



20th Anniversary Essay Competition

Youth Perspectives on the Future of Democracy in Africa

Introduction

The Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) is hosting a youth essay competition as part of its 20th anniversary celebration. The winning essay will be presented during the prestigious 11th EISA annual symposium which will take place in Johannesburg from 20 to 21 October 2016. (Read more about the EISA annual symposium <https://eisa.org.za/index.php/symposia-and-conferences/>) EISA will be responsible for the full cost of the winner's participation at the event. The top four essays will be published in a compendium as part of the outputs of the 20th anniversary celebration in the coming year.

The purpose of the essay competition is to give young Africans an opportunity to present their perspectives on the current state of democratic development on the continent and the future they see. EISA considers the youth as a critical mass for democratic development on the continent. It therefore seeks to give voice to youth perspectives on democracy as part of its contributions to policy discourse on the African continent.

The competition

EISA is inviting undergraduate students from recognised universities across Africa to submit a 300 word abstract on the topic '**Democracy in Africa today and the future I see**'. Abstracts should be submitted along with a coloured copy of the author's student ID and a completed copy of the attached details form (the form can also be downloaded at <https://eisa.org.za/pdf/symp2016contestant.docx>). Abstracts should be submitted by email essays@eisa.org.za not later than 17:00 CET on **24 June 2016**. The subject line of the email should include the full name of the author and the following text: '*abstract submission*'.

Full essays (not more than 3000 words) will be solicited from abstracts that are shortlisted. Full essays are expected to be submitted not later than 17:00 CET on 12 August 2016 along with a letter of confirmation from the Head of Department of the academic institution at which the contestant is studying.

Terms and conditions of the competition:

- Contestants should be of African origin and currently an undergraduate student in an African university.
- Contestants should not be older than 25 years.
- Abstracts should be submitted in one of the following languages: English, French or Portuguese
- Contestants will be disqualified if any information they have provided is found to be false or plagiarised.
- Abstracts and full essays should be submitted to include the following details about the author: name and surname; name of academic institution; current department and year of study.

About EISA

EISA has since its inception in July 1996 established itself as a leading institution and influential player dealing with elections and democracy related issues on the African continent. It envisions an African continent where democratic governance, human rights and citizen participation are upheld in a peaceful environment. The Institute's vision is executed by striving for excellence in the promotion of credible elections, citizen participation, and the strengthening of political institutions for sustainable democracy in Africa.

The Institute has supported and/or observed over 70 electoral processes in Africa. It has extensive experience in formulating, structuring and implementing democratic and electoral initiatives. It has built an internationally recognised centre for policy, research and information and provides this service to electoral management bodies, political parties and civil society organisations in a variety of areas, such as voter and civic education and electoral assistance and observation. Besides its expanded geographical scope, the Institute has, for the past several years, been increasingly working in new in-between election areas along the electoral and parliamentary cycle, including constitution and law making processes, legislative strengthening, conflict management and transformation, political party development, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and local governance and decentralisation.

With its headquarters in Johannesburg (South Africa), EISA has had field offices across the African continent and currently has offices in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique Somalia and Zambia and a sub-regional office at the secretariat of the ECCAS in Libreville, Gabon.