



**Executive Summary**  
**of the Detailed Report of the**  
**Elections to the 18<sup>th</sup> Chamber of**  
**Deputies**

**20 / 09 / 2016**

**2016**

## Introduction

Thanks be to God, the election for the 18<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Deputies was held in accordance with the legislation governing the electoral process, and in line with international standards and good practices. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) was keen, through proactive electoral planning, to implement the highest levels of transparency, integrity and impartiality. In addition, the Commission was committed to a participatory approach with its various partners, due to the election's national and political significance. The primary objective of this election was to enhance confidence of Jordanian voters in the electoral process and the results of ballot boxes, as everyone believes that the language of dialogue through these ballot boxes is the only way for political reform. This is the approach that Jordan has followed and is committed to.

The royal support to the work of the IEC has had the greatest positive impact on the process and the success of the 2016 parliamentary election. Besides, the continuous and clear royal directives on the need to support the IEC, to maintain its independence and to give it full freedom in taking its decisions, formed the greatest factor that strengthened the Commission's ability to work hard and in confidence. This also contributed to the accomplishment of the constitutional requirement represented in the parliamentary election in all its legal stages, according to international best practices.

The Independent Election Commission, today, while handing over its detailed report on the electoral process to His Majesty King Abdullah II, is seeking to holistically review and assess its procedures, to derive lessons learned, and to continue to enhance its participatory methods, in order to better improve its work and to identify and build upon points of strength and avoid points of weakness. All this aims to realize the ultimate goal of fulfilling greater excellence and progress in upcoming elections, which will undeniably mirror the bright image of our country at the international and regional levels. The success achieved under the slogan "Jordan Votes" amidst a region in turmoil is nothing but a confirmation that the language of dialogue and real participation in decision making is a one hundred percent Jordanian approach based on humanity, democracy and respect for citizen's rights and dignity. Such values and principles are inspired by the message of the Hashemites throughout history; the message that has formed and is still forming the strongest guarantee for advancement and excellence, as well as the ability to face any challenges whatsoever.

Congratulations to our nation for this tremendous accomplishment, just as the nation's leader, His Majesty King Abdullah II, wanted. May Allah protect and save him!

*Chairman of IEC Board of Commissioners*

*Dr. Khaled Kalaldeh*

# **Executive Summary**

## Legal Framework Regulating the Electoral Process

In managing the election for the 18<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Deputies, the Independent Election Commission was committed to the legislation governing the electoral process. At the forefront of this is the Constitution. The Commission enjoys attribution under the Constitution in Article 67/2 which states, *“An independent commission shall be established by law to monitor and administer all the stages of the parliamentary and municipal elections and any other general elections pursuant to the provisions of the law; the Council of Ministers may assign to the Independent Commission the administration of other elections or the supervision thereof at the request of the entity legally authorized to conduct those elections.”*

The Constitution of Jordan also identifies the basic principles of the electoral process for parliamentary elections in Article 67/1. This states that the Chamber of Deputies consists of members who are elected by secret ballot in general direct election, and in accordance with the provisions of an election law that guarantees the following principles, which the IEC was keen to respect and ensure their implementation:

1. The right of candidates to observe the process of the election.
2. The punishment of any person who adversely influences the will of voters.
3. The integrity of the election process in all its stages.

## Election Law No. 6 of 2016 and its Amendments

The Independent Election Commission conducted the parliamentary election for the 18<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Deputies on 20 September 2016 under a new election law, which is considered a one hundred percent step of reform. The most prominent features of this law are:

- Adopting a system of proportional representation through proportional open list. This came after more than 23 years of implementing the one-man-one-vote system, together with the closed list proportional system for the election to the 17th Chamber of Deputies which was held according to the Election Law No. 12 for 2012. Thus, Jordan has joined many other countries of the world that use list proportional representation. As of the time of preparation of this report, 70 out of 199 countries of the world follow this system.
- Expanding the boundaries of electoral districts to the level of the governorate with the exception of 3 governorates (Amman, Zarqa and Irbid). This reduced the number of districts from 45 to 23.
- Providing more equity, wider representation and more support to political party programmes and giving the voter the freedom to choose the list s/he wants, with the opportunity to compare and choose candidates from within the same list.
- Reducing the number of parliamentary seats to 130, 15 of which are reserved for women members, in comparison to the law under which the election to the 17th parliament was

held when the number of seats was 150 with 15 reserved for women. Through this, it is clear that the women's quota has increased in accordance with the Election Law No. 6 of 2016 and its amendments.

