

# **ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

*Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001*

**No. ECI/PN/49/2022**

**17.05.2022**

## **PRESS NOTE**

**ECI to lead Democracy Cohort on ‘Election Integrity’ in partnership with 100 Democratic Countries consequent to ‘Summit for Democracy’**

**ECI to share experience and expertise with EMBs of other Democracies**

**ECI to initiate several Capacity Building and training programmes for EMBs**

A four member US delegation led by HE Ms. Uzra Zeya, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights called on the Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioner Shri Anup Chandra Pandey at Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi today. As part of ‘Summit for Democracy’, a decision has been taken to request India to lead the ‘Democracy Cohort on Election Integrity’ and share its knowledge, technical expertise and experiences with other democracies of the world. ECI has been requested to also provide training and capacity building programmes to Election Management Bodies (EMBs) across the world and provide technical consultancy as per needs of other EMBs.



During the meeting, CEC Sh. Rajiv Kumar and EC Sh. Anup Chandra Pandey shared the experiences of ECI and explained how ECI have not only been conducting free, fair, peaceful and credible elections but also making these inclusive and accessible. They shared the new initiatives taken by ECI, use of new information technology as a great enabler for not only voters at large but

also for all stakeholders like political parties, candidates and other members of the society, making all election related processes and voter services seamless, hassle-free and participative.

Sh. Rajiv Kumar also spoke about recent best practices such as postal ballot facility to 80+ senior citizen voters and Persons with Disabilities. Election Commissioner Sh. Anup Chandra Pandey explained how the grassrooted education and awareness programmes like Electoral Literacy Clubs, Chunav Pathshalas, Voter Awareness Forums have been contributing to sensitize voters about their electoral rights and also providing services even in the remotest areas; how our electoral machinery engages with educational institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Icons, political parties and other stakeholders.



Ms. Uzra appreciated the role of ECI in modernizing the election services and making the elections more inclusive and accessible. She said India can take a leading role in sharing its experiences and expertise in providing capacity building programmes to other EMBs to strengthen the election system. In the Cohort led by India, New Zealand, Finland and the European Union have expressed interest to partner and other interested democracies could also join in. Several programs for cooperation and sharing experiences for capacity building are on the anvil. Based on the above a specific strategy and Action Plan will be prepared in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs.

Today's discussions were held in the backdrop of 'Summit for Democracy' which started as a two-day virtual event, hosted by the United States in December 2021 and is now a year-long activity with events and dialogues on themes related to democracy with participating countries. Leaders of more than 100 countries including India, civil society organizations, private sector, media and others participated in the first summit. The Prime Minister of India also spoke at the Leaders Plenary Session on December 9, 2021. Following this Summit, a "Year of Action" was proposed by the United States with events and dialogues on themes related to Democracy and to host an in-person 'Leaders' Summit for Democracy' at the end of 2022. The US Government has also developed two platforms - 'Focal Groups' and 'Democracy Cohorts' to facilitate participation in the Year of Action.

The 'Focal Groups' are for planning for the follow up Summit, proposing content for a summit outcome document, engaging with other participating Leaders on fulfilling their commitments, leveraging regional and multilateral meetings or thematic conferences. The Embassy of India in the United States is representing the Government of India in this Group which was launched in Washington.

The Democracy Cohorts platform is a thematic, multi-stakeholder group, open for official government and civil society participation. Other themes to be discussed under the Cohorts includes Free and Independent media, Fighting corruption, Bolstering democratic reformers, Advancing technology for democracy, Digital governance, Inclusive democracy, Disinformation, Anti-discrimination amongst others. These Cohorts would refine Summit's commitments, demonstrate progress on implementing those commitments, and develop new commitments for the follow up Summit.



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