

International Conference on 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity'

SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY COHORT ON 'ELECTIONS INTEGRITY'

PROCEEDINGS AND SUMMATION
REPORT



SUMMATION REPORT

The Election Commission of India organised a two-day International Conference on 23-24 January 2023 at New Delhi on the theme 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity' under the Cohort on Election Integrity led by ECI, which was established as a follow up on to the 'Summit for Democracy' held in December, 2021. The other Co-Leads of Cohort are Ministry of Interior, Greece; Electoral Commission of Mauritius and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

The Conference is the second in a series of three conferences to be organized by Election Commission of India under the aegis of the Cohort. Over 40 Participants from 16 Countries/EMBs including Angola, Armenia, Argentina, Australia, Chile, Croatia, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Kiribati, Mauritius, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines and Suriname and 06 participants from international organisations namely, IFES and International IDEA participated in the Conference besides the representatives from eight foreign missions located at New Delhi (i.e. Costa Rica, Philippines, Serbia, Cape Verde, Palau, Jamaica, Ghana and Paraguay).



In his Keynote address at the inaugural ceremony, CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar emphasized that engagement of technology has become vital in ensuring inclusivity and transparency in elections and thus in further building up trust towards the democratic electoral exercise. The success of any EMB depends on deploying appropriate technology in three broad verticals - ease of registration for voters, facilitating political parties & candidates and thirdly for election management and logistics/security. Speaking on the occasion, he highlighted various tech interventions by ECI like cVigil, Saksham App for PwDs and use of battery operated non-networked EVMs in a million plus polling stations which has empowered voters and ensured prompt and credible electoral outcome selection after election.

Mr. Rajiv Kumar

Hon'ble Chief Election
Commissioner of India



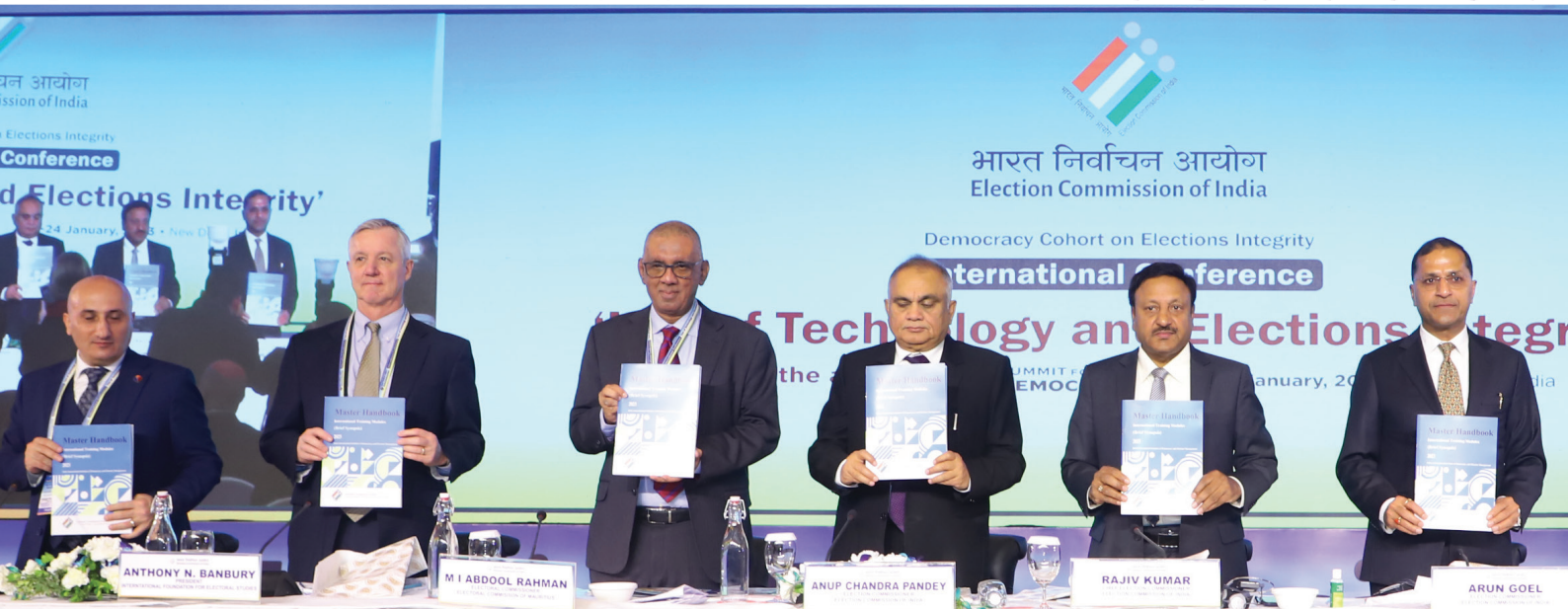
CEC Mr. Rajiv Kumar stressed on the impact of new media especially the social media on the intersection of technology with EMBs' functioning. He added that a disturbing trend of deep fake narratives have become a common feature in elections worldwide, where disruptive elements attempt to alter public perception and mislead the user by repetitively presenting the deep fakes as "fact". While recalling his keynote address from the previous conference, Mr. Kumar stressed that social media intermediaries through their algorithm power and AI, have the capability to detect the deep fakes proactively, specially in jurisdictions like India, where electoral cycles are definite and well announced.