- Adopting passive registration, which makes the voter list more inclusive, to include whomever is eligible to become a voter. At the same time, those who are not qualified are excluded. This helped to double the number in the voter list for the last election, to reach 4,130,145 male and female eligible voters. This compares with half this number for the 17<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election, where the total number of voters did not exceed 2,272,182.
- Lowering the voting age, as the voter list included every person who has started their eighteenth year of age 90 days before the day of polling, while the previous law stipulated that a voter must have completed 18 years of age. This gave way to a new generation of young men and women who may practice their right to vote, and is considered a gain for the electoral process.
- Limiting the use of black money and vote buying by tightening the sanctions imposed on electoral crimes.
- Having all the IEC and the Civil Status and Passports Department decisions relevant to the electoral process subject to appeal before the Courts of First Instance and Courts of Appeal, as appropriate. This enhances the concept of electoral justice in general.
- Enabling personnel working in the electoral process to practice their constitutional right to vote.
- Setting the maximum ceiling for electoral campaign expenditure, which creates an environment that is fair for all lists and candidates.

## **Executive Instructions on the Electoral Process**

The Independent Election Commission prepared the required executive instructions to implement the provisions of the applicable parliamentary election law. This was done taking into account all the relevant controls and steps, along with the commitment that none of these instructions can be considered a violation of the Constitution or in contradiction to the election law or to the international agreements and conventions.

The IEC issued these executive instructions, that are in line with international standards and electoral best practices adopted in countries with advanced electoral experiences. Through these instructions, the Commission aimed to facilitate all stages of the electoral process.

**The executive instructions were as follows:**

Topic of Instruction	Content
Executive instructions on the voter lists	The conditions that should be met by people whose names appear in the voter lists; the procedures that identify the voter's electoral district; procedures to correct or object to data contained in the voter lists before the CSPD, and the mechanism for appealing CSPD decisions before the competent judicial entities.
Executive instructions on accreditation of local and international observers for the parliamentary election	The conditions and standards that should be met by organizations and coalitions that wish to observe the electoral process, and the conditions that should be met by those accredited as local or international observers, which enhance the principle of transparency.
Executive instructions on formation of committees	How to form the election committees, the Special Committee, and also the polling and counting committees, with the authorities and duties assigned to them, the most important of which is managing the polling and counting process with the aim of facilitating work of the election committee.
Executive instructions on Code of Conduct and disclosure	Such instructions apply for the heads of committees and the staff who assist them and all those who manage the electoral process, and stakeholders, to ensure they conduct the election in an organized and highly credible manner, to enhance efforts aimed to build confidence in the electoral process, to create a suitable environment for conducting the elections and to ensure the commitment of all election management staff to running the process with the required professionalism.
Executive instructions on candidacy	The conditions that should be met by those who wish to stand for election; candidacy provisions and the mechanisms for submitting applications for candidacy, organizing the candidate nomination process and submitting appeals before the competent courts.
Executive instructions on polling and counting	The mechanism of polling through a series of clear procedures, to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and prevent any manipulation. This includes establishing many controls that prevent multiple voting, such as using indelible ink, and requiring the polling and counting committees, after completing the counting process, to complete a form/minutes in five copies to be signed by the head and members of the committee and by any candidates or their agents present who wish to sign. One copy of the minutes is posted at the entrance of the polling station.
Executive instructions on election campaign rules	These instructions organize the rules for publicity campaigns. They include provisions that fulfil greater justice and equality amongst candidates. The instructions prohibit

