

Catalogue of Recommendations to Improve the Nigerian Electoral Process

Based on Observation of the 2011 Nigerian Election Process

In order to enhance the Nigerian electoral process, experts and observers from Nigeria and around the world have put their minds together throughout the 2011 elections to provide actionable recommendations on a wide range of issues to a variety of Nigerian stakeholder groups, including the National Assembly, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, the executive branch, security agencies, and civil society organizations.

To put the valuable recommendations into action the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has catalogued recommendations that draws from the statements, communiqués, and reports of the major domestic and international observer groups, as well as the final recommendations of mixed crowds of experts. The following groups are represented in this catalogue:

International Observer Groups	Domestic Observer Groups	Mixed Groups
The African Union (AU) The Commonwealth The Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) The European Union (EU) Election Observation Mission The International Republican Institute (IRI) The National Democratic Institute (NDI)	Civil Society Election Situation Room The CLEEN Foundation and the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria (CLEEN and NHRC) The Domestic Election Observer (DEO) Groups Project 2011 Swift Count	Nigeria Pre-Election Colloquium (Feb 2011) INEC/ Civil Society Retreat (July 2011) National Conference on Youth in the 2011 Elections - Hosted by IRI (August 2011) NDI Post-Election Multilogue (September 13, 2011)

This catalogue is intended to be a guide for measuring progress in the weeks, months, and years ahead. INEC has already begun to prepare for the next election cycle, and the government, legislators, political parties, and civil society will soon follow suit. While some of these recommendations have already been implemented, with the cooperation and advocacy of Nigerian civil society a lot more could be implemented.

Common recommendations:

Though each organization made recommendations based on their individual observations methodologies, they addressed many similar issues. This catalogue groups recommendation by theme and by organization to streamline the review process. While they made their recommendations separately, the groups had many suggestions in common, as you can see in the matrix below.

How to use this document

This catalogue is intended to be a functional, living document. As new recommendations and reports are published, they will be added to this list and shared widely.

The column on the right-hand side of the chart is provided to help each organization determine its priorities for advocacy. As recommendations are accepted, they can be marked as “*Achieved*”. In the meantime, each organization can mark recommendations according to the level of priority that they will assign each one in their advocacy efforts. This can better help inform an action plan for advocacy that each organization can create and adapt as they go forward.

As this is a living document, NDI encourages all readers to offer suggestions for how to make this document a more helpful tool and to highlight new reports as they are released and new successes of advocacy efforts, so as to increase the number of times “*Achieved*” appears.

Catalogue of Recommendations to Improve the Nigerian Electoral Process		Advocacy Priority: <i>High, Medium, Low, Achieved</i>
Broad Legal Framework		
Timeframe for Changing Electoral Laws		
Commonwealth	Avoid late changes to the electoral act. The election calendar must allow enough time to adequately complete all electoral processes.	
EU	Amendments to electoral legislation should be enacted sufficiently in advance of an election, as agreed in the ECOWAS Protocol for Democracy and Good Governance.	
NDI	Finalize the electoral legal framework at least six months prior to an election, as agreed in Art. 2.1 of the ECOWAS Protocol for Democracy and Good Governance.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Nigerian legislators should respect African and International standards respecting limitations to amending the electoral legal framework to six months prior to elections.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	National Assembly must pass the Electoral Offences Commission Bill. An Electoral Offences Commission, the re-delineation of polling units, and the upgrading of the voters register will assist in curbing impunity and need to be passed and implemented.	
INEC Leadership		
Commonwealth	The appointment mechanism for the Chairman, Commissioners, and Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) should be more inclusive; direct appointment by the President should be avoided, unless the shortlist is provided by a more inclusive, representative body.	
EU	Allow independent nomination and appointment of the INEC Chairperson, Commissioners, and RECs, rather than presidential appointment.	
Project Swift Count	Appointment to the INEC should not be based on party loyalty, but on character and integrity.	
Conference on Youth - IRI	Include a youth representative on the Board of INEC.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Institutional strengthening and INEC leadership should be selected based on character and integrity, not on presidential appointment or partisan affiliation.	
INEC Structure and Operations		
EU	The authority and responsibility of each level of election administration should be explicitly defined in the Constitution and the Electoral Act. The law should stipulate on how INEC operates; it should state quorum requirements, voting rules for decisions, the manner of publication of decisions, clear provisions for transparency.	
NDI	Strengthen INEC's authority over state-level RECs.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	There is need to reorganize INEC to focus on direct election duties and other related but less relevant duties should be given to other agencies in existence or to be created.	

	<p>Section 31(1) should be reviewed and Section 87(9) which was in the 2010 Electoral Act reintroduced to strengthen INEC oversight powers.</p> <p>There should be definition of duties and responsibilities of INEC departments with regard to the discharge of the mandate of the Commission.</p> <p>INEC should be restructured in relation to its recruitment and staffing as well as the definition of job roles and matching such roles with relevant skill sets.</p> <p>Clarify and agree to a policy guiding the recruitment, training, and deployment of ad hoc staff for subsequent elections.</p> <p>There is need to restructure and strengthen the INEC legal department as well as supplementing it with an expert external legal advisory team. INEC should retain the services of an expert consultant to advise and guide it through the restructuring.</p> <p>INEC should adopt a creative and progressive stance in the interpretations of its duties and obligations rather than the current restrictive position.</p> <p>Have a detailed review of its organogram, departmental structures, remuneration, and personnel in line with the roles and duties expected of them. Such a restructuring would ensure the organization is better positioned for enhanced performance.</p>	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	INEC needs to be unbundled so that political party registration, prosecution of electoral offenders, polling unit delineation, and voter education are conducted by separate agencies.	
Constituency Boundaries		
EU	<p>Create a Constituency Delimitation Commission.</p> <p>Conduct an up-to-date analysis of the recent population growth as it relates to electoral constituencies, which were set in 1996.</p>	
NDI	Create a Constituency Delimitation Commission.	
Candidate Eligibility Requirements		
Commonwealth	<p>Allow independent candidates to run for office.</p> <p>Lower minimum age requirements for National and State Assembly candidates to offer Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35 the opportunity to seek elected office.</p>	
EU	<p>Allow independent candidates to run for office.</p> <p>Candidates whose role in an election has been judged fraudulent by the courts/tribunals should not be allowed to take part in the re-run election.</p>	
Makeup of Legislature		
Conference on Youth - IRI	Reserve exclusive seats in the legislature at the local, state, federal level of government for the youth representatives.	

