



ECOWAS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO  
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



# INSTITUTIONALISING LESSON-LEARNING PROCESSES FOR IMPROVED ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

**2023 ECONEC Symposium &  
9th General Assembly**



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# Institutionalising Lesson-learning Processes For Improved Electoral Administration

## 2023 ECONEC Symposium & 9th General Assembly

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20 – 21 November 2023

Palm Club Hotel, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

# About ECONEC

The ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) is the umbrella organization of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) in West Africa. It is a member of the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA).

Founded in February 2008 to promote free, fair and credible elections, the Network was inspired by the 1991 ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles on Freedom, People's Rights and Democratisation. This is a reaffirmation of the commitment to the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999); guided by the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) and the Decision of Heads of State and Government of Dakar (2003). This regional initiative demonstrates a renewed commitment to democracy in Africa, and strengthening of a democratic order in the continent.

## Objectives

- a. The promotion of free and credible elections in West Africa;
- b. The promotion of independent and impartial election organisations and administrators;
- c. Strengthening public confidence in the electoral process through free and credible electoral procedures;
- d. The development of professional election officials with integrity, with a strong sense of public service and a commitment to democracy;
- e. To bring predictability to the framework for elections;
- f. Commitment to the promotion and consolidation of democratic culture to create a conducive environment for the peaceful organization of elections;
- g. The sharing of experiences, information, technology and election documents;
- h. Cooperation for the improvement of electoral laws and practices;
- i. Gradual harmonization of electoral laws and practices, as appropriate, capitalizing on good practice in electoral matters;
- j. Rationalisation and pooling of resources to reduce the cost of conducting elections;
- k. Improving the working conditions of its members in the fulfilment of their mandate.

To achieve its objectives, the Network organizes and supports activities such as workshops, seminars, symposia, meetings, exchanges of personnel, funding relevant research, election observation, dissemination of information and experience sharing on electoral matters and, generally, all activities or initiatives that help to achieve its objectives.

# Membership

ECONEC membership is drawn from the EMBs of the fifteen ECOWAS member States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo).



# The ECONEC Steering Committee



**Mr Ibrahim  
Coulibaly-Kuibiart**

(Independent Electoral Commission of Cote d'Ivoire)

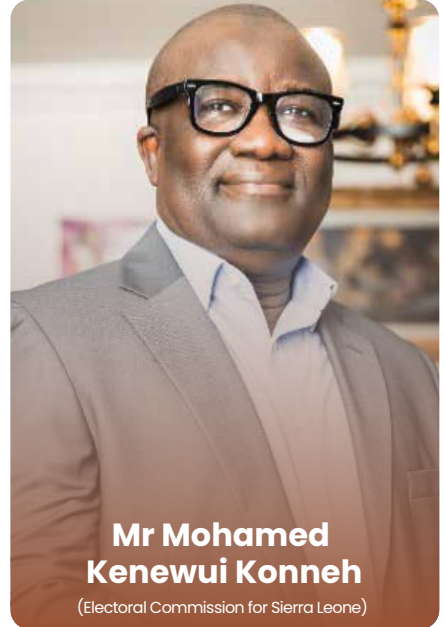
**President of ECONEC**



**Ms Davidetta  
Browne Lansanah**

(National Elections Commission of Liberia)

**1st Vice-President**



**Mr Mohamed  
Kenewui Konneh**

(Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone)

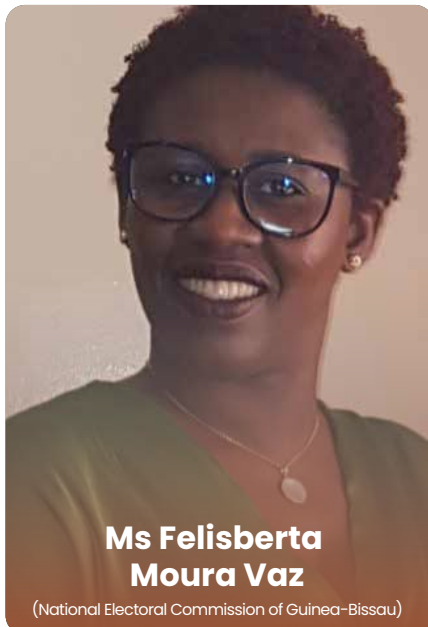
**2nd Vice-President**



**Mr Sacca Lafia**

(Autonomous National Electoral Commission of Benin)

