CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS REPORT

SAFEGUARDING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: STRATEGIES FOR COMBATTING DIGITAL DISINFORMATION

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

2 - 5 MARCH 2020

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ACRONYMS

AAEA	Association of African Election Authorities
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANC	African National Congress
AUC	African Union Commission
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEOs	Chief Electoral Officers
CIB	Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour
CSOS	Civil Society Organisations
CTR	Click-Through Rate
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EMB	Election Management Body
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
ICCC	INEC Citizens Contact Centre
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFCN	The International Fact-Checking Network
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria
IRB	Industry Representative Body
ISIE	Instance Superieure Independante pour les Elections Tunisia
ISPA	Internet Service Providers Association
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
LTOs	Long Term Observers
MMA	Media Monitoring Africa
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPE	National and Provincial Elections
PAdRE	Political Advert Repository
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
RECs	Regional Economic Communities

RoverR	Real Over Rubbish
RMP	Renaissance Movement Party (RMP)-Ennahda
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAM	Synthetic and Manipulated Media (SAM)
SANEF	South African National Editors Forum
SEOMs	SADC Electoral Observation Missions
SMS	Short Messaging Service
STOs	Short Term Observers
TDNs	Take Down Notices
THP	Tunis Heart Party
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
USG	User Generated Content
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly organised a continental conference on the theme: *"Safeguarding Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age: Strategies for Combatting Digital Disinformation"* in Cape Town, South Africa on 2-5 March 2020. The conference was the first of its kind to bring together continental electoral actors and institutions to share experiences, articulate the challenges and map a way forward on mitigation of challenges faced in the advent of digital and social media platforms and their impact on electoral processes and citizens in the continent. Attended by 208 participants, the conference was structured around three main topics themes namely: (a) the rise of social media and its impact on democracy; (b) harnessing and managing social media in elections; and (c) towards an integrated social media management in elections. Within the framework of these three rubrics, conference deliberations proceeded along ten sub-topics. See Annexure 1 of the report for details.

The pros and cons of digital and social media and the role of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) were spelt out during the conference. It was noted that disinformation and misinformation are not new phenomena brought about by digital and social media. Traditional media have been bedevilled by these vices. But social media has amplified them in many ways including how we relate to content, how we structure content, how we consume and the rate at which we transmit information. Digital and social media also must be seen in the context of globalisation including accelerated information and communication flows. A sentiment throughout the conference was that digital and social media can be a double-edged sword: it can either undermine or enhance the integrity of elections, depending on context. The conference recognised a paradigm shift in how political marketplace is exploited by political parties and candidates in elections noting that the traditional form of communication platforms has been transformed. In addition, traditional platforms for gaining votes and support have also shifted making it possible for buying of influence online by promoting content for consumption by citizens and mobilising specific or counter narratives to influence citizens' opinion in electoral processes. Therefore, the environment for digital and social media remains challenging for managing and monitoring of content particularly in the realm of the "dark web". This is more so given that the legal and normative frameworks for elections at national, regional and continental levels do not have adequate provisions relating to digital and social media in elections. This was considered by conference participants as a critical lacuna in the existing legal, regulatory, and institutional architecture governing elections in Africa.

Although elections are not synonymous with democracy, they constitute a key ingredient for democracy. Digital and social media are game changers of how we receive, consume and share information. The conference highlighted the need to conceptualise how electoral players need to manage, harness and mitigate the emerging/new communication platforms. The main power of digital media is in its wide and easy accessibility and the lack of its regulation, hence the enormous risk factors it poses for electoral integrity. Undoubtedly, social media and digital platforms have become a major influence on elections: for good or for ill, they are increasingly being used to shape political opinion and beliefs generally, and in electoral periods they are used as avenues for influencing voter choices. Cognizant that the conference only provided building blocks that have highlighted the challenges and emerging opportunities of digital and social media, recommendations were advanced along four broad categories. These were:

1. **Regulation**
   - Data protection – there is need for a balance between data protection and privacy in terms of determining parameters for regulation of digital and social media. As countries design data protection mechanisms, they should adopt a human rights approach;

- Co-regulation –there is a need for the enhancement of self-regulation by Internet Service providers (ISPs), development of Codes of Conduct and EMBs engagement with other related regulatory and oversight bodies; and
- Electoral cycle approach should be adopted to regulate usage of digital and social media in all activities that form part and parcel of the three stages of the electoral process and the conduct of politics between elections.

2. Monitoring
- EMBs must be transparent, accountable, and impartial in conducting and managing elections to minimise exposure to disinformation and misinformation through digital and social media;
- Election observers and think tanks need to incorporate digital and social media in their election assessment and research methodologies;
- Monitoring of digital and social media in elections should be a synergetic process which entails partnerships between EMBs and all electoral stakeholders; and
- Strategic partnerships and scope for digital and social media usage during elections should be forged with digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc in order to monitor and combat their negative impact on the integrity of elections.

3. Normative framework
- There is need to enhance existing continental and regional normative frameworks that govern the conduct of elections by specifically incorporating issues of digital and social media; and
- There is need to develop continental guidelines and principles governing digital and social media in elections; and
- To this end, there is need to set up a continental working group or reference group to steer the development of these guidelines.

4. Digital literacy
- Digital literacy must deal with the entirety of digital and social media including influencers, peddlers and users; and
- To foster policy conversations about digital and social media in elections should be encouraged in continental and regional EMB fora.

The conference agreed that pursuant to the above recommendations, EMBs and other key actors must be guided by three key principles. These are; human rights approach to regulatory and normative framework on digital and social media in elections; impartiality, accountability and transparency in the creation and composition of any statutory institution mandated with monitoring digital and social media in elections; preservation of self-determination and identity of communities especially marginalised groups. Concrete steps for post conference action are: development of a Policy Brief arising from the Conference and establishment of a Continental Working Group to develop the principles and guidelines governing the use of digital and social media in elections in Africa, and interface with international companies to be adopted by the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and relevant EMB fora such as the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) and regional fora such as the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries in Southern Africa and the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) in West Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, social media and digital platforms have surged around the world to become a leading source of information, news and dialogue for the public. The growth and popularity of digital and social media has brought with its great benefits to electoral democracy including the rapid, convenient and cost-effective distribution of information to the electorate by political parties, candidates and EMBs among other stakeholders. The qualities that give social media and digital platforms their profound power and impact also carry grave risks to the integrity of the electoral processes. Examples abound of the growing influence and potential impact on elections of misinformation, disinformation and "fake news" peddled using a variety of social media platforms and digital technologies across democracies in Europe, the United States of America and Asia. Elections in Africa are no exception as digital and social media continues their unrelenting expansion across the continent, increasing the risk of undue and unfair influence on the electorate rises. Electoral integrity is at the heart of free and fair elections and the continued growth and perseverance of democracy on our continent.

As the defenders of electoral democracy, election management bodies (EMBs) must continually seek ways of enhancing and protecting the integrity of the electoral processes– including understanding how to reap the rewards and mitigate the risks posed by advances in digital technology. Therefore, the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), South Africa and with the support of the African Union Commission (AUC), organised a continental Conference entitled, "Safeguarding Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age: Strategies for Combatting Digital Disinformation" on 2-5 March 2020 in Cape Town, South Africa. Two hundred and eight (208) participants attended the conference that was livestreamed on social media digital platforms across the continent including on television and radio in South Africa. Participants comprised representatives of EMBs, political parties, civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, the private sector, multi-lateral agencies and government agencies. The overall conference goal was to lay a foundation for some principles for the use of social media and digital platforms in elections and begin the process of the development of a continental instrument and principles focussing on the use of social media in electoral processes. Specifically, the objectives of the conference were:

- To create awareness among EMBs, electoral practitioners and other stakeholders on the benefits and threats of digital and social media to the electoral process and to electoral integrity.
- To stimulate debate and discussion on the role of EMBs, digital and social media platforms, political parties/candidates and other stakeholders in seeking to prevent their abuse.
- To help to identify a variety of potential measures by EMBs, technology partners, academia, non-governmental organisations and think-tanks to mitigate these risks, including:
  - ✓ Transparency solutions: *Enhanced transparency of the entire voting and counting process to provide additional sense of security and trust to all stakeholders.*
  - ✓ Legislative solutions: *Potential amendments to legislation governing elections (including codes of conduct) and digital and social media to address and prevent incidents.*
  - ✓ Enforcement solutions: *Heightening the investigative and prosecutorial process to act as a deterrent – including processes through which voters can report fake news.*

- ✓ Communication/education solutions: *Combined/aligned communication and education activities by all stakeholders to highlight the problem and help educate voters; and*
- ✓ Technological solutions: *Enhanced cybersecurity systems in place to prevent hacking, preferably with the buy-in of key stakeholders including political parties and media*

This proceedings report summarises key issues and resolutions of the 4-day conference. The presentations clearly paint a picture of the varied levels of EMBs on the continent in terms of their interface with the new opportunities and challenges presented by social media and digital platforms. The presentations by experts and practitioners clearly highlighted the work required for EMBs to better grasp and understand the opportunities and challenges offered by social media and digital platforms. Following the introductory section, the report provides proceedings under several sessions in line with the conference programme which hereto attached as Annexure 1. The conference covered three broad themes namely:

- Setting the context: The rise of digital and social media and its impact on democracy;
- Taking action: Harnessing and managing digital and social media in elections; and
- Moving forward towards integrated digital and social media management in elections.

This report concludes with summation and recommendations from the conference.

2. CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME REMARKS AND OFFICIAL OPENING

Mr Glen Mashinini, Chairperson, Electoral Commission South Africa (IEC) welcomed delegates and highlighted that the conference attracted at least 30 African EMBs – including several Chairpersons, Commissioners and Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs). Acknowledging the guests of honour, the Chairperson expressed thanks, appreciation and partnership between the IEC and the South African Department of Home Affairs, the UNDP and the AUC. He reiterated that the conference provided a valuable opportunity for electoral practitioners, democracy stakeholders and intellectuals to deepen understanding of the electoral democracy landscape in Africa and help strengthen institutions through opportunities and challenges using customised solutions unique to continental experiences.

The IEC decided that an engagement between African election bodies and international experts on social media and digital platforms in the electoral sphere is apt for better responses to the changing digital and communication landscape to ensure transparent elections. The Chairperson emphasised that the African Union led Agenda 2063 on the theme, "The Africa We Want" provides a foundation to the conference. He highlighted the three key aspirations in Agenda 2063:
- An integrated continent, politically united, and based on Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance;
- An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; and,
- A peaceful and secure Africa.

Mr Mashinini underscored the utility of the conference as a unique opportunity to make a tangible and meaningful contribution to advancing the ideals of Agenda 2063 and called upon the participants to ensure that the conference distilled clear guidelines and principles for consideration and adoption by the African Union Commission and regional organisations to safeguard electoral integrity into the future. He concluded by pointing out that integrity is the currency of EMBs and a safeguard for democracy on the continent.

Dr Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, African Union Commission (AUC), delivered the opening remarks on behalf of Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma, Africa Union Commissioner for Political Affairs. He highlighted the key principles that undergird electoral integrity namely:
(a) ethical behaviour;
(b) fairness and impartiality; and
(c) transparency and accountability.

He pointed out that social media platforms have a positive role in advancing democratisation through elections and have a huge potential to undermine democracy and distort elections. This reality calls upon the EMBs to devise better strategies to ensure that social media reinforces electoral integrity in Africa. Dr. Matlosa affirmed the enormous amount of premium on democracy and elections that the AUC's places within the continental blueprint, Agenda 2063. He pointed out that of the seven (7) aspirations of Agenda 2063, two (2) resonate powerfully with the Conference. Aspiration 3 envisions an 'Africa of good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law'. Aspiration 4 envisages 'a peaceful and secure Africa'. Both aspirations dovetail neatly into Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 16 which aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

Dr. Matlosa emphasised that the challenges posed by digital and social media for democracy and elections such as disinformation, polarisation, decline in the quality of information for citizens to make informed choices, weaken the media environment and are a tool to reinforce authoritarianism, populism, narrow nationalism and xenophobia. This poses a great challenge to the EMBs in Africa. Thus, he regarded the conference resonating with the AU theme for 2020 - The year of Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development.

