

IEC unveils election plan

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on Wednesday, 10 October, unveiled an elaborate election plan that includes a voter registration campaign to attract as many South Africans as possible to participate in next year's general elections.



The IEC has set aside Saturday, 9 November and Sunday, 10 November for a nationwide voter registration weekend. More than 2m people will be targeted during that period.

The commission also unveiled the official logo for the elections at an event in Midrand that was inspired by the country's 20 years of democracy.

"We were trying to figure out what kind of reasons the people were giving for participating in the electoral process. What was common in those responses was that South Africans are excited about being South African," said campaign head Nomsa Masuku.

While the date for the elections has not been proclaimed, chairman Pansy Tlakula said the IEC will pull out all the stops to ensure as many South Africans as possible cast their votes next year.

The Constitution dictates that elections should be held within 90 days from the date of the last elections. This means the elections will be held anytime between May and June next year.

Fifth election for SA

This will be South Africa's fifth general election since the landmark poll of 1994 and will coincide with the '20 years of freedom' celebrations.

"We are preparing ourselves for an exceptionally high voter turnout. South Africans have repeatedly shown that they will rise to the occasion and we are confident that the opportunity of the coming elections will be no different," Tlakula said.

Currently, the voters' roll contains just over 23m names and the IEC is targeting 25m South Africans to vote in next year's election, the largest since 1994.

According to statistics available on the IEC website, the largest number of registered voters on the voters' roll are between the ages of 30 and 39, representing more than 5m people. This group is followed by those aged between 20 and 29, about 4.5m people. "There are less than 200 000 registered voters in the younger ages of 18 and 19, and the IEC wants to increase this number," Tlakula added.

She said the registration weekend can be used by registered voters as an opportunity to inspect their details on the voters' roll and voters who have changed their physical addresses since their last registration are asked to register in their new voting districts.

"We make a special call on young people, especially those who will be eligible to register to vote for the first time, to show up in your numbers on the registration weekend," she said.

Chief electoral officer Mosotho Moepya said the voters' roll remains critical to the credibility of the country's elections. It is being updated every month against the national population register.

"Since the voters' roll was compiled, the IEC has managed to increase enrolment by 21.3%. This is a net increase after taking into account those voters who are on the rejected portion of the voters' roll," Moepya said.

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