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Puntland must learn lessons from 2013 in its democratisation process

PUNSAA today called for renewed efforts from the Puntland authorities and its international partners to promote and support processes of democratisation as it launched *Puntland at the Polls*, an assessment of the reasons behind the failure of July 2013's local elections.

"PUNSAA welcomes the initiatives taken by the new Puntland authorities in support of democracy," said Noor Osman, Chairman of PUNSAA, "The creation of a specific Ministry of Constitution, Democratisation and Federal Affairs is an important step and recognises the desire of Puntland's citizens to establish a democratic, multiparty political system and to move away from clan-based politics."

Puntland at the Polls identified a number of reasons for the failure of last year's election process, including a short time frame, a lack of consensus about the process, the failure to demarcate boundaries and conduct voter registration, and a constrained environment for freedom of expression. Since its establishment, the Ministry of the Constitution, Democratisation and Federal Affairs has developed a strategic plan for 2014-2019 which sets out to support the development of Puntland as a democratic state within the federal Somalia.

"PUNSAA urges the Ministry of Constitution, Democratisation and Federal Affairs to evaluate carefully the reasons behind the failure of the 2013 elections and ensure that it specifically works to address these issues," said Noor Osman "This will be vital in ensuring the success of its ongoing and future efforts."

Puntland at the Polls sets out a number of recommendations for the Puntland authorities, many of which have been identified as priorities under the strategic plan. This includes engagement with Puntland's citizens, reviewing the Puntland Constitution and supporting civic education.

"PUNSAA urges the international community to continue to support Puntland in its democratisation efforts and calls for continued dialogue with the authorities and non-state actors to ensure the success of this process," said Noor Osman

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Notes to editors:

1. Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA) is a platform that represents, coordinates and harmonises non-state actors' engagement with local, state, national and international development actors through inclusive and participatory process to create favourable policies that promote peaceful lives in Puntland.
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