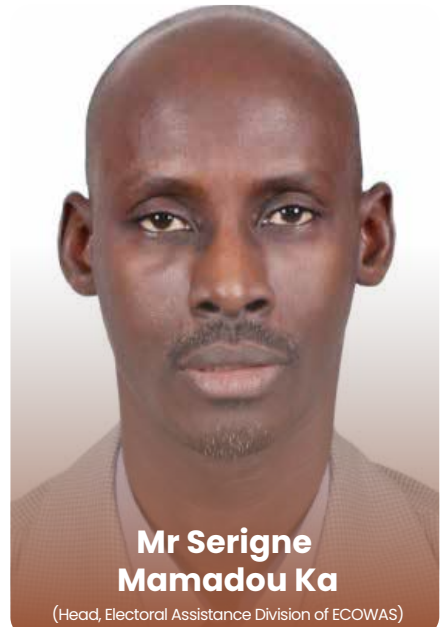
**Treasurer**



**Ms Felisberta  
Moura Vaz**

(National Electoral Commission of Guinea-Bissau)

**Deputy-Treasurer**



**Mr Serigne  
Mamadou Ka**

(Head, Electoral Assistance Division of ECOWAS)

**Permanent Secretary**

# ECONEC Partners



# Background and rationale

Globally, and within Africa specifically, there is great variation in the extent to which election management bodies (EMBs) undertake lessons learned exercises after the conduct of an election to review what went well, what could be done differently, and to make plans for reforms. In some cases no exercise is undertaken at all, while in some others it is undertaken without substantive consultation within the EMB or with stakeholders. Sometimes there is no public plan of subsequent action. This means the opportunity is missed for evidence-based development of election administration practice, as well as the chance to build a cooperative approach with stakeholders and to strengthen EMB accountability.

To date there does not appear to have been any review or activity at the regional level to reflect on how EMBs undertake lessons learned exercises across the West African region. Thus there has not been an opportunity to share methodologies or good practices on how to conduct effective post-election lessons learned exercises.

In the field of electoral administration, there is increasing recognition and wide consensus on what is good practice for the conduct of post-election lessons learned exercises. Thus, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) initiated and led a process of developing guidelines for this purpose, with both the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Union (AU) being involved in helping develop the methodology and supporting the research and analysis. The said guidelines were developed with strong EMB input, extensive research, and high levels of collaboration<sup>1</sup>. The guidelines, whose publication is imminent, provides EMBs with step-by-step guidelines showing best practice for conducting effective lessons learned exercises for effective reform.

The German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and UNDP recently launched the Africa Election Fund to strengthen democracy in Africa through innovative, agile, and timely support to electoral processes<sup>2</sup>. UNDP through the Africa Election Fund is planning several regional events in the months up to the end of 2023. The Fund will undertake activities at a country and regional level to support early phases of electoral cycles and prevent potential crises. One of the Fund windows includes provision for continent-wide lessons learning to improve electoral democracy, accountable and participatory governance, and peace and stability in Africa. Thus, UNDP is collaborating with regional networks of EMBs, such as the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC), to support lessons learned initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Lessons Learned Processes, Advancing to the Next Elections, Guidelines From and For EMBs. By the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in collaboration with 13 organisations including networks of election management bodies (EMBs), inter-governmental organisations, assistance providers, and the global network of citizen observer groups. The 13 organizations are: the African Union (AU), the former Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO), Arab EMBs, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Commission, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Organization of American States (OAS), The Carter Center, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

<sup>2</sup>The Africa Election Fund, GFFO and UNDP.