He further raised concerns over level playing field not being in-built in platforms search results to at least show officially verified versions with the same prominence as fake content. CEC used enforcement agencies analogy to put onus on social media platforms to detect deep fakes proactively. He said that it is difficult to imagine if the enforcement agencies say that they would not act unless crime is reported to them; that prevention is not their responsibility.

RELEASE OF ECI PUBLICATIONS



Global Initiatives in the Use of Technology in Elections



International Training Modules of IIIDEM

Session 1

Technology for Election Administration

Voting and Counting Methodologies and Grievance Redressal

The first session on the 'Technology for Election Administration' was co-chaired by the Election Commissioner of India, Mr. Arun Goel and Electoral Commissioner of Mauritius, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Irfan Abdool Rahman. The session had presentations from EMBs of Armenia, Australia, Croatia & Georgia.



CO-CHAIR

Mr. Arun Goel

Hon'ble Election Commissioner of India

During his address and opening remarks, Mr. Arun Goel, Election Commissioner of India said that use of technology in election administration has become indispensable from automating basic processes to managing sophisticated electoral databases. He highlighted various technology initiatives being used by ECI for managing a database of over 94.5 crore electors and to facilitate election related decision making like rationalization of polling stations; technology for facilitating political parties/candidates and apps like cVigil to empower voters. India is the largest democracy and the promise followed by the ECI is "No voter is to be left behind". In this endeavour, Election Commission has made extensive use of technology in its processes. The voter list is growing annually by 20 million new voters. There are nine million workers engaged by ECI from the grassroot level to upper management in this process. Since technology advances at an unstoppable speed, these facilities are constantly upgraded.



CO-CHAIR

H.E. Mr. Mohammad Irfan Abdool Rahman

Electoral Commissioner of
Mauritius (Co-Lead)

In his opening remarks, Electoral Commissioner of Mauritius H.E. Mr. Mohammad Irfan Abdool Rahman stated that EMBs today are being compelled to provide more and more technology related facilities to all stakeholders, be it the voters, the candidates, the political parties, the civil society etc. whilst delivering credible elections, and at the same time ensuring the integrity of the process. The use of technology in the electoral process is not a new approach for almost every EMB. Public confidence is crucial where technology is used in the management of elections; hence the need to properly communicate well in advance in order to obtain the "buy-in" and undertaking of the various stakeholders. There is also the pertinent issue of lack of resources, especially in smaller EMBs with scarce resources. The technology would have to be selected to suit the local context so as to become not only cost effective but be simple to use and easily understandable by the average voter.

Armenia



H.E. Ms. Nune Hovhannisyan, Deputy Chairman of the CEC Armenia made a presentation on 'Use of Technologies in the Elections and Electoral Legislation in Armenia'. She stated that Armenia, as a country has used Technology and election integrity with a focus at all three levels for electoral reform systems.