This is in light of the fact that challenges posed by digital and social media for democracy and elections often-times lead to violent conflicts, insecurity and instability. All democracy stakeholders in Africa have a duty to find ways in which the added value of digital and social media is adequately harvested, and the challenges are redressed. The conference, he reiterated, was a positive step in the right direction. He concluded by announcing that during the last quarter of 2020, the AUC will convene the Continental Forum of EMBs jointly with the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) focusing on electoral violence.

Dr Adoyele Odusola, UNDP Resident Representative, South Africa underscored the importance of leadership in shaping future of Africa's development. He pointed out that EMBs play a vital role in ensuring the emergence of visionary political leaders hence the UNDP regards them as an effective linchpin of democratic advancement, good governance, peace and stability. However, EMBs are faced with challenges in the era of digitalisation because of the complex nature of relationship between digitalization (including the Internet and Social Media), elections and democracy. Dr. Odusola likened the role of digital and social media to "a double-edged sword – characterised by uses and misuses that could have lasting impact on electoral processes, results and outcomes". Therefore, the combined powers of the EMBs and electorates serve acritical function of ensuring credible electoral processes on the one hand and strong political leaders on the other. He credited the IEC as one of the few institutions in South Africa that have sustained democracy due to its ability to keep to the rule of game as mandated by the Constitution. UNDP believes that the empowerment and capacitation of the EMB is key to for protecting Africa's electoral integrity and shaping emergence of visionary and credible leaders.

Based on the above, Dr. Odusola pointed out that the IEC and UNDP envisioned the conference to be a solution-driven event whose outcomes will shape digital and social media innovation for electoral transformation and integrity in Africa. He highlighted that the strengths of digitalisation and social media can be immense if effectively leveraged including:

(i)   expanding political participation, bringing into the electoral process marginalized and disenfranchised people like the youths;
(ii)   expanding the scope and coverage of electoral information dissemination and promoting access to political information; and
(iii)   promoting electoral transparency.

He also noted that notwithstanding the discomforting and concerning risks, strong collaboration between EMBs, digital and social media platforms and CSOs and maximising the strengths renders the negative impacts of digital and social media surmountable. For these reasons, the UNDP regarded the conference as a great opportunity to bring experts from within and outside Africa to provide practical knowledge and cognitive experience on effectively addressing digital and social media problems. He declared that the conference would shift the frontiers of election management in Africa. It is a build-up of the IEC-UNDP Partnership since 1994 under which a new MoU will be signed focusing on:
(i)   nurturing home grown democracy through grassroots participation and engagement;
(ii)   building African solidarity capacity for credible elections; and

(iii)   using digital technology to expand electoral access and promote transparent elections.

Honourable Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Home Affairs, Republic of South Africa delivered the keynote address and officially opened the Conference. Beginning with the importance of the timing of the conference and choice of Cape Town as a venue, Dr Motswaledi reminded participants that Nelson Mandela and other liberation fighters fought for equal political rights and South Africa had recently celebrated his release from Robben Island in Cape Town 30 years ago. He indicated that society has evolved since Mandela's release and the explosion of digital and social media has been a game changer for all stakeholders, including electoral management bodies, political parties, candidates and voters.

Digital and social media has allowed people to have access to information and to share information and in so doing, it has boosted electoral democracy by helping to create a more informed, active and involved electorate. It has given political parties and candidates rapid, direct and cost-effective access to voters as never before. It has given election management bodies' direct access to citizens, registered voters and potential voters as never before to encourage registration, participation and greater knowledge and understanding of their civic rights and responsibilities. It has also given citizens and voters themselves a greater voice and relatively cheap platforms for engagement and information-gathering. Digital and social media platforms have become the major source of news, information and opinion in most developed countries and this trend is fast being mirrored in the developing world.

Dr. Motswaledi also stated that the media landscape has changed such that "…10 years ago people on digital and social media were talking about what was in newspapers. These days, it is the newspapers which are writing about what people on digital and social media are talking about". This is because digital and social media has increasingly become the source of information as it made people in authority more accessible to citizens.

It has also been used as a powerful tool to mobilise people around a cause. He cited the #BlackLivesMatter movement, which is fighting against police brutality, mostly in the United States of America, as well as the #MeToo Movement, which gives a voice to women who were abused for years, mostly in the entertainment industry.

He lamented the fact that parallel to the positive influence of digital and social media is the emergence of fake news. Although fake news existed before digital and social media, it is now able to spread rapidly through digital and social media. This is the challenge facing EMBs as they seek to protect the integrity of the electoral process. He highlighted the use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the generation of fake videos which mimic a person's mannerism, gestures and voice and digital and social media bots, which are AI products that can automatically generate messages to support or discredit a cause have emerged. They participate in digital and social media conversations with real people. Consequently, few elections have been devoid of incidents and reports of manipulation and distortion of information in recent years against the upsurge of internet use growth in African countries.

Dr. Motswaledi concluded by noting the varying responses to the digital and social media threats including legislation and regulation with levels of successes and failures. Others have pursued a more educational approach seeking to capacitate voters on how to spot fake news. Others have adopted radical approaches such as shutting down internet access during key election periods.

He emphasised that Africa has a window of opportunity to develop policies to fight the threat posed by the abuse of digital and social media on the integrity of the electoral processes.

Therefore, the value of the conference was the peer learning exercise to establish best practices. That is, by bringing together experts in elections, social and digital media, and human rights from throughout Africa and the world. The conference was well positioned to make a meaningful contribution to the global consideration of these digital and social media challenges.

THEME 1: SETTING THE CONTEXT: THE RISE OF DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY

Against the background of a global upsurge of digital and social media over the past decade where they have become leading sources of information, news and dialogue for the public, the conference focused on the breadth and depth of digital and social media and its impact. Theme one was divided into three sessions comprising several topics. In this regard, refer to the attached conference programme for the topics.

- Session 1: *The Digital and Social media Landscape:* - focussed on the provenance of digital and social media, its growth, spread and impact on electoral democracy. It interrogated the rapid use of technology, digital and social media and access on the African continent distribution of information to the electorate by different users including and not limited to: political parties, candidates and election management bodies (EMBs), think tanks, media houses and civil society.

- Session 2: *Social Media Uses and Abuses in Elections*: - focussed on the generation of information data, packaging, analysis and usage around the world particularly in Africa in particular. It interrogated the phenomenon of "fake news" carried through a variety of social media platforms and digital technologies.

- Session 3: *Normative and Legal Frameworks Governing Social Media:* - focussed on the external and internal regulation of digital and social media by different actors and draws good practices while highlighting the pitfalls. Summaries of key issues raised under each session are briefly provided below.

Session 1: The digital and Social Media Landscape

Topic 1: Digital and Social media, its history and socio-political impact: Ms H Nanjala Nyabola, Independent Researcher and Political Analyst

Using examples from Kenya, the key issues presented included the effects of social media and digital platforms and their challenges for both misinformation and disinformation. Experiences from Kenya were highlighted to demonstrate how social media can influence political outcomes. The presentation also highlighted some key aspects of social and digital media footprint. Facebook has the largest footprint followed by WhatsApp, which is also called the - dark social media (dark web) because of its ability to drive internet traffic but without exposing the connections of the various people. That is, WhatsApp has become a platform where interesting political conversations take place driving and increasing web traffic. It is not easy to tell what people are discussing nor measure the extent of the conversation reach. Hence, it often lends itself to misinformation and disinformation at a high rate than other platforms. Twitter comes in third place even though regarded as having a stronger broadcast function and therefore a substitute for traditional media.

Two important aspects of digital and social media impact in especially in African politics are:

i. <u>Network effect:</u> the qualitative nature of the networks formed gives them power. If powerful people are on digital and social media and are responsive to the social media discourse, this gives their networks power. Therefore, the networking effect shows the

ability that digital and social media has in shaping, informing and influencing political agenda and conversation.

ii. <u>Amplification effect:</u> connection between the online conversation and the offline conversation. If the offline (which may be in traditional spaces) are picking their stories directly from the online and amplifying it on television, radio and newspapers, this gives the conversations on digital and social media more power.

Against the foregoing, pros (the good) and cons (the bad) of digital and social media were identified as follows.

The good

- New communities of belonging: Through digital and social media, people from marginalised groups who otherwise struggle to find each other on traditional platforms can find and amplify each other.
- Increase of public engagement and participation: Citizens can demand accountability directly from the EMB without having to go through complex processes.
- Demands for accountability: People engage with other key stakeholders on issues that the mainstream media is not covering.
- Citizens/the electorate being seen on their own terms: People can demand elections coverage that is sensitive to their histories rather than conforming to pre-determined narratives that fit other interests.

The Bad

- Hate speech and spread of disinformation.
- State censorship and internet shutdowns – Africa has the most internet shutdowns in the world (after India). In 2016 there were 17 internet shutdowns in Africa. Internet shutdowns have social and economic costs that are difficult for overcome.
- New forms of gendered violence through doxing (revealing personal information with the intent to invite harm), SWATTING (using personal information to call in terrorist threats at feminists' homes), targeting of women in digital and social networks. Existing laws on libel, slander and assault are rarely applied to protect women.

To explore mitigation of the impact of digital and social media while at the same time extracting value in its use, the following questions were posed to the audience:

(a) what are the parameters of sensible regulation?

(b) How do we keep the good while protecting ourselves from the bad? and

(c) How do we end shutdowns?

Topic 2: Access to digital and social media platforms and technology in Africa: Andre-Michel Essoungou, Political Affairs Officer, United Nations

The presentation traced the evolution of digital and social media from the 1960s up to the advent of the fourth industrial revolution. It demonstrated the transformation of the communication landscape leading to innovation of robust and faster media tools. In 2008, politicians adopted the use of digital and social media alongside traditional media especially during elections. Barack Obama's unprecedented harnessing of the power of digital and social media in politics is the case in point.

In 2011, the leader of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan announced his candidacy for President on Facebook earning himself the title of "Facebook President". Empirical evidence shared by the presenter showed a rapid growth in the use of digital and social media on the continent especially since 2010. Statistically, Facebook has the highest use at 57.77 percent, YouTube -22.78 percent, Pinterest -9.39 percent, Twitter-7.47 percent and Instagram 5.27 percent.

Eight distinguishable trends that offer challenges and opportunities for the EMBs as they embrace social and digital platforms were presented:

Trend 1: More Africans online:
- In 2000: 4,5 million out of 800 million are online
- In 2010: 100 million out of 1 billion online
- In 2020: 525 million out of 1,3 billion online

Trend 2: More video on digital and social media: An image is worth a thousand words, a video even more: YouTube, Facebook, Tiktok have transformed many into broadcasters and technical advances are fuelling a new age of online video with better and cheaper smart phones and improved bandwidth.

Trend 3: Power to influencers: Cultural and sport stars as well as social media personalities' actions and statements are influential to large number of people. Similarly, journalists, activists and expatriates also can frame political debates in significant ways.

Trend 4: Digital and Social media are political: Africa's digital and social media landscape is very political. Polarization drives debates and elections outcomes.

Trend 5: The digital and social media user is young, urban, and educated: Debates on digital and social media reflect views from segments such as activists, students, journalists, lawyers, teachers, hence African political leaders are not driving conversations on digital and social media.

Trend 6: Digital and social media versus old media: Digital and social media have curtailed traditional media's dominance on political news. More people get news and opinions on digital and social media platforms.

Trend 7: Manipulation Challenge: External influence on elections is on the increase. An example of the Cambridge Analytica USA 2016 presidential elections. Social media and digital platforms are inexpensive and easy to pull the strings such as multiple digital and social media accounts, thereby bringing about challenges of monitoring.

Trend 8: The regulation challenge: Social media and digital platforms escape the traditional regulations on mass communications. Digital and tech companies are powerful and among the richest globally and therefore regulation is a necessary aspect for digital platforms.

SESSION 1: PLENARY SUMMARY

EMBs on the continent are for varied reasons not extracting maximum value in digital and social media and are struggling to mitigate its negative impact.

