



BOTSWANA ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM CONFERENCE

Boipuso Hall, Gaborone, Botswana

14-15 March 2006.

CONFERENCE REPORT

Acknowledgements

EISA would like to thank The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) for supporting this Conference which took place at Boipuso Hall, Gaborone, Botswana from 14-15 March 2006.

About The Hosts

EISA is a not for profit non governmental organization which was established in 1996. Its core business is to provide technical assistance, capacity building, and advice on issues of electoral system reforms; election monitoring and observation; constructive conflict management; strengthening of parliament and other democratic institutions; strengthening of political parties; capacity building for civil society organizations; deepening democratic local governance; and enhancing the institutional capacity of election management bodies.

Emang Basadi Women's association was established in 1986 by a group of women who were concerned with the promotion of legal, social, cultural and economic status of women in Botswana. Through advocacy, research and discussions the organization seeks to develop strategies that can change the socio, economic, political, and legal position of women in Botswana.

About the Rapporteurs

Silibasizo Mtunzi (Emang Basadi)
Bertha Chiroro (EISA)

BOTSWANA ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Botswana is characterized as the longest serving multiparty democracy in Africa. It has a track record of holding free and fair elections regularly since independence in 1966. It has continued to hold elections under the First Past the Post (FPTP) Electoral System, which it inherited from colonialism. Unlike other African countries, this system has not led to electoral violence or to political instability. However democracy is not just about casting a vote but about empowering the people and to ensure that institutions that are formed from the election results are reflective of the popular vote and the will of the people. Whilst the First Past the Post System has served Botswana very well in producing a stable form of government, the electoral system has exhibited enormous deficiencies and inadequacies in respect to accountability and representation in some African countries.

One of the major deficiencies in Botswana has been the under-representation of women in governance structures. Despite the ratification of international protocols and SADC regional conventions for a more balanced gender representation in national legislatures, women remain insufficiently represented in the legislature in Botswana. Furthermore, Botswana politics is dominated by one party, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which has won each and every election by a landslide victory. A weak opposition well known for splits and factionalism characterizes Botswana's democratic system.

Changing electoral systems is not easy and politicians have difficulty in modifying the system under which they have been elected. The norm in the SADC region has been for electoral systems not to change especially if electoral systems favor strong parties, there is no incentive for the incumbents to reform the electoral system. Nonetheless there has been widespread concern in the SADC region in some countries operating the First Past the Post electoral model about issues of inclusiveness and political stability. In countries like Mauritius, Zambia, Zimbabwe and now Botswana there have been ongoing debates about electoral reforms. Lesotho moved away from the FPTP in 1992 to the mixed member proportional System (MMP) because the FPTP had not been able to abate conflict and ensured broad based representation in the legislature.

Issues of accountability, representation and political stability and inclusiveness remain key areas of deepening democracies in the SADC region. Since the EISA organized and hosted a regional conference on Electoral System Reforms in SADC in 2003 generously funded by OSISA, the two partners have remained committed to ensure that through research, policy advocacy, and lobbying the issue of Electoral Reforms remains part of the larger agenda for democratic consolidation in the region.

It is for this reason that once again OSISA, EISA and the local partners in Botswana, Emang Basadi and Women's Caucus came together to provide a forum for all stakeholders in Botswana to discuss existing problems with the electoral system and to make specific recommendations for a participative process for electoral reforms in Botswana. The specific objectives were as follows:

Conference Objectives

- Initiate a debate on electoral reform in Botswana
- Debate the advantages and disadvantages of various electoral systems
- Use the platform to advocate for a participatory electoral system in Botswana
- Promote electoral systems that uphold women's participation in political life
- Debate the issue of quota systems
- Initiate a movement for electoral reform in Botswana

METHODOLOGY

The conference was organized in such a way that it provided an opportunity for the citizens of Botswana to learn about other regional experiences in electoral reforms and also review their own system. Therefore, through plenary sessions and group discussions the conference provided the space for the ruling and the opposition political parties, parliamentarians, government officials, civil society, which included labor, women's organizations, churches, traditional leadership and the youth, the media and academics to discuss Botswana's electoral system, and reach a consensus on the need for electoral reforms and mapping the way forward.

The first plenary session had three researched papers with one setting out the trends for electoral reforms in the region. The following presentation on Lesotho, one of the success stories of electoral reforms in the region, outlined the process and challenges of electoral reforms. The paper on Zambia highlighted an ongoing process of both constitutional and

electoral reforms underway, the challenges and the Lessons to be learnt. After every presentation time was allocated for the participants to engage with the respective presenters

The second plenary session had three papers all dealing with Botswana's Electoral systems and the imperatives for reforms. The breakaway group sessions addressed the four pertinent issues, which included; Exploring an electoral reform agenda for Botswana; How to strategize on electoral system reform advocacy; to be able to identify Electoral Reform drivers; and defining the role of the media in the electoral reform process. The group sessions had a facilitator and a rapporteur who had to report back to the plenary followed by further discussions.

