



Office of the National Election Board of Ethiopia

Election Manual

(December 2004)

PART FIVE
PUBLIC OBSERVERS AND CANDIDATES' REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR DUTIES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAPTER ONE
ELECTION AND DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC OBSERVERS AT ELECTORAL
OFFICES AND POLLING STATIONS

1. Public Observers of Electoral Offices and Polling Stations

Public observers at:

- 1.1 a Constituency or Woreda Electoral Office,
- 1.2 a Polling Station Electoral Office assigned to verify candidature endorsement signatures,
- 1.3 a Polling Station

shall follow-up the electoral process at the respective level.

2. Criteria for Electing Public Observers of Electoral Offices and Polling Stations

The following criteria shall be met for election as a public observer:

- 2.1 non-membership of a political party;
- 2.2 non-membership of the assembly of any level of elected government administration;
- 2.3 non-membership of, or non-occupation of official post on, the executive committee of the assembly of any elected government administration;
- 2.4 attainment of high credibility through day-to-day contact with the community; that is by way of experienced service in the capacity of:
 - 2.4.1 an elder of the community;
 - 2.4.2 a leader of an association or a labour union;
 - 2.4.3 a chairperson of an Edir;
 - 2.4.4 a community leader;
 - 2.4.5 a religious leader;
 - 2.4.6 a public or mobile observer during previous elections.
- 2.5 Public observers have to be residents of:
 - 2.5.1 one of the Kebeles within the constituency, if to serve at a Constituency Electoral Office;
 - 2.5.2 the respective Kebele, if to serve at a Polling Station Electoral Office for verification of candidature endorsement signatures;
 - 2.5.3 the respective locality, if to serve at a polling station.

- 2.6 Where previous public observers are missing, for whatever reason, substitutes thereof shall be caused to be elected.

3. Duties and Responsibilities of Public Observers at Electoral Offices and Polling Stations

- 3.1 In accordance with the election schedule, public observers shall report at their respective place of assignment, to follow-up and observe:
 - 3.1.1 the registration of electors;
 - 3.1.2 the verification of candidature endorsement signatures;
 - 3.1.3 the registration of aspiring candidates, screening of candidates, selection of candidature symbols and publicizing of candidates;
 - 3.1.4 the casting of votes, counting of votes, summing-up of votes and publicizing the results thereof.
- 3.2 They shall designate one of their number to verify the daily registration of electors and to sign the confirmation thereof.
- 3.3 They shall follow-up that the electoral process is being conducted in accordance with the electoral law and this manual.
- 3.4 Where designated as members of a Complaints Committee, they shall attend to their duty thereof in accordance with this manual.
- 3.5 Whenever they believe irregularities have occurred in the electoral process, they shall forthwith urge the head of the electoral office or of the polling station to rectify same or inform the respective, superior electoral office on the matter.
- 3.6 They may not:
 - 3.6.1 coerce that corrections be made as to alleged irregularities, and
 - 3.6.2 be argumentative and thereby waste time and disrupt election activities.
- 3.7 The responsibilities of public observers shall be different from that of election officers.
(As such, they shall not directly be involved in decision-making.)
- 3.8 They shall write down and sign their observation, as on the various electoral forms and documents or in the form of minutes.
- 3.9 Where they contravene the restrictions specified above, the head of the electoral office or polling station shall arrest the situation and forthwith report the case to the respective, superior electoral office.

CHAPTER TWO

ELECTION OF PUBLIC OBSERVERS AT A CONSTITUENCY OR WOREDA ELECTORAL OFFICE

1. Election

- 1.1 A Constituency Electoral Office shall have three public observers.
- 1.2 The public observers shall be caused to be elected from among residents of the constituency, in accordance with the criteria under item no. 2 of Chapter One of this Part Five.
- 1.3 In order for the public observers to carry out their daily duties conveniently, they shall be elected from within the town/surrounding wherein the Constituency Electoral Office is located.

- 1.4 The Constituency Electoral Office shall keep a record of the list of public observers, together with other relevant information pertaining to them.

CHAPTER THREE
ELECTION OF PUBLIC OBSERVERS
AT A POLLING STATION

1. Election

- 1.1 A polling station shall have five public observers.
- 1.2 The public observers shall be caused to be elected from among residents of the polling station, in accordance with the criteria under item no. 2 of Chapter One of this Part Five.
- 1.3 The list of public observers elected as replacements, together with other relevant information, shall be forwarded to the Constituency or Woreda Electoral Office.

CHAPTER FOUR
CANDIDATES' REPRESENTATIVES AT ELECTORAL
OFFICES AND POLLING STATIONS

1. Candidates' Representatives

- 1.1 Political party candidates or independent runners shall have the right to follow-up the electoral process, as through their representatives.
- 1.2 For purposes of exercising such right:
 - 1.2.1 the representative of a political party candidate shall produce credentials signed by an official of the party and bearing the seal thereof; and
 - 1.2.2 that of an independent candidate shall produce same, as signed by the candidate himself.
- 1.3 Independent candidates shall be represented as follows:
 - 1.3.1 at a Constituency or Woreda Electoral Office by one representative each
 - 1.3.2 at a Polling Station Electoral Office assigned to verify candidature endorsement signatures by one representative each
 - 1.3.3 at a polling station by one representative each
- 1.4 Political party candidates shall, irrespective of their number, be represented similarly.

CHAPTER FIVE
MOBILE ELECTION OBSERVERS AND NEWSMEN

1. Mobile Observers and Newsmen

- 1.1 Subject to obtaining ID's issued by the Secretariat of the Board:
 - 1.1.1 lawful media organizations,
 - 1.1.2 legally recognized political parties, and
 - 1.1.3 civic organizationsmay follow-up the electoral process, as through their proxies.
- 1.2 The Secretariat of the Board alone shall issue ID's to mobile election observers.
- 1.3 Mobile observers shall be allowed to follow-up the electoral process only upon producing the ID's issued to them.

1.4 Rights and Obligations of Mobile Observers and Newsmen

- 1.4.1 They shall have the right to observe the electoral process and to request and obtain information relating thereto.
- 1.4.2 While exercising observation or requesting information, they shall refrain from such misconduct as specified under item no. 3.6 of Chapter One of this Part Five.
- 1.4.3 They may communicate, to the Secretariat of the Board or to Coordinators of Constituencies, such irregularities as they observed in the electoral process.
- 1.4.4 They shall be obliged not to comment on the election, either locally or abroad, before the final results of the election are officially declared by the Board.
- 1.4.5 They shall submit their observations to the Board before it officially declares the final results of the election.

2. Relationship of Electoral Offices and Polling Stations with Observers and Newsmen

- 2.1 Electoral offices and polling stations shall:
 - 2.1.1 allow public observers, candidates' representatives, mobile observers and newsmen to freely enter their respective premises;
 - 2.1.2 respond to their queries relating to the electoral process;
 - 2.1.3 in case of finding them to be obstructing the electoral process:
 - 2.1.3.1 forthwith report thereon to the police (security) staff stationed thereat and have corrective measures taken; as well as
 - 2.1.3.2 notify the details thereof to the respective, superior electoral office through convenient means of communication.