The uniqueness of the system is online signature collection process for electronic signature. Another important feature is voter authentication devices (VAD) in Armenia. VAD software helps to exclude double registration of voters. VAD feature helps to prevent and diagnose for second time casting for online registered voters. Online registration for observers and mass media representatives has been included as a key feature.

H.E. Ms. Nune Hovhannisyan
Dy. Chairperson, CEC of Armenia

Australia

Mr. Thomas Ryan made a presentation on 'Technology for Election Administration'. He stated that the technology includes Electronic certified lists, Tally Room results, online enrolment, Senate ballot paper scanning, secure telephone voting, generic voter registration system. Currently the skill sets to support and manage the legacy systems are limited; the systems do not enable the AEC to easily respond to changes and the technology landscape is complexed due to the nature of the existing systems. The AEC is hoping to bring in future technology and work is ongoing. It hopes to bolster integrity and gain more public trust in electoral processes. The challenges faced by AEC include integrity, trust and reputation management, digital and data economy, human dimension and disruptive physical environment, democratic participation and transparency and auditability of blackened system and code. There are some opportunities too like Integrity and trust, convenience, inclusion and accessibility, fast & accurate results and ensuring of sustainable election delivery.



Mr. Thomas Ryan
First Asstt Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission

Croatia



In his presentation, H.E. Mr. Damir Kontrec, Vice-President, SEC Croatia stated that in Croatia two types of elections are held, one at the state level and the other is conducted at the local level. IT applications are used during different phases- before the election, on the election day and after the election and throughout the election process. The EC of Croatia uses these applications for its processes: Appointment of Lower Election Commission; Candidacy-Entering Data; Defining Polling Stations; Application of bulk SMS communication with polling station committees; Observer Registry-Entering Data; Serial numbers-Controlling orders and expenses related to ballot papers; Application for Voter Turnout- Providing information on voters turnout at every polling station; and Application for Election Result-Control on the number of voters at polling station.

H.E. Mr. Damir Kontrec
Vice-President SEC of Croatia



Georgia

During his session on “Practice of Using Electoral Technologies in Georgian Election”, H.E. Mr. Giorgi Sharabidze, Deputy Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Georgia, informed that the upcoming 2024 Parliamentary election in Georgia will be held through electronic voting technologies in his country. Around seventy percent of the voters will cast their vote through electronic means. All the ballot papers will be digitalized. Meanwhile, all extraordinary and By-elections will be used for further piloting voting technologies, study and research purposes which is scheduled for Spring 2023. Poll Count Optical Scanner (PCOS) and Voter Verification Machines are verified, researched, studied, piloted and are ready to be utilized in the future. In 2021 municipal elections in Tbilisi were held with 41000 registered voters with thirty one polling stations. To check the accuracy of results, the ballots were counted manually and electronically. That the accuracy was 99.4% with only 0.6% difference is a big achievement. Also there were voter surveys conducted to check the efficiency of technology amongst the people.



H.E. Mr. Giorgi Sharabidze
Deputy Chairperson, CEC of Georgia

Closing Remarks

**H.E. Mr. Mohammad Irfan
Abdool Rahman**

**Electoral Commissioner of
Mauritius (Co-Lead)**



In his closing remarks, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Irfan Abdool Rahman, Electoral Commissioner of Mauritius mentioned that the participants stated how challenging it is for EMBs to operate in this day and age. EMBS are today pressurized to provide more technological options to the voters. In some countries, especially in India the whole process from registration of voters to conducting of elections are done using technology. The benefits of this can be non-printing of ballot papers, counting process is quick and recounts are easier to be done. Technology needs to be assisted with certain measures so as to be true to all stakeholders. The persistent issue in employing technology is lack of resources; social media is another such double edged sword with equal amount of pros and cons. While the pros are numerous, the cons is what can lead to downfall. The true fight is to combat misinformation, fake content and how to verify reliable resources.

Session 2

Technology Solutions for Inclusive Elections Enrolment, Awareness and Capacity Building

The Second Session was chaired by Mr. Anthony Banbury, President & CEO, IFES. Presentations were made by International IDEA and EMBs from Angola and Philippines in the Session.