Welcome and Opening Address

Introduction of guests

After the National Anthem the Vice President of Emang Basadi, Mma Ntombi Setshwaelo, did an introduction of the guests. Some of the VIPs present at the official opening of the conference included His Excellency the President of Botswana, Festus Mogae, Members of Parliament, Chiefs, Attorney General, District Commissioners, Chiefs, Members of the Diplomatic Quo, Representatives of OSISA and EISA, President of Emang Basadi, different non governmental organizations, government departments and ministries.

Welcome Remarks

The President of Emang Basadi, Ms Joyce Andersen welcomed His Excellency the President of Botswana to the conference and all the important guests. In her welcome address she noted that the day was a very special day as it showed commitment by those present to democracy through their willingness to dialogue and discuss the possibility of a new electoral system for Botswana. She also emphasized the dialogues, discussions and deliberations were part of the efforts to nurture and preserve Botswana's democracy. She also said that the conference was timely as Botswana is left with 3 years before the next general elections in 2009 and that the 3 years could be used to dialogue, disagree and agree on the next step regarding electoral reforms in Botswana.

It was also noted that the conference discussions would help forge strong networks as participants get to know each other. She reiterated the objectives of the conference and praised Emang Basadi for its efforts to empower women through its voter and political education. She also expressed special thanks to OSISA and EISA for sponsoring the conference and introduced the representatives of these organizations as very special guests.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The President of Botswana, His Excellency, President Festus Mogae

His Excellency The President of Botswana gave the keynote address. In his address the president welcomed the initiative by Emang Basadi and its partners to deliberate on the electoral system reforms because the democracy of any country is recognized by the ability of its citizens to discuss issues pertinent to the country openly. He reiterated that

electoral system reform deliberations are very important for the upholding of the democracy of any country. The president stated that the current electoral system of Botswana was developed from its pre independence and post independence era. The cultural and diverse needs of Botswana therefore have to be considered in coming up with an electoral system suitable for the country. The President also noted that no single electoral system is perfect as every electoral system has its own advantages and disadvantages and hence the need to deliberate on a multiple range of electoral system models to come up with one best suited to Botswana. In his address his Excellency also cautioned against over simplicity in analyzing the electoral system.

The keynote address also highlighted the pride Botswana takes in being Africa's eldest multi party democracy and pointed out that since democracy is a process, this should not justify complacency in issues of democracy and that deliberations on electoral reforms was part of the democratic process. He stated that Botswana's democratic values must be continuously tested, nurtured and renewed.

The president expressed interest in the outcomes of the electoral system reform conference and how best women's participation and representation in parliament can be increased. He also posed a challenge to women to ensure that they put other women in political positions of decision-making through their votes. He also highlighted that he did his best to put women in decision-making positions by electing all 7 women elected in 2004 to positions of leadership within the government. He also stated that half of the Permanent secretaries are women as well as the Attorney general and the Director of public prosecutions.

EISA Representative: Dr Khabele Matlosa

Dr. Matlosa thanked the president for having opened the conference and expressed hope that the President's keynote address will have an influence in the participants' deliberations throughout the conference. He stated that the partnership between EISA, OSISA, Emang Basadi and Caucus was a result of a regional initiative to look at the region's electoral systems and identify the gaps and best practices in these systems with a view to bridging the gaps and adopting the best practices for the good of the whole region. He introduced EISA as a regional organization based in South Africa and working in the area of governance through its programs. The following were outlined as EISA's programs; Research, Training, capacity building; publications; Election Observation and Monitoring.

Dr Matlosa pointed out the strong bond between EISA and Botswana as EISA has drawn a lot of Human Resources from Botswana, which includes the former patron of EISA, current board members and the current Attorney General played a very influential role in the development of (PEMMO).

It was also stated that EISA runs dialogues on governance issues and that the conference on electoral reform system was one such dialogue. He emphasized that the dialogue is meant to open and not close discussions as democracy is an on going process and never

ends. He concluded that democracy is “A quest for zero defect, and as such it goes on and on”

OSISA Representative: Mr. Sami Modiba

The representative of OSISA paid his respect to the President and all the dignitaries in attendance. He stated that he got the mandate to address the delegates because OSISA is first and foremost a” friend of Botswana”. He described OSISA as a regional organization covering 9 countries in the SADC region. He further described OSISA as a donor NGO that is also an advocacy and backed its ideas with financial means. He further stated that OSISA advocates for promotion and consolidation of democracy and human rights through the following programs; Human rights; the Media; Economic Justice; HIV and AIDS; and the promotion of Indigenous languages.

He highlighted OSISA’s involvement in policy development, constitutional reforms, democracy building. There is an existing partnership with the University of Botswana. He also reiterated the objectives of the conference, which were to engage regional nationalities on electoral reforms. He emphasized that OSISA’s role was to provide the space for discussion. He also appreciated the president’s highlighting of Botswana as being the oldest democracy in Africa and that now was the time to reflect on its state of democracy and institutions. He also acknowledged that it is important to look at each individual nation on its own merits as a nation.