	any kind of spending on electoral campaigns from public funds, from budgets of ministries or public bodies and from external funding. They also prohibit using public bodies and their facilities for campaigning. In addition, the instructions require list delegates or any candidates of the lists to disclose the sources of funding for their publicity campaigns. Ways of spending funds may not violate the election law or these instructions.
Executive instructions related to accreditation of candidate agents	The instructions identify the conditions to be met by candidate agents in their electoral districts, the obligations they should honour, the locations where they are allowed to be present during the day of polling and counting and the method of monitoring votes obtained by each candidate and list.
Executive instructions on accreditation of journalists and media outlets wishing to cover the election	The mechanism of accrediting journalists and media organizations that wish to cover the electoral process, and the conditions they should fulfill.
Executive instructions on the announcement of election results	The people who are permitted to be present in the results tabulation centres; the method of calculating the number of votes won by each candidate, and the method of extracting the percentage of votes obtained by each list as well as votes won by each female candidate, in relation to the number of actual voters in the district.

### **Main features of the executive instructions:**

For the purpose of managing the election, the Commission adopted a number of procedures that guarantee and protect the citizen's right to express her/his will and choose her/his representative in full freedom. This enhances democratic life, rule of law and political participation, based on the contribution of citizens and their role in influencing the official decision-making process. This was institutionalized through the following:

- Publishing drafts of the executive instructions before their approval on the IEC website in order to inform the public and obtain feedback.
- Strengthening integrity guarantees by the IEC through approving the ballot paper/booklet, which contained the names, numbers and emblems of lists and the names and photos of candidates, through maintaining the secrecy of the vote, particularly for illiterate voters, and through contributing to limiting the purchasing of people's support and votes.
- Including in the instructions many measures which contributed to limiting the use of black money and vote buying, such as designating a ceiling for election campaign spending. This was five dinars per voter in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid, and three dinars per voter in other governorates and districts, taking in account living standards in these districts. In addition, each list was required to open a bank account, disclose the sources of funding for their publicity campaigns and on what they were spending it. Lists and

candidates were also required to appoint authorized auditors to report to the IEC upon request.

- Results were subject to three phases of auditing: The first phase is through a committee at the level of the polling and counting centres, to verify the results produced by the polling and counting committees. The second phase is performed through the election committees, again to validate the work of polling and counting committees. The third phase is conducted by the Special Committee, which verifies the preliminary results submitted by the election committees in the different electoral districts.
- The IEC adopted forms/minutes to be used for the first time at the level of the polling and counting centres. This played a great role in realizing the integrity of the election process in front of the lists and candidates.
- Following the highest level of transparency by using cameras and digital video recording during in the counting process. This procedure was highly appreciated by all local and international observers and candidates alike.
- Through these executive instructions, the IEC was keen to facilitate procedures for the voter, and to ensure voting for every eligible voter, prevent those ineligible from voting, and ensure that all updates and removals were made to the voter lists.
- Before opening the ballot boxes, ballot papers were counted, packed and classified for the purpose of identifying them and to make sure they were not used in the counting process.
- Results tabulation at the level of the polling and counting centre.
- Using security features and invisible ink on the ballot booklets.

## **Decisions of the Law Interpretation Bureau**

In order to supplement and build upon the interpretation of the applicable election law in a way that enhances citizens' rights, the IEC sought support from the Law Interpretation Bureau to interpret some provisions of the law. Some of the key interpretations were:

- Stating whether a woman candidate who wins the highest number of votes in an electoral district where seats are allocated for Circassians/Chechens or Christians is deemed a winner of the seat reserved for women or a winner of the seat allocated for Circassians/Chechens or Christians. According to the Bureau's interpretation, if a Circassian/Chechen or Christian woman wins the highest number of votes, she is competing for the seat reserved for her community in the relevant district on religious or ethnic grounds; any woman may compete for the additional seat reserved for women, regardless of religion or ethnicity.
- Stating whether the term "reached" in paragraph A of Article 3 of the election law means a voter who has "reached" the age of 17 and started the eighteenth year, or the voter who

has completed the age of 18 and started the nineteenth year. The Bureau interpreted this provision by stating that what is meant is that the voter who has completed 17 years and has started the eighteenth year 90 days before polling day is eligible to vote.

