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...Disability Inclusion Champion

POLITICAL INCLUSION INDEX REPORT

SEPTEMBER
2024



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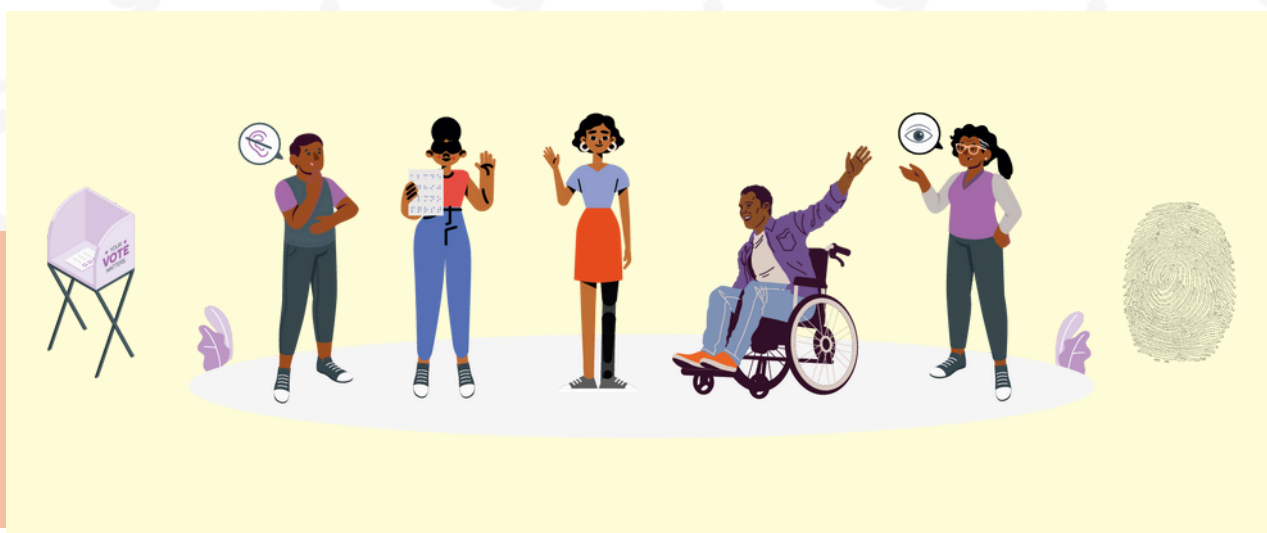
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the leaders and managers of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), Labour Party (LP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Youth Progressive Party (YPP), New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Channels Television, Arise TV, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Raypower FM, Nigeria Info, Tribune, Punch and the Daily Trust for generously sharing their time during the assessment interviews.

We also express profound appreciation to the European Union for funding the Political Inclusion Index tool project through TAF Africa.



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
FRCN	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
LP	Labour Party
NBC	Nigeria Broadcasting Commission
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NNPP	New Nigeria People's Party
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NTA	Nigeria Television Authority
OPDs	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PDP	Peoples' Democratic Party
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
YPP	Youth Progressive Party



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment aimed to evaluate the level of disability inclusivity within key institutions involved in Nigeria's electoral process, focusing on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, media, and security agencies. The evaluation measured compliance with the Electoral Act and other relevant regulations regarding the participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

A total of 18 institutions across these four sectors were appraised to determine their commitment to inclusivity in policies, accessibility, representation, and engagement, utilizing TAF Africa's Political Inclusion Index tool. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied, with in-depth interviews conducted with the leaders and managers of the institutions to administer the tool. Based on their responses, the tool assigns a numerical score out of a total score of 100 points to each institution, benchmarking them against the Political inclusion levels Framework to assess their level of inclusivity.

The findings indicate that INEC has made substantial progress in promoting disability inclusion, achieving a score of 95, signifying a high level of inclusivity. INEC's efforts are particularly commendable in areas such as policy implementation, accessibility of election services, and active stakeholder engagement. Its Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with disabilities in the Electoral Process is being implemented. However, gaps remain, particularly in ensuring electoral accessibility at all levels and in meeting the recruitment target as mandated by the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018.

Other key institutions, including the media, security agencies, and political parties, show varying levels of inclusivity, with significant areas for improvement. Media institutions scored an average of 56, reflecting a limited commitment to disability inclusion, especially in providing accessible content and improving physical infrastructure. Security institutions averaged 45, indicating limited inclusion and the need for better implementation of inclusive policies, particularly in communication and infrastructure. Political parties, with an average score of 64, have demonstrated moderate efforts, with some progress in representation and policy inclusion, though challenges remain in fully engaging with organizations of persons with disabilities (O-



PDs) and ensuring accessible campaign processes.

While significant strides have been made, this assessment highlights that more work is needed to ensure that all institutions meet the accessibility, representation, and policy enforcement benchmarks required for full participation of persons with disabilities in Nigeria's electoral process. Key recommendations to strengthen disability inclusion across the various sectors include:

- **INEC:** A review and updating of the 2018 Framework on Access and Participation of persons with disabilities, conducting pre-electoral accessibility audits, and strengthening of media partnerships for targeted voter education for persons with disabilities.
- **Political Parties:** Implementing quotas for persons with disabilities for leadership roles, ensuring measures for accessibility of party offices, and improving collaboration with OPDs.
- **Media:** Providing election content in accessible formats, improving physical accessibility, and promoting disability-inclusive coverage as part of corporate social responsibility.
- **Security Institutions:** Training of security personnel on disability inclusion, improve on inclusive communication, and establishing of accessible reporting mechanisms for PWDs during elections.

Through these recommended actions, it is anticipated that Nigeria's electoral processes can become more inclusive, ensuring equal participation for all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Political inclusion is a fundamental right, and the active participation of persons with disabilities in the democratic process is essential. In Nigeria, persons with disabilities represent a significant portion of the population, yet they often face systemic barriers that hinder their full participation in the electoral process. These barriers range from inaccessible infrastructure to limited representation in political processes, underscoring the need for greater institutional commitment to disability inclusion.

