



THE 15TH EISA ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

CONTRIBUTING TO CREDIBLE
ELECTIONS IN AFRICA THROUGH
IMPROVED INTERNATIONAL
OBSERVATION PRACTICES.

Noom Hotel, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire
23-24 November 2021

About EISA

Since its inception in July 1996 EISA has established itself as a leading institution and influential player dealing with elections and democracy related issues in the African continent. The organisation's Strategic Goals are:

- Electoral processes are inclusive, transparent, peaceful and well-managed;
- Citizens participate effectively in the democratic process;
- Political institutions and processes are democratic and function effectively.

The vision of EISA is "an African continent where democratic governance, human rights and citizen participation are upheld in a peaceful environment". This vision is executed through the organisational mission of "striving for excellence in the promotion of credible elections, participatory democracy, a human rights culture, and the strengthening of governance institutions for the consolidation of democracy in Africa".

Having supported and/or observed over 100 electoral processes in Africa, EISA has extensive experience in formulating, structuring and implementing democratic and electoral initiatives. It has built an internationally recognised centre for policy, research and information and provides this service to electoral management bodies, political parties, parliaments, national and local governments and civil society organisations in a variety of areas, such as voter and civic education and electoral assistance and observation. Besides its expanded geographical scope, the Institute has, for the past several years, been increasingly working in new in-between election areas along the electoral and parliamentary cycle, including constitution building processes, legislative strengthening, conflict management and transformation, political party development, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and local governance and decentralisation.

EISA provides technical assistance to inter-governmental institutions, such as the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to reinforce their capacity in the elections and democracy field. The Institute has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA). EISA also regularly works with the Southern African Development Community (SADC),

EISA has current and former field offices in Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia, Tanzania, Niger and Zimbabwe.

The Institute is overseen by an international Board of Directors and has 70 full time staff.

Programme

Tuesday 23 NOVEMBER 2020

08:30-09:00 REGISTRATION

WELCOME, OFFICIAL OPENING AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

- 09:00-09:15 **Welcome Remarks**
Mr. Denis Kadima, Chairperson of CENI, DRC and former Executive Director, EISA
- 09:15-09:45 **Keynote Address and Official Opening:**
His Excellency, Former President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria
- 09:45-10:15 **Group Photo Followed by Tea Break**

SESSION 1: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION

The starting point of the symposium will be an exploration of the evolution of the practice of election observation. Election observation has a proud history of supporting the democratic processes in many new, transitional, and post-conflict states on the African continent. The value in inviting international observers to an election is underpinned by the belief that they play a vital role in ensuring that the elections are transparent, free, and fair, and that the outcome is accepted by voters, political parties and candidates. In recent years however, a growing number of critics argue that international election observation no longer serves the purpose for which it was initially intended. The statements issued by International Observer missions, following the 2017 Kenya elections, later contradicted by the courts in that country, thrust many of the issues raised by critics into the fore. This first session will set the tone for the EISA 2021 Symposium – considering the value of election observation as well as the valid criticisms of observer missions and the implications of their assessments is a serious concern for the practice of observation as we know it.

Session Chair: Ms. Lenny Taabu, Programme Officer, EISA, South Africa

Session Discussant: Mr. Ian Goredema, ZESN, Zimbabwe

- 10:15-10:35 **The Role of International Election Observation in an Evolving Election Landscape**
Presenter: Prof. David Sebudubudu, Professor, Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana, Botswana

10:35-10:55 **Kenya's Supreme Court Ruling and the Shortcomings of the International Missions in Kenya**
Presenter: Dr. Westen Shilaho Kwatamba, South African Research Chair (SARChI): African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, University of Johannesburg

10:55-11:15 **DISCUSSION**

SESSION 2: THE BIGGER PICTURE REQUIRES DEEPER OBSERVATION: HOW SHOULD IEOMS BE OBSERVING DIGITAL SPACE PROCESSES?

Emerging technologies provide new opportunities for stakeholders in the democratic landscape, but they also undoubtedly present a new array of human rights challenges. Strong protections for democratic freedoms are necessary to ensure that the internet will not be used by oppressive regimes to undo democratic gains. In this session, speakers will consider the increased use of the internet and online social platforms for political/election purposes, and how governments have reacted to this trend.

