




AGA
African Governance Architecture

International Election Observation in Africa

OUTLINE

- **Value of Elections**
 - **Significance of election observation**
 - **Advancing gender equality in Decision-Making**
 - **Way Forward**
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Value of Elections

- Elections are a critical ingredient of democracy;
- They provide an opportunity for people's choice of leaders (local, provincial/state/district, national etc);
- But elections do not equal democracy;

Value of Elections

- Yes, democracy is impossible without elections;
- But, elections can be held regularly even in political systems that are far from being democratic;
- Whereas democracy is unthinkable without elections, autocracy is also possible even under conditions of regular elections;

Value of Elections

- This irony suggests that elections can actually serve two purposes:
 - They can serve as a fundamental anchor for democracy-building
 - Much the same way that they can provide a veil of legitimacy to authoritarian rule
- This means that elections are double-edged sword

Value of Elections

- Electoral governance is central to our understanding of the value of elections to both democracy and peace;
- In this regard, some scholars (Mozaffar and Schedler) have popularized the notion of procedural certainty and substantive uncertainty the central plank of electoral governance which is key to election integrity;
- They argue that “the paradox is that substantive uncertainty requires procedural certainty. It is this paradox that defines the central task of electoral governance: organizing electoral uncertainty by providing institutional certainty.... If the central task of electoral governance is to institutionalize democratic uncertainty, failure to do so may originate at any of its three levels”. The three levels are (a) rule-making, (b) rule application and (c) rule adjudication.

Value of Elections

- At the very heart of the integrity of elections in Africa, therefore, lies the twin-principle of procedural certainty and substantive uncertainty;
- Simply put, for elections to be credible and their outcomes legitimate, electoral rules, systems and regulations should be certain, well-known and predictable;
- In turn, the election results should not be known in advance of polling;
- Results should be determined by the contest itself whose outcome comes after the event and not before.

Value of Elections

- From the above analysis, two important tasks for election observation are evident;
- First, election observation ought to add value to the democracy-building and peace-building functions of elections;
- Secondly, election observation ought to reinforce procedural certainty and substantive uncertainty of elections as a central plank of electoral governance.

Significance of Election Observation

- OBSERVATION
- MONITORING
- RELATED CONCEPTS

Election Observation

- Systematic, comprehensive and accurate information gathering;
- On-site fact-finding concerning the laws, processes and institutions related to the conduct of elections;
- Impartial and professional analysis of such information;
- Reaching an informed verdict about the credibility, legitimacy and acceptability of the election outcome
- **Watch, see, note & report.**