## **Guarantees of Integrity and Transparency**

**In accordance with the election law and executive instructions, the IEC provided a number of key guarantees of integrity of the electoral process. These included, amongst others:**

- Using indelible ink to prevent multiple voting.
- Linking all polling and counting centres electronically, and marking the voter's name in the electronic system in all centres, in addition to marking the paper version of the voter list when a voter votes.
- Adopting a ballot paper/booklet that contains the names, numbers and emblems of lists and the names and photographs of candidates. This prevents any violation of the secrecy of the vote, especially for illiterate voters, and contributes to the prevention of vote buying.
- Adopting the principle of unifying voting processes, whereby polling and counting of votes take place in the same room and in the presence of candidates and their agents, as well as local and international observers and media representatives. A copy of the counting form is posted at the door of the polling station.
- Pre-assignment of voters to polling centres and stations to prevent multiple voting.
- Ensuring the right of list and candidate agents to observe the different phases of the electoral process.
- Ensuring the right of media to observe the electoral process and the way it is organized.
- Facilitating the missions of local and international observers to observe the phases of the electoral process.
- Posting a copy of the counting form for each polling station at the door of the polling station, and making available a copy of another form at the level of the polling centre for candidates, their agents, observers and other attendees.
- Stipulating the different penalties for different violations and offences committed by those manipulating with the will of voters.
- Following the highest levels of transparency and informing the media and voters about all details during election day, and announcing any violations that were remedied at once and on a case by case basis.

## Managing Election Operations

At an early stage, and as part of its preparations to conduct the election, the IEC worked to develop a comprehensive plan of needs, that included the organizational framework for the electoral process and defining the logistics support, finances and human resources required to organize the different phases of the electoral process. All this was done in coordination with the different relevant government bodies. The IEC aimed to attract staff from these institutions and recruit them as permanent or temporary employees of the IEC, to be members of election committees or polling and counting committees, and they received up-to-date training.

After conducting a comprehensive assessment of polling and counting centres, the IEC developed an integrated plan to fully equip these locations, and collaborated with the relevant bodies to upgrade these centres. The IEC also equipped the results tabulation centres in the various districts.

## Training of Human Resources

As part of its preparation for the election process, the IEC focused on training, being one of the factors contributing to the success of this process. The standards used during training helped to achieve a qualitative leap in the concept of communicating electoral information to cadres engaged in the electoral process. The Commission developed a comprehensive training plan for personnel at the level of IEC headquarters, the election committees, support staff in all stages of the process, and the polling and counting officials on polling day. The training plan considered the following:

- Professionalism in the training programmes.
- Inclusiveness of all groups engaged in the election process.
- Inclusiveness of all levels of human resources working in the election.
- Choosing professional and qualified trainers to implement the training programmes.
- Considering international standards to prepare trainees during the training, especially for the staff working inside the polling and counting centres on election day.
- Preparing the training halls to suit the specialized training provided for each group of trainees.
- Following training methodologies and role play which simulated the electoral process, in order to conduct training in a way that is realistic and feasible.

## **Electronic Connectivity**

**In implementing electronic linkage, the IEC aimed to:**

- Prevent multiple/repeated voting, as a voter is allowed to vote in one centre only, where the voter's name is electronically marked in the central database.
- Verify a voter's data to prevent fraud, as the voter's data and picture appear to the committee and to all attendees in the polling station.
- Identify and announce directly voter turnout data and receive immediate statistics such as age group and gender, which are displayed before observers and media representatives.
- Obtain and know the preliminary results regularly, and acquire an electronic report of the results at the level of the centre for the purpose of audit and detecting mistakes.
- Follow up and monitor the polling centres in the electoral districts through the geographical information system.

**The IEC offered updates to the electronic linkage for the 2016 election by:**

- Using advanced techniques to maintain the safety and security of the linkage network, such as VPN.
- Applying direct statistical analysis of voters' data, which was visually and easily displayed.
- Using, for the first time, the data analysis system and geographical distribution system to assign voters to polling centres.
- Extracting an electronic tabulation form at the level of the centre.
- Using cameras to film the ballot papers/booklets during counting.
- Using backup solutions for electronic connectivity, in addition to the main solutions.