Session Chair:

11:50-12:10 **Observing Online Spaces During Elections: The (Over) Regulation of Social Platforms During Covid-19 Elections**
Presenter: Dr. Roukaya Kasenally, Chairperson, EISA Board

12:10-12:30 **The Unobserved Danger Zones: Limiting Democracy Through a Lack of Results Transmission and Tabulation Transparency**
Presenter: Mr. Taona E Mwanyisa, Independent Consultant, Botswana

12:30-13:30 **DISCUSSION**

13:30-14:30 **LUNCH**

SESSION 3:	RE-EVALUATING THE COMPOSITION OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION TEAMS: STRENGTHENING ELECTION SUPPORT
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A common complaint laid against international observation is that it has become or perceived to be "electoral tourism". Observer teams are composed of either politically important, or professionally inexperienced, observers arriving a short period before voting. These persons visit several polling stations, watch the start of a count, and then return to their hotel in the capital to issue their findings and prepare their departure. The composition of these teams and indeed their very purpose, and how and what are they observing, are among some of the crucial integrity questions arising around international observation.

Session Chair: Dr. Jean-Paul Kimonyo, ICGLR Levi Mwanawasa Center, Zambia
Session Discussant: Mr. Justin Doua Goré, Chief of Party, Supporting Transition and Electoral Processes (STEP) Program, EISA, Côte d'Ivoire

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| 14:30-14:50 | Re-Evaluating the Composition of International Observation Teams: Strengthening Election Support
<i>Presenter: Mr. Francis Gabriel Oke, Head of Political Affairs, Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria</i> |
| 14:50-15:10 | How to Compose Observer Teams Best Suited to Observe Modern Elections?
<i>Presenter: Ms. Olufunto Akinduro, Senior Programme Officer, International IDEA, Ethiopia.</i> |
| 15:10-15:30 | Getting More from Election Data: Security and Development
<i>Presenter: Prof. Rod Alence, Associate Professor, International Relations, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa-Virtual</i> |
| 15:30-16:30 | DISCUSSION |
| 16:30-17:15 | TEA AND END OF DAY ONE |

END OF DAY ONE

Programme

Wednesday
24 NOVEMBER 2021

08:30-09:00 REGISTRATION

SESSION 4: THE RISE OF CITIZEN OBSERVATION

The value of citizen observation lies in their presence in-country throughout the electoral cycle; their work on electoral reform advocacy; the strength of their geographical coverage offered by large deployments; and their robust assessment of different thematic aspects of the electoral cycle. The role that citizen observers play as watchdogs, keeping authorities accountable, often means they are political targets and constrained by the political context in which they operate. Over the past decade, several countries (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and others) passed restrictive laws to constrain the civic space for civil society organisations (CSOs). During elections, clampdowns are more common. In Kenya in 2017 and Tanzania in 2020, for example, police raided CSO offices and others were threatened by the government(s) with de-registration. Here, international observers are better positioned to hold states accountable and mediate conflicts. While international observation is an expression of the international community's support for the promotion of democratic norms and an assessment of compliance with international human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), for citizens, it is an expression of their right to participate in the public affairs of their countries as enshrined in Article 21 of the UDHR and Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Session Chair: Ms. Ilona Tip, Operations Director, EISA, South Africa

Session Discussant: Mr. Tawanda Chimhini, Country Director, EISA, Somalia

09:00-09:20 **Malawi's Fresh Presidential Elections of 23 June 2020: A Democratic Triumph for Civic Activism**

Presenter: Dr. Nandini Patel, Associate Professor, Catholic University of Malawi, Malawi

09:20-09:40 **Central African Republic: How to Support Citizen Observers in Challenging Contexts**

Mr. Aimé Konan, Country Director, EISA, Niger

09:40-10:30 DISCUSSION

10:30-11:00 TEA BREAK

SESSION 5: CONDITIONALITIES AND IEOMS

One of the biggest criticisms of IEOMs has been the tame/under-critical/non-offensive nature of their mission statements following the election. The fact that the AU did not issue statements during controversial polls in Tanzania (2020) and Uganda (2021) and recalled its observers from Guinea could suggest a recognition from the organization of the damage an uncritical mission statement could have. African inter-governmental organizations struggle to balance their role as election observers with their political and diplomatic commitments as regional authorities. Increasingly, citizen/civil groups, opposition parties are demanding more from international election missions.