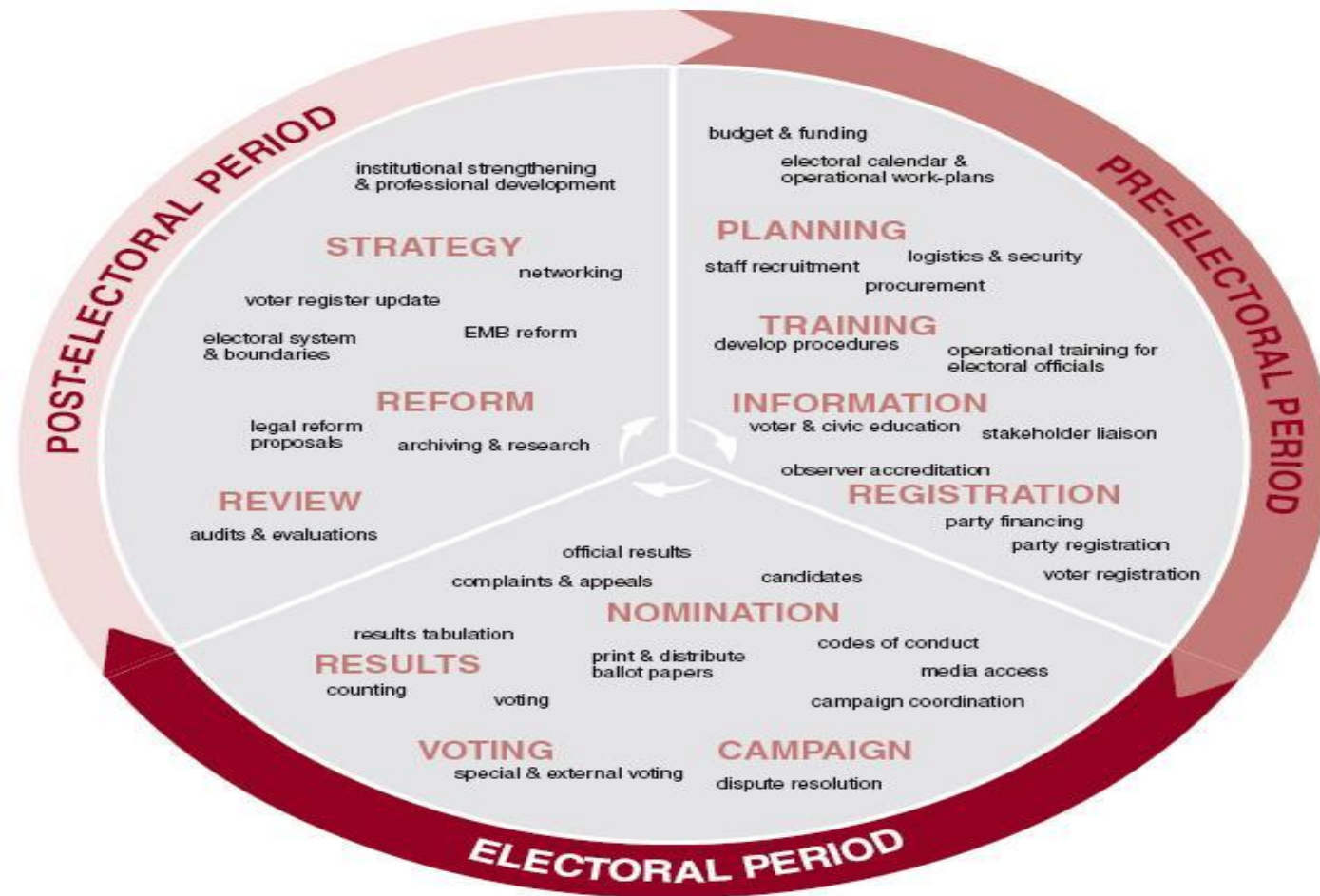
Election Monitoring

- Systematic information gathering, evaluation of the electoral process;
- More thorough-going than election observation;
- Intervention aimed at correcting observed deficiencies in election management and breach of law;
- **Watch, see, note, report, supervise and intervene**

Related Concepts

- **ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE/CAPACITY BUILDING**
 - Human, technical and financial support to EMB & CSOs
- **ELECTION SUPERVISION**
 - Assistance to a country to conduct election esp. in post-conflict situations
- **POLL-WATCHING**
 - Monitoring of elections by agents of parties and candidates
- **PARALLEL VOTE TABULATION (QUICK COUNT)**
 - Statistical sample observation

Value of Election Observation



Pre-Electoral Phase

- Safeguard the integrity of voter registration and voters' roll;
- Assess the process of delimitation of constituencies;
- Encourage the overall level-playing field during the political campaign;

