



ECP Coordination with Election Stakeholders

Pre-U32/18-April-2013

Election officials hold 152 meetings with stakeholders

Introduction and Summary

Free and Fair Election Network's (FAFEN's) District Long-Term Observers (DLTOs) deployed across the country interviewed District Election Commissioners (DECs) between March 25 and April 1, 2013. The interviews with DECs were conducted in 31 districts of Punjab, 14 in Sindh, nine in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and one each in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Balochistan and Frontier Regions (FRs).

Observers asked the DECs about their meetings with election stakeholders, which are essential to ensure transparency, efficiency and accountability in local election administration. FAFEN has classified the electoral stakeholders who met with election officials into seven groups: civil society organizations, political parties, district government officials, media, security officials, former Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies (MNAs/MPAs), and election observer groups.

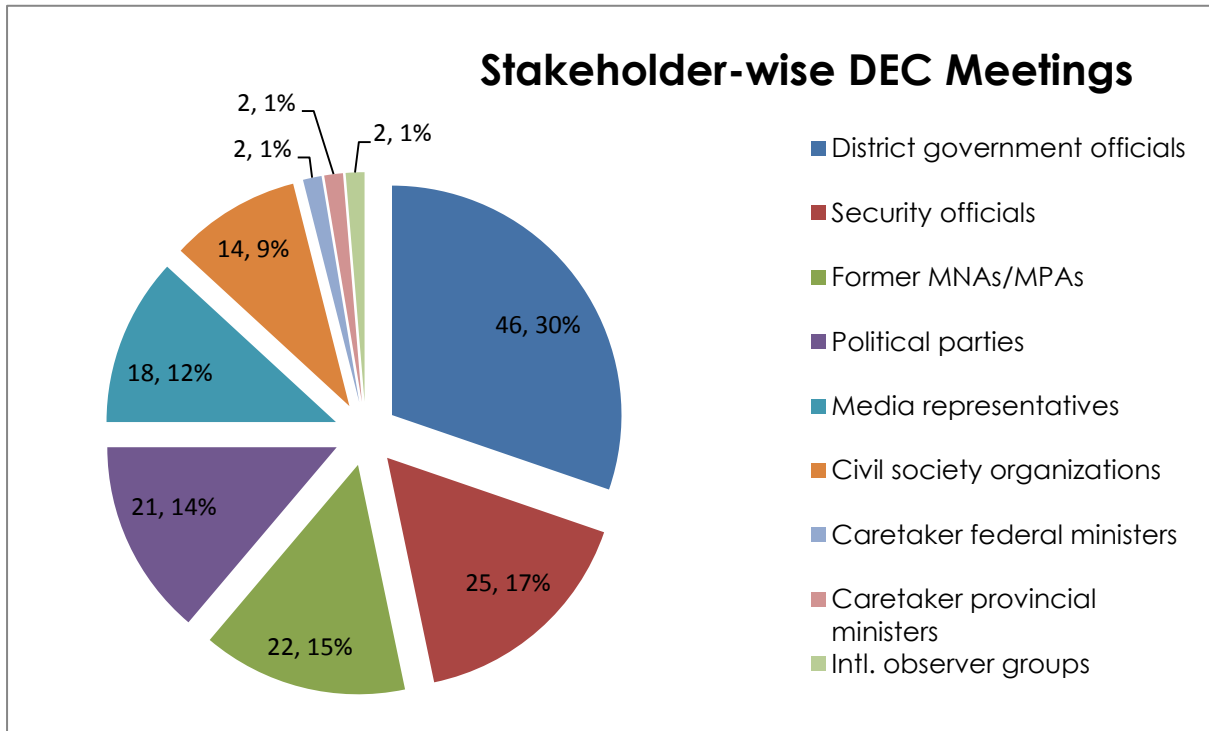
DECs indicated that they had held 152 meetings with various stakeholders in 57 districts. According to the data collected by FAFEN observers, DECs held the highest number of meetings with district government officials (30%), followed by security officials (17%), and former MNAs/MPAs (15%). Fewer meetings were held with political parties, media, civil society, or observers.

DECs in 31 Punjab districts held 80 meetings with election stakeholders or about three stakeholder meetings per district, while DECs in 14 Sindh districts reported holding 23 meetings, or fewer than two meetings per district. Nine DECs in KP conducted 38 meetings, or just over four per district; nine stakeholder meetings were reported from one FATA Agency; and Balochistan and FR officials reported one stakeholder meeting each.

DEC Meetings, by Categories of Stakeholders

According to the data collected by FAFEN observers, DECs in 57 districts held the highest number of meetings with district government officials (46 out of 152 or 30%), followed by 25 (17%) meetings with security officials, 22 meetings (15%) with former MNAs/MPAs.