- *A key recommendation was therefore that EMBs must be capacitated with the infrastructural, technical and financial resources to be present on social and digital platforms and proactively monitor and engage with them.*

The plenary emphasised the devastating impact of disinformation via different digital and social media platforms on electoral processes globally and in Africa in particular. The plenary noted that digital and social media is profit driven and the responsible companies are not always willing and available to help remove fake news and content that distorts information on elections.

- *It was agreed that EMBs cannot deal with the disinformation problem alone especially in the wake of new forms of disinformation such as bots, swatting and doxxing. They must adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure regulation of digital and social media and introduce media literacy.*

Session 2: Digital and Social Media Uses and Abuses in Elections

Topic 1 (A): Big data analytics, social media and elections: Sophia Ignatidou, Journalist and Researcher

The presentation under this topic highlighted the advantages and misuses of digital and social media in elections. As a useful public outreach tool for EMBs, political parties and candidates during an election and with the help of big data companies, these stakeholders can refine their campaigns based on digital and social media user reaction. Furthermore, some of the key advantages of digital and social media are that it:

- enables the persistent tracking, profiling, behavioural modelling, and psychographic targeting of voters;
- empowers citizens to voice their opinions, communicate with their communities and political representatives;
- facilitates EMBs engagement with the public notifying them on Election Day and responding to their concerns;
- enhances the integrity of an election through broadcasting the live fact-checking conducted by election expert teams.

Conversely, evidence points the misuse of digital and social media mainly for disinformation leading to polarisation. For example, digital and social media use on a long or short-term for character assassination of the political opposition. In addition, through the essentially unregulated political advertising that still takes place on Google and Facebook for example, digital and social media can be used to evade electoral law's spending ceilings that are in place to guarantee a level playing field. The disadvantages of digital and social media misuse on electoral processes are many and varied. Some examples include using it in coordinated inauthentic

behaviour (CIB). Big data companies have been fingered in generating false data to sway public opinion on policy issues or candidates during elections. Multiple digital and social media accounts that cooperate and collaborate covertly to promote a specific agenda are used in CIB method. CIB also involves cherry-picking statistics, omitting crucial contextual information, or repurposing and tampering audio-visual content. This is also referred to as "shallow fakes" as opposed to "deep fakes" which is where artificial intelligence (AI) generated audio-visual content is used to present politicians saying something or conducting themselves in a way they never did.

Topic 1 (B): Big Data Analytics, social media and elections: Ms Chenai Chair, Research Manager focused on Gender and Digital Rights, World Wide Web Foundation

The presentation focussed on the on the benefits of digital and social media in elections, misuse and actors. Echoing the conference keynote speaker's phenomenon of a 'double-edged sword', the presentation delved on how to secure electoral integrity in the digital age. It noted that:

- Digital and social media provides a meaningful platform for engagement, communication and information for election management bodies and citizens in general. It increases participation of the electorate, boosting communication, engaging all members of the community and improving transparency and trust throughout the entire electoral cycle.

- Digital and social media provides a platform for new political voices. In Sierra Leone for example, WhatsApp was a particularly important avenue of communication for smaller political parties and new voters. Civil society also makes use of digital and social media during elections in a bid to increase electoral transparency and seeks to hold political actors accountable.

The downside of digital and social media is the amplification of manipulation of information, disinformation and fake news. While the spotlight glares on international actors such as Russian troll farms or bots, domestic and international actors, state and non-state actors, play a role in manipulation of information online to shape voters choices or confuse and disorientate voters, paralyse democratic debate or undermine confidence in the system.

The presentation reiterated the danger of big data use to profile and micro target voters through political advertisements – using disinformation to sway middle ground voters through emotional appeal. The disinformation campaigns play on existing tensions that may result in violent repercussions. It noted that lack of a coordinated approach in mitigating disinformation where security experts, technology companies and governments focus on different factors enables the problem to escalate.

Topic 2: Disinformation and elections: Karen Allen, Institute for Security Studies

The presentation noted that the era of alternate facts, fake news and disinformation is coinciding with the democratisation of the media and more access to information. This is against the background of an increased use of digital and social media in Sub-Saharan Africa where there is a huge population. Disinformation is often means masquerading as genuine information. Disinformation campaigns now incorporate other technologies such as deep fakes into their narratives. So, definitions of disinformation entail dissemination of information with the intend to cause harm to individuals, groups, institutions, and processes.

Therefore, we have to be worried about disinformation in Africa because access to internet is growing extremely fast, with approximately 969 million users . It is expected that the youth who

comprise the majority of Africa's population are the most likely to adopt the new technology. So social media is frightening because it is expected that by 2022 an additional 495 million people will use the internet. This is also the time when mobile phones subscriptions are growing at faster speeds with about 930 million mobile phone subscriptions across the continent.

Studies on disinformation campaigns focus at three levels namely, the agent, message, and interpreter. The conference focus is on the agent. For example, domestic partisan agents may use disinformation campaign to win campaigns through smear tactics. Some actors may want to undermine democracy by increasing intolerance and polarisation. On the other hand, some disgruntled entities may intend to dismantle state institutions and social order and undermine electoral institutions.

The weapons used in disinformation include deep fakes where individuals image in an existing image or video is replaced with someone else's likeness. micro-targeting is also used. Micro-targeting is the precision with which individuals and groups can be targeted to influence a particular outcome. Disinformation also uses manufactured amplifications using hashtags to influence search engine results. Lastly, disinformation uses bots which although not yet popular in electoral processes in Africa, remain a threat. Research has shown that during the USA 2016 elections an estimated 40,000 bots produced 3.8 million tweets.

Experience of disinformation in Africa are about. Examples in Africa countries include Kenya 2013 elections, Madagascar in 2018 elections, Malawi during the 2019, Nigeria 2019 elections and South Africa 2019 elections ranging from the undermining of traditional media to disinformation of fake news on ballot papers, voting instructions that affect voter turnout. Key to disinformation is that what is out in the virtual space has great consequences globally and that is particularly important at time of elections. The Kenya post-election violence in 2007-2008 is a classic example of the brutality and impact of disinformation on communities. Therefore, the advent of disinformation has severely tested the ability of the EMBs to respond quickly to media reports and other information about the electoral process.

SESSION2: PLENARY SUMMARY

The plenary extensively discussed the role of big data companies' manipulation of data to influence elections as one of the major threats to electoral democracy. Some of the key issues included:

- *The negative effects of digital and social media networks' acceleration of the collection, processing and monetisation of data.*
- *The entrenchment and normalisation of pervasive and stealth surveillance practices with detrimental consequences for human rights, political stability and societal cohesion.*
- *The assumption that more information is tantamount to better information or that freedom of speech is also not the same thing as freedom of amplification via ads or algorithmic models.*
- *Social and digital media does not mean the absence of gatekeeping, but gatekeeping as determined by the dominant companies.*
- *Real-time bidding ad networks also permit highly personalised targeting, the ecosystems of data brokers and data-harvesting apps, both vulnerable to cyber-attacks is largely unsupervised and ad targeting has started being employed by big traditional conglomerates too.*

Key recommendations in this session were:
- *Governments must prioritise the democratic stability and social cohesion by putting effective measures for combating disinformation through* digital and *social media.*

> - *Election observer missions and EMBs need to actively engage in monitoring online manipulation of public opinion and the impact it has on elections. They must develop a monitoring methodology and technical capacity that ensures impartiality, transparency and clarity on approach to ensure electoral integrity.*
> - *Election observation missions must invest in capacity building of domestic observers because they can observe digital and social media and other election aspects throughout the electoral cycle continuum.*
> - *The management of elections in the digital era requires a multi-disciplinary approach. EMBs must work with the technical community beyond social media platforms themselves. There must be collaboration between EMBs and Data Protection Authorities on issues of the impact of fake news and disinformation of the freeness and fairness of elections. The capacity of EMBs must be enhanced to have the technical know-how on spotting disinformation in its various form. They should be given enough resources to acquire technology which monitors the origins of bad bots which spread fake news and misinformation so that they can take appropriate action.*
> - *EMBs must maintain engagement with traditional media as it remains important in the fight against disinformation. Therefore, there is a need to increase support for good quality journalism through EMB led capacity building on election reporting. Within contexts of limited internet access and use, most people still rely on radio and television for information and use it for fact checking.*
> - There is a need to develop digital literacy tools to be able to harness the benefits and distinguish facts from fiction.
> - *Digital and social media companies have become embedded in the fabric of society and have become part of what shapes democratic norms. Therefore, these companies should not be sitting on the fence but be readily available and willing to fight disinformation by among others, the removal of fake news.*

Session 3: Normative and Legal Frameworks Governing Social Media

Topic 1: Control measures by digital and social media platforms

Twitter: Emmanuel Lubanzadio, Head of Public Policy for Africa

The presentation outlined the role of Twitter as building networks, educating people and making peoples voices heard. There are over 500 million tweets a day with approximately 6000 tweets per second and that represents both a challenge and opportunity for election integrity. In tackling disinformation and making people safe on the platform, Twitter has:

- developed rules with clearly articulated measures on dealing with misinformation and disinformation. It has various solutions for "rule breakers" on the platform. The procedure entails reporting of the transgression, review by a support team that is on call 24hours per week and conversant in 40 languages. The review may lead to different results including, deleting of the Tweet, verification of the phone or email, activation of a read only or permanent suspension of a transgression account.

- devised Artificial Intelligence (AI) that identifies malicious behaviour on the platform. Up to 50 per cent of malicious posts against which Twitter has acted are surfaced proactively through AI.

Twitter tackles misinformation and disinformation during elections through working with EMBs and training political parties and candidates. For Twitter, every year is an election year and given the impact of disinformation and misinformation especially during elections, Twitter has since 2019 placed a global ban on political advertising on the platform. It believes that political message reach must be earned and not bought.

In addition, Twitter implements rules and tools on voter misinformation. Where state-backed information operations are identified through Twitter's Site Integrity Team, cooperation with government, law enforcement and other platforms, such information operations get published. Twitter has published archives going back to 2016 to enable independent research and investigation into platform manipulation.

Twitter also tackles Synthetic and Manipulated Media (SAM), which it defines as media that has been fabricated or altered in a fraudulent manner, presented with the intent to mislead a viewer to believe that it portrays reality and that is likely to cause serious injury. Twitter labels or removes SAM so that people may understand its authenticity and provide contexts. The success of this initiative owes to collaboration with the public, CSOs, and academic experts. In dealing with the SAM the following criteria is followed:

- Criteria 1: The content is significantly and deceptively altered or fabricated
- Criteria 2: The content is shared in a deceptive manner
- Criteria 3: The content is likely to impact public safety or cause harm

To ensure public awareness and information literacy to curb disinformation and misinformation, Twitter has partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to promote media literacy. UNESCO has since published a Handbook entitled "Teaching and Learning with Twitter" for teachers, educators, learners and parents. To date it has been published in 10-15 languages. The Handbook contents includes:
- Media and information literacy
- Digital literacy
- Digital citizenship
- Online safety
- Classroom exercises

For accountability and transparency Twitter publishes a biannual Twitter Transparency Report that highlights trends in requests to Twitter, intellectual property-related requests, Twitter rules enforcement, platform manipulation, and email best practices.

Facebook: Fatu Ogwuche, Politics and Government Outreach Lead for Sub-Saharan Africa

The presentation highlighted that Facebook has invested into electoral democracy through provision of services that enable electoral integrity. It works closely with the EMBs to assist in voter education and electoral processes and with political parties through training on best practices in the use of Facebook products and features to reach out to supporters. To fight disinformation, Facebook uses AI to identify inauthentic behaviours on the platform. It adopts a three-pronged approach namely:

(a) removal of misleading and manipulated videos or "deepfakes", information interfering with voters and misinformation that leads to real world harm;

(b) reduction of the spread of viral misinformation especially where content undermines the authenticity of the platform. Facebook reduces its distribution by demoting it in News Feed, significantly reducing the number of people who see it. In this way, people can post content as a form of expression, but it is not shown at the top of News Feed. This measure effectively slows down misinformation or hoax from spreading virally; and

(c) information dissemination with additional context to communities about what they see on news feeds so that they decide what to read, trust and share.

