



STANDARDS AND GLOBAL PRINCIPLES FOR NON PARTISAN ELECTORAL OBSERVATION PERFORMED BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Preliminary Version

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Electoral observation means "The systematic collection of information on an electoral process, with the specific purpose of arriving at an informed opinion on the adequacy of that process, based on data collected by persons or specialized organizations, which are not inherently authorized to Intervene in it "(Boneo, Carrillo and Valverde, 2007, p.1073). The Organization of American States (OAS) states that it is "a set of specific activities and procedures designed to closely monitor the development of each stage of an electoral process" (MOE-OEA, 2007)

This set of monitoring activities is in line with the Electoral Observers, ie "national or international persons without party affiliations who observe and report on the electoral process in a country. They are also known as election monitors. "(MOE-OEA, 2006, p.89). It is important to keep in mind that electoral observers are specialized advocates of human rights who focus their work on the promotion of civil and political rights.

The exercise of citizen participation in monitoring and control of political power, which is embodied in non-partisan electoral observation of a national character, is supported by Article 25 of the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (PIDCP,1996,p52)¹

This article states that all citizens, without undue restrictions and without distinction of race, color, sex, political opinion, among others, "shall enjoy the right and opportunity to participate in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through representatives Freely chosen (...)"(underlined and bold outside the original text).

In view of the foregoing, the UN Human Rights Committee clarified that the concept of "right to participate" contained in the above-mentioned article refers to the exercise of political power and should be interpreted broadly. The Committee therefore points out that citizens, because of their organizational capacity, are involved in issues of national interest through public debate and dialogue. (UN-CDH, 1996)

However, the Committee is not limited to these two scenarios for citizens' participation in aspects of national interest. The electoral issue is considered through paragraph 20 of the General Comment, which states that "there must be a count of votes and an independent counting process with the possibility of judicial review **or other equivalent process in order for voters to have confidence in the security of the vote**



and the counting of votes (...) "(underlined and bold not from original text). **That other equivalent process that gives confidence is non-partisan electoral observation of civil society.**

Nonpartisan electoral observation of civil society aims to promote and deepen democracy by holding free, transparent, competitive and authentic elections. That is why those who make the decision to carry out this exercise of participation and control to political power have the ethical obligation to develop their activities in a transparent, informed and technically supported way so that they can give public account of the quality of the electoral process.

In other words, the non-partisan electoral observation of civil society is the recognition and realization of the right of all citizens to know if the electoral results faithfully represent the popular will. In this sense, the observation is not limited to election day (logistics and counting), this can be very complex as the period of observation may include the pre-electoral and post electoral processes; as well as the set of aspects to be

monitored such as campaign financing, campaign behavior, electoral crime and barriers to participation of population groups, among others.

Recognizing, on the one hand, the importance of national electoral observations in the generation of a trusting environment, and on the other, the impact of the reports and findings that these organizations present to authorities and public opinion on the local democracy, the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) developed the [*Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation*](#) by citizen Organizations, as well as the CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NONPARTISAN CITIZENS OBSERVERS AND MONITORS.

These two documents have been signed by more than 160 non-partisan civil society observation organizations from more than 75 countries on 5 continents and by 13 international organizations.



STANDARDS, PRINCIPLES AND GOOD PRACTICES FOR NONPARTISAN ELECTORAL OBSERVATION DEPLOYED BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSO)

Standard, principle, good practice	Explanation
1. CSO must be independent (Principle)	1.1. CSO must be politically neutral; Impartial and non-discriminatory.
	1.2. CSO should be independent of the Government and private interests.
2. CSO should be non-partisan (Principle)	2.1. CSO must be impartial towards to political parties.
	2.2. CSO should be impartial towards political candidates
	2.3. CSO should not privilege political organization when engaging in dialogue or information exchange
3. CSO must be transparent in its mission, finances and goals (Principle)	3.1. The deployment of a CSO mission should respond to a work plan in that indicates: the scope of observation (thematic and territorial); actions to perform; number and topics of the partial and final reports; as well as starting and ending dates of the observation.
	3.2. The organizational structure of the CSO must be public and clear in the line of responsibilities and functions.
	3.3. The source of funding should be publicly available to electoral authorities, political organizations and civil society in general.
	3.4. Legal or natural persons who hold conflict of interests in political, economic or other matters that challenge the impartiality of CSO cannot do electoral observation.
4. CSO is harmoniously but autonomously	4.1. The generation of trust between authorities and the CSO is the result of a fluid dialogue, clear and with technical support.

<p>related with the authorities responsible for the electoral process (Good practice)</p>	<p>4.2. It is advisable to hold periodic monitoring meetings with authorities responsible for the electoral process</p>
	<p>4.3. It is important that meetings with authorities are registered in formal reports that inform on topics discussed, recommendations delivered and conclusions agreed to enhance the quality of democracy.</p>
<p>5. CSO must be a stakeholder that builds trust through an inclusive dialogue with all other agents involved in the electoral process (Good practice)</p>	<p>5.1. It is important to establish communication and support networks with the International Observations.</p>
	<p>5.2. It is advisable to involve academia and a large number of social organizations on the working agenda of the CSO.</p>
	<p>5.3. It is desirable to maintain open communication with all political parties without any exceptions such that there may be a timely exchange of information (i.e. when electoral crimes are taking place).</p>
<p>6. Electoral observation must be supported in technical processes, reliable and validated methodologies and verifiable. (Good practice)</p>	<p>6.1. The work that is done in the electoral observation should be, as far as possible, systematic in the recollection, classification and analysis of information.</p>
	<p>6.2. Technical methodologies and processes adopted for electoral observation should allow the deployment of fair and accurate assessments on the aspects that are to be monitored.</p>
	<p>6.3. It is advisable to incorporate new information technologies in the process of election observation.</p>
<p>7. CSO must have internal processes for electoral observation (Good practice)</p>	<p>7.1. Provide training to all observers on the political system and electoral regulations</p>
	<p>7.2. Train observers in the principles and techniques of electoral observation and management of Forms of observation.</p>
	<p>7.3. It is important that CSO have a code of ethics that is known and agreed by all observers.</p>
	<p>7.4. It is advisable to perform simulations of the election day, particularly on information transmission processes. This aims to test the systems adopted, as well as the established emergency schemes.</p>
<p>8. CSOs should have protocols for incident</p>	<p>8.1. It is recommended to develop a protocol for handling incidents related to political violence.</p>

<p>management directly related to the electoral observation exercise. (Good practice)</p>	<p>8.2. It is suggested to have a security protocol for the management of threats or acts of violence (physical, verbal, symbolic) against observers or electoral observation as a whole.</p>
	<p>8.3. It is advisable to have a support system against crimes or technological damages (support server, mirror web page, alternative connection to the internet, power plant, etc.)</p>
<p>9. Preparation and publication of reports, declarations and public communications. (Principles and good practices)</p>	<p>9.1. The above documents must be accurate, impartial and timely. These must account for facts and not perceptions or rumors. (Principle)</p>
	<p>9.2. The reports should contain recommendations aimed at improving the quality of elections and citizen participation. (Good practice)</p>
	<p>9.3. The partial and final reports of electoral observation should be presented, as far as possible, to electoral authorities and political organizations. (Good practice)</p>
	<p>9.4. Reports, statements and public communications in their final versions should be public and easily accessible to citizens in general. (Beginning)</p>



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