



UNSMIL Welcomes the Official Start of the Electoral Commission

13 February, 2012 On the occasion of the swearing-in of the members of the Higher National Electoral Commission on 12 February, 2012, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) welcomes the official start of the functions of the Commission which sets off the operational electoral preparations in earnest. With this step, the NTC has now finalized its job, pending the decision on the constituencies, of establishing a legal and institutional electoral framework that paves the way for the organization of the National Congress elections, as provided in the Constitutional Declaration of 3 August 2011.

UNSMIL appreciates that the process of developing an electoral law took longer than envisaged in the Constitutional Declaration given the political sensitivities involved when deciding the basic modalities for the first election in the country for over 40 years. Despite difficult conditions and a limited timeframe, it is encouraging that the NTC Electoral Committee did their best to respect the deadlines established in the Constitutional Declaration and that the delay in the adoption of the legal framework was only a limited one. Nevertheless, given the tight timeframe for the elections, implementation of the framework will require swift and immediate preparation.

It is noteworthy that, despite the severe time limitations, the NTC Electoral Committee presented the initial draft electoral law for public discussions and that many of the comments from stakeholders were addressed. UNSMIL appreciates the willingness of the NTC Electoral Committee to allow it to be part of this exercise and for taking into account many of its comments. However, we are conscious that some stakeholders feel the process of dialogue and consultation regarding legal framework for the elections was limited and unsatisfactory.

Overall, it is our belief that the adopted legal framework is a reasonable foundation for the election of the National Congress, although some gaps and shortcomings are still present and will need to be addressed during the implementation process. For example, the provision regarding the restriction of the right to vote to the armed forces needs to be clarified, and the absence of measures to ensure the participation of internally displaced populations is a source of concern.

It is UNSMIL's hope that the newly established electoral authority will be able to set up a functional administration in the near future in order to advance in the practical preparations of the elections. UNSMIL reiterates its commitment to continue providing support to the Libyan authorities, as mandated by the Security Council, in the preparation of credible and impartial National Congress elections.