Vote of Thanks: Ms Ruth Motsete

In her vote of thanks, Ruth Motsete emphasized that the electoral system reform conference came at an opportune time as it comes at a time when Botswana are tasked with realizing Vision 2016 and the millennium goals. It was time to look at the strides made and the challenges ahead to be able to reach the goals of vision 2016. She emphasized the need for every member of the society to be involved especially the women and the youth, in order to come up with an electoral system that suits the country as a whole. She said, “*Democracy without women was in the past*”. She further pointed out to the president that women are not in the legislature not only because other women are not electing them as the president had alluded to in his keynote address. She pointed out that women were not visible in the structures of governance because of an array of structural and cultural barriers. She also emphasized the importance of taking into consideration merit in the quest to get women into positions of decision-making. She concluded by making a special plea to the president to pave way for electoral reforms that will ensure proportional representation before he leaves office.

Summary of Panel Presentations and Discussions

Session 2

Chairing: Mrs Motsei Rapelana

Regional Trends in Electoral Systems Reform in Southern Africa

Bertha Chiroro EISA, Johannesburg, South Africa

Bertha Chiroro opened her presentation by noting that the fact that the President of Botswana actually took it upon himself to open the Electoral System Reform Conference was very unique and something to be proud of as in most countries in Southern Africa the ruling party never takes an interest in issues of electoral reforms and stated that this should be seen as a window of opportunity for Botswana. She pointed out that the electoral reforms debate in Southern Africa was most welcome as it enables different nationalities to discuss issues of how best to deepen their democracies, enhance women's representation, increase the visibility of smaller parties in the legislature, issues of voter turnout and the powers of the executive.

It was noted that in Africa, once electoral systems are set up, they do not change and stay stagnant for a long period. However it was noted that in general the choice of an electoral system has had a clear impact on the politics of different countries. It was noted that the three types of electoral systems operative in the SADC region were:

First Past the Post (FPTP)

- This is the system, which Botswana is currently using. Its major disadvantage is that it leads to disproportionality and declining civil participation in politics, it under presents other nationally based parties. Furthermore women's representation tends to be very low. The major advantage of this system was noted to be accountability.

Proportional Representation (PR)

- Most new democracies are moving towards this system. It is argued that PR remedies major distortions and leads to inclusiveness. Its proportional in that the number of seats a party gets are representative of the votes casts. It also encourages the growth of political parties. Its major disadvantage is that accountability is considered minimal

Mixed Member Proportional System (MMP)

It was noted that countries using this system were Lesotho and Japan, Italy and new Zealand. This system is recommended for its strength in geographical representation, inclusiveness and accountability. Its major disadvantage was that it is quite complicated to implement, a problem which can be lessened by a continuous massive voter education.

It was highlighted in the presentation that it was unusual for governing parties which may benefit from the existing system to sponsor a change that would weaken their advantage. However it was noted that reasons for changing an electoral system were varied, some of them were outlined as:

- Political corruption and scandals
- High levels of public dissatisfaction
- Doubts about accountability, efficacy and legitimacy of political system
- Fractionalization in the incumbent's coalition
- The presence of a consolidated and organized opposition can successfully put pressure on the government for electoral reforms.

The drivers for change have been identified as civil society as constituted by the academics, the media and other organizations representing women, the youth and churches. Civil society was supposed to capture the attention of the public, to sustain civic dialogue, create a climate for change through debates, and change to be regarded as possible, desirable, and inevitable. Most importantly those in power needed to be convinced of the benefits of change.

Trends in the SADC Region

It was noted that eight countries in the SADC region still use the first past the post system and some citizens still find its aspects of accountability and strong form of government still important for political stability. However it was also noted that in most of the countries with FPTP there was general dissatisfaction especially to do with issues of representation and inclusiveness. In countries like Mauritius, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, there is on going debates and pressures for electoral and constitutional reforms. There seems to be general stability in countries with PR that is Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. Lesotho has remained the only successful case of MMP and the system has been renowned for dealing with post conflict situation and bringing about peace and stability.

The international trends show a move towards PR and the mixed system being widely adopted by new democracies in Africa and Eastern Europe. About 35% of the countries in the world use PR and 24% use FPTP with the majority in Africa. 16% use parallel or mixed system and 8% use the TRS electoral system. However reforms in most countries are now taking into consideration international standards which include principles of free and fair elections and fair representation of all citizens.

Electoral Reforms in Lesotho: The Journey so far Mr Seabatha Motsamai

Mr Motsamai gave a whole history of elections in Lesotho, which were marked by controversial results, violent contests and conflict. Lesotho was also showcased as a good example of electoral reforms that managed to abate conflict. It also shows how difficult it can be to change an electoral system and also arrive at a consensus on the type of electoral system. Whilst the move from FPTP to MMP was a product of a long and arduous period of compromises and negotiations it managed to bring peace and stability in Lesotho although there are still other challenges of internal party democracy.