INEC and Election Administration		
Training of Election Workers and INEC Staff		
AU	INEC should provide sufficient training for polling officials to ensure uniformity of procedures.	
Commonwealth	Improve training to poll workers to ensure consistency in application of procedures.	
EU	Provide more comprehensive training and distribution of manuals to INEC staff, party agents, and security personnel, including mock election exercises. Conduct an independent INEC staff performance audit and follow up with rewards and sanctions.	
NDI	Provide more comprehensive and consistent training for permanent and ad hoc staff at all levels. Build institutional expertise by using experienced NYSC members to train future INEC staff.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should allocate sufficient time and resources to ensure that all polling staff are sufficiently trained.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	INEC should carry out timely recruitment and training of ad hoc staff.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Targeted capacity building for different departments and personnel in INEC should be prioritized. Clarify and agree to a policy guiding the recruitment, training, and deployment of ad hoc staff for subsequent elections. Develop a comprehensive program for capacity-building and training for all its staff at the national, state, and local government levels. INEC staff across board should get requisite training to ensure proper discharge of their oversight duties on political parties.	
Planning, Communication, and Logistics		
Commonwealth	Improve INEC organizational capacity to ensure timely delivery of materials and personnel so that polls can open as scheduled. Implement a more effective INEC communication system so that central and state officials can communicate with local staff, and polling staff can seek clarification or advice as required.	
EU	Strengthen INEC's procurement, logistics, and operational capacities. Create an election operational plan with input from different stakeholders inside and outside of INEC, and implement it with strong internal coordination.	
NDI	Improve logistics plans to ensure on-time opening of polls.	
CLEEN and NHRC	INEC headquarters should embark on a comprehensive review of its performance on logistics in the general elections, especially related to the late delivery of election materials to polling units even in places such as Imo State, which is near the capital and easy to navigate by road.	

DEO	INEC should ensure the timely delivery of elections materials to polling station through the provision of adequate transportation.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should continue to address the logistical challenges that have consistently undermined the electoral process. INEC should allocate sufficient time and resources to election planning and data management.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Electoral officers should be posted at least three months in advance of the election to the Local Governments Areas they would be serving. INEC should consider the procurement of non-sensitive and non-perishable materials well ahead of the election. INEC should also examine the propriety of outsourcing some of its logistical duties (e.g. distribution of election materials).	
Election Timelines		
Commonwealth	Electoral timelines should provide enough time for all stages of the process to be completed. Safeguard printing of ballots and other sensitive materials to avoid damaging delays, as with the April 2 poll.	
EU	Inform the public in a timely way of the details of postponed and cancelled elections.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	Before election day, INEC should have a clear position on which candidate is legally recognized to stand for each party represented on the ballot.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Staggering of elections based on criteria to be finalized by INEC should be considered ahead of 2015. This will allow for elections to be better supervised and managed effectively. INEC should institute sanctions for contractors and vendors who do not deliver on contracts. INEC should prioritize the immediate prosecution of all electoral offenders.	
Observer and Media Accreditation		
EU	Create timely and clear procedures for accrediting domestic observers and journalists.	
NDI	Design a clear, effective, and timely accreditation process.	
Project Swift Count	Amend the Electoral Act to establish a clear procedure for approval or rejection of an application for accreditation. Observer accreditation forms should be publicly accessible from the date that INEC announces the election timetable. INEC should print and distribute adequate visibility and accreditation materials to observers, and circulate accreditation to all INEC and police offices.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	INEC should release guidelines for accrediting observers, and this process should take place at the local level rather than requiring groups to travel to Abuja.	

INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	<p>All election observers should receive their accreditation packs ahead of the elections to ensure their deployment and arrival in good time to carry out their duties.</p> <p>Revise the procedure for accreditation to ensure that accreditation issued to groups to observe earlier stages of the electoral process such as voter registrations, party campaigns/primaries remain valid unto the polls.</p> <p>Accreditation should be concluded at least 6 months before the commencement of elections and this system of accreditation should be tested with the elections coming up in 2012.</p> <p>'Political civil society organization (CSO) groups' (those groups with known partisan affiliations) should be rejected in the accreditation process.</p>	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	<p>There should be a clear guideline for election observation accreditation.</p>	
INEC Coordination with Stakeholders		
EU	<p>INEC should continue to hold official periodic consultations with stakeholders and civil society, including international and domestic observers.</p>	
Project Swift Count	<p>INEC should permit unhindered access to all aspects of the election process to political parties, candidate agents, and election monitors.</p> <p>INEC should conduct operations transparently and conduct outreach activities with political parties, domestic monitors and international observers, and security services.</p>	
Pre-Election Colloquium	<p>INEC should engage in constructive dialogue and collaboration with civil society, political parties, security, media and other stakeholders on a formal and regular basis.</p>	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	<p>The earlier conceived INEC-CSO Memorandum of Understanding should be revisited, finalized and implemented ahead of the 2015 General Elections.</p> <p>INEC should foster continuous engagement between other critical stakeholders.</p> <p>INEC should engage the National Assembly to ensure the elections related amendments are reintroduced into the agenda for constitutional amendments which does not seem to include electoral reforms at present.</p> <p>INEC should establish a framework for its engagement with international development partners.</p>	
Conference on Youth - IRI	<p>INEC should engage youth-led organizations through training and funding on voter education and election monitoring.</p>	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	<p>INEC should improve constructive dialogue and collaboration with civil society.</p> <p>CSOs should engage with INEC to implement the provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Act, especially delineation producing a voting unit list.</p> <p>CSOs should engage INEC to make sure it implements recommendations early</p>	