CHAIR

Mr. Anthony Banbury

President & CEO, IFES (Co-Lead)

In his opening remarks, Mr. Anthony Banbury, President & CEO, IFES mentioned that harnessing technology so that it strengthens democracy rather than weakens it – and so that it improves electoral integrity more than it undermines it – is arguably the single biggest challenge facing democracies and election management bodies today.

It is really critical for EMBs to have a comprehensive strategy that maximizes the benefits of appropriate technology for national settings, while defending against the threats posed by technology. This must be at the core of what election management bodies do. Elements of the strategy include cybersecurity, technology for election administration, and the information space in dealing with misinformation and hate speech. It is essential that EMBs deal with not just the technology side of cybersecurity, but also the perception side. There are many challenges that go with this technology: unscrupulous vendors who over-promise what their technology can deliver, but under-deliver; hidden costs; ownership of data; changing technology that quickly becomes outdated; and improper behavior by vendors.

It is important that EMBs strive to incorporate technology in an inclusive manner, aware of built-in biases. Making information and guides to technology and applications available in minority and indigenous languages is a very good start.

Misinformation, hate speech are the single biggest threat to election integrity, democracy and social cohesion and are likely to remain so for the next decade at least. A combination of evolving technology, malign actors (both state and non-state actors), the low cost and low risk of using technology for malignant purposes and the high return that can be obtained by distorting the information environment make this a very difficult challenge.

There are many things that EMBs can do – having a strong strategic communications plan; working to enhance regulatory environments to the extent it is in their control; working with parliaments to develop legislation; working with other national actors; working with tech companies to develop things like memorandums of understanding in advance of elections, or ‘war rooms’ to track misinformation in the run-up to an election.

The importance of the issue of technology and elections is widely recognized, we all need to do more. The Summit for Democracy offers an opportunity for the Election Integrity Cohort, for all of us, to make a contribution in this regard.

Philippines

Mr. Joel J Gines, Provincial Election Commissioner of Philippines made a presentation on 'Technology Solutions for Inclusive Elections – How Philippines Shifted from Manual to Automated Elections'. In 2010, they introduced automated election technology. It is the same as shared by Georgia. Inclusive Electoral Process is useful for democracy. The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) provides the vulnerable members of the society with privileges and special registration. Their voter registration process includes Register from Anywhere Project (RAP), Registration for Persons Deprived of Liberty (in jails); Satellite Registration for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities. Their Voter Education program includes Information and dissemination through mass media, social media, print and the like; - Vote Counting Machine Demo and KEBS (Know Election Better Seminar). COMELEC endeavours to conduct VOTE S.A.F.E (Secure, Accurate, Free and Fair Elections) in the Philippines.



Mr. Joel J. Gines

Provincial Election Supervisor, COMELEC, Philippines

International IDEA



Ms. Leena Rikkila Tamang

Director (Asia & Pacific) International IDEA

Ms. Leena Rikkila Tamang, Director, International IDEA made a presentation on 'Adopting Technology for Inclusive Elections: a Solution or a Problem'. She stated that the more inclusive an election is, the greater the likelihood that all voices and perspectives will be heard and represented in the final outcome. She identified the requirements for an inclusive election as well as the barriers faced in the process. She mentioned that use of technology enhances the inclusiveness, efficiency and integrity of elections and addresses new and evolving threats faced by EMBs. If effectively designed, introduced and maintained, technology can improve the efficiency, speed, accuracy, and reliability of key electoral operations; address procedural shortcomings and, by reducing reliance on human intervention, also limit human error; enhance election integrity and foster electoral inclusion by facilitating voting access.

Angola

H.E. Dr. João Damião, Commissioner Electoral Commission of Angola made a presentation on 'Use of technology of information and communication at the electoral processes in Angola'. He informed that CNE Angola is using IT in all aspects of electoral process from recruitment of poll personnel, maintaining electoral roll, information system for voters; logistics etc. Use of IT in their elections enhance the operability of the electoral operations; creates efficiency and effectiveness to the electoral process; ensures trust of stakeholders to the electoral process; sharpens the communications of the electoral process; ensures greater security of both elections and information data; reduces the delays in the treatment of elections data; allows for the disclosure of elections results quickly and provides great dynamics to the operationalization of the electoral process. This has allowed CNE to declare results in a record time of less than 24 hours.