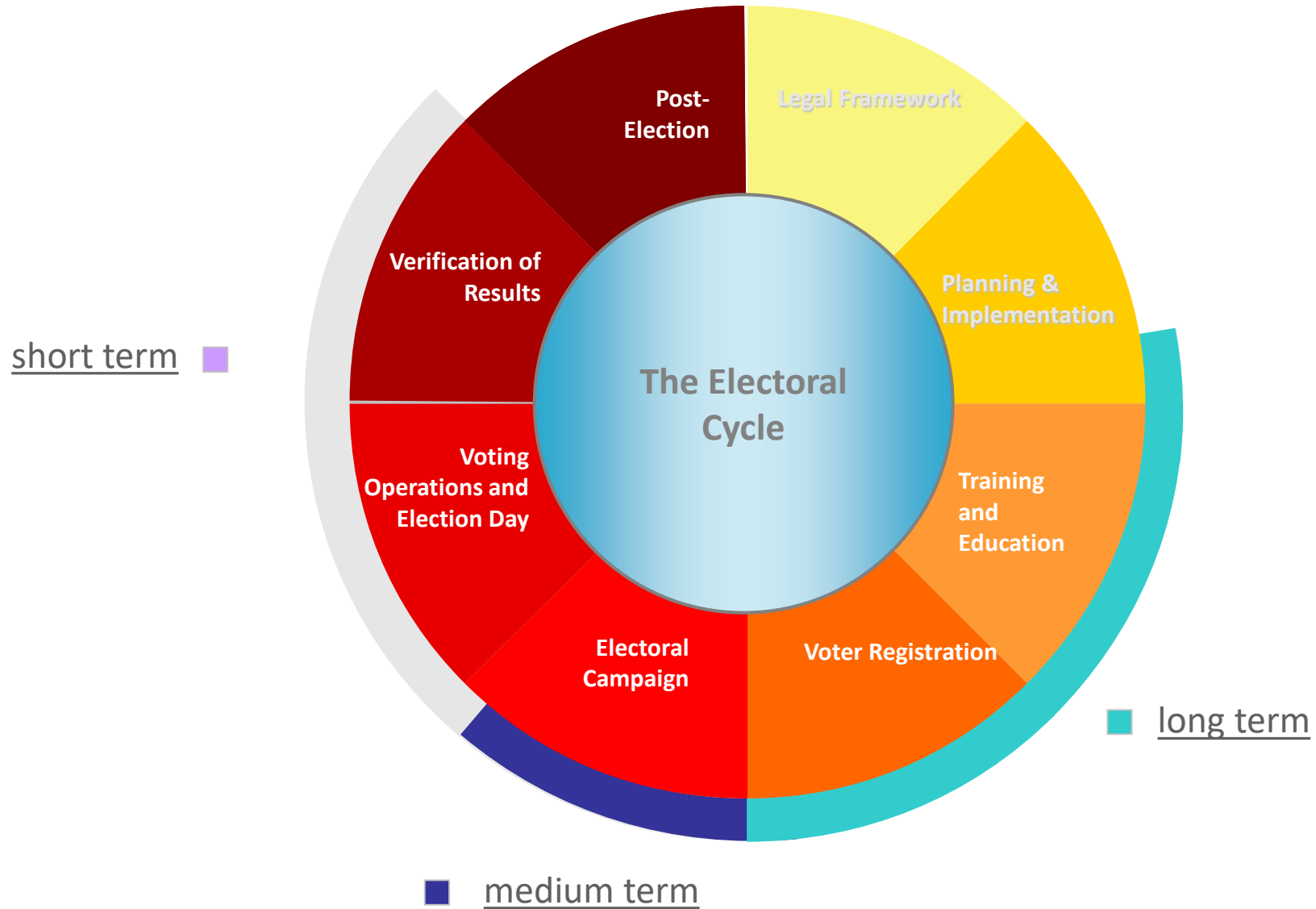
Electoral Phase

- Observe opening, polling and closing of polls;
- Observe tabulation, counting and announcement of results;
- Observe participation of voters (voter turnout).

Post-Electoral Phase

- Assess the overall performance of key actors (parties and EMBs);
- Assess electoral dispute resolution mechanisms and processes;
- Suggest electoral, democracy and governance reforms.

Electoral Observation



Advancing Gender Equality in Decision-Making

- Women constitute more than 50% of Africa's population of 1.2 billion;
- Evidence suggests that women constitute the majority of registered voters in Africa;
- Participation of women in elections is higher than that of men;

Advancing Gender Equality in Decision-Making

- But, women's representation in decision-making structures remains low;
- The 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights Relating to the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol) commits AU Member States to gender parity in all decision-making structures;
- One AU Member State performing well on this front is Rwanda;

Advancing Gender Equality in Decision-Making

- Rwanda's record:
 - Cabinet: 50%
 - Parliament: 61.3%
 - Judiciary: 50%
 - District Executive Committees: 42%

Way Forward

- Integrity of international EO has to be safeguarded by insulating the process from undue political influence (real or perceived);
- More investment has to go towards capacity strengthening of domestic observer groups which should be empowered to play a monitoring role;
- EO instruments should focus on participation of marginalised social groups (women, youth, people with disabilities etc).

Way Forward

- EO should be followed by concrete reforms of electoral and democratic processes aimed at ensuring meaningful representation and participation of women in decision-making structures in Africa (balance quantity with quality);
- Political parties have to institutionalise intra-party democracy, including gender equality in terms of leadership selection and nomination of candidates based on gender parity;
- At the very heart of this reform exercise lies the difficult task of eradicating the entrenched culture of patriarchy and tackling poverty, inequality and unemployment;
- For all this transformation to happen, we require (a) visionary leadership, (b) appropriate institutions and policies as well as (c) a vibrant citizen engagement.

THANK YOU

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