Created in 2008 as the umbrella body of EMBs in West Africa, ECONEC has as core mandate to promote the conduct of peaceful, fair and credible elections whose outcomes are accepted by all stakeholders. Its means of action include the conduct of symposia on relevant emerging thematic electoral developments of interest to election administrators, capacity-building programs, peer-learning events, research, and advocacy. It is thus in pursuit of its mandate, and in keeping with its tradition of organizing annual symposia, that ECONEC is teaming up with UNDP to organize a conference on the topic: Institutionalising Lesson-Learning Processes for Improved Electoral Administration. This topic is particularly pertinent at a time when there is a move towards professionalization of electoral administration in the West African region, with some hitherto ad hoc EMBs being replaced by permanent institutions.

## Objectives

The symposium will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. Help empower EMBs to undertake effective lessons learned processes:** In addition to learning about the research and the guidelines, EMBs will be guided to explore the topic. Specifically, participants will look at the reasons why lessons learned exercises are valuable, the challenges involved and concerns arising, and looking ways to undertake lessons learned exercises more effectively by integrating best international practices. This includes supporting EMBs in taking actions to promote effective stakeholder engagement and participation in lessons learned processes.
- 2. Increase understanding of the support needs EMBs and other stakeholders may have in undertaking effective lessons learned exercises:** EMBs will be given the opportunity to reflect on their own practices and explore what support would help them to better conduct lessons learned exercises. This will in turn help donors and assistance providers to prepare for possible future actions. This could be particularly useful given the focus of the Africa Election Fund on supporting EMBs at early stages of the election cycle.
- 3. Help identify regional electoral needs and possible future actions by the Africa Election Fund:** Reflecting on issues and lessons arising from across the region will help enable the Africa Election Fund to identify regional needs and possible support actions that could be undertaken in the future. This will enable better planning of possible future actions by the Africa Election Fund, including ones that are undertaken at a regional level (harnessing the benefit of peer-to-peer learning and support).



## **Methodology**

The symposium will be organised around panel discussions on specific themes, each facilitated by a moderator and bringing together discussants to make presentations followed by general discussions around the specific theme.

## **Target participants**

The expected participants at the symposium include the following:

- Chairpersons or Deputy-chairpersons of ECONEC member-EMBs;
- Chief Executives of ECONEC member-EMBs;
- Thematic experts;
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs);
- Development partners involved in providing electoral support/assistance to EMBs (including Africa Electoral Fund, IFES, IDEA, UNDP, etc.).

## **Working language(s) & document(s)**

The symposium will be conducted in the three ECOWAS official languages (English, French and Portuguese) with provision made for simultaneous interpretation.

The lessons learned guidelines developed by IFES will constitute the main working document for the symposium.

# Program of Activities – *Day One*

20-Nov-2023

Time	8:30 – 9:00	<b>Arrival and Registration of Participants</b> Responsibility - CEI Cote d'Ivoire/ECONEC
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## *Opening Ceremony*

Time	9:00 – 9:10	<b>Welcome Statement</b> Responsibility - Mr. Jean-Marc Yacé (Mayor of Cocody)
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Time	9:10 – 9:20	<b>Goodwill message</b> Responsibility - H. E. Ingo Herbert (German Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire)
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Time	9:20 – 9:30	<b>Goodwill message</b> Responsibility - Ms. Carol Flore-Smrecznik (UNDP Resident Representative)
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Time	9:30 – 9:40	<b>Goodwill message</b> Responsibility - Amb. Abdel-Fatau Musah (ECOWAS Commissioner, PAPS)
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Time	9:40 – 9:50	<b>Opening Statement</b> Responsibility - Mr. Ibrahime Coulibaly-Kuibiert (Chairman of CEI Cote d'Ivoire and ECONEC President)
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Time	9:50 – 10:10	<b>Keynote Address</b> Responsibility - Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu
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Time	10:10 – 10:30	<b>Group Photograph &amp; Coffee Break</b>
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## *Plenary Sessions*

**PANEL I: Overcoming political, legal and institutional constraints against electoral reforms:** This session looks at the recent experiences of EMBs in overcoming various challenges in order to pursue electoral reforms. The EMBs are expected to share the challenges, the strategies they used to overcome them and specific reforms that they succeeded in undertaking to improve the management of elections.