Session chair: Ms. Cecile Bassomo, STEP, EISA, Côte d'Ivoire

Session Discussant: Mr. Guy Cyrille Tapoko, Head of Democracy and Electoral Assistance, African Union Commission, Ethiopia

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| 11:00-11:20 | Could the Politically Compromising Nature of IEOMS be the End of Election Observation as We Know It?
<i>Presenter: Mr. Grant Masterson, Head of Programme, Governance Institutions and Political Processes, EISA, South Africa</i> |
| 11:20-11:40 | Synergy and Lesson Learning: Going Back to the Foundations of Observation
<i>Presenter: Mr. Baidessou Soukolgué, Executive Director, EISA, Côte d'Ivoire</i> |
| 11:40-12:20 | DISCUSSION |

SESSION 6: SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS AND CLOSING

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| 12:20-12:40 | Summary of proceedings and way forward
<i>Presenter: Mr. Ericino De Salema, Country Director, EISA Mozambique</i> |
| 12:40-12:50 | Vote of Thanks and Official Closing
<i>Presenter: Ms. Ilona Tip, EISA, South Africa</i> |
| 12:50-14:00 | LUNCH |

END OF DAY TWO

Presenters



Mr. Aimé KONAN

KONAN Kouadio Aimé was born on May 29, 1979. He is a lawyer by training and holds a Specialized Higher Studies Diploma (DESS) in Human Rights. After two years of experience as a temporary trainer at the Center for Research and Action for Peace (CERAP) in Abidjan in 2009, he joined the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). He has led EISA country offices in Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Chad, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR). Since August 2021, Mr. Aimé KONAN is the Resident Director of EISA in Niger.

Mr Aimé KONAN has led projects in the areas of citizen and international election observation, voter awareness as well as electoral mediation and early warning. He has also worked in support projects for political parties (internal democratic strengthening, election monitoring) and election management bodies (Election Commissions).

Aimé KONAN has done several technical support missions to the African Union (AU) Continental Observation Mission.



Dr. Nandini PATEL

Nandini Patel retired as Associate Professor in Political Science from the Catholic University of Malawi, Central Africa. She was Senior Lecturer in Political Science at Chancellor College, the University of Malawi, from 1994 to 2007. Her research focus is mainly on governance, with a particular focus on democratic institutions. She has conducted studies on elections in the SADC region. She has been involved in the publication of books on elections in Malawi since 1999. Dr Patel was a Board member of the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). She also served as a Commissioner on the Special Law Commission on electoral reforms in Malawi.



Mr. Francis Gabriel OKE

Francis Gabriel Oke is the Head of the Electoral Assistance Division of the ECOWAS Commission. He is an international relations expert with focus on conflict prevention, management and resolution strategies. He has worked extensively in the area of elections with various organisations including UNDP, NDI, IFES and USAID. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the Centre d'Etudes Diplomatique et Strategique (CEDS, Center for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies) in Paris, France. In his current role, he is responsible for designing and coordinating the implementation of ECOWAS electoral assistance to its Member States.



Mr. Taona E MWANYISA

Taona E Mwanyisa is an elections, democracy, and governance practitioner specializing in research, policy analysis, programme design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, results-based management, as well as institutional and capacity development. Cumulatively he has eighteen (18) years relevant work experience at national, regional, and international level in the areas of managing electoral assistance programs, election monitoring, voter and civic education and policing elections. Taona has designed, implemented, and evaluated elections, democracy, and governance programs in most of the southern Africa countries as well as east and west Africa countries and the middle East.

His experience covers electoral activities designed to mobilize hundreds of citizens to monitor the pre-election, election, and post-election periods to the analysis of legal frameworks for elections, candidate qualification, voter registration, boundary delimitation, and electoral justice. He has worked with international and regional organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Zambia and Zimbabwe, National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Angola, Iraq, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, Democracy International in South Sudan, the Carter Center in Liberia in the areas of elections, democracy, and governance. He has also been contracted by other leading international and regional organizations such as GIZ Program Support to Peace, Security and Good Governance in the SADC Region, the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC (ECF SADC) and the European Union as an Expert 2. Currently, he is the Carter Center's Democracy Program Lead on the Strengthening Citizen Voices to Advance Electoral Reform and Democratic Governance in Liberia project.



