**Africa Regional Office (AfRO)**

Elections Portfolio Review Document

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**Introduction**

This is a review of the Africa Regional Office’s (AfRO) elections work. AfRO is one of the outcomes of the recent transition at OSF that saw the integration of hitherto stand-alone programs, projects, and offices. AfRO comprises the former Africa Regional Office (ARO), the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP) and the Africa Advocacy Office (AAO).

OSF’s Global Board approved a four year (2014-17) AfRO strategy that in addition to the regional office’s internal service provision mandate to OSF’s Africa foundations also includes achievement of specific objectives in priority program areas. Four fields: Anti-corruption; Elections; International Justice; Natural Resources Governance; and one concept – Citizenship/right to nationality were identified as areas where AfRO could add value. AfRO sees its comparative value addition as being in areas such as cross continent/region/foundation learning, dedicated advocacy toward and access to pan-African and international institutions and processes that may obstruct OSF’s objectives in Africa, and development of tools we need that draw from different experiences on the continent.

**1. AfRO’s electoral work**

One of AfRO’s goals is to contribute to the integrity of elections in Africa. The strategy acknowledges that elections are primarily a national process but suggests that they can also benefit from experiences elsewhere on the continent and the world. Increasingly the influence of regional and continental bodies, with which AfRO has regular contact, is being felt in the conduct of African elections.

We have four specific ambitions:

1. Improve the effectiveness of civil society election monitoring through propagation of the Elections Situation Room model;

2. Contribute to improved election management and reform through research and advocacy;

3. Complement foundations’ support for specific elections by contributing research, analysis, and advocacy;

4. Deepen our partners’ understanding (including our own) of key developments and trends regarding elections in order to improve effectiveness of responses to electoral challenges.

We try to fulfil these ambitions through implementation of activities that include: development of an elections situation room toolkit that is flexible and adaptable to different electoral contexts; assessment of the functioning of election management bodies (EMBs) in West, East and Southern Africa; advocacy aimed at Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union (AU) on the election situation room and election management standards; providing technical input to foundations programming on specific elections; complementing foundations support for specific elections through research, analysis and advocacy; and awarding grants to pan-African organizations to carry out research and advocacy on key developments related to elections.

In 2014 a budget of $561,660 was approved to implement some of the activities described above.

**2. The state of the field**

*Trends and developments*

Compared to a couple of decades ago, when holding of periodic and regular elections was not guaranteed, many African countries are now committed to holding elections through which there is plural contest for state power. What remains an issue is the quality of elections, with the central question being whether elections in Africa are delivering democratic outcomes – whether elections present a meaningful opportunity for citizens to choose who governs them. Despite this concern, citizens’ approval of the quality of their elections leads both to satisfaction with their democracy, as well as trust in the political institutions of their countries (Alemika, E.E (2007), Quality of Elections, Satisfaction with Democracy and Political Trust in Africa. Working Paper no. 84. AFROBAROMETER working papers). So, while not a panacea for democracy and democratic governance, elections are an indispensable aspect of democratic consolidation in Africa.

Significant progress has been achieved to extend democratic practice in Africa in which elections have been an important part. Plural electoral contests are now the norm rather than the exception through which political power is transferred. National laws, regional and continental treaties provide normative frameworks that guide the contact of elections. In four of the five presidential elections held in 2013 (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, and Zimbabwe), new leaders were inaugurated. The exception was Zimbabwe. Reversals were seen in the Central African Republic where former President François Bozizé was removed from power through a coup d’état. Egypt’s first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi, was removed from power through street protests. 2014 has been a busy year. South Africa maintained its track record of conducting credible elections during the May plebiscite. In the same month Malawians elected a new president albeit in an election that was marred by some shambolic organization. Mozambique and Namibia will certainly have new presidents after their October and November elections courtesy of constitutional presidential term limits. In Algeria President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (in power since 1999) will be seeking a further term. Key elections in 2015 will include Nigeria, Cote d’ivoire, South Sudan, Togo, Tanzania and Burundi. The integrity with which elections are being conducted in Africa is a mixed bag with gains registered in some countries and reversals being witnessed in others.