Time	10:30 – 10:35	<b>Introduction of panel and discussants</b> Moderator: Mr. Elyse Ouedraogo
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Time	10:35 – 11:15	<b>The experience of Kenya</b> Responsibility - Mr. Wafula Chebukati (Former Chairperson, IEBC Kenya)
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Time	11:15 – 11:55	<b>Findings from International IDEA study</b> Responsibility - Ms. Vera Muring (Programme Officer, IDEA)
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Time	11:55 – 13:00	<b>Questions &amp; Answers – General Discussions</b> Responsibility - Moderator, discussants and participants
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Time	13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
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## PANEL 2: Electoral reforms in digital era: The role of technology in facilitating learning and reform processes

Technology in elections plays a critical role in electoral reform processes. A number of countries have adopted technology in their reforms. This session seeks to understand what problems technology was seeking to address based on previous lessons-learned in election management and the performance of the technology. It also seeks to harness experiences on how EMBs used technology to communicate the new reforms to the public.

Time	14:00 – 14:05	<b>Introduction of panel and discussants</b> Moderator: Mr. Mefoua Traore
Time	14:05 – 14:35	<b>Lessons from Nigeria</b> Responsibility – Mr. Chidi Nwafor (INEC Nigeria)
Time	14:35 – 15:05	<b>Lessons from Cabo Verde</b> Responsibility – Dr. Maria do Rosario Goncalves (CNE Cabo Verde)
Time	15:05 – 15:30	<b>Questions &amp; Answers – General Discussions</b> Responsibility – Moderator, discussants and participants
Time	15:30 – 15:45	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>

## PANEL 3: Forging strategic partnerships for electoral reforms

What kind of partnerships should be developed for advocacy, the actual reform process and the implementation of reforms? This session explores perspectives from civil society organizations which have been involved in electoral reform processes.

Time	15:45 – 15:50	<b>Introduction of panel and discussants</b> Moderator: Mr. Samuel Tettey
Time	15:50 – 16:05	<b>The experience of Ghana</b> Responsibility – Rev. Dr. Fred Deegbe (Co-chair of Advisory Board, CODEO)
Time	16:05 – 16:20	<b>The experience of Senegal</b> Responsibility – Mr. Ababacar Fall (General Secretary, GRADEC)
Time	16:20 – 16:35	<b>The experience of Nigeria</b> Responsibility – Ms. Cynthia Mbamalu (Director of Programs, Yiaga Africa)
Time	16:35 – 16:50	<b>The experience of Zimbabwe</b> Responsibility – Ms. Ellen Dingani (Programs Director, ZESN)
Time	16:50 – 17:30	<b>Questions &amp; Answers – General Discussions</b> Responsibility – Moderator, discussants and participants

*End of Day One*

# Program of Activities – *Day Two*

21–Nov–2023

Time	8:30 – 9:00	<b>Arrival and Registration of Participants</b> Responsibility – CEI Cote d'Ivoire/ECONEC
Time	9:00 – 9:15	<b>Recap of Day One</b> Responsibility – ECONEC

## *Plenary Sessions*

### **PANEL 4: Post-electoral follow-ups and EMBs' uptake of EOM recommendations**

Election observation missions' recommendations are critical pillars which inform subsequent reform processes in countries where organizations have observed elections. This session offers an opportunity to explore strategies that organizations which deploy observation missions use to carry out post electoral follow up and support to electoral reforms.

Time	9:15 – 9:20	<b>Introduction of panel and discussants</b> Moderator: Amb. Francis Oke
Time	9:20 – 9:35	<b>Perspectives from Southern Africa</b> Responsibility – Mr. Andrew Mpesi (CEO, Malawi Electoral Commission)
Time	9:35 – 9:50	<b>Perspectives from the African Union</b> Responsibility – Ms. Karine Kakasi Siaba (Ag. Coordinator, Democracy and Elections)
Time	9:50 – 10:05	<b>IFES Post-election follow-up Tool</b> Responsibility – Ms. Clara Cole (Africa Director, IFES)
Time	10:05 – 10:30	<b>Questions &amp; Answers – General Discussions</b> Responsibility – Moderator, discussants and participants
Time	10:30 – 10:45	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>