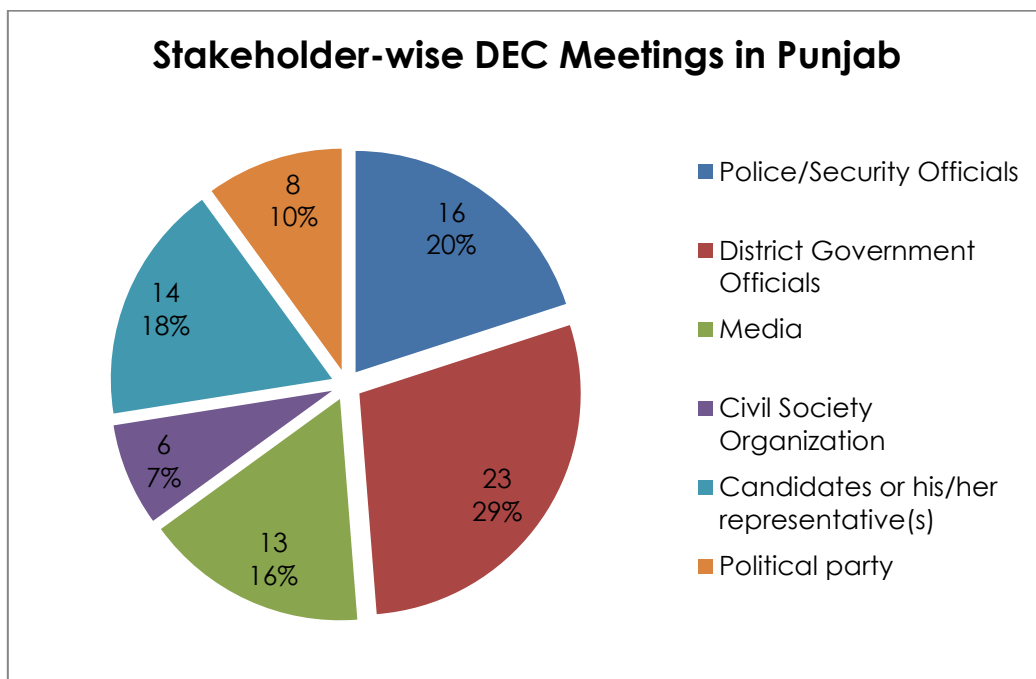
Another 21 meetings were held with political parties (14%), 18 (12%) with media representatives, 14 (9%) with civil society organizations, and two each (1% each) with caretaker federal ministers, caretaker provincial ministers and international observer groups.



DEC Meetings with Stakeholders, by Province

1. Punjab

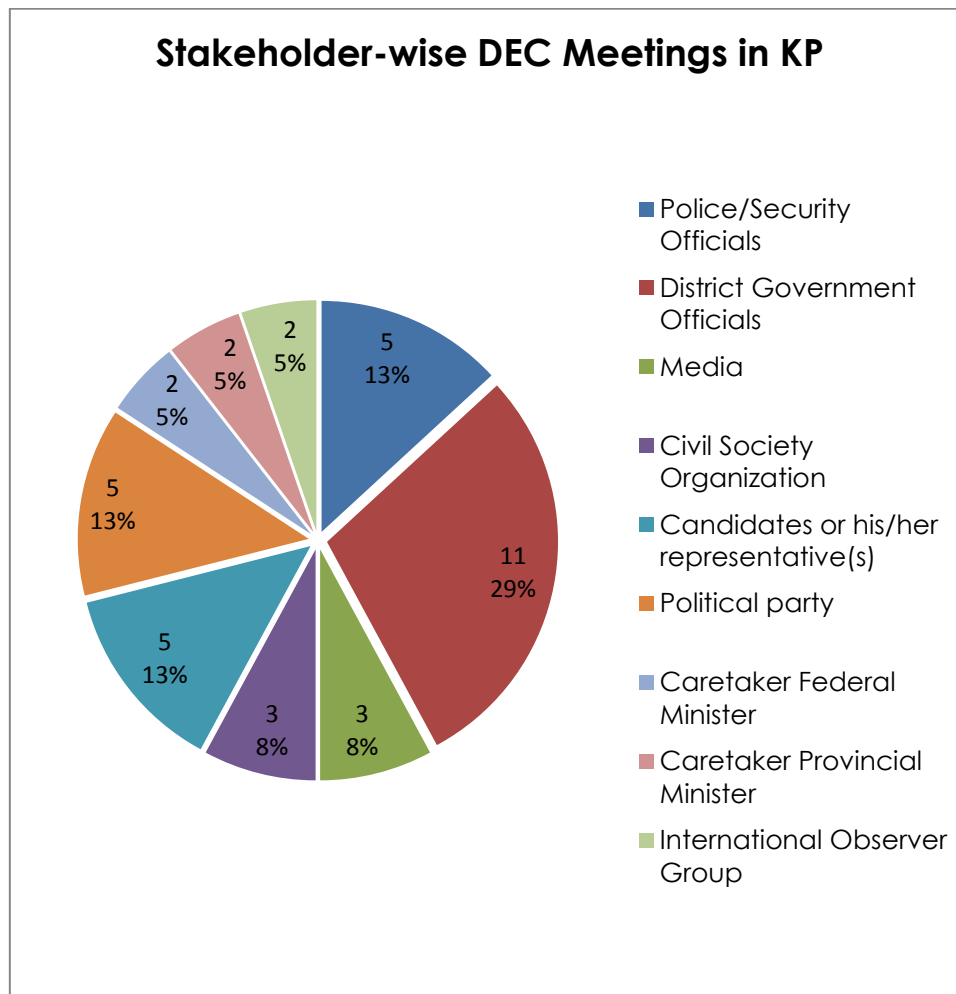
DECs in 31 Punjab districts stated that they held 80 meetings with various stakeholders or about three stakeholder meetings per district. A total of 23 (29%) of these meetings were with district government officials, followed by 16 (20%) with security officials, 14 (18%) with former MNAs/MPAs, 13 (16%) with media representatives, eight (10%) with political party representatives and six (7%) with civil society organizations.