This report examines the level of disability inclusivity across four key sectors that play critical roles in the electioneering process: the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, media, and security institutions. Each of these institutions has distinct responsibilities in ensuring that the electioneering process are free, fair, inclusive and accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities. The report assesses their compliance with Nigeria's Electoral Act and other provisions of inclusive practices and policies.

Using TAF Africa's Political Inclusion Index, this study evaluates the performance of 18 institutions from these sectors, focusing on four key areas: policy and commitment, accessibility and accommodation, representation and participation, and engagement and consultation. By assigning a numerical score to each institution and benchmarking them against the Political Inclusion Levels Framework, this assessment provides a comprehensive view of the current state of disability inclusion across the key sectors within Nigeria's electoral landscape.



METHODOLOGY

Prior to administering the Political Inclusion Index tool, informed consent was obtained from the leaders and managers of participating institutions, in line with ethical data collection practices. The assessment employed a hybrid approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative scoring was conducted using TAF Africa's Political Inclusion Index tool, while qualitative exploration involved in-depth interviews to further investigate strengths, gaps, and opportunities for people with disabilities in the electioneering process. For more information on the tool, please see Appendix 2. Additionally, observations were conducted, specifically focusing on accessibility matters.

This hybrid approach ensured both depth and breadth in assessing disability inclusion within the electioneering process. The Political Inclusion Index tool consisted of 20 indicators covering four key areas: Policy and Commitment, Accessibility and Accommodation, Participation and Representation, and Engagement and Consultation. Respondents from each institution were given three response options for each indicator: No, Partially, or Yes, corresponding to scores of 0, 2.5, and 5, respectively, with a maximum attainable score of 100.

Scores were calculated by summing responses across all indicators, and the total score was benchmarked against defined levels of political inclusion to evaluate each institution's overall inclusion in the electoral process. For each indicator, gaps and weaknesses were identified, with brief explanations provided for selected responses. Each institution's final score was assessed based on their responses and evaluated against established political inclusion benchmarks as follows:

Score	Level of Political Inclusion
0 – 39	Level 1: Minimal Inclusion The index tool indicates minimal or no efforts towards political inclusion. There are significant barriers and discriminatory practices that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in the political process. Very few or no indicators are met.
40 – 59	Level 2: Limited Inclusion The index tool shows some efforts towards political inclusion but there are notable gaps and challenges. Persons with disabilities' participant is limited. Only a few indicators are met
60 -79	Level 3: Moderate Inclusion The index tool demonstrates moderate levels of political inclusion. There are significant efforts made to address barriers and promote representation and participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process. Several indicators are met, but there is room for improvement.
80 – 99	Level 4: High Inclusion The index tool indicates good levels of political inclusion. Persons with disabilities have meaningful representation and participation in the political processes. Barriers are addressed and there are comprehensive policies and practices promoting inclusion. Most indicators are met.
100	Level 5: Excellent Inclusion The index tool reflects excellent levels of political inclusion. Persons with disabilities are fully included and have equitable representation and participation in the electoral processes. Barriers are effectively addressed and there is a strong commitment to inclusive policies and practices. All indicators are met.



Scope of Assessment

The political inclusion assessment was conducted in Abuja, Nigeria in September 2024. This assessment meticulously covered eighteen key institutions which were strategically chosen due to their distinct roles within the electoral landscape. The breakdown of the selected institutions spans four key sectors which include:

- **INEC:** The umbrella organization coordinating elections across Nigeria.
- **Political Parties:** Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), Labour Party (LP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Youth Progressive Party (YPP), New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)
- **Security Institutions:**
 - Nigeria Police Force (NPF)
 - Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)
- **Media Houses:**
 - Television: Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Channels Television, Arise TV.
 - Radio: Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Raypower FM, Nigeria Info.
 - Print: The Tribune, Punch, Daily Trust

Limitations

- There is a likelihood of self-reporting bias as respondents may downplay challenges or overstate their efforts to include persons with disabilities in electoral processes to present their institutions in a more favourable light.
- The scope of the assessment was limited to the selected high-level institutions in Abuja only. This approach may not have captured local variations in political inclusion where the level of inclusion may differ at State or local level institutions.

KEY FINDINGS

Overview of Inclusion Levels

A total of eighteen institutions spanned across four key sectors - electoral body, media, political parties, and security institutions participated in the assessment. The overall results were both revealing and nuanced, highlighting a spectrum of inclusion levels—ranging from minimal to high. Figure 1. displays the aggregated number of institutions by their levels of inclusion.