It was noted that the first elections in 1965 were run under the FPTP electoral system. The results were challenged by the BCP, which felt cheated by the electoral system. The dissatisfaction with the results led to violent conflict, which led to loss of life. The following elections were marked by the same problems of violent conflict.

MR Motsamayi also talked about the 1998 elections, which were the 2nd general elections after years of dictatorship won by the LCD. Opposition parties such as the BNP, BCP and MFP who alleged electoral fraud by the winning party contested the results. These elections led to widespread turmoil in Lesotho. Botswana and South Africa intervened under the SADC auspices to attempt to bring about peace in Lesotho. An

Interim Political Authority (IPA) was formed with the help of the international community. The IPA's mandate was to come up with an inclusive electoral model for Lesotho. The 4th Constitutional Amendment therefore resulted in the adoption of the Mixed Member System for Lesotho, which was used in the 2002 elections

Advantages of adoption of MMP system in Lesotho

- The MMP system has brought peace, stability and democratic government in Lesotho. A Multiparty parliament has led to more inclusion, as now 10 parties are represented in Parliament.
- The adoption of the MMP system has minimized the assumption that civil society is part of the opposition parties.
- The model has a high level of inclusiveness and enables everyone to contribute in the highest decision making body of the nation, parliament.

Challenges facing MMP implementation in Lesotho

Mr Motsamayi highlighted the fact that the people had assumptions and expectations about MMP and they thought it would be a panacea to most of the problems of democratization in Lesotho. There are still challenges to the strengthening of Democracy in Lesotho.

In general the making of party lists has shown that the impact of MMP at the party level is still not inclusive enough. It was noted that the nomination of candidates still remain controlled and manipulated by the party leadership. The MMP model has not been able to resolve problems of participation, transparency and accountability at the party level, which calls for more democratization at the party level.

Furthermore the move to MMP has not increased the number of women MPs automatically nor that of other minorities or disadvantaged groups. More deliberate actions and steps still need to be taken at the party level to remedy such under-representation.

The MMP system has led to a creation of more political parties, which leads to more factional fights and splits and has not added value to the democratic process.

Mr Motsamai highlighted the complicated nature of the MMP system. Lesotho is currently using 2 ballots, 1 for the constituency vote and 1 for the party vote. The advantage of using 2 ballots is to allow the electorates to have a broad choice but this is very costly and difficult to manage.

Electoral Reform Process in Zambia.

Mr. Lee M. Habasonda

Zambia was also presented as a country that has embarked on electoral reforms in the years 1964, 1973, 1991, 1996 and the recent attempt in 2003 exposing the difficulties nations face in order to find an acceptable electoral regime that is agreeable to all. Habasonda's presentation highlighted the following points:

- That electoral reforms in Zambia were necessary to consolidate the democratic gains of the late 1990s
- Electoral Reforms must be country specific, time bound and be backed by the necessary political will if they have to address and respond to the present needs of the citizens
- On their own, electoral reforms can not bring fundamental change without recourse to relevant constitutional amendments and attitude change.
- Regional dynamics may trigger a common trend towards electoral systems and electoral management

Since independence, Zambia has been using The FPTP system. It exaggerates representation of larger parties and reduces that of smaller parties with the exception of the 2001 election where the ruling party got 78% of the votes whilst the opposition received 72%. The FPTP system has been susceptible to manipulation and works against opposition parliamentary representation. The opposition continued losing seats in parliament, for example Zambia had 3 bye- elections in January and the ruling party won all of them.

An electoral Reform Committee was set up and it recommended that Zambia should adopt a Mixed Member Proportional System to address the deficiencies of FPTP.

The Zambian process was two pronged as it allowed for the parallel review of the constitution and the electoral System. In 2003 the government to address problems surrounding the constitution established a Constitutional Review Commission (CRC). An Electoral Reform Technical Committee (ERTC) was also established to assess the electoral system in Zambia and make recommendations regarding desirable or necessary modifications to ensure the democratic conduct of general or local government elections. The process was inclusive as it allowed for the active participation of all stakeholders.

Some of the recommendations made by the CRC and ERTC are that

1. The President has to get 50% of the votes to get to parliament
2. Swearing in of the President after disputes have been settled
3. Public Financing of political parties
4. Introduction of MMP
5. Setting of the election date is still being debated

Problems of the Reform Process

Progress on the implementation of the Electoral Reform Technical Committee (ERTC) recommendations has been slowed down by constitutional amendments and changes for example the requirement of a 50% vote is one of the issues which have been delayed by the constitutional amendments being tied to Election Reform which means that the 2006 elections will be governed by the same old laws.