	in the electoral process. There must be continuous multilogues between INEC and other stakeholders, including international organizations, faith-based organizations, and CSOs.	
Election Workers' Right to Vote		
Commonwealth	Make arrangements for those on election duty to vote, for example advance voting or voting at their stations of duty.	
EU	Provide special voting for election day workers.	
NDI	Provide special voting for election day workers, including poll station staff, security officials, party agents, and citizen observers – as well as other citizens unable to participate due to immobility.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Provision should be made for those on special election duty to cast their vote.	
Cost of Elections		
EU	Review the high cost of elections and reduce it where possible.	
Ballot Design		
Project Swift Count	The INEC should ensure that ballot papers include the names and pictures of candidates and not only the party symbols or abbreviations.	
Learning from this Election		
EU	As a learning exercise, INEC should review a random sample of polling units, ballot papers, results, and collation forms to identify errors, deficiencies and malpractice, if any.	
NDI	Review performance during the 2011 elections and consolidate best practices.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	INEC should undertake a comprehensive and transparent audit of the entire 2011 electoral process with a view to plugging the gaps observed.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should hold a post-election stakeholder conference to draw on positive and negative lessons learned to form recommendations for the future. It should involve INEC leadership, political parties, civil society groups, domestic observer groups, and security agencies. INEC should conduct a retrospective exercise to determine its weaknesses and find ways to address problems for future elections.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	INEC should review past observation reports by local and international observer groups and act on recommendations which move Nigeria's electoral process to meet regional and international standards.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	INEC should work assiduously with the National Assembly and other stakeholders towards reviewing the Constitution and the Electoral Act to address all gaps and problems noted from the previous elections. INEC should focus its preparations for the 2015 elections on overcoming all the lapses noted in the 2011 elections. In INEC's review process, it should draw from lessons learnt in previous elections as well as from international best practices for the improved administration of elections.	

	Immediately develop a strategic plan with detailed timelines for all its forthcoming activities and develop a checklist necessary to ensure enhanced performance in all forthcoming elections and other INEC assignments.	
Voter Registration		
Improving the Voter Register		
Commonwealth	Address anomalies and omissions in the voter register.	
EU	Eliminate double registrations.	
IRI	Improve the voter list to ensure proper voter registration.	
NDI	Address weaknesses in the voter register.	
DEO	Subject the compiled list of voters to the Aggregation and AFIS test to ensure the credibility of the final voter register. All problems related to the voter register and voter identification should be resolved.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should allocate sufficient time and resources to voter registration.	
Continuous Voter Registration		
AU	Implement procedures for continuous voter registration as stipulated by the Electoral Act.	
Commonwealth	INEC should regularly clean and verify the voter register and implement continuous registration.	
EU	Implement continuous registration to maintain the list, but close the registry 30 days before election day.	
NDI	Adopt procedures for continuous voter registration.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should conduct regular registration and continuously review the voter register.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	The Commission should make known its plans for continuous voter registration after the elections	
Conference on Youth - IRI	INEC should embark on continuous voter registration in accordance with the Electoral Act 2010.	
Making the Register Public		
AU	Release voters' registers well in advance of election day so candidates, parties, and voters can verify their accuracy.	
EU	The register should be made readily available to parties and the public.	
DEO	Ensure the publication of the final credible register of voters 30 days before the general election, as stipulated by law.	
Project Swift Count	The voter register should be displayed at appropriate periods for people to contest and make claims.	
Voter Education		
Expanded Voter Education		
AU	Undertake extensive and continuous voter education initiatives.	

Commonwealth	INEC should undertake comprehensive voter education and voter awareness programs, with special focus given to women, youth, and marginalized groups, and in coordination with civil society.	
IRI	Strengthen civic education so all Nigerians fully understand the nature of the electoral process and their role in it.	
Project Swift Count	INEC, especially State Independent Election Commissions, should allocate sufficient time and resources to widespread voter and civic education, which it should undertake in collaboration with civil society organizations.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	INEC should make available and on time voting procedures and list of voting units.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	The responsibility for voter education should be passed on to the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to enable INEC concentrate on direct electoral duties.	
Conference on Youth- IRI	CSOs should embark on continuous voter and civic education to enhance, citizens participation, democratic accountability and good governance.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Voter education should be done by the Centre for Democratic Studies.	
Voter Education Strategy		
EU	Revise and strengthen voter and civic education programs by adopting a strategy that takes account of the target groups, especially first time voters and women. A voter education strategy should include the developing the messages, testing the messages, and identifying appropriate delivery mechanisms.	
CLEEN and NHRC	INEC should improve public trust and confidence in its ability to deliver credible elections in Nigeria, especially in the southeast and south-south regions of Nigeria, where trust and confidence in INEC are lowest.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	<p>INEC should make extended efforts to translate voter education messages into local languages.</p> <p>Civil society should maximize the power of new social media to enlighten and mobilize young Nigerians to participate in elections.</p> <p>CSOs should take a lead role in defining and amplifying public debate and discussion on critical social issues, then mobilizing citizens around those policy issues.</p> <p>Civil society should take an active role in educating people on the technical voting process, and encourage greater participation.</p> <p>Religious and traditional institutions must take a leadership role in encouraging citizens to participate fully in the election.</p>	
Conference on Youth - IRI	<p>INEC should emphasize the need for mainstreaming civic education in school curriculum, from primary to tertiary level as well as integrate electoral process as a course in tertiary institutions.</p> <p>CSOs should bridge the urban-rural divide in voter & civic education and electoral monitoring, not just focusing on central urban areas but also satellite regions connected to urban areas.</p> <p>Youth organizations should encourage the culture of political debates as means</p>	