Facebook also uses third party fact checking to identify fake news. The International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) accredits its fact-checking partners. In fact, checking, the guiding principles are:

- Non-partisan and fairness
- Transparency of sources
- Transparency of funding and organisation
- Transparency of methodology
- Open and honest corrections policies

Despite the foregoing measures, Facebook faces challenges regarding misinformation largely because of a lack of consensus on how to define it. There is no clear line between false news, satire and opinion. Facebook therefore believes that as a private technology company, it should not be the arbiter of truth, which it does not have a policy that mandates that information our users post be true.

Code for Africa: Chris Roper, Deputy CEO

The presentation outlined Code of Africa's partnership with Google in combatting disinformation and misinformation across the African continent. Code of Africa is a federation of civic technology, government technology (civtech and govtech) and media organisations operating in 9 countries and affiliations in 22 countries.
Code of Africa research findings reveal that people do not know how to identify misinformation. Therefore, to address disinformation and misinformation challenges, Code of Africa works extensively with digital and social media platforms including Google, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Collaboration is Code of Africa's strategy to be proactive rather than reactive. In South Africa, it works with Google in South Africa to train the IEC, political parties and media others on, advanced google search, google trends, google engine search, removal of content and open source tools.

Training has also been provided to civil society and the media to assist in fighting disinformation. The important element of the training is ensuring that all the tools provided by the technological companies are understood and used to fight disinformation.

Working with digital and social media companies allows Code Africa to develop tools that are applicable to the local environments making users such as the media and citizenry understand that these resources are available.

Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA): Dominic Cull, Founder, Ellipsis

The ISPA was established in 1996 as a membership organisation of commercial internet providers and academic institutions, school networks and state-owned entities. Although it is a voluntary organisation, members are expected to comply with the code of conduct once they sign up. This code of conduct covers professionalism, integrity, and protection of human rights. ISPA is formally recognised by the South African Ministry of Communications and Digital Technology as an Industry Representative Body (IRB) under the South African Electronic Communications and Transactions Act of 2002. It is therefore a custodian of the content take down notice system information therefore has the obligation to report to the Minister annually on code of conduct and disciplinary matters against its members. It also has to report on the take down notices it has received from South Africans or even from people outside South Africa and how it has dealt with those.

Unlike digital and social media platforms, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) require licensing from the local regulatory authority and must abide by the local law including online content legislation or regulation. ISPA utilises take down notices (TDNs) as a remedy to deal with the content that infringes on others' rights. There is an online form requiring identification of the targeted content and infringed right(s) as well as affirmation that the notice is issued in good faith. Such content may relate to:
- Intellectual property rights
- Security
- Human dignity
- Children
- Fraud, malware or fishing
- Defamation, hate speech, harassment or invasion of privacy.

The presentation highlighted that TDNs are an inexpensive and accessible remedy online content removal. ISPA has managed a comprehensive TDN process on behalf of its members since 2006. Consistently high percentage of TDNs have resulted in expeditious removal of targeted content with most valid TDNs effected within 24 hours. ISPA reported that on average, it has removed 95 percent of content in the past the past 6 years.

However, it has noted a trend of reduction in the TDNs lodged with its members. Fewer TDNs were lodged since 2019 with the entity. Members are exempted from legal liability for content hosted on their networks if they accept TDNs for hosted content and act expeditiously to remove the content or disable access to it. However, ISPA indicated that the TDN process is a limited remedy that only applies to content under the control of an ISPA member.

SESSION 3: PLENARY SUMMARY

Discussions during this plenary centred around the balance between the right to freedom of expression and the right to access of information and the rights of others. Several questions were directed at the digital and social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) in terms of how they operate. Some to the key issues raised were as follows:

- *Lack of clarity on the relationship between cell phone network companies and the digital and social media companies in terms of their accountability and regulation.*
- *Lack of collaboration between digital and social media companies in response to fighting disinformation around elections. Participants wanted Twitter and Facebook to explain whether they had collaborated on policies of curbing disinformation?*
- *Lack of adequate and effective data privacy policies in digital and social media companies can compromise the personal information of the electorate. This may result in their*

> *personal information being unlawfully processed and used to spread fake news, disinformation or misinformation. The personal information of voters can also be unlawfully processed by political parties to bombard voters with unsolicited campaign messages. It can also be used by data analytics companies to micro target certain groups or individuals to influence the outcome of an election and thereby affect its freeness, fairness and credibility.*
> - *Failure by digital and social media companies to respond to political parties' requests to take down fake news.*
> - *Delays in turnaround time for taking down fake news by digital and social media platforms despite that fake news spreads like fire and consequences are instant. An example of the Zimbabwean 2018 elections was used where people took to the streets and got killed within a short time of disinformation via* digital and social media. Under such circumstances, there is no time to wait for Twitter and Facebook to fact check. The only remedy to stop the tragedy before it unfolds is a quick and effective real time intervention by digital and social media companies.
> - *Twitter's decision to ban political party campaign adverts does not include banning of posts that seek to destroy the image and integrity of political parties.*
> - *Digital and social media companies should intensify fact checking to produce tangible results and to inspire confidence in their efforts.*

Topic 2 (A): Perspectives regarding digital and social media regulation: Adv Pansy Tlakula, Chairperson of the Information Regulator, South Africa

The **first presentation** focussed on the role digital and social media plays in information dissemination and advancing the right to freedom of expression and the right of access to information that are critical to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections. Digital and social media pays an important role including in electoral processes.

Comparing social and traditional media, the presentation highlighted the difference between digital and social media on the one hand and traditional media on the other. With respect to the the latter media houses are subjected to closure, harassment, intimidation and even arbitrary arrest or murder of journalists. Such phenomena do not arise within the digital and social media ecosystem. The arbitrary shut down of the internet by governments of countries such as Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Uganda and Zimbabwe in the run up to and during elections under the guise of the protection of national security or the prevention of election related violence was a manifestation of attempts to silence digital and social media and disrupt information dissemination.

The presentation acknowledged the negative use of digital and social media such as a fake news, misinformation and disinformation. Such dissemination of social and digital media is a tool against free, fair, credible and peaceful elections. Misuse of digital and social media to carry fake news and misinformation can incite political violence and sabotage an election as was witnessed in the Cambridge Analytica debacle and the Russian interference in the 2016 elections of United States of America (USA).

The abuses have given impetus to calls for the regulation of digital and social media like the mainstream journalism media that is regulated by a Code of Ethics which require journalists to report truthfully and objectively, to verify their sources and afford a person a right of reply.

Proponents of digital and social media regulation say digital and social media companies should be held accountable for what is published on their platforms.

However, some have advocated for self-regulation arguing that digital and social companies must self-correct. They have a problem with the regulation of fake news and disinformation by the state. Their reason for this is who decides what is fake news and what is not? If content is found to be fake, is it satire or is it intended to cause harm? Even if it causes harm, who decides whether it is freedom of expression or prohibited expression and what rules or criterion is used to make such a determination?

It is further argued that judging by regulation of traditional media, regulation may stifle freedom of expression and suppress dissent or critical speech citing laws such as criminal defamation, publication of false news, insult laws and sedition which have often been used to arrest and prosecute journalists, members of the opposition parties and even representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The pro self-regulation school suggests that instead of regulating digital and social media, the governments should establish independent regulatory bodies which monitor whether digital and social media companies comply with their self-regulation policies or not. These bodies must have effective enforcement powers.

The presentation gave examples of digital and social media regulation in Australia, China, European Union (EU), Germany, Russia, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania. These are summarised below for comparative reasons:

Country	How Digital and Social Media is Regulated
Australia	The Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Act in 2019 has criminal penalties for digital and social media companies, possible jail sentences for technology executives for up to three years and financial penalties worth up to 10% of a company's global turnover. The Enhancing Online Safety Act creates an eSafety Commissioner with the power to demand that digital and social media companies take down harassing or abusive posts as well as revenge porn. Companies get 48-hour "takedown notices", and fines of up to 525,000 Australian dollars (£285,000). Individuals can also be fined up to A$105,000 for posting the content.
China	Sites such as Twitter, Google and WhatsApp are blocked in China. Chinese providers such as Weibo, Baidu and WeChat provide their services instead. Access to the virtual private networks that some users have employed to bypass the blocks on sites is also restricted. China has hundreds of thousands of cyber-police, who monitor digital and social media platforms and screen messages that are deemed politically sensitive. Some keywords are automatically censored outright, such as references to the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident.
EU	There is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which set rules on how companies, including digital and social media platforms, store and use people's data. There is also a copyright directive that puts the responsibility on digital and social media platforms to make sure that copyright infringing content is not hosted on their sites. Member States have until 2021 to implement the directive into their domestic law. The EU is also considering a clampdown, on terror videos. Digital and social media platforms face fines if they do not delete extremist content within an hour.
Germany	Digital and social media companies with over 2 million users are required to set up procedures to review complaints about content, remove illegal content within 24 hours and publish updates every six months about how they were doing. Individuals may be fined up to €5m ($5.6m; £4.4m) and companies up to €50m for failing to comply with these requirements. In 2019 Facebook was fined €2m (£1.7m) for under-reporting illegal activity on its platforms.

Russia	Digital and social media companies are required to store any data about Russians on servers within the country from 2015. LinkedIn was blocked while Facebook and Twitter were fined for not being clear about how they planned to comply with this requirement. The Law also gives regulators the power to switch off connections to the worldwide web "in an emergency".
Nigeria	The protection of Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill of 2019 is still before the legislature.
South Africa	Film and Publications Amendment Bill provides for a fine of up to R300 000 or up to four-year imprisonment for distribution of revenge porn. It also provides for up to R150 000 fine or no more than two years imprisonment for distribution of hate speech. Internet service providers are obliged to remove child pornography content, hate speech, propaganda for war or incitement of imminent violence as soon as the service provider becomes aware of it. The Cybercrimes Bill criminalises electronic content that incites violence or damage to property. This includes messages sent via WhatsApp, Facebook, e-mail, SMS or any similar communications platform. The Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA) regulates the processing of Personal Information by public and private bodies. It also establishes the Information Regulator (Regulator), which monitors compliance with the Act. The Regulator has extensive enforcement powers
Tanzania	The Tanzanian Cybercrime Act of 2015 criminalizes fake news.

The presentation ended with an emphasis that an election is a contest for political power and during campaigning robust speech should be allowed. The only speech that should be proscribed is speech which violates standards prescribed in regional and international human rights instruments. Therefore, a caution was made that introducing new standards for speech in digital and social media platforms must be carefully considered. Contemplated new standards may violate long established regional and international human rights standards on freedom of expression and access to information.

Topic 2 (B): Perspectives regarding social media regulation: Avani Singh, Attorney of the High Court of South Africa and Director and Co-founder of ALT Advisory and Power Singh Inc.

The **second presentation** highlighted the weaknesses of countries in addressing regulatory challenges posed by digital and social media. Often, they resort to state regulation to control the problem and the discourse. Trends are emerging where the spread of fake news is criminalised, as in Brazil and France. In Africa, some of the regulatory initiatives include Burkina Faso's punishment of fake news publications, Cameroon jailing of journalists accused of publishing fake news, Egypt punishing owners of social media accounts with over 5,000 followers on digital and social media platforms if they publish fake news and, Kenya introducing a Bill criminalising 17 different types of cybercrimes, including misinformation. Most of these initiatives have proven futile because due to questions of jurisdiction and implementation of the laws when dealing with multi-national companies that are incorporated in external jurisdictions.

The presentation brought in the dimension of co-regulation to the conference discussion. It considered co-regulation as an increasingly popular approach that adds to the complexity of content governance. A co-regulatory regime was defined as a self-regulation that is actively encouraged, supported, and sometimes monitored by public authorities. The presentation underscored the importance of co-regulatory mechanisms including voluntary codes of conduct that are products of dialogue between private actors and national or regional authorities. These

have different levels of formality and include a formal regulatory element such as a code or administrative decision that acts as a framework and governs the activities of the actors involved, including rules and consequences of different kinds. In other cases, such cooperation between public authorities and private actors is governed by informal voluntary agreements that also set rules and objectives.

The presentation mentioned India as one of the best co-regulation initiatives where prior to the May 2019 elections, the EMB tasked the digital and social media platforms with coming up with a code of conduct which was then signed and applied during the elections. This was effectively a licence to operate. This code outlined the types of content to be monitored during the election period including the reporting mechanisms for the EMB to engage with the digital and social media platforms, time periods for response times and acting on the content removal requests and consequences for non-compliance.