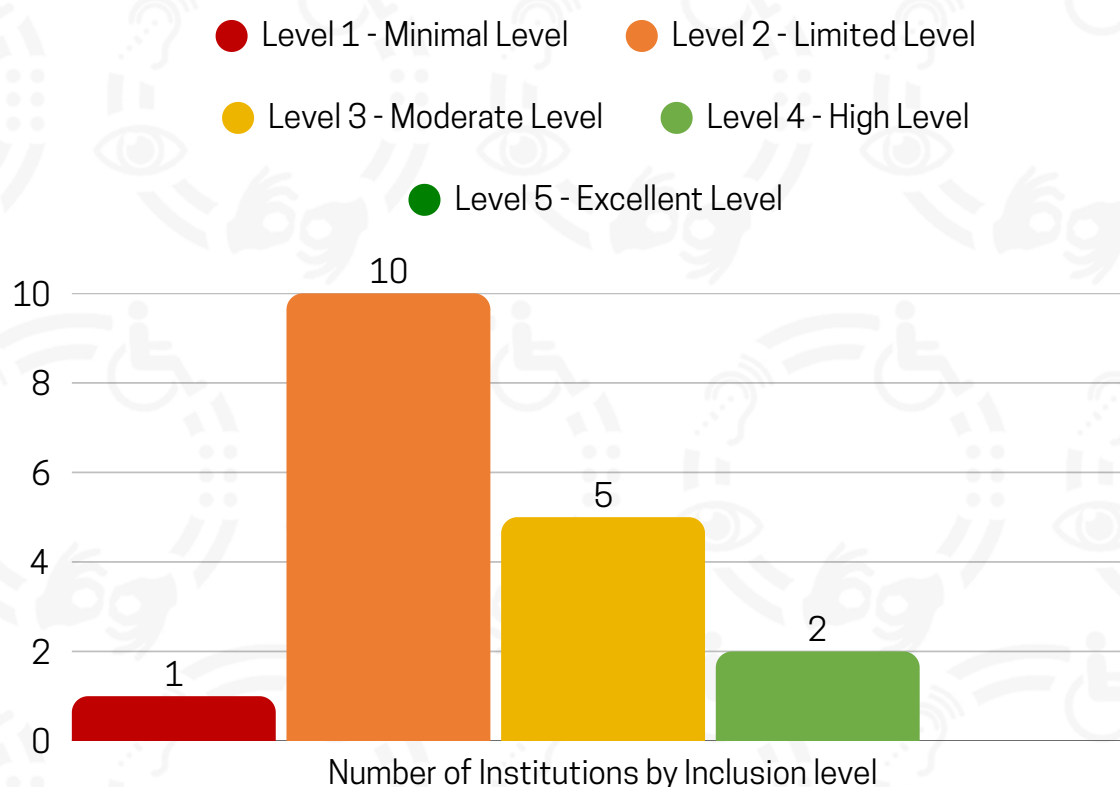


Fig. 1 Number of institutions by Inclusion levels

In the context of disability inclusion in the electoral process, the majority (56%) of the institutions fell within the 'Limited level' category. Approximately 28% of institutions were classified as having 'Moderate level' of inclusion. Notably, only 11% achieved 'High level' of inclusion, while a smaller proportion (6%) operated at the 'Minimal level'.

Political Inclusion by Key Sectors

In the context of disability inclusion in the electoral process, the majority (56%) of the institutions fell within the 'Limited level' category. Approximately 28% of institutions were classified as having 'Moderate level' of inclusion. Notably, only 11% achieved 'High level' of inclusion, while a smaller proportion (6%) operated at the 'Minimal level'.

Table 2: Level of inclusion by Sector

Sector	Score	Level of Inclusion
Media	56	Level 2 - Limited level of Inclusion
Security	45	Level 2 – Limited level of Inclusion
Political parties	64	Level 3 – Moderate level of Inclusion
INEC	95	Level 4 - High level of Inclusion

The assessment score for both media and security institutions falls within the “**Limited**” range (40–59). Despite some efforts, significant gaps and challenges persist in ensuring meaningful political inclusion for persons with disabilities during the election process. Unfortunately, only a few inclusion indicators are currently being met in these institutions.

Political parties have achieved a “**moderate**” level of inclusion (60–79). Commendable efforts have been made to address barriers and promote representation. However, there is still room for growth. Several inclusion indicators are met, but further enhancements are necessary.

On the other hand, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) stands out with a “**High**” level of inclusion score signifying meaningful commitment, representation, and active participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes. Most inclusion indicators are being met, setting inclusive practice standards.

The subsequent sections elaborate on the findings of the inclusion levels by each institution.



INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC)

Level 4: High Level of Inclusion

The Independent National Electoral Commission has demonstrated commendable dedication to promoting inclusion within the electoral process. With a score of 95 as shown in Table 3, INEC operates at a **Level 4** indicating **High level of inclusion**. This achievement signifies that INEC is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate fully in democratic processes.

Table 3. INEC’s Level of Inclusion

Electoral institution	Scores	Level of Inclusion
INEC	95	Level 4 - High level of Inclusion

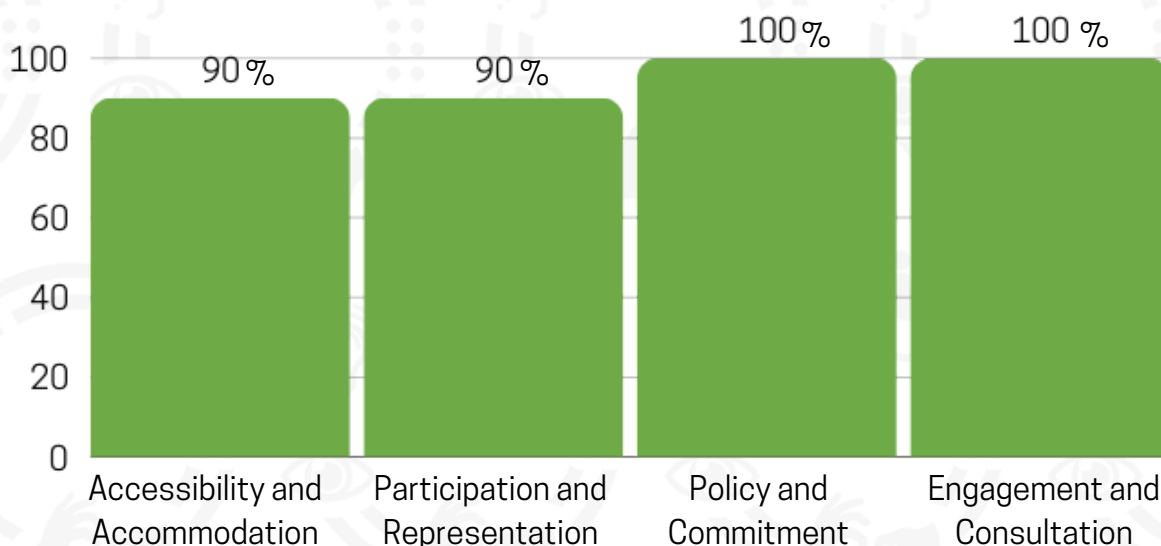


Figure 2. INEC Disability inclusion disaggregated by domain

INEC's scores across various categories highlight its strong commitment to inclusivity, particularly in policy implementation, accessibility, and stakeholder engagement, setting a high standard for inclusive practices. The institution demonstrates robust dedication to inclusive policies for persons with disabilities in electoral processes. INEC's Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the Electoral Process is actively being implemented, reflecting this commitment.

