



SOUTH AFRICA

Vota News

FEBRUARY 2017

ELECTORAL COMMISSION *Ensuring free and fair elections*

BLOW THE WHISTLE ON FRAUD, WASTE & ABUSE



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Editor's note

Embrace 2017!

Welcome to our first edition of Vota News for the year! "As we embrace 2017", in the words of CEO Mosotho Moepya, "let us be alive to the fact that it will not be without its own challenges. We should count it all joy to be living and doing what we do in times such as these." As you will see from the articles this month, there is much to be grateful for, austerity measures notwithstanding, including awards, opportunities for knowledge exchange and training, and the improvement of our governance mechanisms. Municipal by-elections are going full-steam ahead, and the financial year-end will soon consume much of our time – if it isn't already. As the CEO pointed out, the challenges that 2017 brings will call on all of us to be agile and play our part fully when called upon to do so. "In a team such as Team IEC, everyone matters. It is not a question of 'if you are called upon to play your role' – it is rather a question of 'whenever you are called upon to play your role!'"

Calendar FEBRUARY 2017

4 February	World Cancer Day
9 February	Opening and Joint Sitting of Parliament and President Jacob Zuma's delivery of his 2017 State of the Nation address
21 February	International Mother Language Day
20 February	World Day of Social Justice
22 February	National Healthy Lifestyles Day

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Lights, camera, action!



And you thought formal corporate photo shoots were all work and no play? If this evidence is anything to go by, even our Commissioners can have a light moment during their photo shoots.

Whistleblowing service to promote ethics and honesty

In an effort to stamp out fraud, corruption and unethical practices, the Electoral Commission has secured the services of an independent information gathering company, Whistle Blowers (Pty) Ltd, to whom employees, its contractors, suppliers, customers and the public can report illicit activity without fear of victimisation. The service is available with immediate effect.

“Whistleblowing policies and procedures are an essential part of ensuring good governance in any organisation, but one could argue even more so in a Chapter 9 organisation like the Electoral Commission, which is tasked with ensuring free and fair elections in South Africa,” says Chief Electoral Officer Mosotho Moepya.

The CEO points out that a whistle-blower has the right to remain anonymous. “Our service provider, Whistle Blowers, never divulges the identity of a whistle-blower, even if it is known to them,” he explains.

Mr Moepya says that the Electoral Commission is determined to provide for a safe reporting mechanism for staff, contractors, suppliers and customers and explains that all reports will be dealt with at the highest level.

Reports of any suspected fraudulent, corrupt or unethical practices can be submitted confidentially by toll-free number, fax, e-mail or online. The best way to report such practices though is through Whistle Blowers' call centre, which is staffed by multilingual operators who are trained to gather information.

The whistleblowing service operates 24-hours a day, seven days per week and 365 days a year.

Contact details for Whistle Blowers are as follows:

Website: www.whistleblowing.co.za

Toll-free number: 0800 000 223 (free from a landline)

Email: IEC@whistleblowing.co.za

Fax: 08652 22 816

Postal address: PO box 51006, Musgrave, 4062

To report any suspected fraudulent, corrupt or unethical practices you need to contact the whistleblowing service, and provide them with as many details as possible regarding the illicit activity or issue you are reporting, for example:

- Who
- When
- What
- How
- How often
- Value
- Details of vehicles used, if relevant.

Whistle Blowers will either provide you with a reference number which you need to use for future follow-up calls, or you can choose your own unique code name, word or number that you can use in the future, so that they know when you are communicating with them.

If a person has communicated with them before, they should please use the code given previously. Remember that the service provider will keep the identity of the whistle-blower confidential at all times.

“By promoting and fostering a culture of honesty and integrity, our vision of achieving the Electoral Commission's goal of being a pre-eminent leader in democracy will be that much easier to achieve,” says CEO Moepya.



Chairperson represents IEC at US elections and GEO-7

Electoral Commission Chairperson Glen Mashinini was hosted by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) during the 2016 United States Election Program (USEP) and Seventh Global Elections Organization Conference (GEO-7).

The 2016 USEP, the 13th since 1992, provided a fruitful exchange of ideas and expertise. At the peak of the program, on Election Day, there were over 550 participants from 90 countries there to witness the US electoral process and to share their incredible wealth of knowledge and diversity of experience about a variety of electoral topics.