	of promoting issue-based politics.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Local languages must be used in voter and civic education campaigns.	
Political Party Conduct		
Political Party Financing and Transparency		
Commonwealth	Enhance INEC's capacity to enforce legal provisions on campaign financing and party expenditure.	
EU	Parties should develop transparent internal book-keeping procedures so that campaign expenditure regulations can be enforced. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should share information on paid advertising with INEC, so that INEC can better monitor political party expenditures.	
NDI	Adopt transparent candidate selection, campaign, and party finance processes. Strengthen and enforce comprehensive political party finance laws.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	INEC should begin to prosecute companies that overtly and covertly contribute to political parties' finances. INEC should design a reporting format for political parties to report on election campaign expenditures both by the party and by their candidates. There should be training, capacity building and advocacy around issues of campaign finances of political parties. Records of campaign finances of political parties should be audited in a timely manner to ensure that violations are punished even before the elections. CSOs should be encouraged to monitor and track campaign finances of political parties.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Political parties should adhere to provisions enshrined in the Electoral Act for political party finances and campaigning.	
Inter-Party Advisory Committee		
Commonwealth	Strengthen the role of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) to be a standing mechanism for resolving differences and promoting consensus among political stakeholders.	
NDI	Participate actively in the IPAC to promote dialogue and adherence to the Code of Conduct.	
Project Swift Count	Promote multi-stakeholder and inter-party dialogue platforms to ensure a transparent and inclusive electoral process.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	There should be standardized representation of political party in IPAC	
Party Agents at Polling Units		
Commonwealth	Enforce more strictly the limit on the number of party agents from any one party in polling units and collation centers.	

EU	Accredit only one party agent per polling unit to reduce interference in the voting process.	
NDI	Submit to INEC the names of agents assigned to represent parties at each polling unit.	
Political Party Code of Conduct		
AU	Political Parties should restrain their followers from engaging in violent acts.	
Commonwealth	Consolidate and implement the letter and spirit of the Code of Conduct Political party leaders should ensure their supporters reject violence as an instrument of politics.	
IRI	Ensure that political parties evolve into constructive actors respecting democratic values in internal behavior.	
NDI	Rigorously follow and abide by the provisions of an agreed Code of Conduct prohibiting acts of violence, intimidation of voters and other violations of the Electoral Act.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	Political leaders should take seriously their responsibility to heal the wounds arising out of the political process.	
Project Swift Count	Commit to peaceful actions during electoral periods. Sign and enforce codes of conduct, and educate party activists to honor their provisions.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	INEC should institute, with stakeholders, an advisory committee for political party accountability and enforcement of the party code of conduct.	
Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission		
EU	Create a Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission.	
NDI	Create a Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should create a party registration commission.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	The registration/de-registration and management of political party affairs should be taken from INEC and vested in a specialized agency to be created to handle these duties specifically. Matters related to campaign finance should be handled by another agency or commission.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	INEC should not conduct political party registration.	
Political Party Primaries		
Project Swift Count	Conduct a democratic and transparent candidate selection process. INEC should allocate sufficient time and resources to the candidate selection process	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Sections 31 (1) and 87 (1)-(2) of the Electoral Act should be harmonized in such a way as not to give the impression that they are contradictory in relation to the power of INEC to monitor the procedure for party primaries. On no account should INEC monitor more than one primary election by a political party for the same position.	

	<p>Political Parties should be permitted to shift their primaries only once with cogent and verifiable reasons and with prior approval from INEC.</p> <p>Appropriate venue for the conduct of primary elections should be used and changes in venue should be communicated to INEC at least 72 hours before the commencement of the elections.</p> <p>In notification served to INEC for party primaries political parties should be explicit about what states/constituencies and for what posts they intend to conduct primaries to avoid wasting resources and deploying personnel where no primaries are scheduled.</p>	
Other Issues of Parties' Internal Democracy		
Pre-Election Colloquium	<p>Parties should create institutes to define their visions and seek advice from academic and research institutes to inform their policies.</p> <p>Political parties should continuously engage with their members, not only during election periods.</p> <p>Political parties should play the intermediary role of linking the institutions of government to economic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and other societal groups.</p>	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	<p>Political parties should have clearly defined issues and ideologies.</p> <p>INEC should compel political parties, through appropriate sanctions, to comply with their internal democratic structures.</p> <p>Political parties should be encouraged to set up research and policy units; in submitting their manifestos to INEC, political parties should have a director of policy and research on their board.</p> <p>Political parties should engage their members periodically in order to sell their ideologies and build their capacity.</p>	
Youth in Parties		
Conference on Youth - IRI	<p>Political Parties should ensure that the youth leaders of the parties are between the ages of 18-35 which is the prescribed age for youth under the African Youth Charter, the National Youth Policy and the Nigerian Youth Manifesto.</p> <p>Political Parties should create adequate space for young people to participate in the electoral process by making party nomination forms free for interested young people seeking political offices.</p> <p>Youth organizations should create internal mechanisms for mentoring young people as part of their succession plans and party development.</p> <p>Political parties should ensure internal party democracy especially in the nomination of candidates for elections.</p> <p>Youth organizations should encourage their constituents to join political parties of their persuasion and participate actively in the political process of Nigeria.</p>	

	Youth organizations should liaise with the youth wings of political parties as means of engaging the parties.	
Leadership Recruitment		
Project Swift Count	Use the time in between elections to recruit and educate members and to prepare women and youth leaders for positions of leadership, within party structures, and as candidates for elected office.	
Campaigning		
Project Swift Count	Engage in issue-based campaigning.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Parties should base campaigns on relevant issues and defined ideologies.	
Media		
Election Content in Media		
Commonwealth	NBC should ensure that state media gives equitable coverage to all stakeholders. Private media should transcend narrow partisan considerations and report objectively and in the larger interest of the nation. Continue to encourage public debates on television and radio among presidential and other candidates.	
EU	Federal and State government-owned broadcasters should allocate a significant proportion of their prime-time programs to election debates and comparative analysis of political parties' programs, while eliminating "paid-for" coverage of campaign rallies.	
Project Swift Count	State-owned and -controlled media must subscribe to and enforce codes of conduct prohibiting biased news or other coverage and must guarantee accurate, fair, and equitable coverage of all electoral contestants across the political spectrum for no fee. State-owned media should provide robust voter education on the voter registration process and polling day procedures.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Media should report holistically on the election process, focusing on the political perspectives on critical social issues in need of policy address. Media should be fair, objective, and balanced in their reporting. Greater critical analysis should be employed particularly in reporting on opinion polls. Media should provide public service air time for civil society's voter education messages, as well as fair levels of coverage for political parties. Media should develop a partnership with civil society and political parties to contribute to effective voter education.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	NBC should equitably apportion airtime coverage of political party activity.	