2. Khyber Pukhtunkhwa

Nine DEC in KP conducted 38 meetings with various election stakeholders, or just over four per district. About one-third of these meetings were with district government officials (11, or 29%), followed by former MNAs/MPAs, political parties and security officials (5 each, or 39% combined).

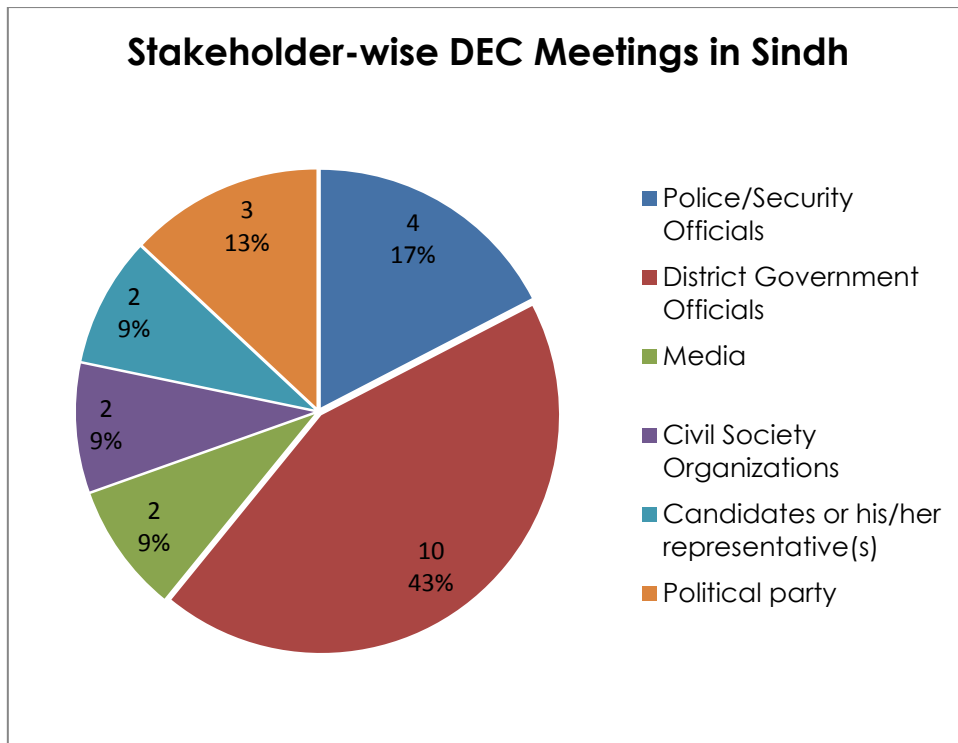
The DECs held three meetings (8%) each with media representatives and civil society organizations and two each (5%) with international observer groups, caretaker federal ministers and caretaker provincial ministers.



3. Sindh

DECs in 14 Sindh districts reported holding 23 meetings with various electoral stakeholders or fewer than two meetings per district. As in Punjab, the highest number of meetings held by Sindh DECs were with district government officials (10, or 43%), followed by security officials (4, or 17%) and political party representatives (3, or 13%).