Pictured below are scenes from the Chairperson's tour of the elections and attendance of the GEO-7.



Chairperson Mashinini pictured with IFES President and CEO William Sweeney, and inspecting a voting station



Chairperson Mashinini pictured with Rushdi Nackerdien, a former IEC employee and now IFES Regional Director for Africa, and IFES Chairman and CEO William Sweeney

2016 Municipal Elections advertising campaign continues to garner awards

The Electoral Commission's advertising campaign for the 5th Municipal Elections continues to roll in awards.

In late October last year, the 2016 Advertising Media Association of South Africa (AMASA) Awards ceremony was held to celebrate the year's most innovative and excellent media and advertising work in the country.

The event marked the most successful AMASA Awards to date with a record number of entries – over 170 entries and over 60 shortlisted campaigns.

The Electoral Commission's advertising agency, MediaShop, and its digital partner, Yonder Media, won the Best Integrated Public Service Award for their work on the Electoral Commission's 2016 Municipal Elections campaign.

Then, in late November, Yonder Media went on to win several Smartie awards

for its work on the digital 2016 Municipal Elections campaign at the Mobile Marketing Association's Europe, Middle East, Africa (EMEA) region gala event held in London, in the UK.

Yonder Media won a gold EMEA Smartie award (as they are known) for Messaging and two silver Smarties in the Mobile Native and Social Impact/Not-for-profit categories. Yonder's mobile campaign for the elections also won a special industry gold award that is only awarded annually on discretion of the panel of judges, for campaigns that had significant impact on the mobile industry.



MediaShop's Sandra Burger and Yonder Media's Fiona Potgieter accepting their AMASA Award



Johan van der Walt, Yonder Media CTO, at the Smartie EMEA Awards

National Outreach Strategic Planning Session



Attendees at the National Outreach Strategic Planning Session, held from 21 to 24 November 2016 in Magaliesburg, Gauteng. Staff from the Electoral Commission's Outreach function countrywide and across all levels participated in this landmark session to plan the way forward for the Outreach strategies and policies, business processes, monitoring and evaluation, and human capacity for functions relating to public education, communications, research and knowledge management, and stakeholder relations management.

IEC Eden office supports CANSA pink fun walk

By Keith Muller, EPC: George, Western Cape

CANSA George hosted its annual 5km fun walk at the Blue Mountain Estate in George. The aim of the 5km Pink Fun Walk is to create awareness of breast cancer and the knowledge that early detection can save lives.

This annual event was attended by over 1 300 people, mostly draped in pink. The IEC Eden team, dressed in their pink 2016 Municipal Elections T-shirts, blended in nicely in the sea of pink attire. As part of their contribution to the event, the team manned one of the many refreshment points and offered 'thank you' gifts to all participants.

A total of R40 000 was raised during the event



Elections to watch in 2017

The dramatic and unexpected outcomes of some high-profile elections in 2016 – the narrow approval of Brexit, the rejection of the Colombia peace accord referendum and the surprising victory of Donald J. Trump – may make the elections in 2017 seem mundane by comparison.

Yet, according to Michael Svetlik, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Vice President of Programs, elections in two of the European Union's largest economies (Germany and France), during a period of anti-incumbency and nativist tendencies, will make for interesting election watching.

He adds that, moreover, the dynamics of two elections in Africa (Kenya and Liberia) will help shape the continued democratic evolution of the continent in a hopefully peaceful manner.

Meanwhile, elections in the Americas and Southeast Asia, ranging from Haiti to Timor-Leste, will provide new tests of political resiliency and strength as these countries grapple with further development and consolidation shaped by both historical forces and new challenges to political stability, says Svetlik.

As an organisation dedicated to helping citizens have a voice in elections and assisting institutions to deliver electoral processes with integrity, the IFES is currently working in over 25 countries around the world.