Other examples include Australia which established the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce to identify potential cyberattacks and foreign influence campaigns targeting Australian elections. The Department of Home Affairs which is responsible for the taskforce instructed Facebook and Twitter to comply with notifications of illegal political advertising on their platforms, or face injunctions for non-compliance.

On the other hand, Belgium established an expert group of journalists and scholars to provide potential solutions to address disinformation. The Ministry of Digital Agenda launched a website and held a public debates to inform the public about disinformation. Whilst the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) introduced a WhatsApp tip line to field misinformation about the Ebola disease. It also recruited young people to report potentially false information on the WhatsApp, and then experts would rebut them via digital and social media channels and radio across the country.

The presentation submitted that in developing regulatory measures to address disinformation, the following considerations are key:

- Compliance with legality, necessity and proportionality – disproportionately restrictive laws that violate the right to freedom of expression.
- Caution against delegating judicial functions to social media because they have different objectives to judicial officers.
- Collection of enough evidence and information.
- Creation of space for consultation and enough debate by key stakeholders, such as journalists, bloggers and vulnerable communities.

It is also important to ensure that above promoting transparency and accountability, regulatory initiatives cause for proactive disclosures from political parties regarding digital and social media advertising and serve to monitor the extent to which political actors are themselves responsible for disinformation campaigns.

SESSION 3: PLENARY B SUMMARY

The plenary discussion welcomed the need for regulation but was ambivalent on state regulation versus co-regulation. Plenary questions focussed on who, what, how and when to regulate. Despite this, there was convergence in both arguments when it comes to the need for regulation of illegal content such as child pornography, content which incite violence based on race, ethnicity, religion (hate speech) on digital and social media platforms. Key issues discussed in the plenary were:

- *the complication accompanying regulation of digital and social media platforms. Prominent among these are (a) questions of jurisdiction and implementation of the laws when dealing with multi-national companies that are registered outside the region. (b) Ownership of the digital and social media platforms and their accountability. Since they are regulated by the governments in countries that host them such as the United States of America (and China for TikTok), they are accountable to those governments and to their shareholders.*
- *the recognition of Africa's diversity in terms of the political, historical and socio-economic conditions, which shape the views on the balance between freedom of information and state security in Member states. The example of Kenya and South Africa was used to illustrate the point that while they have taken steps in regulating with hate speech, definitions remain vague and human rights activists have warned that legislation risks on impinging on freedom of information.*
- *Lack of most governments' capacity and requisite resources to regulate digital and social media companies has led to internet shutdowns, which have not solved the problem. They have instead been disproportionate restriction of the right to freedom of expression and other associated rights.*

Recommendations under this plenary session were that:
- *The African Union Agenda 2063 should be used as an opportunity to build sustainable and accountable institutions and to consider a set of aspirational goals about how digital and social media and disinformation campaigns can be regulated in the future.*
- *EMBs should bring their laws in line with the data protection legislation and adopt policies which ensure the protection of personal information of voters.*
- *EMBs to consider adopting codes of conduct on the use of personal information of voters by political parties.*
- *Digital and social media companies must ensure that their policies are compliant with national electoral laws which deal with prohibited conduct and ensure that they remove content which violates these laws. They must use a rights-based approach to their policies which must be based on the respect for human dignity, the right to equality, non-discrimination, access to information and privacy and freedom of expression.*
- *The management of elections in a digital age requires a complete paradigm shift. Some electoral laws are no longer fit for purpose because they were adopted before the proliferation of digital and social media.*
- *The AUC and other regional bodies can draw inspiration from other bodies such as the EU to use their convening power to develop co-regulatory models for countries that opt for co-regulation.*

Topic 3: Digitisation of democracy in SADC: Regional Insights from the 2019 Elections: Fritz Nganje, Lecturer, University of Johannesburg

The presentation focussed on the manifestations and significance of the digitalisation of democracy in SADC region and the role and impact of digital and social media in 2019 elections. Digital and social media and other new technologies are opening the political space for enhanced deliberative and participatory democracy, including giving voice to the youthful segment of the electorate. Yet, the challenge of regulation and fake news phenomenon are becoming a reality. In this regard, the greatest challenge is the failure to adjust politics and governance to the disruptive and democratic possibilities (pros and cons) of these technologies. The use of digital technologies must be cognizant of the ability to enhance participation in political discourses; ensure greater

transparency and accountability of electoral processes through real-time monitoring and, breaking the monopoly over access to media channels for political messaging and vote-canvassing. Conversely, digitalisation is highly susceptible to abuse and manipulation. Fake news and the spread of hate speech through digital and social media platforms exacerbate political polarization.

Using examples of elections in the SADC region in 2019, the presentation demonstrated that digitalisation is not necessarily a panacea. For example, a look at the big parties that have a lion's share of the digital space in South Africa namely the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) showed that the party digital and social media presence and activism does not always lead to huge electoral support. If it did, the EFF would have garnered the most votes compared to the ANC and DA during the 2019 General elections. The generally low youth turnout attests to this view. Despite a high prevalence of youth activism on social and digital media platforms, this does not always translate into greater electoral participation.

In Malawi, the high participation of the electorate in the electoral process through the new technologies enabled greater access to information and communication channels for political parties. Yet, the incidence of fake news on digital and social media were high thereby affecting the integrity of the electoral process. Similarly, social media in Botswana largely served to polarise society than aid the electoral process. Facebook and Twitter were utilised as disinformation tools during campaigns.

The presentation showed that the SADC region is yet to harness digital and social media and digitalisation. The revised Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015) are silent on the salience of digital and social media. Hence, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOMs) preliminary statements on Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa elections make no reference to the role of digital and social media.

It is observed that there is a growing disillusionment and despondency with electoral politics by technologically empowered youth in the region. Therefore, there are two options available for the SADC region. One progressive option is adoption of a digital and inclusive policy direction at a regional level. This would make digital technologies a catalyst and enabler of socio-economic and political innovation.

The other option, which could potentially have disastrous consequences for the region is consolidation of the status quo where SADC continues to be sleepwalking in a digital age. Under this option, elections will steadily progress into an empty ritual serving narrow interests of the elite and underpinned by violent protestations.

Topic 4: Partnering with Civil Society and digital and social media platforms to combat disinformation: A Case Study: William Bird, Director, Media Monitoring Africa

The presentation emphasised the centrality of the media and journalism in ensuring that people still have the right to choose based on credible information. They are the core means for sifting, checking, validating and offering diverse views and perspectives. However, the core existing challenge is the unlevel playing field.

Traditional media must abide by all sorts of regulation in election period but not digital and social media. Besides the media and journalists, credible democratic institutions are required to

guarantee trust and credibility in democracy. Digital and social media's double-edged characteristic is that it facilitates and presents new platforms and potential growth areas for EMB's while it also enables disinformation that presents a fundamental threat to free, fair and credible elections. This is at the behest of political parties, rogue elements, factions, foreign entities, big business and fanatics. It is a shifting target and like a mutating virus, for example deep fakes will be a common reality in 2021 and more providers will offer disinformation services with better bots.

A fundamental element on how to combat disinformation is through partnerships and collaboration. The collaborative case between CSOs and the IEC was highlighted. In 2019 Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) worked with the IEC and media partners on a few initiatives including:

- The Digital Disinformation Complaints process
- Development of a Draft Code of Conduct for use in elections period
- Setting up the Real411 information and reporting platform and website
- Establishing the Real411 communications programme
- Developing the political advert repository (PAdRe)
- Setting up a portal for journalists, media monitoring and digital literacy tools like Real Over Rubbish (RoveR)

The IEC's Directorate for Electoral Offences reviewed the complaints using established guidelines and it made recommendations to the Commissioners for a ruling. Individuals or entities that were unhappy with the Commissioners ruling had a recourse at the Electoral Court. The IEC partnership with MMA is a practical way in which EMBs can harness digital technologies for the integrity of elections. Other practical ways could include:

- *Communication:* there is required shift for communication, and this requires more resources and delegatory authority. In the case of no financial resources' partnerships can be established to offer support even if for limited periods.
- *Taking control of their area, but trusting the process*: It is too easy to want to control everything, but a lesson of digital technology is that disinformation is because entities seek to control, the media, the internet etc.
- *Working with credible entities*: civil society, media, academics, government and the platforms. Each brings and offers skills and expertise that EMBs may not have. It means actively supporting media freedom, condemning attacks on media, calling out misogyny, demanding greater transparency from platforms, support digital literacy initiatives, and those to combat disinformation.

SESSION 3: PLENARY C SUMMARY

The thrust of discussions in this plenary largely focused on inclusivity pertaining to digital and social media opportunities and challenges. Whether in regulation or innovating new approaches to combating disinformation, the key message was the need for multi-stakeholder approaches. *The following key points were made:*
- *Need fair regulation of digital and social media, including in the context of elections.*
- *Adoption of guidelines by regional bodies to encourage fair access to of digital and social media during elections.*
- *Investment in ICT infrastructure and cheap internet-based devices to bridge digital divide.*
- *Alignment of politics and governance with the socio-economic needs and democratic aspirations of the people.*
- *Mainstreaming and prioritisation of digital literacy in civic and voter education campaigns.*

- *Need for media to help facilitate and drive conversations and ensure more explanation ensuring understanding EMB processes and intricacies of election work and digital and social media acts as platform.*
- *Collaboration between CSOs and government in building up robust education curriculums and implementation programmes*

THEME 2: TAKING ACTION: HARNESSING AND MANAGING DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTIONS

Theme 2 focussed on the various experiences of the EMBs in Africa. It highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of digital and social media use in electoral processes including outreach programmes, challenges and measures taken in mitigating digital and social media risks. It comprised two sessions focusing on the comparative experiences of selected EMBs that have harnessed and managed digital and social media. These are the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria, IEC South Africa and the Instance Superieure Independante pour les Elections – (ISIE) of Tunisia.

The second session presented insights into various EMB country specific, sub-regional, regional, continental and international experiences regarding partnerships with digital and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Google and others to manage disinformation in digital and social media.

Session 4: Social Media and the Electoral Cycle

Topic 1: Digital and Social Media and EMBs: EMB Panels

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Nigeria: Dr Sa'ad Umar Idris, Director- General, INEC Electoral Institute

In an effort to gain the confidence of Nigerian citizens and build trust in its electoral process, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Nigeria, prior to the 2011 General Elections, set up digital and social media platforms to disseminate information directly to citizens and to monitor Election Day processes and procedures. The 2011 General Elections were the first in which digital and social media was actively used throughout Nigeria's electoral process by a wide range of stakeholders that included civil society organisations, political parties and candidates, the police, citizens, traditional media outlets and the INEC. Statistics indicate that there are 162 million mobile subscriptions in Nigeria out of a population of approximately 200 million, which amount to 84 percent of the population. Out of these, 89 million have internet access while approximately 22.4 million are on Facebook and 1.6 million are on twitter. As of February 2020, INECs social media followership was:
- 401, 896 on Facebook
- 103,000 on Instagram
- 1,400,000 on Twitter

INEC's use of digital and social media as a communication strategy had a profound impact on electoral processes, changing the sources of information for citizens and voters from traditional media or one-way communication sources to the mobile-based platforms that allow for two-way interactions through user-generated content (UGC). Twitter, Facebook and Instagram ensure a speedy feedback and offer online users opportunity to react to INEC articles and stories. Since the 2011 General Elections, INEC has a Communication Policy that ensures a well-coordinated and effectively managed communication flow between INEC head office and the sub-national (state) offices and the public. Through the Policy, INEC has:

- Provided timely, accurate, clear and complete information about the electoral processes to the public thereby countering fake news in real time.

- Ensured visibility, accessibility and accountability to the public.
- Provided information in multiple formats and channels to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders.
- Delivered prompt, courteous and responsive service that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the public.
- Ensured that the electorate understand basic information on the electoral process including timeframes, appropriate procedures, complaints and redress mechanisms.
- Encouraging and mobilizing qualified Nigerian citizens to participate in the electoral process, including voter registration and elections.