*Players*

There are a number of actors working in this area that range from national election management bodies, governmental institutions, local civil society and non-governmental organizations, political parties, regional networks of electoral commissions, pan-African organizations, international organizations, through to development partners. There is also a wide body of work that may not necessarily be described as electoral support but has an important bearing on the integrity of elections. Such work includes the protection of civil and political rights, plural media, work with political parties, legal reforms, strengthening of civil society capacities, and inclusion of minorities in decision making processes.

Electoral support work has tended to take place in the run-up to an election with important national differences in the way in which activities to deepen democracy are supported in between elections. In the past decade more emphasis is now being placed on providing electoral support in the context of the full electoral cycle that comprises pre, during and post elections. There are organizations in this field whose primary focus is to promote the credibility of elections. Organizations such as International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the Carter Center, and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) have done impressive work that has made significant contribution to our understanding of different aspects of elections. Bilateral and multilateral donors as well as private foundations have provided substantial amounts of resources in the form of electoral assistance aimed at different aspects of elections. Support has included electoral law reforms, electoral systems design, voter registration, election observation, voter education, election management, and election related violence mitigation. Despite the fairly significant levels of support that have been provided in the form of electoral assistance, elections in many African countries continue to experience a myriad of challenges and distortions that undermine their credibility and integrity.

All four OSF Africa foundations have had an elections focus as part of their strategic priorities. OSF initiatives such as OSJI, the Program on Independent Journalism (former Media Program), the former Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP), and the Africa Advocacy Program have undertaken work that has had a bearing on the credibility of elections. Key OSF interventions in this field include: strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations and election management bodies; election observation; mitigation of election related violence; development of regional electoral norms and standards; research and analysis; advocacy; and citizens’ engagement with electoral processes.

**3. Pre-AfRO research and advocacy work**

Our strategy has been designed primarily to respond to foundations’ needs and exploit pan-African and international spaces where these exist to promote elections with integrity. It builds on previous work done by the different programs that have now integrated in AfRO.

*Research and Analysis*

During its existence as a separate program, AfriMAP produced comprehensive reports on democracy and political participation in twelve African countries. These reports had a specific chapter that assessed the conduct of elections based on African and international standards. AfriMAP assessed the functioning of election management bodies in six West African countries and published the comparative study in 2011. The study has been used by OSIWA to inform and frame its engagement and support to the Network of Electoral Commissions in West Africa (ECONEC). A similar study has been completed in East Africa and is about to be published. OSISA and AfRO are currently in discussion with the SADC Electoral Commissioners Forum (SADC-ECF) to collaborate on a similar study in Southern Africa.

In the context of closing political space in the lead-up to the 2011 Ugandan elections, OSIEA collaborated with AfriMAP to commission a review of Uganda’s compliance with international and regional standards for the conduct of elections. The review covered issues such as preconditions for electoral participation, the electoral process and management, and electoral dispute resolution. The report made it possible for OSIEA to engage with Uganda’s Electoral Commission directly on what could be done within the remaining time to avert the kind of electoral violence witnessed in Kenya in 2007. Rounds of in-country meetings took place between OSIEA and the researcher on one hand and various diplomatic missions in Kampala on the other. The report was then brought to international attention through the efforts of the Africa advocacy team and international advocates. An advocacy mission was organized to the EU that delivered recommendations based on the report to the EU Observer Mission to Uganda, the EU Commission election services and the External Service Uganda desks. Whilst these advocacy efforts have been appreciated for contributing to increasing EU officials’ knowledge about the dynamics at play in the Ugandan elections, it’s difficult to assess the impact of these interventions: the EU’s highest political authorities in fact decided to recognise the electoral process as free and fair for political expediency and preference for stability and political continuity in Uganda.

This level of substantive engagement with elections has ensured that there is pan-African knowledge about elections on the AfRO team that can be brought to bear on foundations work.

*Advocacy*

The Africa advocacy program complemented and supported foundations through advocacy at the AU, Brussels, London, Washington and New York. Fact finding missions were undertaken to DRC, Kenya, Senegal, and Zimbabwe that equipped advocates with first-hand information about the context in which elections were being held. This information was used to brief authoritatively, diverse policy makers and other key actors in the respective policy centres. In the case of DRC advocates met with EU decision makers prior to the EU feasibility assessment of election observation in that country and provided input into the assessment. They also highlighted the need for adequate financing of election support activities. During the meeting with the EU external Action Services the need for diplomatic initiatives to mitigate rising tensions in the lead-up to elections was emphasized. The fact finding mission to Zimbabwe organized together with OSISA enabled advocates to challenge views held in EU and US policy making circles that overlooked corruption and undemocratic practices in the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The need to support civil society actors in the face of government’s clampdown was highlighted.