H.E. Dr. João Damião

Commissioner, Electoral Commission of Angola

Session 3

Technology as an Enabler & Challenges of Digital Space

Stake holder engagement, Public Trust & Strategic Partnerships

Session 3 was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Giorgi Sharabidze, Dy. Chairperson, CEC of Georgia and H.E. Mr. Cesar Emilio Rossel, Minister/Vice-President, TSJE, Paraguay. Presentations were made by IFES and KPU of Indonesia.



CHAIR

H.E. Mr. Cesar Emilio Rossel

Minister/Vice- President TSJE
Paraguay

H.E. Mr. Cesar Emilio Rossel provided information about the extensive use of information technology in the electoral process in Paraguay. He informed that they follow a total digital system which can be accessed by all Paraguayan nationals. They are able to transmit results of their Elections quickly within two hours with 0.06% of error. The country has been using voting machines since 2009 onwards. In two months, they will have presidential elections which will be conducted through voting machines. The TSJE of Paraguay is also taking steps to fight fake news through digital means. They have introduced SINAFID, a system of expenditure monitoring in respect of the candidates and political parties. This has been appreciated by the European Union. However they are not using biometrics in their process which if implemented would be a step forward in their electoral process.

IFES

In his presentation titled 'The Present and Future of Elections and Disinformation', Mr Matt Bailey, Senior Global Adviser for Cyber Security, IFES mentioned that Disinformation erodes trust but it is also evolving. It is "polyvalent" in its aims and flexible in its tactics and rapidly evolving. Disinformation about election cybersecurity can play on public lack of understanding of the technology. Cyberattacks are increasingly used to provide a foundation for later disinformation claims.

Measures to secure Cybersecurity and Information Integrity Operations include creation of standing security operations and incident response capacities; Proactive coordination with internet, telecoms, and tech industry on threat intelligence and response; independent real time awareness capacity and independence from government, industry, and vendors. He suggested EMBs should have Proactive Approaches for Strategic Communication and Voter Education; Crisis Communication Planning; Threat Modeling and Industry and Civil Society Engagement.



Mr. Matt Bailey

Sr. Global Advisor for Cyber Integrity, IFES

H.E. Ms. Betty Epsilon Idroos, Commissioner, KPU of Indonesia gave a presentation on 'Technology as an Enabler and Challenges of Digital Space'. She informed the conference about the electoral process in Indonesia and the progress of digitisation of the election process. She gave a roadmap of Election Digitisation including Digital Transformation Acceleration in the country for the upcoming 2024 election. She provided information on various IT systems used by KPU in the electoral process including : SIPOL - Political Party Information System which is a Web-based information system to facilitate the election stage of political party data management; SILON - Candidacy Information System; SIDAPIL Electoral Boundaries and Seat Allocation Information System; JDIH - Legal Document Utilisation Information System and the process of Disinformation Management.



H.E. Ms. Betty Epsilon Idroos,
Commissioner, KPU of Indonesia

Closing Remarks



H.E. Mr. Giorgi Sharabidze

Deputy Chairperson, CEC of Georgia

Mr. Giorgi Sharabidze appreciated the presentations from representatives of Paraguay and Indonesia and shared his observations and remarks. He appreciated that more than 65% people of Indonesia exercise their voting rights and that their election systems are robust and results are declared within 2 hours after casting of votes.

He highlighted the cyber security issues raised by Mr. Matt Bailey during his presentation, considering it as the most important challenge. The relation between disinformation and cyber security through hacking services, political parties etc. also remain a vital challenge faced by most countries today. He urged all the participants to create a platform where sharing of challenges and failures faced by the Election Commissions are done regularly to work on tangible solutions.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS



Mr. Anup Chandra Pandey
Hon'ble Election Commissioner of India

Mr. Anup Chandra Pandey mentioned that ECI is proud to be associated with the initiative of the Cohort on Elections Integrity and for hosting the conference which aims to promote institutional mobilisation to strengthen the electoral democracy in the world. After this conference, a third conference on inclusive elections and election integrity would be held virtually in the second week of March 2023. This would be in time for the second summit for democracy which is scheduled for 29th to 30th March 2023.