Below are some of the most significant elections to watch in the coming year according to IFES:

- **Ecuador – February 2017**
- **Timor Leste – Presidential (March/April 2017) and Legislative Elections (June 2017)**
- **France – April or May 2017**
- **Papua New Guinea – June/July 2017**
- **Kenya – August 2017:** In a highly polarized environment, President Uhuru Kenyatta is expected to seek a second term in office against Raila Odinga, the main opposition leader who has run in the past two elections. Given the age provision in the constitution, this will be Odinga's last shot at the presidency. Some 22 million Kenyans are expected to participate in general elections, with candidates for president, members of Parliament, senators, governors and members of county assemblies all on the ballot.
- **Germany – October 2017**
- **Liberia – October 2017:** Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has announced she will step down as president, setting the stage for a competitive race that will likely include a number of candidates that have previously contested the presidency. Former footballer George Weah and former rebel leader Prince Johnson are expected to vie for the open seat. Elections will be held concurrently for 73 seats in the House of Representatives.
- **Kyrgyzstan – October 2017**
- **Honduras – November 2017**
- **Thailand – November 2017**
- **South Korea – Date to be finalised**
- **Italy – Date to be finalised**

Read the full article at <http://www.ifes.org/news/elections-watch-2017>



Mbizana MEO undertakes by-election training

By Mpumelelo Twabu, EPC at Mbizana, Eastern Cape

By-election training at the Mbizana Municipal Electoral Office for the 9 November by-elections in Ward 26 took place in October 2016. Facilitator Mpumelelo Twabu took the trainees through the training, which included everything from marking voter thumbs, to assembling ballot boxes, and the three steps of accurate results slip completion:

- Draft results slip on exam pad paper
- Dummy results slip in election diary, and
- Actual results slip in duplicate.



By-election trainees listening attentively



Mpumelelo Twabu demonstrating the importance of visibly stamping the back of ballot papers to eliminate fraud and ensure their validity



Mpumelelo Twabu demonstrating the assembly of ballot box for voting

Assignment to South Korea: Observing elections in Kyrgyzstan 2015

By Thuli Kholisa an, Assistant Manager: HR & Training, Eastern Cape

My first observation assignment while seconded in South Korea was electoral observation in Kyrgyzstan for the elections that took place on 4 October 2015. My team consisted of six members of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB), hailing from the Electoral Commissions of Cambodia, Georgia, Kenya, Malaysia, Uganda and South Africa. The main purpose of this observation was to provide an insight into the efficiency of Kyrgyzstan's use of an electronic voter identification device (EVID) and precinct count optical scanner (PCOS).

EVID is a device that was used to verify voter details. How it worked is that a voter showed their identity document, their fingerprint was scanned, and if the voter was registered in the correct voting district their details were displayed on the monitor for everyone at the polling station to see, and they were then issued with a confirmation receipt to sign and proceeded to the ballot paper issuer.

PCOS is an electronic ballot box that automatically calculated the results of an election and the results can be printed immediately after the polling station had been closed for voting. Once the voter marked the ballot, he/ she must not fold the ballot paper, but inserted the ballot paper into the ballot box (PCOS). This special ballot box has the ability to sort the invalid and valid votes as soon as the ballots are deposited into it. We visited 5 polling stations of which three were schools, a library and a restaurant. We were quite impressed by the performance of the electronic devices and the staff in general, however you could feel the uneasiness and the fear of touching the devices the minute a machine did not switch on or it did not reflect the required step, fortunately there were manual ballot boxes and the manual voters list in case technology failed.

There was a list of all candidates and their parties contesting an election posted at the entrance of each polling station to remind voters in case they had forgotten who to vote for. Majority of polling staff was women, you would be lucky if you could find two men in one polling station. Polling staff were required to sing a national anthem before declaring a polling station open to remind them of the huge task and responsibility placed in their hands.



(L-R: Commissioner Ongaria: Uganda, Ms Kholisa IEC South Africa; Commissioner P Hang: Cambodia; Commissioner CW Soo Kee: Malaysia; Dimitri Javakhadze, CEC-Georgia; and Agathe Awome, IEBC-Kenya)



A monitor displaying a voter's photo after verification, and a fingerprinting machine



In our observation we felt that the unfolding of the ballot before inserting it into the PCOS machine may compromise the secrecy of the vote, if the voter fails to turn the ballot upside down to hide the mark. We also picked up during counting, that the PCOS machine was not 100% correct with sorting of invalid votes, because it was programmed to read clearly marked ballots, once the marker was not strong (as some people may mark lightly compared to others) then it automatically rejected it, which required a Presiding Officer to take a decision on the validity of that particular vote. We were amazed to learn that you could actually use a restaurant as a polling station and the restaurant will be closed on that day just to allow voting to take place, of course we did not ask how much they were paying the owner that is if they were even paid anyway.