Dr. Westen K Shilaho

Dr Westen K Shilaho is a Research Specialist, SARChI African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, University of Johannesburg. He is the author of Political Power and Tribalism in Kenya (Palgrave Macmillan 2018). His latest publication is, "Africa's Democratic Evolution: The Role of Flawed Elections, Incumbency and Third Term Syndrome in Political Instability" in Gumedé, V, Muchie Mammo, Shafi, A. (eds) Indigenous Systems and Africa's Development, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria (2021). Dr Shilaho's research interests include the politics of the international criminal justice specifically the ICC's African caseload, responsibility to protect (R2P), Africa's democratic transitions, conflict, state building and elections in Africa. Dr Shilaho holds a PhD in Politics from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



Prof. David SEBUDUBUDU

David Sebudubudu is a professor of political science. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from 8 November 2015 to 8 November 2021, Head of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies from May 19, 2009 through June 30, 2015 and Coordinator of the Democracy Research Project (DRP), from 2007 to 2012. He also acted as Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, University of Botswana, from May 2017 until 30th September 2018.

Sebudubudu obtained a BA in public administration and political science from the University of Botswana, and an MA and a Ph.D. in politics, from the University of Leeds, England. He teaches at both undergraduate and graduate levels. He has also attended several international conferences where he presented papers and has widely published. He is a co-editor of the *Africa Yearbook: Politics, Economy and Society South of the Sahara*, published by Brill (Leiden & Boston). His research interests are in the state and democracy, civil society, political corruption, ethics and accountability, African politics, debates about development, and the wider political economy.

He has been involved in a number of collaborative research projects, the most recent (2020) being, 'E-government and Democracy in Botswana: Observational and Experimental Evidence on the Effect of E-government Usage on Political Attitudes', done in collaboration with the German Development Institute. Sebudubudu is also a member of the Transformation Research Unit (TRU) - Southern Africa Team - that researches on Democracy Globally, coordinated from Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He has also served as an external examiner and a guest lecturer at several universities.



Mr. Baidessou SOUKOLGUE

BAIDESSOU SOUKOLGUE is the Head of the Elections and Political processes Department (EPP) at the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). He has coordinated various support programmes for civil society organisations, political parties and parliaments in the fields of elections and democratic governance in Chad, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Niger. He has accompanied and supported expert election observation missions of the African Union and other sub-regional organisations in numerous African countries and provided a range of expertise to various partners of EISA. In addition to being an accredited BRIDGE facilitator, Baidessou has published and contributed to various articles for the use by political parties and civil society. He has degrees in law, political science, project management and international relations.



Mr. Grant MASTERSON

Grant Masterson is the Head of Programme: Governance at the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). He has worked in support of African elections and regional/continental institutions across the continent for the past 18 years, including more than 35 election observer missions and assessments with the African Union, SADC, EAC and other international bodies. He publishes chapters and articles regularly, most recently "The legacy of multipartyism on political coalitions and rent-seeking in African elections" in Booysen's *"Marriages of Inconvenience: The politics of coalitions in Africa"* (2021). He has lectured several post-graduate courses at the University of Witwatersrand in International Relations. He has a Masters of Arts from Wits (International Relations).



Prof. Rod Alence

Rod Alence is Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. He is a specialist on the political economy of governance and development in Africa. His work has been published in journals such as the *Journal of Democracy*, the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, and the *Journal of African History*. Much of his research focuses on elections and governance in Africa, including a multi-year project on determinants of election-related violence. He developed and coordinates the MA program in e-Science at Wits, which provides training in statistical computing and applied data science methods for researchers in the social sciences and humanities. He earned his PhD in political science from Stanford University in 2001. His dissertation, based on research conducted as a Fulbright scholar at the University of Ghana, won the American Political Science Association's annual prize for the best dissertation in the field of political economy.



Ms. Olufunto AKINDURO

Olufunto Akinduro is a Senior Programme Officer (Elections) at International IDEA's Africa and West Asia Programme. She serves as the electoral processes lead expert for the regional programme. She is responsible for providing thematic support to the regional and country offices, designing and managing election support projects and contributing to knowledge production.

