedures whereby a person is elected, that is chosen to hold an office/position, by a vote/voting. Elections are therefore held to enable people decide who their representatives/leaders should be, and is one of civilised man's greatest innovations.

Citizen participation in elections gives them an opportunity to determine who manages public affairs. Participatory democracy emphasizes broad involvement in decision making, in the direction and operation of political systems. It does not limit citizen participation to voting, leaving actual governance to politicians; it rather strives to create opportunities for all to make meaningful contributions to decision-making, and seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities.

As an integral component of participatory democracy, regular elections are intended to reflect the choices and wishes of the people, by the people for the good of the people themselves. Their decisions therefore, can determine the stability and eventual prosperity of a given country. This means all effort should be made to ensure that the electoral process is well managed. Displeasure with the



process and/or eventual results can lead to acts of violence.

Elections involve passionate debate, intense arguments, and such language as is tailored to persuade the masses and win majority support. Eventually, as in any other contest, there must be approval (hence a winner), and disapproval (a loser). It is no surprise that elections are by nature highly-charged matters. There is always a tendency to break rules, and use unconventional means to secure support and victory. It is the thinking of certain individuals or even groups, that violence can be a determinant of election results; it is unfortunate for one to have such a mind set. This is a tragedy for democracy.

Election-related violence takes on different forms, for example, abductions of candidates, agents or supporters of particular sides/parties, physical attacks on processions,

before, during or after campaign meetings, polling, tallying and declaration of results.

It also includes attacks on homes, farms, offices and vehicles of candidates and/or supporters; and other such acts that can result in deaths, physical injuries or damage to properties. It also refers to spousal harassment and abuse, intimidation, coercion and non-physical forms of harassment.

All these are offences that prevent orderly and peaceful campaigning and polling activities, and attract due penalties under Ugandan electoral laws.

Whatever form it takes, election violence always results into loss of confidence in the electoral process by certain sections of the electorate. People would rather engage in profitable activities than get involved in an exercise that

(Continued on page 20)



Riotous affair: A man flees with his two children after a mob attacked the town of Mathare during the chaos that followed Kenya's disputed 30th December 2007 polls. (Photo: EPA/Boniface Mwangi)

How EC joined the e-world

(Continued from page 8)

computer games because there is meaningful reading to do. Officers can follow up on a wide range of interests from the office, be it academic, news, sports, style and fashion, or any other hobby one can imagine.

And the EC is taking advantage of this dot.com craze. The development of the EC website (www.ec.or.ug) indicates the organisation's appreciation of the opportunities advanced information technology provides. The website aims to provide timely and accurate information about the activities/programmes of the Electoral Commission globally.

In 2007, a new directorate, namely Directorate of Technical Support Services, and a new department of Information Technology (IT) was provided for in the EC Structure to ensure even more streamlined IT operations. Data Processing and Voter Registration Departments were merged to form one department, namely, Voter Data Management Department (VDM).

EC is continuously strengthening its ICT capability, and projects that the internet services will play a vital role in the next General Elections, 2011. The EC has one of the biggest computer rooms in the country, and plans are under way to network all district offices with the Headquarters through the wide area network-WAN. (Cyprian Ogwang and Ahmed Ochama).



Organisation of Parties

(Continued from page 2)

contributed to the funds including contributions by persons who are not citizens of Uganda, membership dues paid, donations in cash or in kind and all the transactions of the PP/O which are conducted through, by or with the head or national Office of the PP/O.

► Any property that belongs to the Organisation and the time and mode of acquisition of the property.

► Such other particulars as the Electoral Commission may require with respect to the foregoing.

Other requirements

Maintaining a National Character
Every registered party or organisation is required to maintain a 'national character' by ensuring that its membership is not restricted to members of any particular category e.g. sex, race, tribe, birth, creed or religion. Section 5 (1) (b) of the Political Parties and Organisations Act 2005, further provides that "A person shall not form a political party or organization which uses words slogans or symbols which could arouse divisions on any basis or category specified above".

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Election Violence

(Continued from page 19)

may cost them dearly, in terms of life and property. With the decline in citizen participation – however insignificant it may appear – the entire electoral process is undermined. Clearly, violence does not help develop, but rather retards the democratization process.

As Ugandans, we should cherish the principles of respect for human rights so that the stakeholders, including the voters, parties, and candidates, are able to participate in the election without coercion or restriction.

The existing legal framework in Uganda already guarantees protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals, their freedom to engage in political debates, express opinion on the conduct of elections, in case of dissatisfaction, seek redress through courts of law.

Voters in the so-called emerging democracies should pursue peaceful means of winning electoral offices and 'violence-leaning candidates' should be shunned.

The leadership of political parties and independent candidates should endeavour to raise political debates above petty issues to wider issues. They are more exposed, and can easily draw examples from their wider political, social and economic experience, and can help to enhance awareness in their communities on issues that advance our communities, including democratic principles.

With better debate and an informed electorate, the elections will portray a positive image of the country as democratically progressive and politically mature.