## **Media, communications and awareness**

The IEC adopted the phrase “Jordan Votes” as a slogan for raising awareness and education on the electoral process. The slogan was chosen according to specific standards that emphasize, amongst other things, its comprehensiveness, the enhancement of popular participation in the election, and compatibility with the election law. The slogan also reflected the transformation from active to passive registration of voters. Besides this, it can be used for the upcoming municipal and decentralized elections, so as to be instilled in the Jordanian voter's mind.

The IEC used the available and most updated tools and mechanisms to provide outreach and education, fulfilling the principle of equality in delivering information to citizens, and in

order to reflect the bright image of Jordan before the international observers. The IEC used printed publications/fliers, which were distributed by volunteers with daily newspapers, in addition to posters and booklets in the polling centres, an atlas (district map manual) as well as signs and banners on street columns, bridges and in public squares.

Awareness videos and radio recordings were produced and broadcast through different audio-visual media outlets for free. The IEC also used SMS and email, and produced a special song for the electoral process, a motivational theatre play for youth and mobile phone applications. It also provided a service for enquiries on polling centres, by providing a free line for all networks, where people could enquire by sending their national number. A total of 3,039,376 citizens enquired about their polling centre through this service.

The IEC was greatly interested in using social media tools to spread awareness and to answer voters' questions interactively. It held 123 face-to-face meetings with voters in different locations in the Kingdom through workshops where an interpretation and explanation of the law and different measures was provided, with positive interaction and comments. Responses of the IEC through social media tools reached a 97% response-rate within seven minutes.

A solid media plan was also implemented. It was transparent, open and proactive in providing information and in positive networking with the different media outlets and participation in all media activities. In addition, press releases were issued on a daily basis about the election process, which contributed to implementing a participatory methodology with the media, increasing awareness and education, and encouraging participation.

The IEC also provided different means of facilitation for the various media organizations, such as journalist accreditation. 200 media organizations were accredited, of which 140 were local and 60 were international, with a total of 1900 male and female journalists. The election media centre was established to facilitate access to information.

The 2016 parliamentary election witnessed a clear increase in the number of local organizations that submitted applications for observation, and an increase of the number of male and female observers. A total of 20 applications for observation were submitted to the IEC, of which 17 fulfilled the requirements for observation. These comprised six coalitions and 11 civil society organizations. The IEC reviewed the applications to see whether they fulfilled the conditions stated in the executive instructions for approval by the IEC Board of Commissioners, and then issued the observer identification badges which entitled the observers to enter and observe the different phases of the election process. The number of observers, including reserves, who applied for accreditation through the electronic system was 14,962 male and female observers. Women represented around 40.55% of the total local observers. The number of observers whose required documents were proven to be complete by the IEC observation units was a total of 11,473 male and female observers. The number of international observation organizations was 16, with 396 male and female observers, and the number of support groups for the international observation teams was 227.

## Challenges

The IEC faced a number of challenges while managing the processes for the election of the 18th Chamber of Deputies. The most important of these were:

- New election law and by-law: Despite all the advantages of the new election law, the IEC nonetheless faced some difficulties in interpreting this law to the Jordanian voter, due to the ‘one-man-one-vote’ concept of the previous law being deeply rooted in the mind of the voter. In addition, a number of candidates responded to this law in an individual manner, away from the collective work envisaged by the concept of lists. This was evident during the personal election campaigning, with some candidates inviting voters to vote for them individually instead of for their lists.
- Inflexibility of timelines (time constraints): The IEC did not have many options in setting the date for the parliamentary election, or on other relevant timelines including the period between the dissolution of the House of Deputies and the issuance of the Royal Decree to conduct the election. The period coincided with the Holy Month of Ramadan and the Eid Al-Fitr festival, the Hajj pilgrimage season and Eid Al-Adha. The IEC was obliged to conduct the election before the start of the FIFA Women’s World Cup, due to the rules adopted by FIFA, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA).
- The inherited weak confidence in management of the electoral process and in the Chamber of Deputies itself: This relatively affected citizen participation and election turnout. In addition, there were previous cases of suspicious crimes in earlier elections that are still associated, although this is lessening. The IEC exerted tremendous efforts to change this negative image and to convince voters of the integrity and transparency that they seek and eventually achieve the desired credibility.
- Implementing the principle of accessibility: The IEC is still struggling to find solutions to implementing the principle of accessibility in all its details as one of the electoral best practices, and making it easy for eligible voters to practise their right to vote. Some of the challenges include the inability to date to resolve the problem of facilitating voting for expatriates, and also for the hospitalized and those in prison. In addition, some polling and counting centres are still not well-equipped to receive persons with disabilities.
- *Enabling election officials to vote:* In accordance with the election law, the IEC took the required measures to facilitate voting for election officials. These numbered more than 45,000 persons. The geographical expansion of some electoral districts aided the selection of officials who could be assigned to work in the same district as where they were registered to vote, as they were unable to leave the polling station or centre. This was particularly for heads and members of the polling and counting committees, administrative and technical liaison officers, and centre managers and assistants working in the various polling centres. Other election staff in different locations were able to leave their locations for a limited period of time in order to vote without obstructing the election.