Advocacy visits by foundations staff and their partners have been facilitated in relation to elections in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, DRC, and Senegal where advocates have relayed key messages at the AU, in Brussels, London, Washington, and at the UN. In the case of Senegal international pressure that was exerted on former President Wade not to manipulate the constitution in order to run for a third term can be attributed to advocacy that was undertaken in Brussels and Washington. For more details refer to the Portfolio Elements document annexed to this document.

These two streams of work provided a good basis to develop an elections portfolio within the newly constituted AfRO. More recently AfRO has implemented the following activities:

**4. Complementing OSISA’s work in Malawi**

Malawi held tripartite elections on the 20th of May, 2014. As part of its program to support credible elections in Southern Africa, OSISA supported a number of election related activities that included election monitoring through the situation room, political dialogue through presidential debates, and media coverage of elections.

In order to kick start implementation of the situation room OSISA invited OSIWA colleagues to Malawi in May 2013 to share their experiences about implementing the situation room. This learning process inspired Malawian organizations to implement their version of the situation room, the Malawi Elections Information Centre (MEIC).

In its 2014 work plan AfRO included activities that were aimed at complementing OSISA’s work on elections in Malawi and facilitating learning across the network. Building on previous AfriMAP work, AfRO finalized and published a report on democracy and political participation in Malawi that was based on the country’s compliance with regional and continental standards on democratic governance. The report and follow-up analysis were used to define what the situation room would focus on and subsequently AfRO cluster members provided technical input into the situation room on such aspects as the observer checklist and functioning and terms of reference for experts that were part of the situation room. Further technical input has been provided by AfRO to OSISA regarding evaluation of implementation of the situation room in Malawi. The close collaboration between AfRO and OSISA to implement the situation room ensured that the situation room experience was written up and shared with others in the network. This was also the case with regular updates provided during the OSF wide elections group monthly call.

A post-election crisis was triggered by incumbent president Joyce Banda’s attempt to annul the election. AfRO and OSISA started consultations to facilitate advocacy at key policy centres to respond to the unfolding crisis. AfRO had already made budgetary provision in its 2014 budget to respond to such a crisis and was ready to support advocacy missions in respect of the crisis. Fortunately the crisis was resolved through domestic processes and ended up not requiring the type of advocacy interventions planned under the AfRO strategy.

**5. Other current work**

*OSIEA/Tanzania learns from Malawi*

In response to OSIEA Tanzania program’s need to learn more about the situation room in order for them to decide whether to support implementation of a similar initiative in the 2015 Tanzania elections, AfRO and OSISA invited Tanzania program staff to observe the functioning of the situation room in Malawi. As a follow-up to this learning process, OSIEA’s Tanzania program and AfRO staff jointly conducted consultations with key stakeholders in Tanzania to explore the feasibility of implementing the situation room. AfRO assisted with the development of a concept note for a stakeholder workshop that will explore the feasibility of implementing the ESR in Tanzania. The stakeholder workshop is planned for 24th September and will bring together Tanzanian CSOs working on elections, the electoral commission, government institutions and development partners. OSISA and OSIWA colleagues are also being invited to share their experiences. This form of collaboration ensures that experiences from elsewhere in the network and on the continent are factored into decision making regarding electoral assistance in Tanzania.

*Collaboration to develop the Elections Situation Room (ESR) toolkit*

AfRO and OSIWA jointly developed a proposal that was presented to and approved by the OSIWA board to develop an elections situation room toolkit. OSIWA had planned to develop such a toolkit for West Africa in its 2014 work plan. AfRO had planned to develop a toolkit that would have continent-wide application. When complete the toolkit will comprise manuals, training modules, templates, checklists, and other visual materials that will be used by CSOs in implementing the ESR. OSISA, OSIEA and OSF-SA will participate in this project by bringing in their partners who have implemented or are planning to implement the ESR as part of a learning process. An experts meeting was held in August that brought together experts who have been involved with the situation room in West Africa and Southern Africa to develop a framework for the ESR toolkit. A stakeholder workshop was to have been held in early September to review the draft toolkit and provide input based on experiences and lessons learned by organizations that have implemented or are in the process of implementing the ESR. The workshop had to be postponed due to the Ebola outbreak since some of the participants would be coming from affected countries.

