

Comprehensive Strategy. The Action will directly contribute **SDG 16 on ‘Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions’**.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis: The transitional period of the peace agreement in South Sudan is to end in general elections. For these elections to be transparent, inclusive and credible, supporting the operational aspects (hardware) of election implementation addresses only part of the picture. It is foremost essential to support the creation of **enabling conditions** that allow citizens to participate in a meaningful way, and that lead to **election outcomes that are seen as genuine/accepted by all**. This requires citizen’s **trust in processes** including enabling conditions for appropriate legislative frameworks (e.g. national elections’ act and political parties’ act), respect for human rights, adequate institutions, inclusive public education and participation, enabling security arrangements, etc.

As the first elections in South Sudan, intended to bring in representative institutions under an agreed political framework, it will be particularly important to ensure all communities are equally able to participate – as voters, as candidates and in decision making processes on the electoral framework. This principle is at the core of the concept of “free and fair elections” envisaged within the peace agreement. However, there are a number of groups who are often underrepresented and marginalized from political life, and targeted efforts may be required to ensure the equal and meaningful participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, refugees and other minority or political groups for a fully inclusive post-transitional state.

Elections are inherently **complex political and technical processes**. They comprise many inter-related sub-processes, rely upon a number of institutions, and involve an array of stakeholders, including the public at large. Hence, the relevance and need for **EU to connect with a holistic and coordinated multilateral agenda** (in particular connected with UNMISS’ mandate) **on an enabling environment for elections**. The electoral process and the technical preparations will be dependent on political buy-in from the transitional government and the parties to the peace agreement.

The action aims to support an enabling environment for inclusive democratic processes to take place in South Sudan. The action is **complementary to AAP 2021** on its intervention on **permanent constitution making** and investment in the South Sudan Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilisation, Resilience (RSRTF) linked to operations of UNMISS, the latter including **thematic window** on elections.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action:

Main stakeholders in the Action will be national and local authorities and civil society, and multilateral partners in particular UNMISS, and international and national NGOs, as well as regional partners (the African Union – AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development – IGAD).

A) Rights holders

Representatives of the South Sudanese society, including internally displaced and refugees, have a crucial role in the ongoing and upcoming reforms and processes which provide for direct and indirect participation of right holders, including:

- Youth: South Sudan’s young population needs to be empowered in the political, economic and rights-based approach agenda.
- Women: The considerable gender disparities need to be addressed. Girls and women in vulnerable situations need to be protected and have a voice in the public debate.
- Civil society: civic space needs to widen, in particular in the context of the permanent constitution making process, elections, but also on Human Rights and public accountability.
- Churches are an important stakeholder in South Sudan, being present and reaching out to the population throughout the country, including remote and difficult accessible areas.
- Marginalised communities and people that are living in the most vulnerable situations (such as displaced people, persons with disabilities, people living in remote, natural and man-made disaster and conflict-affected areas) need to be included.