INEC has also established the Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC) as an information exchange facility for community and electoral stakeholder outreach. The ICCC serves as a situation room on a continuous basis in-between the elections. The INEC Voter Education and Publicity Department (VEP) which hosts the ICCC analyses news items, documentaries and programmes of special interest. Its response to fake news and other digital and social media challenges. During the 2019 General Elections, the ICCC services included daily briefings by the INEC Chairman; radio live shows and interviews before, during and after elections; issuance of weekly press statements and extensive use of digital and social media platforms.

Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa: Janet Love, Vice Chairperson, IEC

In carrying out its constitutional mandate, the IEC requires information technology (IT) support throughout the electoral value chain. IT is an integral part of the IEC tools during the different electoral processes including delimitation, voter registration, registration of political parties and candidate nominations, polling and publication of results. The IEC has cyber-security measures, and these include:

- Network segmentation
- Applying security driven application design and development
- User account management and access control
- Filtering of all traffic – malware, worms, viruses, spyware, etc.
- Continuous security monitoring of all elements
- User access is based on a need to know
- Security in depth – multi-layered segmented networks and subnets
- Ensuring timely alerts when attempts to breach security are made
- Regular access control, data, information and network security

Furthermore, the IEC invites experts to conduct independent security audits of ICT infrastructure. Political parties also independently audit the elections results capturing system. In harnessing the digital opportunities, the IEC has expanded its communication arsenal. According to the 2019 Global Digital Yearbook, in January 2019, South Africa had an overall internet penetration rate of 54 per cent, with just over 31 million people online in the country. Out of these, 40 per cent have social media accounts. WhatsApp is the most active social media platform with 90 per cent of internet users accessing the platform, followed by YouTube at 84 per cent, Facebook and Facebook messenger at 82 per cent and 57 per cent respectively while Instagram is 54 per cent.

The IEC began using Twitter and Facebook ahead of the 2011 municipal elections and these and other platforms have since become vital tools in its outreach programmes. By the 2019 National and Provincial Elections (NPE), the IEC Campaign tactics included advertising on Facebook (365,000 followers), Instagram (2,000 followers), Snapchat, Twitter (215,000 followers). Search campaigns on Google performed well above industry benchmarks, particularly for voting abroad millions of impressions and click-through rate (CTR) of nearly 19 per cent. The aim was to create elections awareness among 26.7million eligible voters and encourage them to register and vote. The IEC also enjoyed success with influencers on Twitter and YouTube for youth, and YouTube

video advertisement. News site adverts and homepage takeovers delivered value, as did taxi Wi-Fi advertising. To reach rural and youth voters, 1.5 million short messaging service (SMSs) and over 2million Please Call Me's were sent, with the unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) click-throughs for feature phones. IEC also launched a Facebook chatbot to assist contact centre – Facebook is most popular channel for voter queries and complaints. The latter totalling 17 000 queries.

However, with the above-mentioned successes, the IEC still encounters disinformation both during municipal and national and provincial elections (NPE). Hence, the IEC plans to put in place regulation to address the problem in addition to the electoral code of conduct that already has some provisions on disinformation albeit not fully addressing the new global challenge of disinformation.

During the 2019 NPE political parties were requested to voluntarily commit to the Draft Code of Conduct on Disinformation with a view to formally include of issues of disinformation for future elections. The IEC is aware that disinformation regulation must strike a balance between political rights and freedom of expression as enshrined in the constitution. Principles of transparency, diversity and credibility of information, accountability and inclusivity will inform their development and implementation. Cognizant of the regulation gap, the IEC proactively responded to the disinformation challenge by partnering with CSOs as already alluded to in session 3, topic 4 of this proceedings report. The CSOs were, MMA, South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) and Press Council. It also collaborated with digital and social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Google and ISPA to enable rapid responses.

Instance Superieure Independante pour les Elections – (ISIE) ,Tunisia: Ayachi Belgacem, Commissioner, ISIE

The Tunisian experience highlighted an emerging trend of the diminishing use of traditional platforms for election campaigning and the increase in use of digital and social media. In Tunisia, out of a population of 11.7 million there are 193,000 Twitter users, 1.9 million Instagram users and over 7.4 million Facebook users. During the 2019 elections, campaigning occurred largely on digital and social media with the second round of the presidential election taking place in the virtual space. The main political parties such as the Renaissance Movement Party (RMP)/Ennahda, the Tunis Heart Party (THP) and Aich Tounsi extensively used digital and social media as an outreach strategy. This is a clear recognition of the role of the new media, which is setting a new agenda in political and electoral discourse.

To mitigate digital and social media challenges, the ISIE issued a campaign regulation that built upon the existing rules related to the campaigns to include campaigns on all electronic media (social media, phone applications, websites, etc.). The regulation mandates ISIE to monitor the election campaigns on digital and social media to ensure that the candidates respect the election campaign rules.

However, ISIE encountered several challenges with monitoring. For example, the candidates or their election campaign teams do not officially own most of the social media accounts. This makes the attribution of violations to the candidates impossible in many cases. Digital and social media platforms are not transparent in managing content posted on them and they are not accountable sometimes for broadcasting political content that contains violations of campaign rules. Although Facebook offers Ad Library which "provides advertising transparency by offering a comprehensive, searchable collection of all ads currently running from across Facebook Products", the 2019 election in Tunisia has proven that this feature is unreliable. It did not include all funded advertisements containing political contents during the campaign period. Facebook

allowed the issuance of funded advertisements even during the period of electoral silence, which violates the rules of the electoral campaign in Tunisia. The record of previous advertisements in the Ad library were not arranged orderly.

The presentation gave the global contexts, pertinently legislations and collaboration on the use of social media by EMBS. Highlighting that digital and social media serves as a vital source of information, as a place to find people and groups with similar interests and a public and private space for political interaction. Modern political rallies and campaigns are increasingly taking place online.

The presentation further noted that digital and social media has altered the way elections are conducted and, most importantly, it has affected EMBs' ability to conduct elections. It broadened the conference discussion beyond disinformation by including "information operations" defined as "coordinated attempts to authentically manipulate an information environment in a systemic and strategic way". The point is that the problem is bigger than disinformation because disinformation is just one of the many techniques used to manipulate information environment. EMBs cannot solve the information operation problem by themselves but they are a key actor of solving it.

In dealing with the question of regulation, the presentation raised the following key questions: who regulates, what to regulate, who to regulate and who monitors. In most cases regulation is left to governments. However, as articulated in session 3, topic 2 of this report, digital and social media networks are also an option. France is an example where a government took the responsibility to regulate digital and social media. If digital and social networks have more than 5000 users in France, they must have representatives in the country.

Studies have shown that even if regulation is enforced by the state, in most cases, there is no entity capable of enforcing the regulation on digital and social media. Self-regulation by digital and social media networks has been considered as an alternative to state regulation because of the limitations of the latter including lack of capacity to legislate or enforce legislation where it exists. Companies like Facebook and Twitter have self-regulated by taking down inauthentic behaviour, but the success rate is not necessarily high.

In terms of what to regulate, there are three key questions: what is posted, how it is posted and who pays for it. Ireland is one example where content is targeted by criminalising content posting techniques like bots for political content. However, regulating content is necessary but not enough because information operations do not rely on fake news (content). They rely on being organic, seek to attack and seed discord or create questions, doubt or polarisation among people. Instead, creating fake impressions making people believe that one idea has a lot more support is all that is required in information operations.

Therefore, the question of who to regulate becomes difficult to answer especially as the calls for self-regulation gain traction. The presentation noted however, that self-regulation itself is not straightforward. The question being who makes the final call especially when a digital and social media company does not comply, as was the case when India asked WhatsApp to track messages?

Germany and the EU laws place serious responsibilities in the network companies (see session 3, topic 2 of the report). In Malaysia and Taiwan regulation targets the individual responsible for

spreading misinformation. In Spain, the regulation targets political parties. However, placing the enforcement burden on companies is also a common technique.

Monitoring of digital and social media is often left to the EMBs without the requisite resources and capacity. The presentation noted that digital and social media companies are, in many cases also the ones that oversee monitoring, and that usually creates a problem for government and electoral authorities. It is not easy to verify if these companies are indeed monitoring. This is more so because they are often not physical present in the country and if they are, they lack the capacity to monitor in the local languages. In addition, there is a conflict of interest because they undertake monitoring while also focusing on the bottom line for profit-making.

It is for these reasons that EMBs must forge relationships with CSOs and digital and social media companies. For example, the EMBs of Mexico and Brazil have partnered with digital and social media companies like Facebook for their outreach progammes. A lesson here is that EMBs must make digital and social media to work for them. International IDEA and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) are bringing together a group of EMBs that are interested in exploring collaboration with digital and social media companies to share lessons and ideas and open conversation with the companies.

SESSION 4: PLENARY SUMMARY

Session 4 portrayed a picture of the diversity of EMBs experiences and challenges in dealing with digital and social media platforms.

Some of the recommendations on how EMBs on the continent can harness the opportunities and deal with the challenges posed by digital and social media platforms are:

- *The need for EMBs to ensure that digital and social media platforms work for them by tapping into the opportunities they offer through formal working arrangements.*
- *The establishment of inter-agency cooperation between EMBs and other statutory bodies.*
- *Collaboration with political parties in curbing disinformation.*
- *Capacitation of the EMBs communications teams and institutionalisation of strong coordination mechanisms.*
- *The need for EMBs to work with digital and social media platforms to ensure the respect of the laws on information dissemination on the one hand and to develop quick mechanisms to delete or ban content that violates the law including those that contain misleading information on the other hand.*
- *The need to learn from benchmarking on the good international practices and comparative experiences through cooperation between African EMBs and their peers from out of the continent on monitoring of digital and social media platforms.*
- *The need for collaboration with other entities especially CSOs in protecting election integrity through monitoring digital and social media platforms online activities.*

Session 5: Managing and Mitigating the Risks of Digital and Social Media in Elections:

1. Breakaway Groups

The conference participants were divided into three groups with three focus themes and guiding questions:

(1) Utilising partnerships in managing digital and social media in elections;

(2) Regulatory approaches to managing digital and social media in elections; and

(3) Education and communication approaches to managing digital and social media in elections.

The conference facilitating team provided the following guiding questions to the three groups:

Theme 1: Utilising partnerships in managing digital and social media in elections

- Which partners can the EMBs establish in managing and mitigating digital and social media opportunities and challenges?
- What are some of the strategies that EMBs and partners can take in dealing with:
- ✓ Combatting disinformation
- ✓ Leveraging digital and social media for electoral process (e.g. voter education)

Theme 2: Regulatory approaches to managing digital and social media in elections

- What are the key aspects for consideration in regulatory approaches to managing digital and social media in elections?
- Outline some of the specific areas that should be regulated for digital and social media in elections
- What are some strategies for monitoring/ adherence and managing digital and social media in elections?

Theme 3: Education and communication approaches to managing digital and social media in elections

- Outline the capacity development aspects required by EMBs to harness opportunities and address   challenges availed by social media in elections
- Outline some communication approaches/ strategies for EMBs for (a) educating and outreaching to citizenry and (b) combatting disinformation

2. Summary feedback from breakaway sessions
The following key issues emerged under each theme.

Utilising partnerships in managing digital and social media in elections

There was convergence in the group's feedback of the need for EMBs to fight disinformation through partnerships. Key to the partnerships is identifying strengths of each partner, ethical issues and set clear objectives and outcomes for use of social media and digital platforms for electoral processes. The identified partners include:

- Political parties and Candidates
- Voters

- Media
- CSOs
- Development partners
- Government
- Digital and Social Media Practitioners / networks
- Election Observers
- Service providers
- Public representatives
- Law enforcement agencies
- Institutions of learning
- Social influencers
- State agencies such as NPAs statistical agencies, home affairs, traditional affairs

In collaboration with the above partners and depending on their peculiar environments, EMBs can adopt several strategies for combating disinformation. The strategies identified by the groups include:

- Establishing strong relations with the digital and social media and traditional media experts
- Creating regional dialogue platforms on digital and social media
- Forging partnerships with other national entities
- Coordination with law enforcement agencies
- Engaging the youth as the highest user and consumer of digital and social media.
- Enhancing internal fact-checking capacity
- Using existing electoral instruments and tools effectively
- Peer learning between EMBs for comparative advantage
- Raising awareness in rural areas and among marginalised groups
- Conducting research on digital and social media and media literacy
- Open online communication driven by the EMBs and partners to combat disinformation
- Segmentation of partnerships in relation to strategic need for the EMB to increase use of digital and social media with appropriate and relevant content

Regulatory approaches to managing digital and social media in elections

There was consensus in the feedback that digital and social media needs to be regulated. In so doing, the regulatory framework must incorporate the following elements– who regulates, what is regulated, how to regulate and how to monitor. Key regulation issues identified include:

- enable registration of digital and social media users to deal with the problem of anonymity
- serve as deterrent to the abuse of digital and social media
- control the conduct of ISPs especially regarding personal information
- ensure adherence to the code of conduct and laws pertaining to media
- balance interests of the users and influencers

The groups' feedback on self-regulation was a combination of self-regulation and state regulation. Considerations put forward by the groups included:

- Regulation must ensure that human rights are safeguarded.
- Regulation must not only be election focused.
- Digital and social media must not be over-regulated.