*Collaboration and advocacy on Nigeria 2015 elections*

AfRO has been working closely with OSIWA’s Nigeria program regarding the 2015 elections. AfRO reviewed and provided input for the OSIWA’s Nigeria 2015 elections including convening a network-wide call to discuss the strategy. AfRO’s elections cluster members provided technical input by commenting on the Nigeria program’s request to the reserve fund that was approved to the tune of $700,000 to respond to new challenges facing the Nigerian elections.

In response to OSIWA’s request and need to expand advocacy regarding the Nigerian elections, AfRO supported and facilitated an advocacy mission by OSIWA’s Nigeria program and its partners to Washington and New York in June 2014. Advocacy at these centres was considered important given the deteriorating political and security situation in Nigeria that is likely to adversely affect the integrity of elections. The specific objectives of the visit included providing a clear set of actionable recommendations to the US government, present information to enhance understanding by US policy makers of the interconnectedness of the elections and security challenges, including manipulation of religious and ethnic identity by politicians, and providing information to Increase understanding of capabilities and shortcomings of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Meetings attended included a roundtable hosted by the Assistant Secretary for Africa, the UN Political Affairs Desk on Nigeria, the UK permanent mission to the UN, and African civil society roundtable on the US/African Leaders’ Summit. A fact finding mission that was to be undertaken September 8th-12th by AfRO advocates and members of the elections cluster had to be postponed due to concerns about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Instead a downsized group undertook the mission. The purpose of fact finding missions by AfRO is to equip AfRO advocates with first-hand information that goes beyond mainstream international news and media coverage. The missions take advantage of OSF Africa foundations’ presence in-country to get a much more objective understanding of the electoral environment to enable transmission of balanced and unbiased messages to key actors such as election observers, policy makers, and development partners.

**6. Going Forward**

It is important that we reflect on some of the critical assumptions we have made in designing our portfolio. We would like to pose some questions so that we get advice from the group on the portfolio’s direction:

* *Which particular AfRO assets do foundations find valuable in practice? What lessons can be learned from our collaboration and cooperation with foundations so far?* Our impression is that the work we contribute is in demand. It is important to tease out why that is. We have sometimes struggled to draw a firm line between our contribution and that of a foundation. Do foundations see more value in the expertise/technical knowledge that AfRO is able to bring through research and analysis or is the value in AfRO being extra hands on the deck? Or is it the coordination/convening role that AfRO is able to play? A clear area of need has been inter-foundation/region/country learning. There has been a concern that learning about elections across the network has not been as systematic and institutionalized as it ought to be. How can we improve on AfRO’s effectiveness in facilitating learning among partners and ourselves?
* *Is it reasonable for a team that focuses on continental and international settings to be working alongside foundations on national elections? Or is it contradictory and inappropriate?* It is acknowledged that the most useful interventions have been in specific countries and contexts. On the other hand there is a growing role and influence by regional institutions such as Regional Economic Communities, the AU, networks of electoral management bodies and parliamentarians in national elections. It is important to hear whether foundations see value and utility in bringing the regional and international norms and standards to bear on national processes and whether this actually enhances the impact of their programs. There are common problems that impact on electoral integrity such as voter registration, electoral systems design, violence and impunity, election dispute adjudication, and the functioning of election management bodies – should AfRO rather be supporting interventions that respond to such cross-cutting challenges?
* *Could we be duplicating what others are doing? How well do we identify the gaps before entering the space?* There are several groups whose core mandates are electoral support and have developed technical expertise and in-depth knowledge about elections. Is some other actor able to contribute what AfRO is doing? With a budget of just over half a million to respond to the challenges we have identified, is our investment commensurate with the threats to the integrity of elections in Africa? If we stopped trying to fulfil what we have defined as our ambitions, what will be the implications? We need to understand whether what we are doing is unique and indispensable. We will also want to explore how AfRO can foster better development partner collaboration and coordination in the field and at headquarters level.
* *Should we be doing more to engage with/strengthen African institutions and electoral processes?* We believe that Africa has made significant progress regarding democracy and good governance, including the holding of periodic elections, outlawing unconstitutional changes of government, developing progressive standards by which elections are being assessed. Yet, there is still justified scepticism about the commitment by African governments and their leaders to ensure that elections are conducted with integrity. Recommendations from the APRM reviews have not resulted in meaningful electoral reforms. Although the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance came into force two years ago there is little evidence that member states are meeting their obligations. Institutions such as the Pan African Parliament, that could have played an important legislative oversight role over the conduct of elections, have remained weak due to excessive executive control. The AU and other regional observer missions have given a number of elections a clean bill of health against irrefutable evidence of irregularities and fraud. Yet at a continental level these are institutions that we have to work with. Do we write them off or do we take the risk to do more to improve their effectiveness?