PCOS machine

As much as new technology was introduced in this country, their Electoral Act still required them to do manual counting after getting the results from the PCOS machine. This was used to prevent fraud by electoral staff as the results from the machine were used to monitor their counting. What we learnt from this experience is that if you want to introduce something new, awareness to all stakeholders becomes crucial every step of the way, it takes time for people to adapt to new systems therefore you should not rush change.



A copy of the results from the PCOS machine, votes cast per party per candidate

Did you know?

The African Union (AU) has elected Moussa Faki Mahamat from Chad as the new AU commission chairman. Mahamat replaces South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma who was elected to the post in 2012. Dlamini-Zuma is set to stay on in Addis for another three months for a formal handover.



Spirit of tolerance during Newcastle's Ward 6 by-elections

By Thembekile Ntshangase, Outreach Training Officer: DC 25, KwaZulu-Natal

The voters in ward 6, Newcastle Municipality, braved the rainy weather to vote on the 9 November 2016 by-elections in four voting stations, namely Sizanani Secondary School, Siyathuthuka Primary, Madadeni Reformed Community Church, and Jobstown Combined School.

The by-elections were kickstarted by the signing of the Code of Conduct on 26 October 2016. At the signing ceremony, all five political parties who contested the elections were represented and pledged to uphold the values and conduct required by the Code of Conduct. The spirit of tolerance among the parties was observed during the ceremony, during which Mrs Mbonane, the Regional Supervisor, emphasised what the code entails and the penalties for candidates or parties that breach the code.

On the day of the by-elections the same spirit prevailed. As the IEC officials were preparing for the opening the stations, the political parties displayed their tents outside the voting stations. South African Police Service (SAPS) members were also in full force to ensure the safety of voters and officials in all the stations.

Four permanent IEC officials who worked as Area Managers were escorted to and from voting stations throughout voting. The Joint Operations Centre was also activated, and they also received reports from SAPS members on the ground about the situation on an hourly basis. A voter turnout of 41, 56% was achieved, although we suspected that, had it not been for the rainy weather, we could have achieved an even higher turnout as the MEO did get through to the community to do voter education. When asked why it is important to vote, one voter (who asked not to be named) said: "As the community they cannot sit down and watch others deciding on their behalf, they believe through their vote they have the power to contribute meaningfully to initiatives that can change their lives for the better."



At the Code of Conduct signing ceremony

WCape PEO grandma makes her driving dreams come true

By Noluvo Plaatjie, SAO: Outreach, Western Cape PEO

Sometimes we complain about life and everything else around us not going well. The Christmas season reminds us to stop that and reflect on the good and the greatest gifts we have in our lives.

Christmas is the time for giving and this article will surely make you appreciate the little things we often take for granted, such as having a permanent employment.

Rachel de Vries works at the Western Cape Provincial Electoral Office and is our everything. Our day is miserable without her. She has a special relationship with each and every one of us. She makes you feel so special in her own unique ways.

She makes the meanest hot chocolate. I call it a love potion.

Rachel's journey in the organisation has been a long and inspiring one. She started in 2006 working under the broker. Her exceptional service and personality saw her win the hearts and the IEC family love grew fonder.

After years of working with only a portion of the salary paid to her, then an opportunity presented itself for her to be an IEC employee permanently. She then qualified and acquired her driving licence.

The whole office celebrated with her the day she brought back the big news. That was the greatest achievement ever to her, her children and grandkids. Looking at grandma driving with pride after all those years proving you are never too old to achieve your dreams.

Recently we were all blown away on Tuesday, 1 November 2016, when Rachel brought to the parking bay, her own set of wheels. We all went out to congratulate her, ululating with pitched voices. The onlookers were admiring the love shared between colleagues to see one of their own making her dreams a reality.

We took photos and created such a melody in the air celebrating her independence from the hassle and the bustle of the public transport.

One can't stop thinking that Rachel is a gift in her community as she organises women and children's outings with the little that she has. She organises Christmas parties for the kids and they always look forward to her coming home after work as they are guaranteed to get something from her bag. Just what you would expect from a grandmother, extending love and support to those less fortunate.