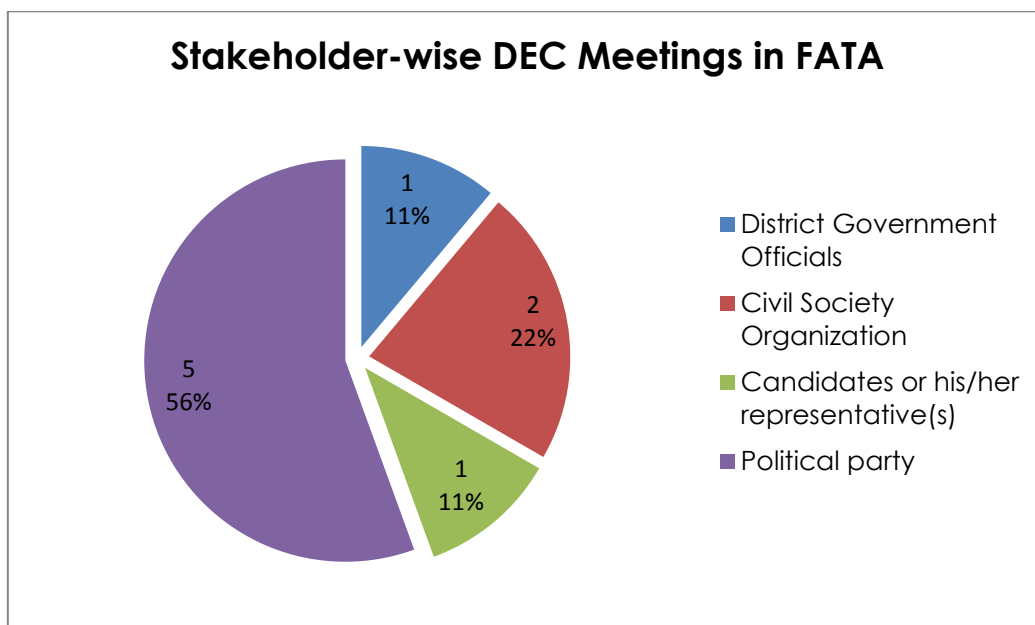
The DECs held two meetings each with former MNAs/MPAs, media representatives and civil society organizations. They held no meetings with caretaker federal ministers, caretaker provincial ministers or international observer groups.



4. FATA, FRs and Balochistan

Nine stakeholder meetings were reported in Kurram Agency (FATA). Of these, five (56%) meetings were held with political party representatives, two (22%) with civil society organizations and one each (11% each) with former MNAs and district government officials.

FAFEN observers from Balochistan and the FRs reported one meeting each. A DEC in Balochistan met with district government officials, while a DEC in FR met with a civil society organization.



Recommendations

Based on interviews with election officials around the country, FAFEN recommends that:

1. Election officials should meet with all local election stakeholders, including election observers, and share the maximum possible information of public interest.
2. Election officials should meet with representatives of all political parties and candidates on an equitable basis to avoid any perception of political bias.
3. Election officials should meet with all relevant security departments to ensure security during the pre-election campaign period and Election Day.

About FAFEN

The Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), established in 2006, is a coalition of 42 leading civil society organizations working to strengthen all forms of democratic accountabilities in Pakistan. Governed by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA), FAFEN also implements robust programs in-between elections related to monitoring parliamentary affairs, connecting constituents to their elected representatives, monitoring the performance of public and elected institutions and advocating electoral and democratic reforms.

FAFEN Election Program

FAFEN is implementing a long-term election observation program nationwide, including both pre and post-electoral processes. FAFEN has deployed almost 400 District and Constituency Long-Term Observers (DLTOs and CLTOs) across the country to monitor all phases of elections. In addition, FAFEN will deploy more than 43,000 trained, non-partisan citizens to monitor polling stations across the country on Election Day. FAFEN's 10-month observation process, which began on February 1, 2013, helps keep all election stakeholders informed on issues relevant to fairness and transparency at every stage of the election process.

FAFEN Election Observation Methodology

FAFEN's election observation activities are based on the Constitution and laws of Pakistan, global best practice standards for elections, as well as the legal obligations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Pakistan in 2010. All FAFEN observers adhere to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) Code of Conduct for National Observers as well as the Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations (April 2012). FAFEN LTOs use standardized checklists to report electronically to the FAFEN Election Observation Secretariat in Islamabad regularly. FAFEN compiles data and information from around the country to issue regular thematic updates for the consideration of voters and election stakeholders.

FAFEN LTOs monitor and report on the activities of District Election Commissioners (DECs) and other ECP officials related to preparations for elections, including appointment and training of election officials, and the process of candidate nominations. LTOs also observe compliance with the ECP's Code of Conduct for political parties and candidates, and compliance of the executive branch with legal responsibilities and ECP regulations, including restrictions on transfers of civil service personnel and initiation of new development schemes. In addition, LTOs monitor political and electoral intimidation and violence, the actions of the police and other security forces, and the overall political environment during the pre-election period.