**Conclusion**

Although AfRO has been implementing its elections strategy for less than a year, OSF has a long history of involvement in elections, some of it rather controversial. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, OSF helped nurture social movements in Central and Eastern Europe and countries of the former Soviet Union. Currently OSF’s engagement with elections is deepest in Africa. We see potential work in a number of upcoming elections and believe that now is the time to assess whether we should continue on the present track because it’s working well, whether what we are doing has marginal if not minimal impact on the issues undermining the integrity of elections in Africa, or whether we should consider doing something completely different from what we are doing under the current strategy. We believe that people participating in this review are best placed to give such guidance.

**ANNEX**

**Elections Portfolio Review**

**September 19, 2014**

**Portfolio Elements**

**Topic:** Elections and Political Participation (OSF Field: Electoral System Reform – contributing to the integrity of elections in Africa)

The portfolio review will respond to the following questions:

* Which particular AfRO assets do foundations find valuable in practice? What lessons can be learned from our collaboration and cooperation with foundations so far?
* Is it a sign of smart integration for a team that focuses on continental and international settings to be working alongside foundations on national elections? Or is it contradictory and inappropriate?
* Could we be duplicating what others are doing? How well do we identify the gaps before entering the space?
* Should we be doing more to engage with/strengthen African institutions and electoral processes?

**Strands of work**

* Facilitate learning between foundations, partners and other stakeholders
* Complement foundations’ efforts in supporting specific elections
* Contribute to improved electoral standards
* Generate knowledge and information to deepen understanding regarding key developments and trends related to elections in Africa

**Tools**

The strategy and interventions build on work done under previous programs that have now been integrated into AfRO namely: the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP) and Africa Advocacy. Under AfriMAP research was carried out in the area of democracy and political participation and on election management bodies. Advocacy was conducted aimed at key institutions such as the African Union, the European Union, the British government, the United States government, and the United Nations regarding specific elections.

**I. Research**

1. AfriMAP research on democracy and political participation assessed citizens’ opportunity to choose political leaders of their choice through regular and legitimate elections. Using a research tool developed with input from a wide range of African experts and using sub-regional, continental and international standards (<http://www.afrimap.org/questionnaire.php>), research was conducted and reports produced in 12 countries (<http://www.afrimap.org/ReportTheme/Political+participation>).
2. In response to OSIEA’s request for analysis of Uganda’s compliance with African and international standards and state of preparedness in the run-up to the 2011 elections, AfriMAP carried out research and published an analytical report (<http://www.afrimap.org/Report/Uganda%3A+The+Management+of+Elections>) that was used for advocacy.
3. A comparative study of the functioning and effectiveness of election management bodies in West Africa was done in 2011 (<http://www.afrimap.org/Report/Election+Management+Bodies+in+West+Africa>). The study has been used by OSIWA in its engagement with the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC). A similar study is about to be finalized for East Africa and the one for Southern Africa will commence soon.
4. The Malawi democracy and political participation report and policy discussion document (<http://www.afrimap.org/Report/Malawi%3A+Democracy+and+Political+Participation>) were published and publicly launched in the run-up to the Malawi May 2014 elections. The report and panel discussion organized during the launch of the report and the elections situation room helped frame the issues that the situation room supported by OSISA focused on.
5. An analytical report that builds on the findings of the AfriMAP 2009 democracy and political participation report (<http://www.afrimap.org/Report/Mozambique%3A+Democracy+and+Political+Participation>) has been commissioned to complement OSISA’s elections work in Mozambique.