In this way, the Commission was able to avoid any conflict of interest resulting from kinship or personal relations and connections between candidates and staff of the polling and counting centres, which might affect the integrity of the election, while at the same time providing them with the opportunity to practise their right to vote.

- Some civil society organizations, media entities and political parties were not able to play their role in a wider partnership with the IEC due to their limited capacities and capabilities.
- The Commission faced challenges in monitoring publicity campaigns, even though it established the following:
  - Setting a financial ceiling for campaign expenditure according to criteria based on the size of the electoral district, the number of voters in the district and the cost of living.
  - Requiring opening of a bank account to disclose the sources of funding and how campaign funds are spent.
  - Each list appointing an authorized auditor to audit the list's accounts.
  - Formation of coordinating committees comprised of the relevant bodies, to remove campaign materials in the electoral districts and recruitment of field observers to follow up on the monitoring of campaigning.

However, such challenges persisted as some candidates and media outlets failed to abide by the legal timeframe for the start and end of the campaign period, including the election silence period. Besides, there was a weak response by some government bodies to remove campaign materials or to prevent campaigning in accordance with the law.

- The short timeframe available for the IEC to attract field staff, especially given its eagerness to implement measures of transparency and equal opportunities.
- Some of the election committees did not work full time, which caused delays in their performing some of the tasks assigned to them.
- The short timeframe dedicated to training more than 70,000 staff engaged in the election placed pressure on the IEC. While the IEC was able to deal with this problem, it was nevertheless a challenge.

## **Lessons learned, future steps and areas for development and improvement**

1. The IEC success in managing and implementing the election for the 18<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Deputies held on 20 September 2016, according to most reports of international and local observers, is the fruit of joint efforts of many partners, including civil society organizations, political parties, public and private media entities, and other relevant government bodies. It was a free, transparent and fair election. This can be attributed to the following:
  - Early planning to conduct the election. From the moment the Board of Commissioners was formed, the IEC started to develop a plan of what was needed for the election, including human resource requirements, election materials and supplies, and requirements for electronic linkage, all of which were greatly effective effect in making the election process a success.
  - The IEC adopting and implementing an unprecedented, wide-scale outreach and education campaign. It was a nationwide campaign that was inclusive of all citizens, including women, youth, disabled persons, civil society organizations and political parties. Face-to-face meetings and direct contact with citizens also had a great impact on the success of this exercise, and reflected positively on the number of valid ballots which constituted 98.3% while invalid ballots were no more than 1.7%. This was due to the effective and successful awareness and education campaigns in explaining the legal and procedural requirements.
  - Digital social media used in this election, which played a vital role in the success of the IEC's management of the awareness and education campaign. Various social media tools were used, targeting groups of young voters. This reflected positively on the participation level of these groups. It also prompted positive interaction on different electoral issues in a clear and transparent way, to the extent that this even covered issues relating to the electoral budget and tenders issued for election materials.
  - Openness towards all partners and building real partnerships with them, including the media, civil society organizations and political parties; working with them transparently and consulting them on policies and executive instructions.
  - Openness towards international and local observers, and facilitation of their accreditation and missions.
  - Openness towards international organizations, and benefiting from international standards and best practices in a way that is relevant in the Jordanian context.
  - Adopting a training strategy that targeted all colleagues in the election process, using different training packages according to the target group and role, and employing practical training methodologies, according to the most up-to-date international standards.