Access to Information		
EU	<p>The Freedom of Information Bill should be passed and duly implemented to provide a higher degree of transparency, and accountability in the public sector.</p> <p>The federal government should promote access to print (e.g. newspapers) and e-media (e.g. internet) in public places like libraries.</p> <p>In order to broaden the diversity of the information sources available to the electorate, it would be advisable to facilitate the licensing of community radios, especially in the rural areas.</p>	
Project Swift Count	<p>INEC should publish on its website names, phone numbers, and addresses of all electoral officials, both ad hoc and permanent.</p> <p>INEC should partner with the press to ensure that timely and accurate information is provided to the public.</p>	
Pre-Election Colloquium	The Attorney General and Minister for Justice should make available the official gazette copy of the 2010 Electoral Act that reflects the amendments passed by National Assembly.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	INEC should release the election data from the previous elections to the public.	
Conference on Youth - IRI	<p>INEC should make information more accessible to the general public through its Civil Society & Gender Desk and the other communication channels.</p> <p>CSOs should utilize the FOI Act 2011 to ensure implementation and proper assessment of government performance and tracking of campaign promises.</p>	
Enforcement		
EU	<p>NBC's law enforcement capacity should be strengthened by the creation of a capable legal department within the institution.</p> <p>INEC and NBC should establish state-level media monitoring systems.</p>	
Project Swift Count	<p>State-owned and -controlled media should enforce codes of conduct prohibiting biased news and ensuring fair and equitable coverage.</p> <p>Private media should adopt codes of conduct, ethical standards, and professional guidelines requiring unbiased, accurate and equitable news coverage of political parties and electoral candidates.</p>	
Pre-Election Colloquium	The National Broadcasting Commission should enforce the relevant legal framework for media, including the ban on party monopoly of airtime.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Media organizations and CSOs must work towards ensuring that all recommendations are implemented.	
Journalism Training		
EU	Editors-in-chief should be trained in international best journalism practices ahead of elections.	
Project Swift Count	All media outfits must assume responsibility for training journalists and media personnel within their establishments in order to cover elections accurately, effectively, and professionally.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Media houses should provide specialized training for journalists who cover election matters, both in topical issues and investigative methods.	

Financial Independence		
EU	State-owned media should build towards financial independence.	
Appointment of State Media Leaders		
EU	Neither the President nor the Governors should be entitled to appoint the Director General and the Board of state-owned media; the appointment process should be made transparent and public.	
Women's Participation in the Electoral Process		
Increased Women's Participation		
Commonwealth	Parties should increase to at least 30% the proportion of women in positions of leadership and decision-making, as well as ensure a level playing field for female aspirants. Implement the National Gender Policy to enhance women's participation in politics.	
EU	Strengthen efforts to implement the National Gender Policy providing for 35% female representation. INEC should ensure women are well represented among election officials.	
IRI	Encourage fuller participation of women in the electoral process.	
NDI	Support and promote female participation in party leadership at national and state levels, during the candidate selection process, and as candidates.	
Project Swift Count	Political parties should make more of an effort to facilitate participation by female candidates in all elections. INEC must ensure greater involvement of women in election administration at all levels. The National Assembly should pass into domestic law the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and promote affirmative action and proportional representation in the holding of public office in all three tiers of government.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Parties should encourage more women to emerge as candidates in winnable contests.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Political parties should encourage women to contest for all positions.	
Financial Support to Female Aspirants		
EU	Consider financial support for female aspirants to level the playing field.	
Violence as a Deterrent to Women's Participation		
EU	Parties should address the problem of violence and internal democracy within the parties, as this constitutes a barrier to women's participation.	
Polling, Balloting, and Collation		
Location of Polling Units		

AU	Polling stations should be clearly marked for ease of identification in elections.	
Commonwealth	Polling stations should be in convenient, suitable and adequate locations.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	INEC must clearly mark out polling, balloting, and collation centers.	
Campaigning on Election Day		
Commonwealth	Fully implement the provision forbidding the display of campaign materials at polling stations.	
Sufficient Poll Materials		
Commonwealth	Ensure that adequate and suitable furniture is provided and that some form of lighting is available.	
ECOWAS	Ensure complete voter registers are present at all polling stations.	
Opening of Polling Stations		
DEO	The INEC should ensure that its officials and voting materials arrive at the polling station on time and that accreditation begins as scheduled.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should ensure that the required members of staff are present in polling stations during election day.	
Overcrowding at Polling Stations		
AU	Fully implement INEC plan to limit the number of voters per polling unit to 300.	
Commonwealth	Assess polling locations to ensure that space is suitable and adequate.	
ECOWAS	There must be an adequate ratio of voters to electoral officials.	
IRI	Ensure that polling stations have a manageable number of registered voters.	
NDI	<p>Plan for equitable allocation of polling units based on voter registration figures.</p> <p>Split all polling places with over 500 voters into sub-units to improve efficiency and access to the process.</p> <p>Instruct polling officials to create multiple points for accreditation and voting wherever possible and provide guidance on better management of queues.</p> <p>Implement crowd control in ways that neither intimidate voters nor compromise the secrecy of their ballots.</p>	
Observer Access		
ECOWAS	Ensure that observers are not prevented from observing the voting process.	
NDI	Protect the rights of observers, in particular to move freely and access all aspects of the process.	
Project Swift Count	<p>The right of domestic observers to observe the entire election should be guaranteed by law.</p> <p>INEC should work together with security agencies to explore ways of ensuring that all accredited observers are able to observe future elections without inhibitions.</p>	