Significant efforts are evident in providing accommodations and ensuring accessibility, making electoral facilities and services accessible to all, including those requiring reasonable accommodations. While substantial progress has been made in areas such as electoral database availability, election monitoring, voter education, and priority voting for persons with disabilities, there is still room for improvement in meeting the 5% recruitment benchmark for persons with disabilities as stipulated in the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018.

INEC has also established strong partnerships and collaborations with government bodies, the media, security agencies and organizations of persons with disabilities. These collaborations enhance disability inclusion through training, capacity strengthening, regular consultation, and feedback mechanisms.



MEDIA

Level 2: Limited Level of Inclusion

The average score for media institutions overall was 56, signifying a 'Limited Level of Inclusion'.

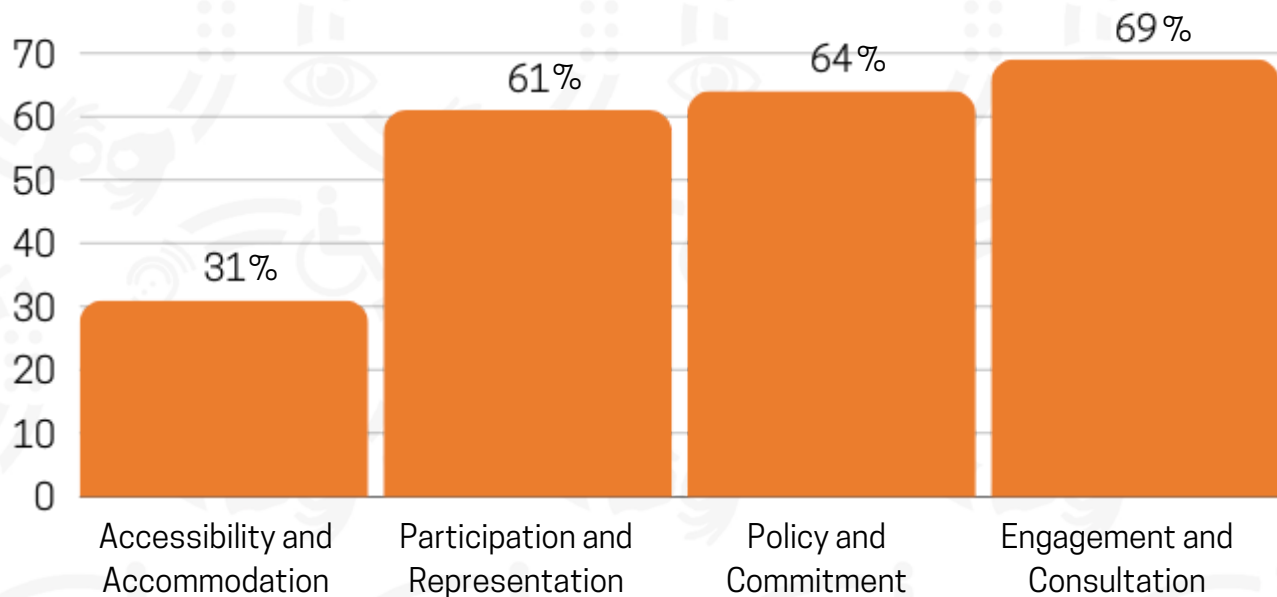


Figure 3. Media Disability inclusion by domain

The assessment reveals Accessibility and Accommodation as the most concerning area, highlighting significant challenges in making electoral content accessible to the diverse disability needs and providing accessible physical infrastructure, facilities, and equipment for persons with disabilities. This indicates a need for substantial improvements in these areas to ensure inclusivity in the electioneering process.

There is a decent commitment to inclusive policies, but a considerable gap remains in their practical application. The media institutions are relatively better at engaging and consulting with diverse groups of persons with disabilities, though there is still room for improvement as effective engagement and consultation are crucial for understanding and addressing the needs of all audience segments, ensuring that the electioneering process is inclusive.

Notable strides have been made in Participation and Representation, yet there is still potential for broader and more accurate representation of persons with disabilities. Ensuring diverse voices are not only present but also fairly represented remains an ongoing challenge in the electoral process.



Overall, while progress has been made in some areas, significant efforts are still needed within media institutions to address gaps in accessibility, policy enforcement, and representation to achieve a truly inclusive electioneering process for persons with disabilities.

Table 4. Media Institutions' Inclusion Ratings

Media Institutions	Scores	Level of Inclusion
Punch	33	Level 1 (minimal level of inclusion)
Daily Trust	45	Level 2 (Limited level of Inclusion)
Arise TV	50	
Ray power	53	
Tribune	58	
Naija Info	58	Level 3 (Moderate level of inclusion)
FRCN	65	
Channels	70	
NTA	75	

The inclusion levels of individual media institutions vary significantly, ranging from minimal to moderate. Most institutions fall within the limited inclusivity level. While one institution is categorized under Level 1, indicating minimal inclusion practices, a few (33%) institutions achieve Level 3, reflecting moderate inclusion practices. The majority (56%) of institutions are in Level 2, demonstrating limited inclusion practices.

This highlights the fact that while some media institutions are making strides towards moderate inclusivity, the majority still operate at a limited level. The disparity in inclusivity levels among media institutions directly impacts how these institutions address disability inclusion in the electoral process.