### **PANEL 5: Integrating gender and marginalized groups in electoral reform agenda**

Lesson learning and electoral reforms processes need to be inclusive of all key actors in the electoral process. This session explores experiences of managing inclusion in post-electoral lesson-learning and reform processes

Time	10:45 – 10:50	<b>Introduction of panel and discussants</b> Moderator: Mr. Lamin Cham
Time	10:50 – 11:05	<b>Experience of Sierra Leone</b> Responsibility – Mr. Edmond Alpha (ECSL)
Time	11:05 – 11:20	<b>Experience of Cote d'Ivoire</b> Responsibility – CEI Cote d'Ivoire
Time	11:20 – 11:35	<b>Perspectives from the United Nations</b> Responsibility – Mr. Simon-Pierre Nanitelamio (Deputy Director, UNEAD)
Time	11:35 – 12:00	<b>Questions &amp; Answers – General Discussions</b> Responsibility – Moderator, discussants and participants

## LOOKING FORWARD: Developing sustainable and innovative solutions for EMBs as action-oriented learning institutions

Time	12:00 – 12:20	<b>Presentation of sustainable lesson-learning methodology</b> Responsibility - Hannah Roberts (UNDP Consultant)
Time	12:20 – 12:30	<b>Presentation of key policy recommendations</b> Responsibility - Robert Gerenge (UNDP Regional Electoral Advisor for Africa)
<i>Wrapping it up</i>		
Time	11:10 – 11:30	<b>Closing Remarks</b> Responsibility - UNDP Resident Representative
Time	12:40 – 12:50	<b>Closing Statement</b> Responsibility - ECONEC President
Time	13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>

## ECONEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Time	16:30 – 16:40	<b>Welcome Statement</b> Responsibility - ECONEC President
Time	16:40 – 17:00	<b>Presentation of 2023 Activity &amp; Financial Report</b> Responsibility - ECONEC Permanent Secretary
Time	17:00 – 17:20	<b>Comments &amp; Discussions on Report</b> Responsibility - All
Time	17:20 – 18:00	<b>Election of New Steering Committee</b>
Time	18:00 – 18:15	<b>Presentation of Priorities for 2024</b> Responsibility - ECONEC President
Time	18:15 – 18:30	<b>Comments &amp; Discussions</b> Responsibility - All
Time	18:30 – 18:50	<b>A.O.B</b> Responsibility - All
Time	18:50 – 19:00	<b>Closing remarks</b> Responsibility - ECONEC President