Observer Conduct		
Project Swift Count	Monitors and observers must be selected on the basis of competence and impartiality, and codes of conduct should be enforced for all involved in observation and monitoring efforts. Observers should endeavor to observe and report on all aspects of the electoral process, including factors that affect the overall political environment.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	CSOs monitoring the elections should monitor political party primaries, campaigns, mandate protection as well as activities of relevant agencies like INEC and security agencies.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	INEC should conduct trainings on election observation best practices and procedures	
Consistent Application of Election Procedures		
Commonwealth	Election procedures should be applied consistently.	
ECOWAS	Ensure all INEC officials apply the same procedures for accreditation and voting.	
EU	Ensure election procedures are applied consistently, especially through enhanced internal INEC communications.	
NDI	Standardize implementation of procedures in all states and LGAs.	
DEO	The INEC should ensure that its officials adhere to elections guidelines, especially provisions for separate accreditation and voting.	
Special Provisions for Voters		
NDI	Ensure that election officials employ every means possible to ease the accreditation and voting process for the elderly, the disabled, and women who are pregnant or accompanied by children.	
Project Swift Count	All measures should be taken to ensure the accessibility of the voting process to marginalized groups.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Provision should be made for special needs citizens including the disabled and elderly in order to access voter information and to vote on election day.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	There needs to be a provision for special needs voters; e.g. Braille ballots for the blind, a special line for aged, and interpreters for the deaf	
Underage Voting		
AU	Put in place measures for proper screening and registration of prospective voters to reduce under-age voting.	
Commonwealth	Implement stricter safeguards against underage registration and voting.	
IRI	Address problems of underage voting.	
NDI	Enforce vigorously the law against underage voting by instructing polling officials to exercise their authority to verify the identity and age of those attempting to vote.	
DEO	All individuals caught violating electoral procedures should be investigated and when appropriate prosecuted, particularly concerning violence, ballot box snatching, underage voting, and vote-buying.	
Secrecy of the Ballot		

AU	INEC should provide booths at all polling stations and give clear directives on how and where they should be arranged.	
Commonwealth	Polling stations should be appropriately laid out to ensure ballot secrecy.	
EU	Enhance protection of ballots in ballot boxes by mandatory use of serialized seals. Make ballot boxes of less flexible material so removing ballots is more difficult.	
NDI	Instruct officials to place voting booths in such a manner that ballot secrecy is ensured, and inform voters of the proper ballot-folding method to maintain the secrecy of their votes.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should ensure that voting booths are distributed in sufficient time to all polling stations, and all polling staff are trained to erect them and fully implement all procedures designed to ensure secrecy of the vote.	
Protection of the Vote		
AU	Consider alternative methods of marking a ballot to avoid spoilt ballots from ink spills or inconsistent decisions about proper marking. Permit the use of ICT in the biometric identification of voters and collation of election results.	
EU	Elaborate the procedures for using tendered ballots at the collation level.	
NDI	Develop voting mechanisms to reduce the incidence of invalidated ballots.	
CLEEN and NHRC	As the security of the polling unit was enhanced by voters remaining behind after they voted, this system needs to be reinforced.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Election observation procedures such as mandate protection which were observed to have been contentious in 2011 should be clearly defined and procedures for same developed and incorporated into the reviewed Electoral Act.	
The Closure of Polling Stations		
ECOWAS	Ensure polling stations remain open long enough for accredited voters to cast ballots.	
EU	Issue a clear time for close of voting so the process can be more predictable.	
Collation		
EU	Provide collation officers with clear instructions for correcting arithmetic errors on results sheets.	
NDI	Ensure security, sufficient staff, and adequate facilities for collation centers.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	Enhance the integrity of the collation process in the light of the challenges expected in the forthcoming gubernatorial elections.	
Publishing Results		
EU	Publish poll results down to the polling unit-level on the INEC website, among other means. INEC should devise a more robust and swifter internal results verification mechanism to be put in place before the official proclamation of the winners.	
Alternative Voting Procedures		

AU	Consider alternative voting procedures in place of thumb printing to reduce spoiled ballots.	
Commonwealth	Review the advantages and disadvantages of the Modified Open Ballot System.	
DEO	All voters with proper identification should be allowed to vote.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Electronic voting system should be introduced incrementally, beginning with bye-elections and re-run elections to ensure that short-comings observed are corrected ahead of general elections.	
Petitions and Appeals		
Election Appeals Mechanisms		
AU	All parties should seek electoral redress through constitutional and legal mechanisms.	
EU	The Electoral Act should provide specifically for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) that would address the issue of voluminous and protracted litigation. Eliminate or revise Section 87(10) of Electoral Act 2010, dealing with complaints	
NDI	Establish clear guidelines for the management of electoral complaints and litigation.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	INEC should put in place mechanisms to respond promptly and transparently to any election complaints. With the announcement of results, we encourage the parties and their candidates to address such complaints to INEC, in accordance with the applicable legal and constitutional procedures.	
Project Swift Count	New reform measures should be introduced to ensure that the authorities do not interfere in the judicial process; INEC should continue to adhere to the rule of law and observe all judicial declarations.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	The process of electoral adjudication should explore the possibilities of alternative electoral dispute mechanisms. Judges presiding over election offense tribunals should be appointed and trained ahead of elections. The National Assembly should amend the Evidence Act so that electronic evidence can be admissible in elections tribunals.	
Time Limits for Appeals		
Commonwealth	Petitions from disputed elections should be determined within six months, through a fast-tracking mechanism where appropriate	
EU	Reasonable, specific, and adequate time limits for filing, hearing and determination of pre-election petitions should be included in the constitution.	
Project Swift Count	A certificate of return should not be handed to the winner of an election until all relevant election-related disputes are resolved. Consider a more realistic timeframe between an election and the inauguration into office of the election-winner, to allow for the resolution of appeals.	
Filing Complaints		
EU	Allow voters, domestic observers, or other national stakeholders to file complaints and petitions.	