SECURITY

Level 2: Limited Level of Inclusion

The average score for security institutions was 45, indicating that they fall within the 'Limited Level of Inclusion

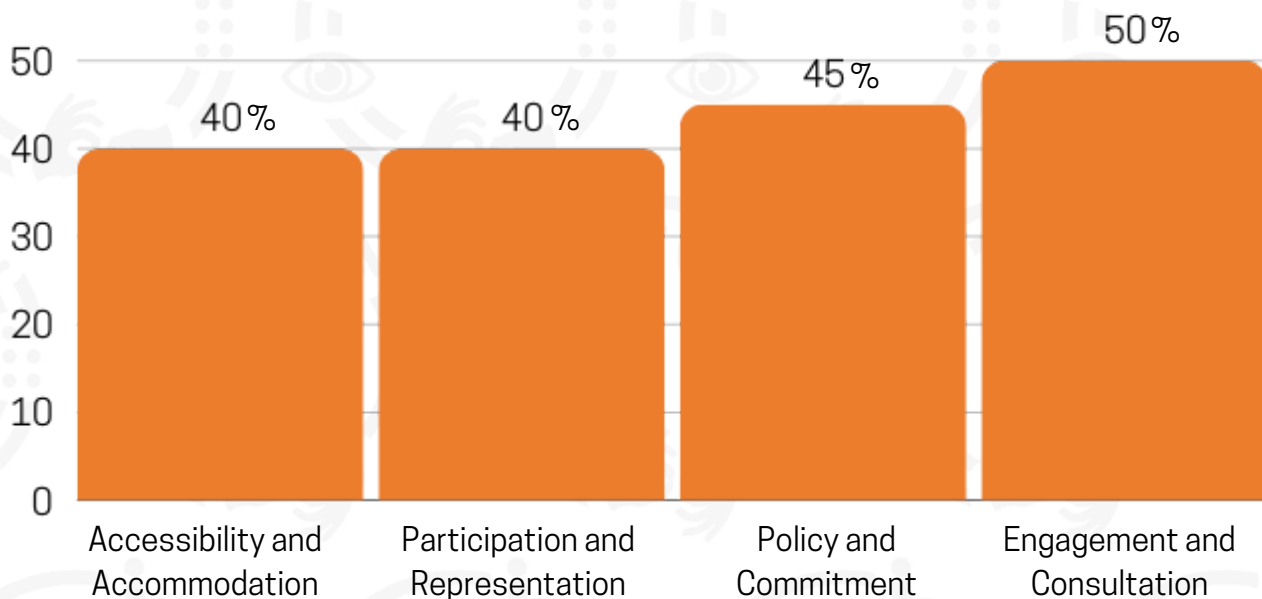


Figure 4. Security Disability inclusion by domain

The assessment reveals a moderate commitment to inclusive policies within security institutions. While there is some effort to implement policies that support persons with disabilities, there is still considerable room for improvement.

Key challenges include the provision of electoral security information in accessible formats and the need for more inclusive physical infrastructure. These issues also impact the accessibility of reporting and grievance mechanisms for persons with disabilities during the election process.

Although some initiatives have been made to engage and consult persons with disabilities in security planning, these efforts remain insufficient. There are significant gaps in the development of protocols to provide necessary support to persons with disabilities in emergencies during the electioneering process, the establishment of feedback mechanisms, and the implementation of inclusive communication strategies during the election process.



Table 5. Security Institutions Inclusion Ratings

Security Institutions	Scores	Level of Inclusion
Nigeria Police Force	45	Level 2 (Limited level of Inclusion)
Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps	50	

Both the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) are at Level 2, demonstrating limited inclusion for persons with disabilities in the electioneering process. Both institutions reflect commitment to policies related to electoral security indicating that while policies are in place, there is room for improvement in their implementation and effectiveness for persons with disabilities.

The NPF slightly outperforms the NSCDC in accessibility and accommodation, but both institutions still fall short of ideal accessibility standards and need to make significant improvements to ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately accommodated, represented, and consulted.

While there is limited interaction and consultation with persons with disabilities, both institutions show some efforts in promoting disability inclusion during the electoral process through the enforcement of priority voting and protection against harassment. However, both lack dedicated reporting mechanisms and comprehensive monitoring systems for persons with disabilities in the process.



POLITICAL PARTIES

Level 3: Moderate Level of Inclusion

The average score of 64 positions political parties at the 'moderate level of inclusion' in their efforts to include persons with disabilities in the electioneering process.

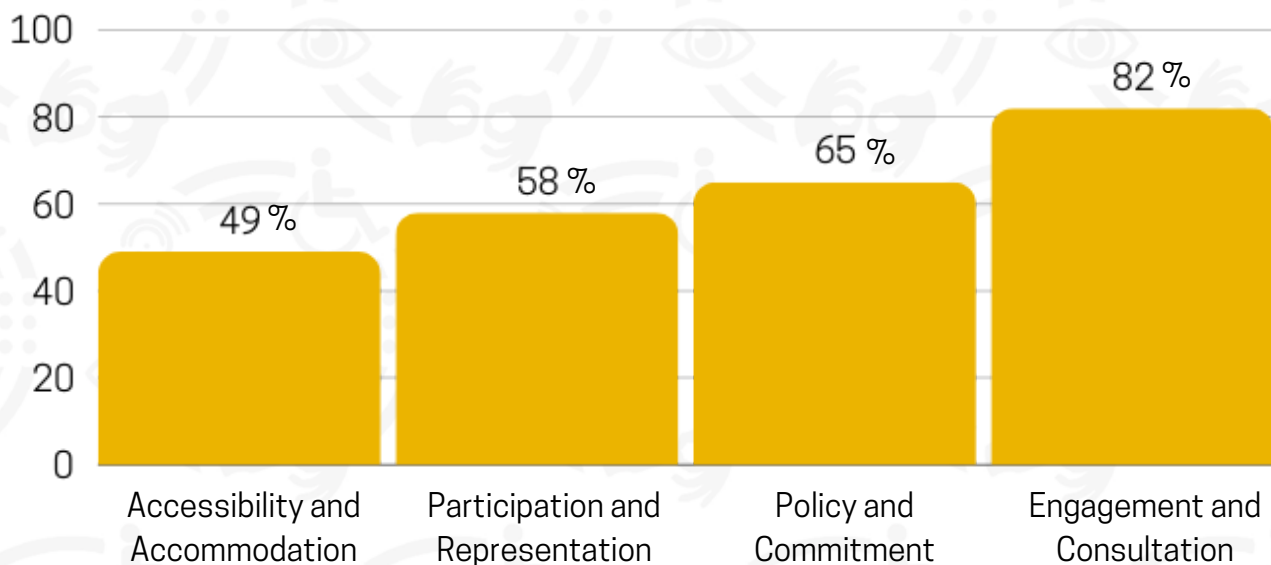


Figure 5. Political Parties inclusion by domain

The assessment reveals that political parties show limited interaction and dialogue with OPDs and individuals with disabilities. Unlike other domains, parties fall short in seeking input, feedback, or expert advice from disability communities to enhance disability inclusion within the party. While some progress has been made, further efforts are needed to prioritize engagement.