He conveyed that technology can be leveraged for promoting civic participation, combating corruption, facilitating access to justice, enhancing transparency and accountability and support democracy inclusion and access to information. It can be used as well as misused. Social media can often lead to disturbances and imbalance between the equilibrium of choice. It is a necessity for voter education for ethical and knowledgeable participation in voting. Mr. Pandey concluded by emphasising that all available platforms need to be used effectively. He provided an overview of the presentations made by participating EMBs and International Organizations (International IDEA and IFES).

He mentioned that the initiatives taken by EMBs and international organisations are commendable and will encourage the use of technology in elections with a view to make elections accessible, credible, free, fair, participative and transparent globally. For this purpose, EMBs also need to come together, increase in activities (sharing of knowledge, experience, tech. transfer etc.); to fulfill unfinished task; time has come to strengthen democratic norms and processes by collective action. We need to address the challenges through knowledge sharing on regular basis in a structured manner. The A-WEB, IDEA and similar such institutions have tremendous potential to play this role. We need to develop strategies and action plans for utilizing this potential.

Efforts should be made to bring more and more democracies including older democracies on board in a manner that involves them, engages them into strengthening of electoral democracy. Roles of the Partner organizations need to be redefined for more effective assistance to the needy EMBs for capacity building. All available platforms need to be effectively utilized for collective voice for safeguarding the EMBs to ensure strengthening of electoral democracy across the world.

PART B: DISCERNING INTERSECTIONS AND CONTINUITIES

Perspective

Viewed consecutively and cumulatively between the first and the second conferences, the following commonalities and continuities amongst the participants can be discerned.

- All participants narrowed down the challenges and concern flowing from technology primarily from the lens of “Role, Framework & Capacity of Election Management Bodies/Election Authorities (EMBs/EAs)”.
- All broke down the discussion into the primary categories of concern and challenges of technologies i.e., internal to the EMBs/EAs, and those which are real but emerging in the wider ecosystem of the respective jurisdictions. All agreed to the potency of the international dimensions of this thematic.
- The discourse discerned three broad verticals of approach as highlighted by IFES, viz technology and technical solution *per se*: policy and legal dimension and; the perception management challenge.
- Though the above categorization was more for ready understanding of the complexity of the challenge, all agreed that many-a-times it is not easy to see the challenges in a segregated manner and the concern of perception management in many cases vitiates even a well formulated policy and technical instrument.
- The specificity of technology in relation to some core electoral steps such as voter registration, thereafter security of data, voter interface, backend process modernization of the EMBs/EAs itself, the voting day – taking of the ballot, counting and dissemination of results will have specific technical solutions, yet individually and cumulatively, they ought yield a credible outcome. This particular point was clearly in continuity of the first conference.

Specific to the theme of technology, the following broad concerns were shared.

- Synchronization vs a segmentation approach to adopt technology by EMBs/EAs.
- Whether to be done in-house or, through a government company or outsourcing to private sector, with majority experiences gravitating towards the first two options.
- All presentations enumerating success stories invariably reflected a back stopping of technology with physical modalities and protocols both as a measure of safety of transition of manual to tech-based and, also as a conscious maintaining of options to deal with the reality of the digital divide.
- The presentations also brought out that the majority of participating EMBs/EAs have chosen standalone platforms and are still showing hesitation to rely on the internet connectivity. All acknowledged the dilemma, as it is the internet which is most likely to unleash the full power of the technical solutions.
- Flowing from the above, the near unanimity was that internet being an externality to the EMBs and having a transnational regime and impact, is the most potent cause for not finding the internet as a reliable vector.
- Therefore, a framework idea can be chiseled as to whether the need to have a basic framework or a voluntary code of ethics for big data companies to deal with the specific reality and challenges of the electoral space, which is much more specific in terms of timelines (during the poll process primarily) without in any way diluting the freedom of speech and related counter concerns which informs this debate.
- In relation to next thematic of “Inclusive elections” the concern of inappropriate technology itself codifying discriminatory practices through embedded bias or, the digital divide or, the lingual divide was flagged.