*End of Day Two*

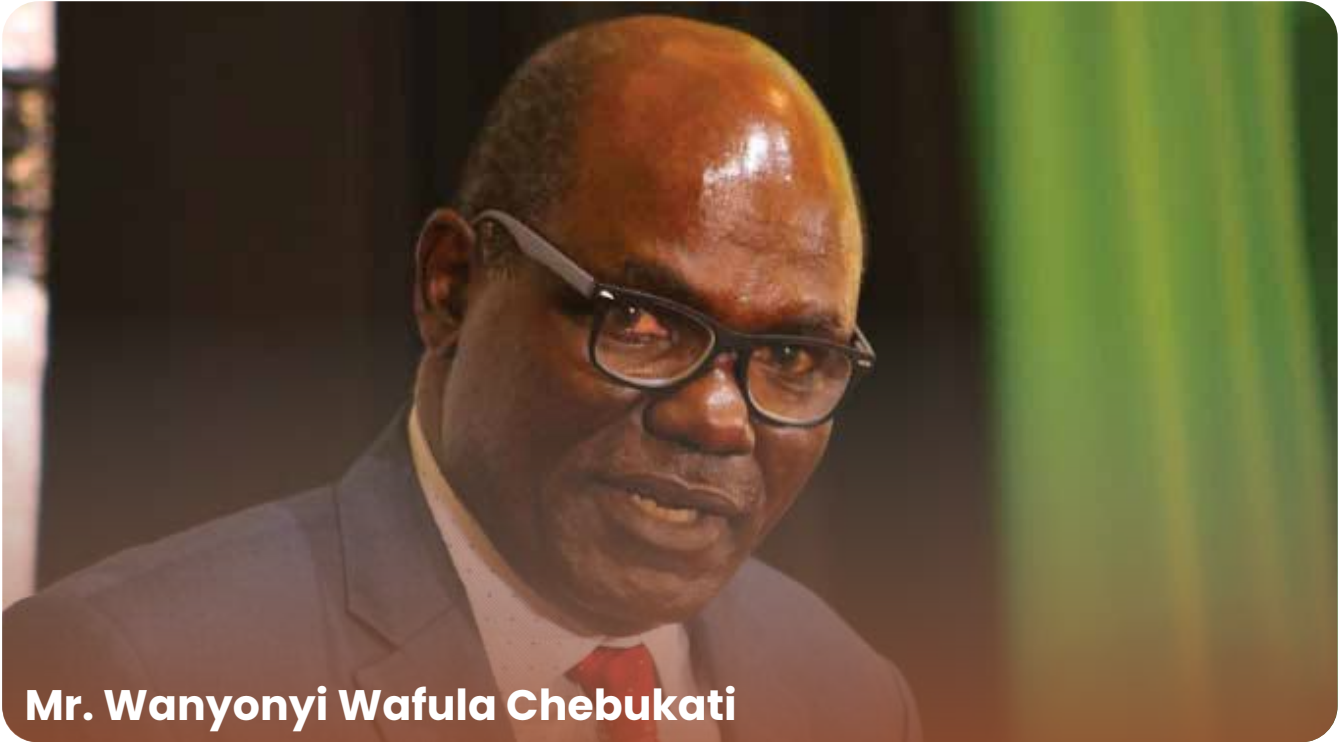
## About the **Speakers**



**Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu**

is a former National Electoral Commissioner in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria's election management body. Before his appointment to the Commission in 2016, he was the Chief Technical Adviser to the Commission between 2010 and 2015. Professor Ibeanu holds a doctorate degree in Political Science, and he is currently a professor of Political Science and concurrently Research Professor in Development Studies at the University of Nigeria.

He began his academic career in 1983 and rose to the rank of Professor in 2000. He was at various times the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences at the University. He has been a visiting scholar at the United Nations University in Tokyo, the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington DC., as well as King's College London. Professor Ibeanu also served as the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Council on Toxic Waste and Human Rights between 2004 and 2010. In an academic career that spans forty years, Professor Ibeanu has published several books and over one hundred essays in journals. In addition to his work at the University of Nigeria, he is presently a Senior Fellow of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), an advisor to Yiaga Africa and the election expert in the European Union Support for Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EUSDGN) project.



**Mr. Wanyonyi Wafula Chebukati**

Mr. Wanyonyi Wafula Chebukati EGH is the former chairman of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) in Kenya and former President of the General Assembly of Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA). He is widely recognized for his unwavering commitment to upholding the integrity of electoral processes.

During his tenure as IEBC Chairman, Chebukati displayed exceptional leadership by overseeing comprehensive electoral reforms. His commitment to transparency and accountability was unwavering, fostering an environment of cooperation and trust among various stakeholders, including political parties, civil society, and international observers. His tenure emphasized the vital role of fairness and transparency in the democratic process.

Mr. Chebukati holds a bachelor of laws [Hons] degree from the University of Nairobi and a post-graduate diploma from the Kenya School of Law. Mr. Chebukati also holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Mr. Chebukati is also a trained legislative drafter and policy formulator.

Before assuming leadership at the helm of the IEBC as Chairperson on 20th January 2017, Mr. Chebukati established himself as a distinguished legal practitioner with 31 years active experience and in good standing. He was a founder and managing partner at a leading corporate commercial law practice in Nairobi and Mombasa. Mr. Chebukati also served as Council member of the Law Society of Kenya, Kenya's Bar association. Upon appointment to Kenya's electoral body, he sought to leverage his expertise and experience in leadership, governance and management to public service and electoral management.



is a minister in the Ghana Baptist Convention and a Co-Chair of the Advisory Board of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) in Ghana. Since joining CODEO in 2002 he has observed almost every election in Ghana including by-elections, presidential and parliamentary elections, and local-level elections. He has been part of advocacy programs for electoral reforms to promote electoral integrity in Ghana. Before becoming the Co-Chair of the Advisory Board of CODEO, he served in many capacities in CODEO including chairing the Procurement Committee for the last three general elections (2012, 2016 and 2020).