	The Electoral Act should provide a process for political parties, candidates and voters to lodge complaints and appeals arising from the adoption and implementation of INEC guidelines. This process should also allow for complaints and appeals arising from the violation by INEC of electoral legislation.	
Project Swift Count	Voters, domestic observers, and other stakeholders should be allowed to file elections petitions based on their observations and findings.	
Transparency of Adjudication		
EU	Ensure that the complaints system is transparent and publicly accountable. Consolidated records of complaints, responses, decisions and outcomes should be made available by INEC or the Judiciary for public scrutiny.	
Security		
Security of Individuals		
AU	Election security escorts should be provided for polling officials and materials from and to the distribution and collation centers.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	Ensure the safety and security of youth corps members in particular and observers in general.	
CLEEN and NHRC	<p>The leadership of security agencies involved in the elections should take appropriate steps to provide security for election observers and discipline security officials involved in the violating the rights of election observers.</p> <p>The leadership of security agencies involved in the elections should take appropriate steps to provide security for election security officials.</p> <p>The absence of firearms at the polling units enhanced security and more effective management of conflict. This regulation, especially the regulation which prohibits incumbents from coming to the polling units with armed escorts, should be enforced.</p>	
DEO	<p>Discourage vote-buying and intimidation at polling stations.</p> <p>Security agencies should exercise restraint in handling matters involving the electorates.</p> <p>All accredited observers should be allowed to perform their duties free from harassment and intimidation.</p>	
Project Swift Count	<p>INEC staff, political party agents, observers, and other election stakeholders should receive appropriate security protection throughout the election process.</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies should strengthen their capacity to police polling booths and election materials.</p>	
Conference on Youth - IRI	Strengthen security measures and mechanisms especially during elections.	
Security of Materials		
CLEEN and NHRC	Reports of sporadic snatching of ballot boxes during the movement to collation centers suggests the need for reinforcement by armed escorts during transport of results to collation centers.	

Provision for Security Officials		
CLEEN and NHRC	Authorities of security agencies should ensure that sufficient funds allocated for transportation and feeding allowances of security officials are disbursed before Election Day to enhance morale of the officials and promote the integrity of the electoral process.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	The timing of the payment of allowances for officials needs to be reviewed allowing for part of the stipend in advance and the balance at the end of the exercise.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	INEC's strategic plan should outline clearly procedures and timelines for the deployment and remuneration of ad hoc staff and security agents participating in the elections.	
Coordination and Communication of Security Agencies		
Commonwealth	INEC must clarify who has ultimate authority at a polling unit, with regards to the presiding officer and security officers.	
NDI	Improve the security and management of collation centers including by providing additional staff at ward level	
CLEEN and NHRC	<p>Improve communication between headquarters to security officials in the field. Field security officials should be briefed about any developments introduced after their deployment to the field.</p> <p>Strengthen the early warning system to prevent post-election violence. Security agencies need to improve on intelligence gathering.</p> <p>Deploy security personnel to polling stations in city centers, suburbs, and hinterland LGAs. There is still evidence of disproportionate deployment of security personnel in favor of urban areas, but rigging of elections is more widespread in rural areas and difficult terrains. Improved deployment would be better managed under a joint deployment arrangement and coordination</p> <p>The security agencies should ensure that security officials are deployed early enough, as they arrived on time only in 55% of the polling stations observed.</p> <p>Provide adequate communication equipment to security personnel for quick response to security alerts and deploy more operational mobile units to support increased demands for assistance from security personnel at the polling stations.</p>	
Pre-Election Colloquium	<p>The interagency security committee should be strengthened for effective coordination, information exchange, and strategic deployment.</p> <p>During election periods there is a need for a central command to coordinate among all the security branches.</p>	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	<p>INEC should be authorized to give final decisions on all election issues such as security.</p> <p>The deployment of military personnel to election duties should be avoided unless it proves to be absolutely necessary.</p>	
Conference on Youth - IRI	INEC's collaboration with security agencies should be strengthened to protect youth involved in elections and facilitate the prosecution of electoral offenders.	
NDI Post-Election	An inter-agency body should monitor the activities of the security agencies; if the security agencies have failed to adhere to their code of conduct then it	

Multilogue	means there is a flawed accountability process and reforms must take place. CSOs should recommend and/or facilitate the production of a Code of Conduct on Elections for the police and other security agencies to make them more effective in their electoral duties.	
Neutrality of Security		
Project Swift Count	Law enforcement agencies should strengthen their impartiality.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	Security agencies have an obligation to operate in a manner that is compatible with their political neutrality.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	Security agencies should keep to their dedicated roles without partisan influence.	
Communication with the Public		
Pre-Election Colloquium	Hotlines for police should be publicized so that concerned citizens can contact them with election incidents. Provide access to security information by law abiding citizens. The Inspector General of Police should make public the police code of conduct for elections and commence the process of training and retraining of security personnel on elections duties. INEC should make available information about how to interact with it and police on security issues. Religious and traditional leaders and institutions should take a constructive role in encouraging among their constituents peaceful political conduct, and condemn vigorously any use of electoral violence.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	Security assessment findings should be made public.	
Learning Lessons from the Election		
CLEEN and NHRC	Security agencies should embark on a post-election review of security after each election with inputs from independent observers, INEC monitors, and the mass media.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	There should be a security assessment in order to identify electoral problems for the future.	
Prosecuting Electoral Offenders		
Electoral Offences Commission		
Commonwealth	Create a dedicated body capable of handling offenses in an independent and professional manner.	
EU	Create an Electoral Offences Commission.	
NDI	Establish an Electoral Offences Commission.	
Project Swift Count	INEC should intensify its calls for setting up the Electoral Offences Commission. Such a commission should bring the police administration on board to find ways of dealing with election-related violence that is criminal in	