PART C: FOLLOW-UP

While endorsing Part C of the previous 'Summation' document on "Role, Framework and Capacity of EMBs/EAs". Further specific follow-ups were worked out:

- Despite all the challenges that technology is posing there cannot be an option to the EMBs/EAs to not adopt them. Therefore, the focus should be on "appropriate technology" and not a blind pursuit of high technology. Therefore, it should be viewed as a conceptual challenge and thus success stories and sharing of best practices and capacity building relationship between EMBs and EAs, as part of the cohort activities, is paramount.
- There was a view that EMBs/EAs should take a step out of their comfort zone and consider coalitions amongst themselves and work out a format of relationship which makes other stakeholders of the domain, primarily the big data companies, as part of the solution.
- EMBs/EAs through this cohort may delineate some core elements of a comprehensive strategy which can setup some sort of 'Internal industry benchmark', related to tech companies and elections integrity so as to make a coherent recommendation as a shared expectation from the "Summit for Democracy".
- Of the several monitorable criteria of the success of EMBs/EAs on any axis of technology and election integrity, there was an agreement for placing inclusivity in elections as the foremost benchmark - which ties up with the already agreed theme of the third conference "Inclusive Election and Election Integrity".

PART D: SYNCHRONIZING WITH THE SECOND SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 29-30, 2023

- ECI and IFES briefed the Conference on approaching timelines for delivering an outcome document by the Cohort
- Accordingly, a first draft of the approach paper of 'Inclusive Election and Election Integrity' will be circulated immediately.
- The IFES will settle a framework for civil society consultations through a questionnaire with the co-leads and, all members are requested to facilitate IFES in case some of the CSOs are located in the respective jurisdictions.
- The participants may take note of the fact that inputs from all 16 cohorts has been requested in every format for consideration/inclusion in the "Outcome Document" of the Summit for Democracy.
- There was an agreement that the cohort must attempt lasting and enduring outcomes which may see fruition through the Summit, in the immediate framework, but, continuities can be maintained beyond the Summit timelines and in that context the possibility of having an "Institutional Mechanism" was flagged.
- It was also agreed that to the above end, the focus can be on EMB's/EA's autonomy /integrity as a foundational starting point for the concern of election integrity at large. This creates legitimate ownership of space by the EMBs/EAs themselves. The possibility of having an interim stop gap mechanism to maintain the momentum of this effort, especially through the capacity building collaboration being pivoted by the IIIDEM, which has already conducted three special courses for this Cohort members (covering sixty participants) and one more course listed for Feb 2023. Therefore, a basic framework for continuity has come into being through the IIIDEM platform which can be exploited/utilized.

IT WAS AGREED THAT GIVEN THE CONSTRAINT OF TIMELINES, THE LAST CONFERENCE WILL BE ON VC MODE AND WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR 2ND WEEK OF MARCH 23. EXACT DATE WILL BE NOTIFIED SHORTLY.



In terms recommendations to the Summit flowing from these two conferences, the following broad lines were proposed:

- a) "Paramount need is to protect autonomy of EMBS/EAs as a credible starting point for achieving election integrity". What such an autonomy could mean, a short checklist as an Annexure will be worked out.
- b) Capacity building of EMBs/EAs on continuous basis through secure funding and a cohort-identified institution like the IIIDEM and, resource organizations like IFES and International IDEA and other similar entities with geographical spread, which can be identified, to create a specificized knowledge network focusing specifically on election integrity through the lens of autonomy/technology/inclusivity.
- c) To provide positive success stories to the Summit outcomes with focus on voters; political parties; candidates; and EMB/EA logistics, the recommendation is for the Cohort continuing with the present framework.
- d) Challenge of disinformation and the urgent need to have a response to this challenge, even though fraught with criticism with free speech argument, needs to be red flagged without hesitation to the Summit, both as a challenge to the positive discourse on democracy and, as a field level challenge to every election cycle.