- Regulation must be cognizant of changes that digital and social media companies make on their platforms as these could have implications on the provisions of such regulation. Face Book's decision to merge WhatsApp and Instagram was used as the case in point.
- Regulation has pros and cons so there is need for realistic expectations from it.
- EMBs need to work with government and other departments with regulation mandates as well as with international companies in developing regulations. This will ensure that the EMBs are not overloaded with the responsibility to take the lead in regulation because their primary mandate is to manage the A-Z of elections. been set up to deal with elections from A-Z and therefore it is prudent to establish partnerships with skilled partners with relevant regulation mandates
- Regulation must be guided by an analysis of the citizens' behaviours.
- Drafting of the regulation content must be clear regarding the do's and don'ts
- Digital and social media regulation must include a monitoring mechanism that that ensures its effective enforcement.
- Electoral laws must be aligned with the new and emerging environment of digital age.

Education and communication approaches to managing digital and social media in elections

Feedback on EMB capacity development and communication strategies to harness opportunities and address challenges posed by digital and social media raised two key issues. Firstly, the need for the EMBs to understand the workings of digital and social media in terms of opportunities and threats. They must have clarity on the use of digital and social media and therefore be able to manage information and content based on their needs.

Most importantly, the groups submitted that EMBs must know and understand their constituents and be able to leverage capacities of partnerships especially those who are experts. Considerations put forward by the groups for specific actions EMBs can take to combat digital and social media challenges were:
- Introduction of digital literacy programmes
- Establishment of communication policies
- Setting parameters for digital and social media utilisation
- Managing dis/misinformation through pro-active communication with stakeholders and electorate
- Ensuring interactivity in their digital and social media outreach
- Building trust with electoral stakeholders

The second key issue raised by the groups on how EMBs can harness opportunities and address challenges posed by digital and social media was the establishment of a mechanism at regional or continental levels to harness their power in dealing with digital and social media. They must speak with one voice when interfacing with digital and social media companies.

On communication approaches for educating the citizenry and combatting disinformation, the groups acknowledged the currently low EMB presence on digital and social media. Therefore, they recommended that that:
- Digital and social media education and communication approaches must target EMB personnel as well as the public.
- The electorate must be educated on basics of electoral processes using digital and social media tools such as audio
- Human, institutional and financial resources must be mobilised for appropriate content development for use on digital and social media.
- EMBs must also develop strategies for ongoing and crisis communications.

THEME 3: MOVING FORWARD TOWARDS INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN ELECTIONS

Theme 3 provides a summary of key issues, recommendations and official closing remarks

SESSION 6: Summation and way forward

1. Summation of conference proceedings and way forward

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of IEC South Africa, Mr. Sy Mamabolo gave a summary of key issues from the Conference. He reiterated the importance of the conference, highlighting the complexities for EMBS in dealing with digital and social media. The rich discussions gave participants some insight into challenges posed by digital and social media for all electoral stakeholders especially the EMBs in Africa. The key issue for debate was how the value of digital and social media could be harnessed, while mitigating against its harmful effects. The EMBs also discussed how they can work together or pre-empt the opportunities and challenges of digital and social media in elections. The CEO presented the following key issues emanating from deliberations by conference participants.

- Disinformation and misinformation are not new phenomena brought about by digital and social media. They have also bedevilled the traditional media as well;
- Social media has amplified disinformation in many ways including how we relate to consume and transmit content. Therefore, EMBs need to be cognisant that digital and social media are an everyday reality and part of present-day communication and information infrastructure;
- Digital and social media also must be seen in the context of globalisation and cross-border information and communication flows. Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages, especially for EMBs and electoral stakeholders. Therefore EMBs must manage the new digital environment and increase their capacities and digital literacy;
- Although they are not synonymous with democracy, elections are a key ingredient of the democratic processes in Africa. They enshrine some of the fundamental political rights and civil liberties of the African people. Experiences show that digital and social media are a double-edged sword: they can make or break electoral integrity with consequences for democracy;
- There has been a paradigm shift in how political marketplace is exploited by political parties and candidates during elections. The traditional form of information and communication platforms has been transformed;
- Traditional information and communication platforms for gaining votes and support have also shifted making it possible for buying of influence online by promoting content for consumption by citizens and mobilising specific or counter narratives to influence citizens' opinion during electoral processes;
- The digital and social media operating environment remains challenging for managing and monitoring of content particularly in the realm of the "dark web"; and
- The legal and normative frameworks for elections at national, regional and continental levels do not have adequate provisions for regulating digital and social media during elections.

Furthermore, the CEO reiterated several challenges posed by digital and social media to democracy and elections as highlighted during the various sessions of the conference as follows:

(a) Disinformation and misinformation can distort and harm democratic processes, including electoral processes;

(b) Digital and social media increase polarisation which can provide a breeding ground for the decline of democracy and onset of political instability;

(c) Digital and social media contribute to the decline in the quality of information for citizens to make informed choices;

(d) Weakened media environment undermines the checks on government, facilitating unaccountable and corrupt practices; and

(e) Digital and social media can also become a tool to reinforce authoritarianism, populism, negative ethnicity and narrow nationalism.

He pointed out that from the discussions, the EMBs and other stakeholders have responded to the above issues in different ways which showed that digital and social media gives them opportunities to harness and combat disinformation and misinformation. The responses included the following:

- Digital and Social media have already created spaces and given voice to marginalised communities and the EMB reach has been enhanced;
- Digital and Social media have enabled communities to be seen and heard on their own terms - increasing participation, boosting communication, engaging all members of the community and improving transparency and trust throughout the entire electoral cycle;
- Increased accountability, transparency and regular media interface by the EMBs towards the electorate in real time has been enabled;
- Development of Code of Conducts, multi-party special committees, stakeholder engagement have been developed and established;
- In response to internal and external threats - some EMBs and political parties have developed communication or media policies to mitigate crises that could compromise institutional integrity; and
- There are concerns about legal and extra-legal overreach by the state as manifested in shutdowns of social media especially during and/or in the immediate aftermath of elections, often under the guise of national security.

The CEO highlighted the following key lessons derived from the presentations and plenary sessions:

- Social and digital technology are tools at the disposable of organisations and individuals;
- The need to embed digital and social media expertise in election observation missions and research methodologies of electoral/democracy think tanks;
- The over-reach by the state in social media shutdowns does not work due to alternatives such as through Virtual Private Network, hence the need for regulation and better normative and legal frameworks;
- Without collaborative efforts and partnerships, EMBs cannot deal with digital and social media alone. Therefore, there is need for a multi-sectoral and multi-faceted approach at national, regional and continental levels;
- There is urgent need for the development of legal and normative frameworks governing digital and social media in elections and the need to build institutional capacities of EMBs in this field;
- Digital literacy is not enough. The pressure point is on those who pay for disinformation and misinformation; and
- Protection of personal data in EMBs' points to a vulnerability that creates risk for malicious narratives.

2. Closing remarks

Mr Glen Mashinini, Chairperson, Electoral Commission South Africa

The IEC Chairperson, Glen Mashinini officially closed the conference. He emphasised that the conference had enabled discussions, debates and deliberations on the pressing and persistent challenges facing electoral democracies. . He highlighted some of the takeaway points from the conference as follows:

- Solutions to digital and social media must be broad-based and inclusive of   the   full ambit of stakeholders including EMBs, political parties and candidates, CSOs, media, social media platforms and technology companies, regulatory authorities and the voters. He noted that while inclusivity is vital, EMBs must drive this process because they ultimately carry the responsibility of protecting the integrity of elections.
- Not all countries and electoral management   bodies are at the same level of capacity and experience, so we need to work together to support   each other on the continent to build our capacities to deal with this new dimension in electoral democracy.
- As with most things in life, there is no single, magical solution to the challenges posed by social media. Rather it will take a variety of approaches and actions.

The Chairperson indicated the conference is only the beginning of a long journey in safeguarding the hard-won democratic gains on the continent. It is a huge step forward in reaching broad consensus on where to go and how best to get there. It has planted the seeds which will guide individual and collective EMB responses and has charted a course them to follow at own pace. EMBs must take forward the seed from the conference and ensure it grows and flourishes into a continental structure and plan of action.

He thanked all those who contributed to the success of the conference including all participants from across the continent and beyond, conference speakers, panellists and rapporteurs. He also thanked the UNDP for the collaboration and support in arranging and hosting this conference and the AUC for support and assistance in promoting the conference and helping to ensure a strong turnout. Lastly, the conferencing teams comprising IEC and UNDP administrative and technical staff, interpretation and mass media teams and the staff of the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Dr Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, African Union Commission (AUC)

Dr. Matlosa, in his closing remarks reminded the delegates that the conference was historical and reiterated its importance based on three key elements. First, he reminded the delegates that this conference hosted by IEC South Africa was epoch making just as was the case when the IEC hosted a conference in 2003 in Pretoria and supported by the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA) and the AUC deliberating on Elections and Democracy in Africa. The result was the production of the African Charter on Democracy and Governance – the continent's foremost governance blueprint. (AAEA). Secondly, South Africa as the host of the conference is crucial as the President of South Africa, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa is the current Chairperson of the African Union in 2020, the same year which the AU theme was on Silencing the Guns. Finally yet importantly, he pointed out that the AU is committed to supporting the initiatives that will follow the conference including the development of continental guidelines for digital disinformation and electoral integrity in Africa. He underscored the need for the conference momentum to be

maintained. Therefore, the AUC undertook to reach out to the IEC and UNDP for this work to commence in earnest. The AUC and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will facilitate the finalisation of the guidelines and their adoption by all the AU Member States.

Dr Adoyele Odusola, UNDP Resident Representative, South Africa

Dr Adoyele Odusola indicated that the success of the conference owed to an effective collaboration by all participants. He pointed out that the conference has not only laid a foundation to move Africa's development forward but also proven that it is possible to protect election integrity through a collective effort. He committed UNDPs support to the outcome of the conference including next steps for the establishment of a reference panel for developing principles and guidelines.

Dr Odusola underscored the challenges faced by EMBs and other institutions under the age of digital information. Digitalisation ad social media is a double-edged sort with ample opportunities and concerning threats. He said participants should not be deterred by the threats posed by social media. Instead, opportunities provided by social media must be leveraged and threats mitigated through clear strategies.

Dr. Odusola announced to the conference that UNDP and IEC were supposed to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for their partnership before the conference but this was delayed so that the MOU will incorporate the outputs of the conference. He stressed that although this signing will be done by IEC South Africa, it will be on behalf of all EMBs on the continent.