	nature.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	An Electoral Offences Commission should be created and tasked with monitoring violations of campaign finance rules and other electoral offences.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	An electoral offences commission needs to be created.	
Accountability for Offenses		
Commonwealth	End the culture of impunity for those who commit electoral offenses, and prosecute offences in an effective and timely way.	
EU	Promptly prosecute people involved in electoral violence.	
NDI	Follow through in prosecuting electoral offenders.	
Civil Society Election Situation Room	Investigate all allegations of serious misconduct. All persons found to have been involved in unlawful acts which undermine the credibility of the electoral process should be held accountable.	
CLEEN and NHRC	Early and open trial of suspected violators of election regulations arrested in the last election will help check security breaches and enhance the credibility of the role of the security agencies on elections. Cases where politicians or their thugs were accused of assaulting security officials should be investigated and those found guilty punished according to the law notwithstanding their position in society.	
DEO	All individuals caught violating electoral procedures should be investigated and when appropriate prosecuted, particularly concerning violence, ballot box snatching, underage voting, and vote-buying.	
Project Swift Count	We urge the relevant appropriate authorities, in particular the security agencies and INEC, to investigate these acts of violence, harassments and intimidations that were witnessed during the elections and bring perpetrators to justice as a deterrent measure.	
Pre-Election Colloquium	INEC should strengthen its party and campaign monitoring mechanism and refer offenders to appropriate authorities for prosecution.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	INEC should prioritize the immediate prosecution of all electoral offenders.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	INEC must implement recommendations to curb impunity by electoral offenders. INEC should impose appropriate sanctions on political parties for offenses. INEC needs the powers to vet and also prosecute dubious characters, impersonators, criminals, and certificate forgers who present themselves as candidates for election.	
INEC / Government Offenders		
CLEEN and NHRC	In cases where security officials played suspected partisan roles such officials should be redeployed and investigated accordingly. There is need for a comprehensive review of the performance of security officials involved in the elections in several South East and South-south states.	
DEO	Direct all RECs to ensure that all those detected to have been involved in cases of fraud, double or multiple registrations are referred to the appropriate	

	authorities for investigation and prosecution where appropriate.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	The leadership of security agencies involved in elections should take appropriate steps to discipline erring security officials/personnel.	
Transparency		
CLEEN and NHRC	Security agencies should, without further delay, parade all persons, including security officials, apprehended for electoral offences. This is to enable the media, civil society and the concerned members of the public to follow the cases. The present silence and non-disclosure is likely to fuel suspicions that the arrested persons have been let off the hook.	
Resources for Prosecution		
Project Swift Count	INEC should allocate sufficient time and resources to compliance mechanisms.	
Human Rights		
Internally Displaced Persons		
EU	Provide with sufficient protection and assistance any Internally Displaced Persons affected by election violence, and allow them to make a free choice on whether to return to their original locations, integrate locally, or relocate.	
Implementation of Human Rights Directives		
EU	Implement the strategy of the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.	
Appointment of Leaders of the Human Rights Commission		
EU	The members of the Counseling Board and Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission should be appointed free from political influence.	
Civil Society and Follow-up		
Commitment to Electoral Reform		
EU	Continue commitment for electoral reform through an inclusive and transparent process.	
NDI	Continue to advocate for electoral reform.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	Enhance collaboration and cooperation on citizen participation in elections. The CSOs should develop and agree to a strategy for democratic elections to ensure improved engagements with the donor community and strategic engagement on the electoral process. The CSO Strategy for 2015 Elections should be developed immediately to guide on the direction of program/proposal conception, development, funding and project implementation.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	If need be, there should be mass action by CSOs to ensure that the National Assembly passes the bills and amend the laws as recommended. There is an immediate need to mobilize key CSOs to form a coordinated platform to drive the implementation of all recommendations; the platform should review the state of the nation monthly, or at least once every quarter, and issue a common statement on electoral matters.	

	CSOs have to sensitize citizens on the need to shun violence and avoid being used by nefarious individuals and groups to perpetrate electoral violence.	
Sustainability		
Pre-Election Colloquium	CSOs should strengthen their own financial capacity to sustain their operations.	
INEC/ Civil Society Retreat	CSOs should prioritize local philanthropy as a way to break international donor hold over CSOs engagement with the electoral process. There is need to put in place mechanism for CSO self-regulation in Nigeria.	
Conference on Youth - IRI	Strengthen the capacity of youth organizations on electoral processes and political participation through the Ministry of Youth Development and other agencies. Established CSOs should create a Fund to support smaller youth civil society organizations. Multinational companies can be approached to contribute to the fund. CSOs should advocate for local philanthropy and government support for civil society work.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	CSOs should strengthen their own financial capacity to sustain their operations.	
Civil Society Conduct		
Conference on Youth - IRI	Code of Conduct should be created so that youth-led CSOs advance ethical practices that avoid partisan politics, favoritism and corruption. Youth organizations should advocate that youth groups, especially student groups create internal sanction mechanisms for members who use their platforms to endorse or campaign for certain political candidates or parties. Youth organizations should sensitize and initiate a culture that would encourage youth political participation in democratic processes by stemming political violence. This will be aimed at peace-building through changing the political culture of those who see violence as a primary and most reliable problem-solving mechanism.	
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	There need to be advocacy efforts and capacity building programs to foster CSO activities. CSOs should follow up their recommendations with a call for the removal of the Inspector General of Police and other security agency heads if recommendations are not implemented after specific time period elapses.	
International Community		
NDI Post-Election Multilogue	The international community should allow local ownership of the reform process.	