Learning points from Zambia

- Time is a critical factor for reforms, addressing specific demands at a particular time is crucial.
- Political will is essential to push reforms at a reasonable time. Although Zambia has initiated electoral reforms there are delays in actual implementation in time for the 2006 elections.
- Civil Society should not hijack government's process but take advantage of the window of opportunity they would have opened as this might lead to rejection by the government.
- Look at the merits and demerits of the proposed changes when proposing any changes e.g. popular view might not be workable

Plenary Discussion

In the discussions that followed participants raised a number of important points. One of the issues was how to carry out both constitutional and electoral system reforms at the same time as in Zambia. Participants expressed reservations at carrying out both reforms and feared that they might end up biting more than they can chew. They were suggestions that it was necessary to carry out one set of reforms at a time. But it was finally agreed that some of the electoral reforms will require constitutional engineering and therefore the necessary constitutional and electoral reforms have to be carried out concurrently.

A heated debate ensued over the best type of electoral system for Botswana. Different participants raised the merits and demerits of the FPTP and PR. PR was considered more representative and does not waste votes and was also favorable to the representation of women and other parties as well as minorities. Some participants argued for FPTP because of its stable forms of government and accountability. There was an argument that accountability really depended on the caliber of some MPs as some MPs have sat in parliament for years and they do not say anything either in parliament or back in their constituencies.

There were suggestions that maybe the Mixed Member Proportional system and FPTP system will work well for choosing Members of Parliament and the President and that other systems can be adopted for councilors. It was noted that this has helped many women to get to parliament in other countries.

Since participants still felt strongly about both PR and FPTP, it was suggested that there was need for thorough discussion and deliberations on the different electoral systems prior to the adoption of one suitable for Botswana. An important point was raised concerning the representation of women. It was argued that even if with the implementation of PR, still women find it difficult to climb the echelons of power. It was noted that in Tanzania, although the system used is the FPTP electoral system, some measures have been put in place to include women e.g. 30% upfront and contest the remaining 70%. It was considered by the participants that supportive measure for including women in the structures of power should be targeted at the political party level.

Another pertinent point raised was the issue of party funding, taking a leaf from the Zambian electoral reforms process it was noted that Zambia has proposed that all political parties should be funded by the government. In Botswana people actually agree with the government that there is no money for funding political parties. This leaves out an important aspect of democracy as it's up to individual members to sponsor opposition parties thereby rendering the system's democracy dependent on voluntarism, which might not be as effective. It was suggested that the issue of party funding should be put on the agenda of electoral reforms.

Regarding the process of reforms there was general consensus that there is need for a participative environment, which will include all interested parties including women, youth, and the disabled. Some participants still felt for the need for a civil society driven process of reforms, as political parties were considered not genuine except only when they are advancing their agendas. There was a concern that political parties only tend to pay lip service to issues since it was not the first time that the issue of representation was being debated. What have political parties done since the 2002 conference, which discussed the 30% quota representation?

There was also a call for caution when dealing with electoral system reforms, as it is a very sensitive issue, which can easily lead to chaos as those, experienced by Lesotho in their quest for electoral reforms.

As considerations on electoral reforms for Botswana are being made some of the following factors need to be taken into consideration e.g. the types of elections currently held in Botswana, the problems at party level, council and member of Parliament level and whether there is need for electoral engineering in each, whether there is need for presidential elections and to what extent electoral and parliamentary Reforms can assist.

Some participants thought that it was better for Zambia to postpone its elections in 2006 until a new electoral system was put in force. But Mr Habasonda explained that most of the political parties did not prefer any further delays in the election.

SESSION THREE

Chairing Hon. Moggy Mbaakanyi (Caucus)

INTERPARTY DEMOCRACY IN BOTSWANA

Dr Zibani Maundeni

The focus of the presentation was on relations between the parties, the cooperation between the ruling BDP and the opposition parties and the competition between the main opposition BNF and the other smaller parties. He pointed out that whilst managing inter-party democracy was a big challenge for other African Countries, Botswana enjoyed high levels of dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition.

Whilst there are high levels of tolerance among the political parties, Botswana politics is characterized by defections from one party to the other, although no violence is involved.

Therefore the relations between parties is quite cordial and the different parties accommodate defectors because even if one has deserted to another party that person will still be able to ascend to positions of leadership within the party defected to. Maybe there should be a clause that where there is a defection, there should be a bye law where women candidates are the only ones fielded to accommodate women

Factions also characterize Botswana politics and the factions should put women forward. Factionalism leads to cooperation between the ruling party factions and opposition Members of Parliament. This improves relations between parties for the good of the country.

Inter-party Democracy in the Opposition

Dr Maundeni pointed out that most of the pacts made by the opposition never last. Different attempts by opposition parties to unite have not been very successful. For example in 1991 the People's Progressive Front collapsed and split into the BNF, BDP and BPP. New structures by opposition usually collapse in Botswana. The BNF is so uncomfortable at the formation of new structures and they always end up breaking up. For example BAM (Botswana Alliance Movement) did not succeed with the BNF pulling out despite having initiated it. In the 2004 elections BAM fielded in candidates but still went on to loose all the seats. There are chances that ongoing negotiations for new pacts for the 2009 elections will certainly collapse.