Many parties have moderately incorporated disability-inclusive policies/commitments into their constitutions, manifestos, or agendas. However, there is significant room for improvement to ensure these policies are comprehensive, actionable, and effectively implemented.

In terms of accessibility and accommodation, political parties have made strides in making these processes more inclusive. This includes offering subsidized or free nomination forms for persons with disabilities, providing sign language interpreters at rallies, and using accessible venues for meetings. Nonetheless, challenges persist, in providing campaign information in accessible formats and particularly for parties operating in rented spaces with inaccessible infrastructure.



On a positive note, many parties show strong representation of persons with disabilities within their membership, with some holding leadership roles. Some have also established dedicated committees or leadership positions focused on advocating for disability inclusion. However, sustained efforts are necessary to ensure active participation in decision-making, candidate selection, and leadership beyond membership, as well as the implementation of quotas or affirmative action policies to ensure representation in elective and appointive positions.

Table 6. Political Parties Inclusion Rating

Political Parties	Scores	Level of Inclusion
Labour Party (LP)	40	Level 2 - Limited level of inclusion
New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)	55	
Young Progressives Party (YPP)	58	
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	70	Level 3 - Moderate level of inclusion
All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	68	
All Progressive Congress (APC)	90	Level 4 - High level of inclusion

While no political party falls in Level 1 category indicating minimal inclusion, it suggests that all parties have at least taken some steps toward inclusion. Most of the assessed parties (56%) fall into level 2 which indicates limited level of inclusion. These parties demonstrate some awareness of disability inclusion but have not fully integrated it into their practices. Approximately one-third of the assessed parties (33%) operate at the moderate level. They have made commendable efforts to create an inclusive environment, with room to become fully inclusive.

Only one party out of the six parties sampled, the All-Progressives Congress (APC), was in the Level 4 category indicating high level of inclusion.

Overall, while progress is being made, there's a clear need for more concerted efforts across the parties to ensure that all citizens with disabilities can fully participate in the democratic process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):

- **Review of the Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disabilities:** The current framework, launched in 2018, needs to be reviewed after being implemented across two election cycles. This review is essential to incorporate the latest best practices, technological advancements, and the evolving needs of persons with disabilities. It will ensure compliance with international standards, integrate feedback from persons with disabilities and other stakeholders, and enhance accessibility measures, making the electoral process more inclusive and user-friendly for persons with disabilities.
- **Training and retraining of INEC National and State Officials on the Framework:** Owing to the steady intake of new personnel and the retirement of experienced staff from the civil service, it is crucial to ensure continuous training and retraining of INEC National and State officials. This will help maintain a high level of competence and understanding of the framework, ensuring that all officials are well-equipped to support persons with disabilities in the electioneering process.
- A thorough accessibility audit of all the designated polling units and registration centres be conducted prior to elections, to identify and address specific accessibility issues to facilitate full participation for all voters without any barriers.
- Accessibility testing prior to the elections is required for all election related services to ensure suitability to the diverse needs of people with disabilities. Such related services include online platforms, braille ballot guides for blind persons, voting cubicles for wheelchair users and persons of short stature, etc.
- INEC's collaboration with the media should be expanded to emphasize the importance of voter education information specifically designed to cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Political Parties:

- Political parties should consider implementing disability quotas to ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately represented in political offices and decision-making processes. This can help promote inclusivity and ensure that the unique perspectives and needs of persons with disabilities are considered in policy development. Additionally, parties should provide necessary support and resources to candidates with disabilities to support them effectively participate in the political process.
- Most party administrative offices are situated in rented spaces, which limits the possibility of making extensive structural changes to enhance accessibility. As a solution, temporary accessibility measures such as holding meetings on ground floors and the use of mobile ramps should be implemented to provide easier access for individuals with physical disabilities. Furthermore, when building or designing permanent party offices, accessibility standards must be followed to ensure inclusivity and compliance with legal requirements.
- Parties should offer their overview information in accessible formats, such as braille, large print, and audio, to accommodate individuals with disabilities who are interested in registering as party members. This initiative will encourage persons with disabilities to join the party without concerns about communication barriers.
- Collaboration with organisation of persons with disabilities to provide expertise and training on disability inclusion for party members and staff. This training can cover best practices for accessibility, communication, and inclusive campaigning.
- Political parties should establish comprehensive membership registers that include disaggregated social characteristics, such as disability status, so that they can foster genuine representation and design targeted inclusive policies.

Media

- The media should make efforts to improve accessibility by ensuring that election related content is available in accessible formats, either by closed captions, sign language interpretation, and audio descriptions.

- Media facilities should be made physically accessible to persons with disabilities, by ensuring the availability of ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms.
- Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) should collaboratively work with the media to design and implement media campaigns that highlight the importance of disability inclusion in the electoral process.
- Rather than disseminating generic voter education, the media should be deliberate in voter education information by specifically designing content to cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- TAF Africa and other OPDs should undertake advocacy to the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to encourage and lobby media houses to create and broadcast voter education content tailored for people with disabilities as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.