He holds an LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) from the University of Ghana, completed his professional law course at the Ghana School of Law, and was called to the Ghana Bar. Additionally, he pursued ministerial studies and obtained an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a D.Min. (Doctorate of Ministry).

Throughout his career, Rev. Dr. Deegbe has served in various pastoral and ministerial capacities. He worked as a Chaplain at Baylor University Medical Centre and lectured at Ghana Baptist Seminary. He served as the President of the Ghana Baptist Convention as well as the Chairman of the Denominational Board of the Ghana Baptist Convention. From 2003 to 2013, he served as the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana.

Additionally, he held positions on several national boards, including the Ghana AIDS Commission, the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, the National Media Commission, the All-Africa Conference of Churches, and the Narcotics Control Board.





**Mr. Ababacar Fall**

is specialist in electoral matters with an academic background in economics. He has served as electoral expert on several consultative committees on the electoral process as well as various technical commissions responsible for reviewing electoral laws in Senegal. He was a member of the Commission tasked with setting up the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA) in 2004.

Mr. Fall has written extensively on electoral management drawing from his experiences in Senegal. He currently serves as the Secretary General of GRADEC, a think-tank focus on participatory democracy and good governance.



**Ms. Cynthia Mbamalu**

is a human and gender rights advocate and a development practitioner. A lawyer by profession with an LLM in Comparative Constitutional Law from the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary, she specialises in human and women rights advocacy, youth leadership development, constitution building, and elections. She is a founding member of Yiaga Africa and has dedicated the past 15 years to development work specifically targeted at building sustainable democracies and promoting political inclusion and human rights. She manages the Annual Democracy Camp for teenagers with over 2000 beneficiaries and the Youth Organizing School for young people in Nigeria and West Africa on how to organise for Policy Advocacy and Civic Engagement with about 280 beneficiaries. She is also one of the leaders of the Not Too Young to Run movement and the Ready to Run campaign.

In her current role as the Director of Programs for Yiaga Africa, she leads the engagement with the Legislature on Electoral Reform and Constitutional review for a gender-sensitive Constitution and Laws that promotes women's political inclusion and gender equality in Nigeria. She provides mentorship to a cohort of young female politicians and young women under different initiatives. Cynthia has participated in several election observation missions and studies internationally and nationally and currently leads the #WatchingTheVote project which is a data and tech-driven movement of citizen observers committed to promoting electoral integrity.

She is an alumna of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government Executive Program on Leadership, Organizing and Action; the Central European University (CEU) on Constitution-Building in Africa; the University of South Africa (UNISA) on Management of Democratic Elections in Africa, and the University of Cape Town on Leading in Public Life: Women, Influence Power Programme. She is also a member of the Advisory Board of Amnesty International Nigeria amongst others.

A portrait of Ms. Ellen Dingani, a woman with glasses and a red top, smiling. The portrait is set against a light background and is partially overlaid by a dark brown banner at the bottom left.

**Ms. Ellen Dingani**

has over 20 years of working experience in electoral, governance and democracy in Zimbabwe and beyond the borders. Currently, she is working as Programmes Director for the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) where she is responsible for project formulation, design, coordinating the implementation of programmes and internal appraisals, and supporting the network strengthening and coordination of Members and CSOs working on election-related interventions. She is also one of the key secretariat members of the Electoral Support Network – of Southern Africa (ESN-SA). Her principal responsibilities in both the ZESN and ESN-SA programmes are to ensure the implementation of activities as planned and in line with the strategic vision of the organisation, donors' guidelines, the Value for Money (VfM) principles and that the organization achieves the expected results.

Over the years, she has worked extensively to support electoral integrity initiatives in Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa where she has provided technical support to civic and voter education, citizen observation, CSOs coordination, and women, people with disabilities, and youth participation.

Ellen holds a BA in Media Studies, MA Commerce in Strategic Management and Corporate Governance, Dip Print Journalism, and an Executive Certificate in Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation. She is also a Commonwealth Professional Fellow – 2012 in the United Kingdom. She has professional and research interests in democracy and governance in Africa, elections, in particular citizens' participation, gender and inclusive development.