The conclusion was that maybe civil society, Emang Basadi and others should participate in the negotiations because there is a tendency to exclude women's issues when discussing national issues

Electoral System and Gender Representation: Lessons for Botswana **Dr Onnalenna Selolwane**

Dr Selolwane emphasized the fact that the process of enhancing women's status cannot be separable from the process of rebuilding democratic institutions and practices in Africa. Therefore she looks back at the history of southern African countries and the struggles that were waged which continue to define and shape the type of institutions and women's representation. The lessons to be discussed are those drawn from SADC region, where most of the ruling governments have graduated from one party state to multiparty democracies of course with Botswana and Mauritius as an exception.

Most voters are women but candidates are mostly males because of the notion that the only legitimate Member of Parliament is male and the candidates are chosen at party elections hence the need to ensure that they file a certain % of women as candidates. The males are therefore guaranteed swift passage to parliament and cabinet

Under FPTP women can only get in through bargaining and threats to say if you don't do this we will vote for the opposition

Lessons

- Within the FPTP progress can only be made if there is a strong opposition and supportive measures to ensure women's representation.
- South African politics have been tainted with negotiations to ensure representation of all, whites, and women. Most women in positions of decision making in South Africa are from the ANC because it's the only party, which puts women in positions where they can be elected. Maybe the other parties are not as committed.
- Internal party democracy is crucial if we are to have inclusive democracies.
- Electoral systems and system of government must bring the systems closer to the wishes of the people.

Imperatives for Electoral Reform: Building Political Trust in Botswana.

Professor Mpho Molomo

Professor Molomo began his presentation by stating his disappointment at the level of development of Botswana's democracy. He contends that Botswana is the oldest democracy in Africa and the frontrunner of democracy but its achievements as compared to former racist dictatorships like South Africa is less impressive and therefore needs electoral reforms to deepen its democracy. There is need to review the FPTP to see if another system that fully represents the popular will of the people to be implemented. It is also crucial to consider the level of trust people have in Botswana of their leaders and the institutions they occupy. Furthermore an electoral system must be put in place that ensures the equal representation of men and women and minorities as well.

Using the Afro barometer survey Professor Molomo examines the levels of satisfaction and the trust Botswana has with democracy and their institutions respectively. He found out that 32% are not satisfied that democracy works in Botswana and 58-59% are satisfied with Botswana's democracy. However 29% thought Botswana is a full democracy 44% thought it's a democracy with minor problems and 13% thought it's a democracy with serious problems. These statistics, according to Prof Molomo, suggest that electoral reforms should be part of the agenda to make democracy in Botswana highly rated. There are also varying levels of trust of the different institutions ranging from the presidency to the institutions governing elections.

Professor Molomo proceeded to examine the merits and demerits of the FPTP and PR and arrived at a decision that there is no perfect electoral system and the mixed member proportionality MMP which is referred to as semi PR or a hybrid is an attempt to draw the best from the two worlds. MMP recognizes the strength and weaknesses of both the FPTP and PR system.

What needs to be done for Botswana?

Botswana needs more than just a new electoral system but also needs a strong united front of opposition parties. More targeted ways to improve equal gender representation need to be implemented. The People of Botswana could also have a look at the Lesotho model of an electoral system and the Mauritius one in order to come up with their own. A stakeholders' meeting should be held to give Botswana time to reflect on their systems and their culture to formulate a suitable model for themselves.

Plenary Discussion

The discussion centered on issues of party splits factional fights and defecting members and the notion that Botswana is a peaceful country. It was argued by some participants that the tolerance among the parties seemed rather exaggerated.

Other participants raised the point that there has not been much deliberations and negotiations on changes in the electoral systems in Africa and there is need to understand why we need to change our electoral system and reach a consensus on the need for change.

There was a concern that Dr Maundeni's presentation was not balanced and aimed at discrediting opposition parties and lacked depth in terms of analyzing what really caused those splits and factions. There was even hope that the ongoing PACT negotiations will be successful this time around.

On the issue of women's representation there was grave concern that the issue of electoral reform systems should be looked at holistically and not as an issue of men vs. women. Political parties should start fielding more women candidates at primary election level. Women's activism is not visible hence the need to lobby party structures up to the top hierarchy.

Another pertinent point was the issue of Botswana's acceding to the APRM a good mechanism for appraising issues of governance. There was however a general feeling that continued demands by the people on the government shows there is confidence or trust in the government. It means that there are some good things that the government was doing.

It was agreed that there was a need to re-examine issues of party pacts by the opposition and the types of structures that are set up in order to ensure that these pacts do not remain a joke and a foregone conclusion that they will collapse.