Security: —

- **Training and Sensitization:** Regular training sessions on disability rights and inclusion for security personnel should be conducted at every election cycle. This is essential as security personnel are deployed at each cycle, with new recruits joining regularly and experienced members retiring. These sessions will help security personnel understand the specific needs of persons with disabilities and how to assist them effectively during elections. For instance, enforcing priority voting for Persons with disabilities can reduce the time they spend at polling stations, thereby minimizing their exposure to potential security risks
- **Collaboration with Disability Organizations:** Security institutions should work closely with organizations of persons with disabilities to understand their needs and incorporate their feedback into security planning and execution.
- **Inclusive Communication:** Multiple communication channels should be utilized by security institutions to disseminate election-related security updates, advisories, and other information for accessibility. This communication can further be enhanced by providing the content in formats such as large print, plain language, gesture caption, electronic/digital formats, or easy-to-read versions to cater to individuals with various disabilities.
- Accessible monitoring and reporting mechanisms that cater to the different needs of persons with disabilities should be established for monitoring and reporting issues related to their inclusion during elections.



This will help address problems promptly and improve future processes.

- Security institutions should develop and implement emergency response protocols and plans to provide necessary support and assistance to persons with disabilities in case of any security incidents and other emergencies during elections.



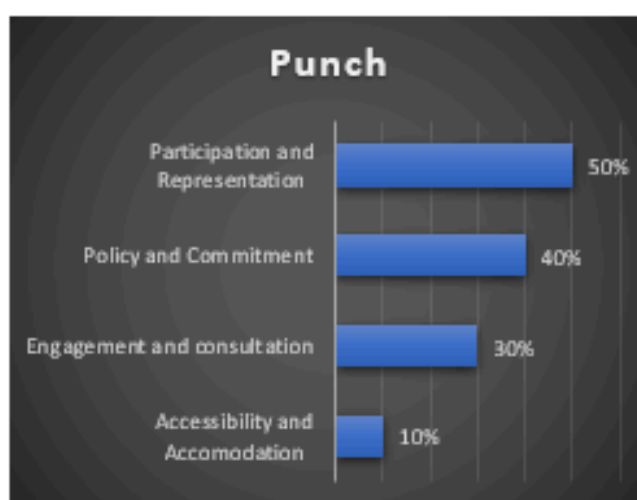
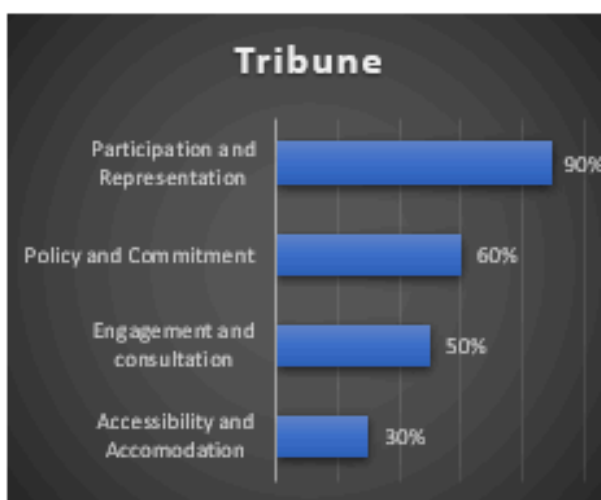
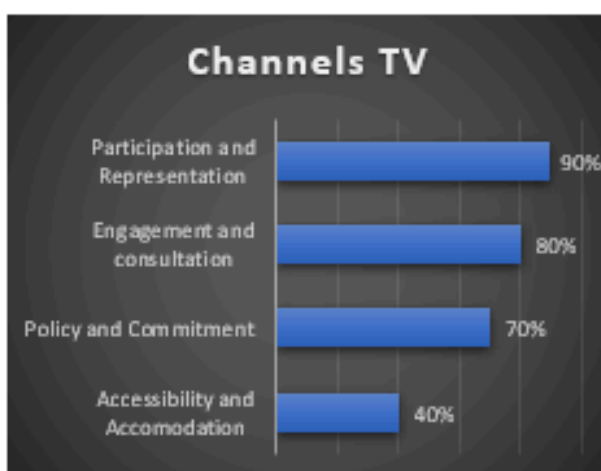
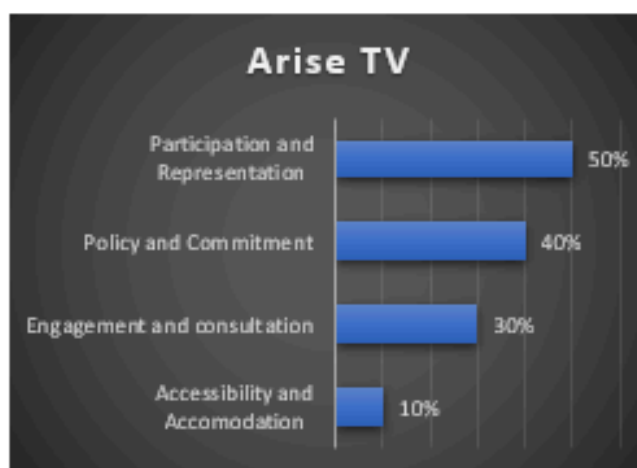
CONCLUSION