Lastly, he pointed out that the conference has contributed immensely to the mandate of EMBs and it has marked the beginning of a journey in ensuring election integrity. He invited participants to dedicate time and resources to the conference recommendations and translate them into concrete plans to shift the frontier of electoral integrity in Africa.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The success of this continental conference was that it brought together the continental electoral practitioners and institutions to share experiences, articulate the challenges and map a way forward on how Election Management Bodies (EMBs) can tackle and manage the advent of digital and social media platforms and their impact on electoral processes and citizens in the continent. Participants and EMBs from countries with no comprehensive policies and programmes on digital and social media expressed the desire to work towards developing them drawing from lessons learned from the conference. Specifically, the conference was able to achieve the following:

- It created awareness among EMBs, electoral practitioners and other stakeholders on the benefits and threats of digital and social media to electoral integrity;
- It stimulated debate and discussion on the role of EMBs, digital and social media platforms, political parties/candidates and other stakeholders in seeking to prevent the abuse of these platforms; and
- It identified a variety of potential measures by EMBs, technology partners, academia, non-governmental organisations and think tanks to mitigate these risks, including Transparency solutions; Legislative solutions; Enforcement solutions; Communication/education solutions and Technological solutions.

Key recommendations

Cognizant of the fact that the conference only provided building blocks that have pointed out that the challenges and emerging opportunities of digital and social media are a global phenomenon, and noting the need to continue with the dialogue and collective efforts, the following recommendations were made in four broad categories:

1. **Regulation**
    *   *Data protection* – there is need for a balance between data protection and privacy in terms of determining parameters for regulation of digital and social media (human rights approach);
    *   *Co-regulation* –there is a need for the enhancement of self-regulation by Internet Service providers (ISPs), development of Codes of Conduct and EMBs engagement with other related regulatory and oversight bodies; and
    *   Electoral cycle approach should be adopted to regulate usage of digital and social media in all activities that form part and parcel of the three stages of elections and the entire political game between elections.

2. **Monitoring**
    *   EMBs must be transparent, accountable and impartial in election management to minimise exposure to disinformation and misinformation through digital and social media;
    *   Election observers and think tanks need to incorporate digital and social media in their election assessment and research methodologies;
    *   Monitoring of digital and social media in elections should be a synergetic process which entails partnerships between EMBs and all electoral stakeholders; and
    *   Strategic partnerships and scope for digital and social media usage during elections should be forged with digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc to monitor and combat negative activities during elections.

3. **Normative framework**
    *   There is need to enhance existing continental and regional normative frameworks that govern the conduct of elections by specifically incorporating issues of digital and social media in elections;
    *   There is need to develop continental guidelines and principles governing digital and social media in elections; and
    *   To this end, there is need to set up a continental working group or reference group to steer the development of these guidelines.

4. **Digital literacy**
    *   Digital literacy must deal with the entirety of digital and social media including influencers, peddlers and users; and
    *   To foster policy conversations about digital and social media in elections should be mainstreamed in continental and regional EMB fora.

Proposed overarching Principles

Pursuant to the above recommendations, it was further recommended that EMBs and other key actors must be guided by the following principles:

- Human rights approach should underpin any regulatory and normative framework on digital and social media in elections;
- Impartiality, accountability and transparency should guide the creation and composition of any statutory institution mandated with monitoring digital and social media in elections;
- To guard against over regulation of digital and social media in elections, measures must not erode the self-determination and identity of communities especially marginalised groups; and
- There must be established a multi-level partnership including national, regional and continental levels for coherence and maximisation of benefits of digital and social media and mitigation measures.

Way forward

Based on the foregoing recommendations, the following short to medium term action points were suggested and adopted by the conference:

1. Development of a Policy Brief arising from the Cape Town Conference; and
2. Establishment of a Continental Working Group to develop the principles and guidelines governing the use of digital and social media in elections in Africa to be adopted by the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as the relevant EMB fora at regional and continental levels.

ANNEXURE 1: CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**SAFEGUARDING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY
IN THE DIGITAL AGE:
STRATEGIES FOR COMBATTING DIGITAL DISINFORMATION**

AN AFRICAN CONFERENCE
Cape Town, South Africa

2 – 5 March 2020

Time	Item	Speakers
DAY ONE: MONDAY 2 MARCH 2020		
ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION AND WELCOME		
13h00 - 15h00	Arrival & check in	
13h00 – 16h30	Registration	
18h30 – 21h00	Formal Welcoming Ceremony and Official Dinner	Mr. Glen Mashinini, Chairperson of the Commission South Africa Dr Khabele Matlosa, Directorof Political Affairs, African Union Commission (AUC) Dr Ayodele Odusola, UNDP Resident Representative The Honourable Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Home Affairs

DAY TWO: TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2020		
SETTING THE CONTEXT: THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY		
Over the past decade, digital and social media has exploded around the world to become a leading source of information, news and dialogue for the public. This section provides the context for the conference through sessions that paint a picture of breath and depth of digital and social media on the one hand and its impact on the other.		
Time	**Theme/Item**	**Speakers**
09h00	Welcome and housekeeping	Programme Director Mr Sy Mamabolo
SESSION 1: THE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE Digital media has had a profound impact on public opinion and has been a game changer fin electoral politics across the globe. This session looks at the provenance of digital and social media, its growth, spread and impact on electoral democracy. Different topics under this session will interrogate the rapid use of technology, distribution of information to the electorate by different users including and not limited to political parties, candidates and election management bodies (EMBs), think tanks, media houses and civil society. Inputs in this section will also delve into digital and social media and access on the African continent. **SESSION MODERATOR: COMMISSIONER DR NOMSA MASUKU**		
09h15 – 09h35	Digital and social media, its history and socio-political impact	Ms H. Nanjala Nyabola Writer. Researcher. Humanitarian. Political Analyst.
09h35 - 09h55	Access to digital and social media platforms and technology in Africa	Mr. André-Michel Essoungou, United Nations
09h55 – 10h25	Plenary discussions	
10h25 - 11h00	TEA BREAK	
SESSION 2: SOCIAL MEDIA USES AND ABUSES IN ELECTIONS The growth in the spread and popularity of digital and social media has brought with its great benefits to electoral democracy including the rapid, convenient and cost-effective distribution of information to the electorate. But these very qualities which give digital and social media its profound power and impact also carry with its grave risks to the integrity of the electoral process. Flowing from Session 1, this session focuses generation of information data, packaging, analysis and usage around the world in general and in Africa in particular. It interrogates the phenomenon of "fake news" that is carried through a variety of social media platforms and digital technologies. **SESSION MODERATOR: DR AYODELE ODUSOLA**		
11h00 – 11h55	Big data analytics, social media and elections	Panel presentation:

		Ms Sophia Ignatidou, Academy Associate, International Security Programme, Chatham House
		Ms Chenai Chair, Research Manager focused Gender and Digital Rights, World Wide Web Foundation
		Ms Ruth Price, Project Lead, Digital Action
11h55 – 12h15	Disinformation and elections	Ms. Karen Allen Institute for Security Studies
12h15 – 13h00	Plenary discussion	
13h00 - 14h00	LUNCH BREAK	

SESSION 3: NORMATIVE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to respond to potential threats posed by digital and social media, international organisations, statutory bodies, EMBs, civil society organisations including mainstream as well as digital and social media platforms have introduced a variety of measures to mitigate the risks. This session focuses on the external and internal regulation of digital and social media by different actors and draws good practices while highlighting the pitfalls.

SESSION MODERATOR: COMMISSIONER MS JANET LOVE

14h00-15h00	Control measures by digital and social media platforms	**Panel presentation:** About Twitter: Mr Emmanuel Lubanzadio, Public Policy Manager Sub-Saharan Africa Twitter About Facebook: Ms Fatu Ogwuche, Politics & Government Outreach Lead, Sub-Saharan Africa, Facebook About Google: Mr Dominic Cull, Code for Africa Internet Service Providers Association: Mr Chris Roper, Deputy CEO
15h00 – 15h45	Perspectives regarding digital and social media regulation	**Panel presentation:** Adv Pansy Tlakula, Information Regulator (SA) Representative from the Communications Authority of Kenya (TBC) Ms Avani Singh, media and social media law expert

15h45 – 16h15	Plenary discussions	

SESSION MODERATOR: COMMISSIONER JUDGE DHAYA PILLAY		
16h15-16h45	TEA BREAK	
16h45-17h05	Digitisation of Democracy in SADC: Regional Insights from the 2019 elections	Dr Fritz Nganje University of Johannesburg
17h05 – 17h20	Partnering with civil society, media and digital and social media platforms to combat disinformation: A case study	Mr William Bird Media Monitoring Africa
17h20 - 18h00	Plenary discussion	
18h00	END OF DAY TWO	
18h30	DINNER	

DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2020		
TAKING ACTION: HARNESSING AND MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTIONS This section zeroes in on the use of digital and social media in elections. It offers EMBs from across the continent the opportunity to share experiences regarding the dividends of digital and social media for their outreach programmes, challenges and measures taken in mitigation of digital and social media risks.		
09h00	Welcome and housekeeping	Programme Director
SESSION 4: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE ELECTORAL CYCLE EMBs have varying experiences regarding the use of digital and social media around the election cycle especially public outreach purposes. This session is meant to provide comparative experiences by a select panel of EMBs which have harnessed as well as managed digital and social media. The EMBs will share strategies they employed to raise awareness of the threats inherent in digital and social media especially "fake news" as well as how they dealt with the legislative, enforcement and technological solutions to the challenges faced. **SESSION MODERATOR: COMMISSIONER MOSOTHO MOEPYA**		
09h20 – 10h40	Digital and social media in EMBs: Lessons learned by selected African EMBs	**Panel presentation:** Representatives of EMBs from: Dr Sa'ad Umar Idris, Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria Ms Janet Love, Vice Chairperson of the Electoral

		Commission of South Africa
		Mr Ayachi Belgacem, Commissioner Instance Superieure Independante pour les Elections – ISIE, Republic of Tunisia
10h40 – 11h15	Plenary discussion	
11h15 – 11h45	TEA BREAK	
11h45 – 12h15	Digital and social media approaches by EMBs: A global perspective	Mr Alberto Fernandez Gibaja, Senior Programme Officer Political Participation and Representation Programme International IDEA
12h15 – 13h00	Plenary discussion	
13h00 – 14h00	LUNCH BREAK	

SESSION 5: MANAGING AND MITIGATING THE RISKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTIONS

BREAKAWAY SESSIONS

As a sequel to session 4 above, this session will delve deeper into the management and mitigation of the risks entailed in the use of digital and social media. The session will take the form of breakaway groups and feedback sessions to give participants the opportunity to share country specific, sub-regional, regional, continental and international experiences regarding partnerships with digital and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Google and others to deter the manipulation of digital and social media. Participants will also deliberate on the regulation and education approaches for the management and mitigation of risks of digital and social media in elections.

14h00 –16h30 (Tea to be taken during breakaway sessions)	Breakaway session 1: Utilising partnerships in managing digital and social media in elections	Moderator/Facilitator Rapporteur
	Breakaway session 2: Regulatory approaches to managing digital and social media in elections	Moderator/Facilitator Rapporteur
	Breakaway session 3: Education and communication approaches to managing digital and social media in elections	Moderator/Facilitator Rapporteur
16H30	END OF DAY THREE	
18H30	DINNER	

DAY FOUR: THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020		
MOVING FORWARD TOWARDS INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN ELECTIONS This section provides a consolidation of the issues raised in session 5 above. Participants shall present issues emerging from the breakaway groups programme. This will be followed by the conference summary on key issues with concrete policy propositions for consideration by individual delegates.		
Time	**Item**	**Speaker**
09h00	Welcome and housekeeping	
Session 6 **09h15 – 10h00**	**Feedback from breakaway sessions**	**Session moderator: Mr Mawethu Mosery**
09h15 – 09h30	Report back from breakaway session 1	Rapporteur Group 1
09h30 – 09h45	Report back from breakaway session 2	Rapporteur Group 2
09h45 – 10h00	Report back from breakaway session 3	Rapporteur Group 3
10h00 – 11h00	Plenary discussion	
11h00- 11h30	TEA BREAK	
Session 7	**Summation and way forward**	**Session Moderator: Mr Mawethu Mosery**
11h30 – 12h00	Summation of conference proceedings and way forward	Mr Sy Mamabolo: Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Commission of South Africa
12h00 – 12h30	Closing remarks	Mr. Glen Mashinini: Chairperson of the Commission, South Africa Dr Khabele Matlosa, Director, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission (AUC) Dr Ayodele Odusola, UNDP Resident Representative
12h30 - 13h30	LUNCH BREAK	
	END OF DAY FOUR	
14h00	EXCURSION	TBC

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