Professor Molomo concluded the discussion by proposing that the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system that takes into account the cultural practices of Botswana should be considered.

SESSION FOUR

Chairing Ms Bertha Chiroro (EISA)

DAY 2 –Reflections from Day One

Rapporteur Ms Silibaziso Mtunzi

Day two proceedings started with a prayer from Pastor Maseko who blessed the proceedings and asked the lord to guide the participants in their deliberations.

The Rapporteur ran through the first day's proceedings and singled out the following points to be considered in the group discussions.

- That there was a need for electoral reforms in Botswana.
- Botswana should question why they need reforms
- Why is Botswana stuck with FPTP
- Who would be the key players in the reform Process
- Should electoral reforms go together with parliamentary reforms and possibly constitutional reforms?

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

SESSION FIVE Chairing Mr. Log Randitlhokwa (Caucas)

GROUP REPORT BACK SESSION

Group 1 reported on the following points:

GROUP 1: Explore an Electoral System Reform Agenda for Botswana

1. There is a need to engage the political leadership and different institutions in Botswana to do advocacy e.g. political parties, university (research), and civil society. National and International networking should also be enhanced.
2. Botswana Electoral Support Network needs to be strengthened to take up this challenge.
3. There is a need to amend the constitution to legitimize the reforms.
4. Educate the grassroots on electoral reforms
5. Lobbying for the 50% women representation should start at party level.
6. Advocate for funding of political parties
7. Undertake research on the different systems with the aim of identifying the right system for Botswana
8. Use Vision 2016 as an advocacy tool together with Botswana Constitution. Every household should have a copy of the two important documents
9. Review of the constitution should be done by a separate body
10. Review the current Electoral Act to include the issue of accountability and commitment at all level
11. There is a need to come up with a term of office for Members of Parliament

12. In conclusion the group advocated for a strong network that could be used to overcome resistance by government and political parties. They also felt that the electoral reforms should be on the agenda during elections.

GROUP 2: Strategies on Electoral System Reform Advocacy

1. Establish the need for reforms (this should be done through a committee)
 - Here key challenges of the current system should be identified (for example, lack of representation, its inclusiveness, legitimacy, and trust, accountability etc).
2. Do research on the different systems of reforms (here experience could drawn from the sub-region, region and international)
3. Other reforms:
 - a. create commissions that will drive the different reforms at party level
 - b. IEC should be completely independent
 - c. Presidential elections at national level should be held
 - d. Reform parliament

GROUP 3: Identify Electoral Reform Drivers

The group started by defining drivers. They said they are key stakeholders that should be involved and can spearhead the electoral reform processes.

The group also divided the drivers into three groups and gave examples as follows:

KEY STAKEHOLDERS	SUPPORTERS	TRIGGERS
Women’s organizations Political parties Youth organizations Religious organizations Media Labor organizations Traditional leaders Botswana Law Society Bala	Religious organizations Disabled (BCD) Pressure groups Women’s wings Judiciary Private Sector Donors NGOs/CBOS Media	Religious organization Marginalized groups, Academics SADC Parliamentary Forum, Members of Parliament, Donors International pressure groups, Media

GROUP 4: Define the Role of the Media in the Electoral Reform Process

Strategy 1: BY EMANG BASADI WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

There is a need to involve the media in the groundbreaking sessions and carry them along.

- Media should be allowed to be devils advocate.
- They should be used as resource persons
- They should be allowed to express their opinion
- There must be a continuous briefing with the media in terms of progress

Strategy 2:

- a) Media should pressurize stakeholders (ruling party, opposition parties, and civil society) to continue the debate on electoral reforms.
- b) Media should be neutral in coverage. Emphasis should be on inclusion of all sections of society through debates, talk shows, and columns.
- c) A code of conduct relevant to electoral reforms should be developed and linked to the one existing.
- d) Media should be encouraged to come up with community based media, for example community radio stations
- e) Private media should be encouraged to expand their coverage to rural areas.

Discussions

The group presentations also generated interesting questions and comments as demonstrated below:

1. There was yet another emphasis on the need to be strategic when lobbying for the electoral reforms, if it looks as if the aim is to oust the ruling party, there will be very little support from the incumbents.
2. Another emphasis was on the need to start any process of reform from the bottom and target the leadership.
3. The conference also heard that Botswana is used to piecemeal reform, therefore there is a need for holistic reforms if the electoral system is to benefit everybody.
4. Is it necessary to review the constitution when electoral and parliamentary reforms are undertaken? Electoral systems and country constitutions are closely

linked therefore it may be necessary to amend the constitution when electoral reforms are done.

SESSION SIX

Dr Khabele Matlosa (EISA)

WAY FORWARD AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PLAN

Based on the group presentations the following plan was drawn up and delivered to the plenary by Dr Matlosa. It was agreed that a proper work plan with all the timelines which would include the following activities will be developed by Emang Basadi to share with all participants.