- The IEC was extremely interested in maintaining contact with voters and citizens, and listening to their views, enquiries and complaints, through activating the communication and complaint Call Centre 117100. This had a positive impact on IEC professionalism and its preparedness and response to any enquiries or comments.
- The electronic linkage of all polling and counting centres, polling stations and results tabulation centres with the information centre at the Commission, and using technology in the elections, had a great impact on obtaining accurate results and on reconciling the electronic results with the paper results. This also reflected positively on the IEC's ability to monitor the field and increased the level of accuracy and integrity of the electoral process, regaining the Jordanian voters' confidence in the election.

2. There was a noticeable improvement in the level of citizen participation in the election for the 18<sup>th</sup> House of Deputies compared to the 2013 election, as the number of voters increased to 1,492,400 compared to 1,288,000 in 2013. This is an improvement to be esteemed for the IEC and its efforts in spreading awareness and education and accessing citizens using all available means.
3. The level of governmental support to the IEC was evident but there was no interference on the part of government, and the IEC maintained its independence in decision-making.
4. The media played a vital role in the election process and had a great effect in its success.
5. The IEC exerted clear efforts to empower women in conducting the election process, by appointing women as members in various committees such as election committees, polling and counting committees and the Special Committee. In addition, the IEC targeted women in outreach and education campaigns, by dedicating a large number of workshops for organizations interested in women's issues. Such efforts resulted in an increase in the number of women Members of Parliament to 20, or 15.38% of the total of 130 Members of Parliament, as compared with 18 out of 150 parliamentarians in 2013, which represented only 12%. This is considered a notable improvement.

The percentage of woman on the voter list was around 53% and the percentage of woman candidates was around 20%, compared to only 14% in 2013. It is worth mentioning that such figures, whether relating to women's membership in the different committees or their participation in voting, could have been higher were it not for certain social and cultural conditions that in several cases hindered such an increase.

6. The IEC paid great interest to the youth and voluntary work by involving young volunteers in outreach and education programmes, using methods that suit this age group such as social media platforms and tools. The outcome was apparent in an increase in voters from this group, with 45% of voters aged 35 or under, which is a high rate by any means, and 823,313 voters aged 40 or under, which represents a turnout of 55.16%. There were more than 10,000 young volunteers of both genders, of which around 45% were female, which formed a benchmark in the 2016 election.

7. The IEC succeeded a great deal in facilitating the participation of disabled voters, through taking measures such as:
  - Translating and printing the legislation and executive instructions in Braille.
  - Preparing polling and counting centres and buildings with ramps for people with mobility disabilities.
  - Enabling this group to choose their escorts to assist them in voting, if desired.
  - Deploying volunteers in centres, to assist and guide disabled voters.
  - Making available a number of sign language interpreters in polling centres, in addition to other public outreach materials.
8. Despite the success achieved by the IEC, there were some errors that were more singular in nature and did not affect the integrity of the election process overall. Such errors were observed and received due attention by the IEC, in order to benefit from the experience.
9. The offence relating to ballot boxes that took place in the district of Central Badia is deemed a criminal act. We are still following up on this issue with the competent authorities to uncover the violators who committed this act that harmed the bright image of the Jordanian election, as acknowledged by local and international observer groups.

## **Future steps and areas of development**

Despite the fact that the IEC succeeded in running and implementing the election for the 18<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Deputies, as acknowledged by observers and followers, nevertheless, from its long term vision and established concept as a learning organization, the IEC always sees that efforts exerted can be better improved and developed by adopting a number of recommendations. The most important of these are:

### **1. Updating the legal framework for the election**

The election law for 2016 election formed a very positive move in the progress of political reform. It provided an opportunity to take positive steps in procedures for the 2016 election. As this law was being implemented for the first time, the IEC sees itself as duty bound to comprehensively review the law from a procedural perspective, based on the Commission's current assessment of the recent election in cooperation with all partners and stakeholders. It is hoped that the outcome of this assessment addresses the election law, and the related executive instructions prepared by IEC in accordance with the provisions of the election law and the IEC Law, in a way that enables the IEC to submit its recommendations to the relevant authorities.