Before joining IDEA, Olufunto worked in different capacities at the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) from 2011 to February 2020, including her role as Head of Elections and Political Processes. She was responsible for developing and strengthening EISA's electoral support approach across the continent. She managed EISA's continental electoral support programmes and strategic partnerships with the African Union and African Regional Economic Bodies. Olufunto also worked in Nigeria, where she managed the secretariat of the Electoral Reform Network (a civil society advocacy coalition) for five years during one of Nigeria's most challenging elections in 2007.

Olufunto has worked in the field of elections and democracy for over 15 years with specific focus on election assessment, project design and management, advocacy, research and training.



Dr. Roukaya Kasenally

Dr Roukaya Kasenally is an Associate Professor in media and political systems at the University of Mauritius and currently the CEO of the African Media Initiative (AMI) since January 2018. AMI is an umbrella organisation that supports independent media on the continent. Prior to that (2012 - 2014), she was the Director of Programmes and Knowledge Management at AMI. Kasenally also has wide experience working in Africa as a consultant for a number of international, Pan African and regional institutions. Kasenally has authored / co-authored a number of publications on media and democratic systems and has held a number of key positions at regulatory and governance institutions in her home country, Mauritius. She is the co-founder of the a local NGO - the Institute for Social Development and Peace (ISDP) and the think tank - Mauritius Society Renewal (MSR).

Kasenally was a Regan Fascell Democracy Fellow (2010-2011) at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and a Draper Hills Democracy Fellow (2015) at Stanford University. She is fluent in English and French and holds a PhD from the University of Sheffield (UK).

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Notes

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Symposium Overview

For the past thirteen years, EISA has held an annual continental symposium, focused on a selected democracy and governance issue. The ambition of the EISA Symposium is to not only facilitate academic discourse and critical analysis, but incorporate the views and experiences of policy practitioners and civil society stakeholders in the substance of each Symposium's subject matter.

- The first Annual Symposium, in November 2006, examined the challenges of conflict, democracy and development in Africa.
- The second, in October 2007, focused on a policy discussion around the prospects for sustainable democratic governance in Africa in an environment of dire socio economic conditions and entrenched poverty.
- The third, in October 2008, dealt with the challenges facing civil society engagement with the African Peer Review Mechanism.
- The fourth Symposium focused on the problem of persistent, violent election-related conflicts in Africa with a view to understanding their causes, magnitude and consequences for democratic governance.
- The fifth, in November 2010, provided a platform for political parties from across Africa to develop benchmarks to support political parties in institutional development and to enhance democratic systems of governance through political parties.
- The sixth Symposium in November 2011 explored the role of ICT in promoting political change in Africa. It provided a platform for stakeholders from across the continent to share experiences and learn best practices on the use of ICT and its impact on democracy and elections.
- The seventh EISA Symposium in March 2013 reviewed the two decades of election observation in Africa since the re-introduction of multi-party elections.
- The eighth, in September 2013, focused on causes and consequences of political party alliances and coalitions in Africa.
- The ninth Symposium held in December 2014 offered the platform to share experiences, harness lessons, and examine best practices regarding gender equality and participation of men and women in politics in Africa.
- The tenth symposium focused on recent constitutional reforms and the promotion of constitutionalism and how these impact on the progress of democratic governance in Africa.
- The eleventh symposium which coincided with EISA's 20th Anniversary and was held in October 2016. The symposium reviewed democratisation efforts in Africa over the past several decades with a view to pinpointing the factors that are influencing positively and negatively the continent in its trajectory of democratic consolidation.
- The theme of the 12th annual symposium was "State capture as an obstacle to democratic consolidation in Africa" This gathering explored how the phenomenon of state capture impacts the consolidation of democracy in Africa, exploring specifically its influence on elections; the institutionalization and normalization of democracy; and the transformation of post-colonial states.
- The 13th Annual Symposium was themed 'Realising Democratic Gains through Social Cohesion in Africa'. The Symposium explored the link between democratic stability and social cohesion, and consider whether building more cohesive societies might be the answer to building stronger democracies.
- The 14th Annual Symposium is themed 'Electoral Integrity in Africa: Under Imminent Threat?

The 15th Annual Symposium is themed 'Contributing to Credible Elections in Africa Through Improved International Observation'. The symposium will take stock of the value that election observation has had on the development of electoral democracies, while also considering the criticisms of the practice, with the intention of strengthening the field of election observation going forward.

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