This time Rachel and her family will be able to go out in style as Santa Claus has delivered an early gift to them, rewarding her for her big heart.



Rachel de Vries with her first car



Rachel de Vries pictured at a Christmas party in late 2016

11 things you probably didn't know about Parliament

South Africa's Parliament officially opens for the year on Thursday, 9 February, when President Jacob Zuma delivers his State of the Nation address to a joint sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. These facts about Parliament might interest you.



1. The seat of Parliament is in Cape Town, but it could be moved by an Act of Parliament supported by a majority of the members of the National Assembly.
2. The President is not a Member of Parliament (MP). After an MP is elected as President, he or she loses the seat and the vacancy is filled by the next eligible person from the same party.
3. The President may attend meetings of the National Assembly and may speak in the Assembly, but he or she does not have a vote.
4. MPs have freedom of speech in Parliament, as long as they keep within the parliamentary rules. They cannot be prosecuted, arrested, imprisoned or be expected to pay damages for anything they say, produce or submit in Parliament or its committees.
5. Bills can only be introduced in Parliament by Ministers, Deputy Ministers, parliamentary committees and individual MPs.
6. Although ordinary citizens may not submit bills to Parliament, they may lobby MPs or committees to introduce legislation that deals with their concerns.
7. It takes 14 months to prepare the annual Budget for its introduction in the National Assembly. The annual Budget determines how much money government departments will receive and has to be approved by Parliament.
8. Committees have the power to summons any person to appear before them to give evidence or produce documents. They may ask any person or institution to report to them and may receive petitions, representations or submissions from the public. They play a crucial role in the law-making process.
9. The copy of an Act of Parliament signed by the President is the official version of that Act and is given to the Constitutional Court for safekeeping.
10. The Constitution says a parliamentary committee meeting may not be closed to the public "unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society".
11. Because the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) deal with classified or top secret information, it is the only committee that has meetings that are usually closed to the public. The members of the JSCI have to get security clearance from the National Intelligence Agency before they can serve on that committee.

Source: www.parliament.gov.za

Dealing with grief and loss

Most people grieve when they lose something or someone important to them. The way grief affects you depends on lots of things, including what kind of loss you have suffered, your upbringing, your beliefs or religion, your age, your relationships, and your physical and mental health.

How does grief affect you?

People react in different ways to loss. Anxiety and helplessness often come first. Anger is also common, including feeling angry at someone who has died for "leaving you behind". Sadness often comes later.

Feelings like these are a natural part of the grieving process. Knowing that they are common may help them seem more normal. It's also important to know that they will pass.

Some people take a lot longer than others to recover. Some need help from a counsellor or therapist or their GP. But you will eventually come to terms with your loss, and the intense feelings will subside.



How to cope with grief and loss

There's no instant fix. You might feel affected every day for about a year to 18 months after a major loss. But after this time the grief is less likely to be at the forefront of your mind.

There are practical things you can do to get through a time of bereavement or loss:

- Express yourself. Talking is often a good way to soothe painful emotions. Talking to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor can begin the healing process.
- Allow yourself to feel sad. It's a healthy part of the grieving process.
- Keep your routine up. Keeping up simple things like walking the dog can help.
- Sleep. Emotional strain can make you very tired. If you're having trouble sleeping, see your GP.
- Eat healthily. A healthy, well-balanced diet will help you cope.
- Avoid things that "numb" the pain, such as alcohol. It will make you feel worse once the numbness wears off.
- Go to counselling if it feels right for you – but perhaps not straight away. Counselling may be more useful after a couple of weeks or months. Only you will know when you're ready.

When to get help

Get help if any of the following apply to you:

- You don't feel able to cope with overwhelming emotions or daily life.
- The intense emotions aren't subsiding.
- You're not sleeping.
- You have symptoms of depression or anxiety.
- Your relationships are suffering.
- You're having sexual problems.
- You're becoming accident-prone.
- You're caring for someone who isn't coping well.

Your GP is a good place to start. They can give you advice about other support services, refer you to a counsellor, or prescribe medication if needed.

Find the full article at <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/emotionalhealth/pages/dealingwithloss.aspx>