### **2. Reviewing the procedural framework for polling and counting processes**

The IEC is committed to reviewing the procedures for polling, counting and result tabulation, and designing the forms relevant to these operations. It is also committed to taking into consideration the recommendations made within the reports submitted by international and local observer groups, provided that they are compatible with the law and may make things easier for voters and staff in the field.

The IEC seeks to retain the good procedures and practices implemented in the last election, such as assigning voters to polling stations in advance, using cameras during the counting of votes, and establishing a new cycle of audit by adopting the counting form at the level of the polling and counting centre.

### **3. Enhancing IEC institutional and individual capacities**

The IEC organizational structure, institutional framework and recruitment system should be reviewed. Depending on the evaluation of these aspects, necessary amendments should be made which, if approved, will develop and improve IEC performance and efficiency in a way that is in line with international best practices in election management. This would require a change in the concept of election management and its mechanisms for communicating with civil society organizations, research and study centres, political parties, youth, women, persons with disabilities, voters and citizens.

It is essential to develop an executive plan for improving IEC staff capacities. There is also a need to prepare and adopt the necessary measures to follow up on and evaluate IEC officials and the performance of committees, linking performance to job advancement. The IEC will review the criteria for choosing heads and members of election committees, and polling and counting committees and data entry clerks.

The IEC must **enhance its relations with other public bodies and all partners and stakeholders** in a way that supports its work and enhances its independence. This is for the purpose of providing a democratic environment that guarantees free and fair elections which can be conducted through general and secret voting, and which safeguard the right of the voter to choose her/his representative.

### **4. Encouraging surveys, research and election-related questionnaires**

The IEC looks forward to establishing a "**community of knowledge**" on the various aspects of the electoral process. Part of the burden of achieving this community of knowledge may lie with the research and study centres, political parties and civil society organizations. The IEC is therefore committed to providing the data and information to enable researchers to conduct their surveys, which might result in recommendations that may be translated into suggestions to amend the legislation and improve the election process for the future.

In relation to this, the IEC is keen to encourage research and surveys, and create a platform for dialogue and discussion around the various topics related to elections. This requires communication with partners to reinforce citizens' confidence in the electoral process and in the role of the IEC.

5. The IEC intends to go forward in establishing a regional training centre, specialized in electoral processes, in partnership with relevant local, Arab and international organizations. Such a centre could serve as a hub for election administrations of the Arab region, which may benefit from the accumulated experience of the IEC and the political and secure environment of Jordan.
6. There is a need for more training for media on some media topics relevant to elections, such as investigative reporting, and in-depth coverage of some topics such as illicit political money, electoral fraud and other topics. In addition, there is a need for more attention on covering issues related to electoral districts, as well as training journalists based in the different regions of the kingdom.
7. Discussing the possible mechanisms for enabling expatriates and administrative detainees and patients admitted to hospitals to practise their constitutional rights to vote.
8. Seeking to activate and execute penalties against the selling and buying of votes and against electoral campaigns that violate the rules, and increase coordination with partners in order to address this situation from a cultural and social perspective.
9. Studying international developments in using advanced technology in elections, and introducing much of this to Jordan.
10. We are currently conducting an assessment of many large sports halls as facilities for polling and counting centres, which would be easier for voters, less costly and more sustainable, and the possibility of providing voters with transportation to ensure their access to polling and counting centres.
11. Augmenting and institutionalizing procedures and measures adopted by IEC in the last election, which had a great impact in strengthening election integrity and transparency.
12. Pursuing the implementation of the smart card in coordination with key partners (Ministry of Communications, CSPD) in order to fully apply this technology to promote election integrity.
13. Building on what was conducted in terms of the wide outreach and education campaigns, which used many methods and had a positive impact on increasing the awareness of citizens of the legal and procedural frameworks, and increasing voter turnout in the next elections.
14. Working on making use of the 12 Ministry of Education centres allocated for deaf and dumb persons, to facilitate voting for this group of people with special needs.
15. The IEC shall continue to produce relevant laws and executive instructions in Braille for use by people with visual impairment. The IEC will study the possibility of producing ballot papers in Braille in the future, and of using an automated speaking machine to help people with visual impairment.