EXPLORE AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM AGENDA FOR BOTSWANA

1. Research should be undertaken to deepen the knowledge on electoral systems and then determine the best system for Botswana.
2. An All Party Conference
3. Undertake Parliamentary reforms
4. Emphasis should be on gender equality when lobbying for electoral reforms (this can be used as a lobbying tool).
5. If it so happens that there is a need for a new electoral system – there will be a constitutional amendment.
6. Party funding is critical in terms of leveling the play ground

ADVOCACY

1. All key stakeholders should be lobbied for electoral reforms (Government, the ruling party, opposition parties, traditional leaders, House of Chiefs, Civic organizations, women's wings)
2. Sensitize the electorates about the proposed electoral reforms
3. Embark on a comprehensive voter and civic education program
4. Link the advocacy and lobbying neatly to Botswana's Vision 2016

DRIVERS

National: Emang Basadi Women's Association and Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics (to identify other key players)

Regional: EISA and OSISA

International: IDEA

MEDIA

1. Generate public debate in the media on reforms and reform systems
2. There is a need to work on a media strategy looking at the short, medium and long term for outreach.
3. Develop and link with existing media code of conduct in relation to the electoral reforms
4. Ensure that information on the reforms filter to the communities for example through community radios
5. There must be a strong mass mobilization by the media

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ms. Rhoda Sekgororoane noted that such conferences as the one just held have been convened before but there have been very little achievements because of the conservatism that characterizes Botswana's political leadership gave closing remarks. She said there is a need to change strategies and lobby the authorities to be more flexible if change is to be realized. She thanked every participant and organizers for bringing the issue of reforms onto the agenda of Botswana's politics.

OFFICIAL CLOSING

M. N. Setshwaelo who gave an overview of Emang Basadi Women's organization did official closing. She said always when people talk about Emang Basadi they talk as if it is a huge organization with capacity to do everything yet it is small. She said they have a small secretariat due to lack of resources especially finance. She further listed EB programs such as Political Education Program legal aid and counseling officers, Resource and Documentation Center, and the Women economic empowerment program.

She gave special thanks to all the participants for their dedication and commitment.

ANNEX 1

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Conference on Electoral System Reforms in Botswana
Venue: BOIPUSO HALL, FAIRGROUNDS, Gaborone Botswana.

13 -15 March 2006

PROGRAMME

Day 1	14 March 2006
8.30-9.00:	REGISTRATION
Session 1	Chairperson Ms Ntombi Setshwaelo (Emang Basadi)
9:00-9:30	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Joyce Anderson Chairperson, Emang Basadi,• DR Khabele Matlosa Research Adviser EISA• Mr Sami Modiba Programme Director-OSISA,
9:30-10:00	Keynote Address The Role of Elections in Democratic Governance His Excellency the President F.G Mogae
10:00-1015	TEA BREAK
Session 2	Regional Perspectives on Electoral Reforms Chairperson Ms Motsei Rapela (Emang Basadi)
10:15-12:00	Regional Trends in Electoral Systems Reform in Southern Africa Bertha Chiroro, EISA, Johannesburg, South Africa. Electoral Reforms in Lesotho

Mr Seabata Motsamai

**Electoral Reforms in Zambia
MR Lee Habasonda**

12:00-13:00 DISCUSSION

13:00-14:00 LUNCH BREAK

**Session 3 Electoral System Reform in Botswana
Chairperson Hon Moggy Mbaakanyi (Caucus)**

**14:00 - 17:00 Inter- Party Democracy in Botswana
DR Zibani Maundeni**

Electoral Systems and Gender Representation: Lessons for Botswana
Dr Onalenna Selolwane

Botswana's Electoral System and Imperatives for Reforms
Professor Mpho Molomo

DISCUSSION

17h00-21h00 Cocktail/Reception

Day 2 15 March 2006

Session 4 Chairperson Bertha Chiroro (EISA)

9:00-9:15 Reflections on Day One
Rapporteur

9:15-9:30 DISCUSSION GROUPS

9:30-11:00

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- Explore an Electoral System Reform Agenda for Botswana
- Strategies on Electoral System Reform Advocacy
- Identify Electoral Reform Drivers
- Define the Role of the Media in the electoral reform process

11:00-11:30

TEA BREAK

SESSION 5

Chairperson Mr Log Randithokwa (Caucus)

11:30- 13:00

**GROUPS REPORT BACK SESSION
Group Facilitators**

13:00-14:00

LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 6

Chairperson Dr Khabele Matlosa (EISA)

14:00-15:00

**Developing a Work Plan
Conference Delegates**

15:00-16:00

**WAY FORWARD and CLOSING REMARKS
OSISA/EISA/EMANG BASADI**

THANK YOU

***Rapporteurs: Ms Silibasizo Mtunzi (Emang Basadi)
Bertha Chiroro (EISA)***

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**Conference on Electoral System Reforms in Botswana
Boipuso Hall, Gaborone, Botswana
14-15 March 2006
Participants List**

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