**II. Advocacy**

Advocacy has been used to highlight key issues relating to specific elections with the aim of mobilizing pressure to ensure the credibility of electoral processes or to respond to developments that could potentially undermine the legitimacy of elections. Advocacy has been facilitated through advocacy missions by OSF foundation staff and their partners to policy centres, fact finding missions by OSF advocates to specific countries, and regular communications between foundations and OSF advocates. Below are examples of where advocacy has been undertaken in respect of specific elections.

**1. DRC:** The Open Society European Policy Institute (OSEPI), formerly OSF’s Brussels advocacy office briefed the EU preparatory and fact-finding mission using the AfriMAP political participation report; in consultation with OSISA, regularly briefed the head of the EU Election Observation Mission using analyses and concerns raised by the OSISA DRC office; facilitated high level advocacy in coordination with OSISA in relation to the 2011 elections. Although advocacy in Washington did not produce successful outcomes, there was strong collaboration between the DC office and OSISA’s DRC program with information being relayed to key players in Washington.

**2. Uganda:** An advocacy visit by OSIEA’s Uganda program and their partners was organized with EU representatives from the office of the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes; the EU Commission election monitoring services and the External Action Service Uganda desks in respect of the 2011 Uganda elections. Recommendations were delivered based on the AfriMAP report. The impact of the advocacy is not clear since the EU seems to have prioritized political stability over credible elections.

**3. Senegal:** The country was identified as a country of concern for OSF advocacy due to attempts by President Wade to manipulate the constitution in order to stand for a third presidential term in the 2011 election and appoint his son as vice-president. The advocacy group organized an extensive fact finding mission to Senegal. The fact finding mission and engagement between the Africa advocacy group and OSIWA helped shape consistent messages from the US government and the EU to the government of President Wade.

**4. Kenya:** OSIEA invited advocates to conduct a fact-finding mission to evaluate the degree of progress in institutional reforms with regard to the 2013 elections. The mission also assessed the political environment and provided advice for an advocacy strategy to OSIEA. Findings from the mission identified support for the Chief Justice and the US as a key entry-point for immediate advocacy.

**5. Zimbabwe:** A team of advocates undertook a fact finding mission in the run-up to the 2013 election. Advocacy missions were facilitated for OSISA staff and partners in Washington and London.

**6. Nigeria:** Staff and partners from the Nigeria program undertook an advocacy mission to Washington and New York as part of advocacy regarding the 2015 elections. The mission held meetings with US government officials and provided information and made specific recommendations regarding the elections.

**III. Technical assistance**

Based on its experience working at a pan-African level, AfRO staff members have provided technical assistance where needed:

**1.** **Malawi:** Reviewed documents and provided input in respect of the Malawi elections situation room. Such technical assistance included review of the observer checklist, drafting of the terms of reference for the experts, working with the experts in the situation room to ensure application of pan-African electoral standards, and participation in the evaluation of the Malawi situation room.

**2.** **Nigeria:** Reviewed and provided input for the OSIWA’s Nigeria program’s strategy and request for reserve funds for the 2015 elections.

**3.** **Tanzania:** Assisted OSIEA’s Tanzania Program to develop the situation room concept paper that will be used to convene a stakeholder meeting to decide whether to implement the situation room during the 2015 elections.

**4. Training:** AfRO team of advocates conducts advocacy training for foundationsstaff and their partners.

**Convenings**

Where appropriate, AfRO has convened meetings or other forums to promote learning, catalyze dialogue, and develop implementation tools. Below are some of the recent forums that have been convened:

**1.** A seminar based on the Malawi AfriMAP report on Democracy and Political Participation for stakeholders to discuss the state of preparedness of the country to hold elections and the extent to which the country was in compliance with its own constitution and electoral laws, regional and continental electoral standards;

**2.** An experts meeting convened in collaboration with OSIWA to bring together experts working on the elections situation room as part of the process to develop a toolkit for the implementation of the situation room

**3.** AfRO convenes a weekly advocacy call during which priority advocacy issues, including elections, are discussed and action plans developed. Participants on the call are AfRO, foundation, and OSF program staff.