**Mr. Andrew Mpesi**

joined Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) in August 2022 from USAID where he worked as Governance Specialist. He holds Master of Arts (Political Science), Bachelor of Arts (Public Administration) and Postgraduate Diploma in Health Systems Management. He started his professional career with the Centre for Social Research of the University of Malawi. He has lectured Political Science at the Catholic University of Malawi and served as a Part-time Lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

He has worked for ActionAid Zambia and ActionAid Malawi as Head of Fundraising and Partnership and as a National Project Manager, respectively. He also worked for Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD). He serves as an External Assessor for Public Social Accountability Monitor (PSAM) examinations at Rhodes University. He has served as an Associate for the MS-Training Centre for Development Cooperation (MS-TCDC)-Arusha Tanzania. He worked as a Master Trainer for Democracy Works Foundation which is implementing Southern African Political Parties & Dialogue (SAPP&D) programme that aims at strengthening democratic institutions and capacity of political parties. He has published in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters on governance and politics in Malawi. He has expertise in political party organization, elections and political processes, parliamentary strengthening, international relations, local government administration, party manifestos and promise tracking, and social accountability, among others.



**Ms. Clara Cole**

is the International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) Africa regional director. Cole is a governance and democracy professional with 20 years of international experience working on a broad range of governance issues. Her program specialties include electoral management, election observation, civic and voter education, civil society development and women's political participation.

Before joining IFES, Cole was the head of Regulatory Support at the United Kingdom's Electoral Commission leading the team that provided regulatory guidance, advice and support to UK political parties and campaigners.

Prior to the Electoral Commission, she was the political adviser for the Electoral Support Section at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. In this role, she advised on and facilitated the Secretariat's activities in promoting democracy and good electoral practices across the Commonwealth. In addition to planning and deploying more than 25 international election observation missions, she designed and managed technical assistance projects for electoral management bodies, including The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Malawi and the Seychelles. She also led on the development and delivery of knowledge products covering a range of subjects such as voter registration, the impact of new media on elections and campaign finance.

Cole holds a master's degree in international peace and conflict resolution from American University and an undergraduate degree in political science and philosophy from Loyola University in Maryland.



**Ms. Karine Kakasi Siaba**

is the Ag. Coordinator of the Democracy and Elections Unit (DEU) of the Governance and Conflict Prevention Directorate (GCPD) within the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (D-PAPS) of the African Union (AU). She has had nearly twenty (20) years of solid experience and knowledge in the areas of: management of electoral processes, handling of sensitive continental issues and multilateral cooperation in terms of conflict prevention and management of pre or post political crises. elections, democratic transitions and consolidation, peacekeeping, high-level meetings on diplomatic mediation between the continental institution, the Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs) in particular the United Nations (UN) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In addition, she has so far followed more than thirty (30) electoral processes in Africa and Latin America, including in States in transition or in crisis or post-conflict situations. She also has an excellent command of: good governance and participatory democracy and the rule of law in Africa and in the world as well as issues of politics, gender, peace, security and stability, consubstantial with any sustainable development.

Before joining the AU, Karine worked as Electoral Advisor for nearly ten (10) years within the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, in particular the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Operation in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). She is also an Accredited Trainer of the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Program and AU Election Observers Trainings.

In addition, she is currently enrolled in the Doctorate in Diplomacy and International Relations at the Center for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies (CEDS) of the INSEEC U Group in Paris, France. Previously, she obtained the Diploma in Election Administration from the Panthéon SORBONNE University of Paris I in France and the Master's degree in Public Relations from the Faculty Institute of Information and Communication Sciences in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She is also a graduate of: Certificate in Conflict Resolution and Mediation from the Clingendael Institute (The Hague) in the Netherlands and Certificates in Bilateral and Multilateral Negotiation; in Conflict Prevention and Peacemaking from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), among others.

Karine is a leader, professional and dynamic woman who contributes to the excellence of international relations between Africa and the rest of the world.

# Get in touch with **us:**

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w : [www.resao-econec.org](http://www.resao-econec.org)

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