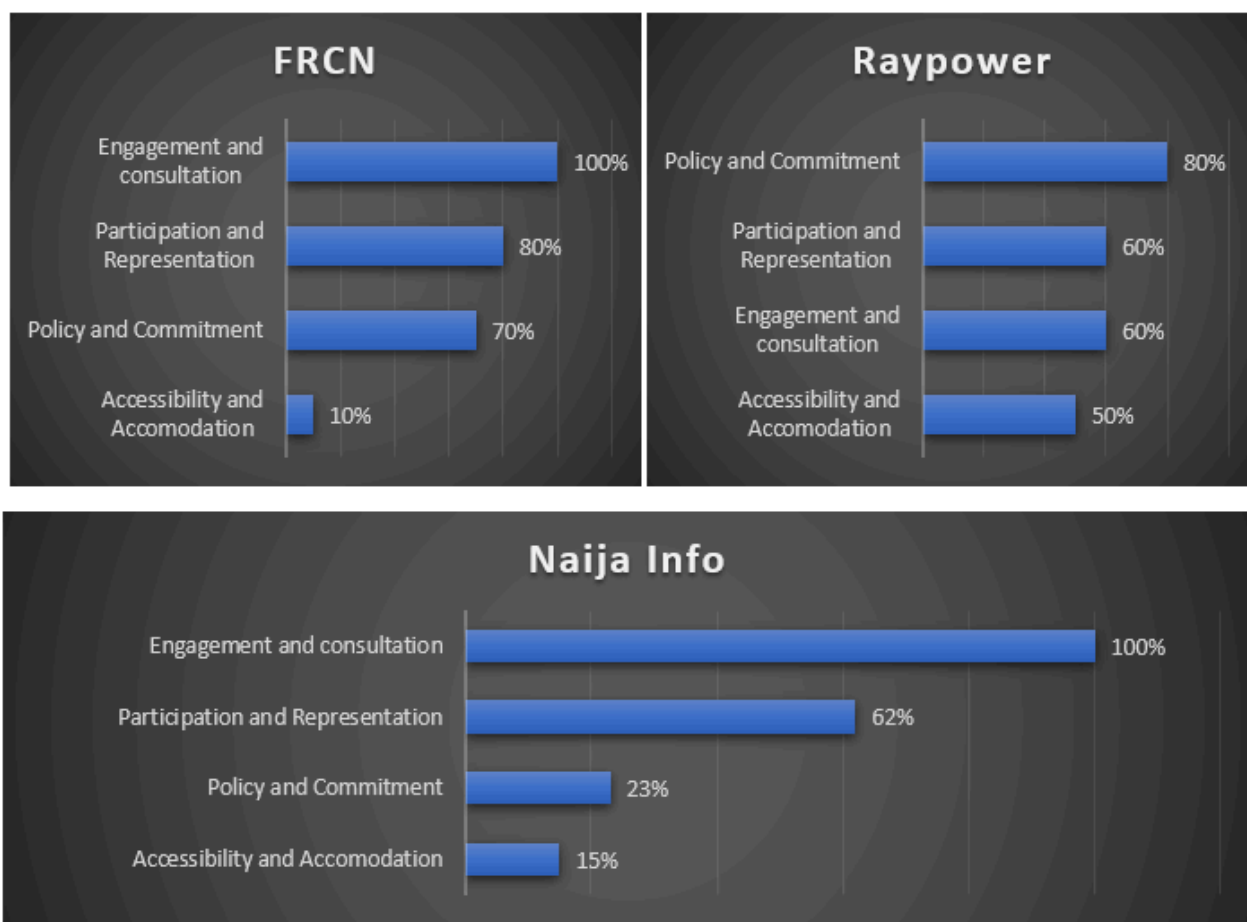
The political inclusion assessments acknowledge the concerted efforts of the key institutions—such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, media organizations, and security agencies—in promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process. These institutions have played distinct roles to ensure greater inclusivity. However, the findings and recommendations outlined in the report also shed light on existing gaps and provide a valuable opportunity for us to strengthen disability inclusion across these relevant institutions to enhance the overall inclusiveness of our electioneering process.

APPENDIX

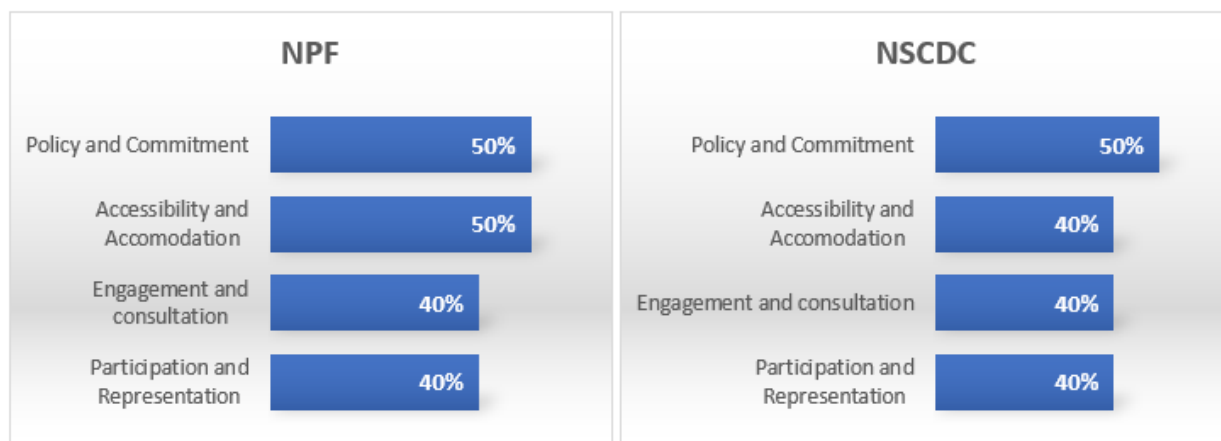
APPENDIX I: DISAGGREGATED INCLUSION LEVELS BY INSTITUTIONS

A. Media

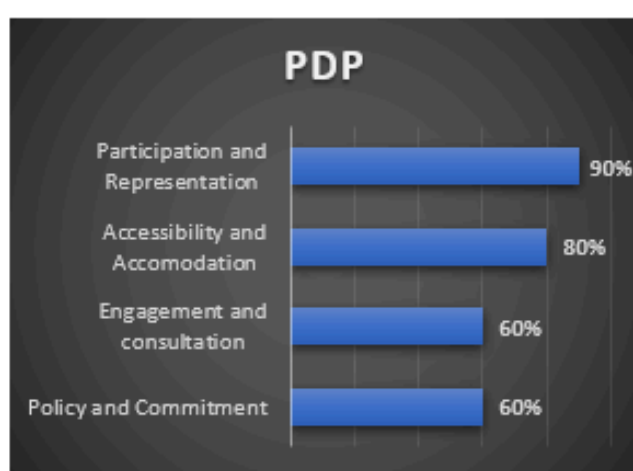
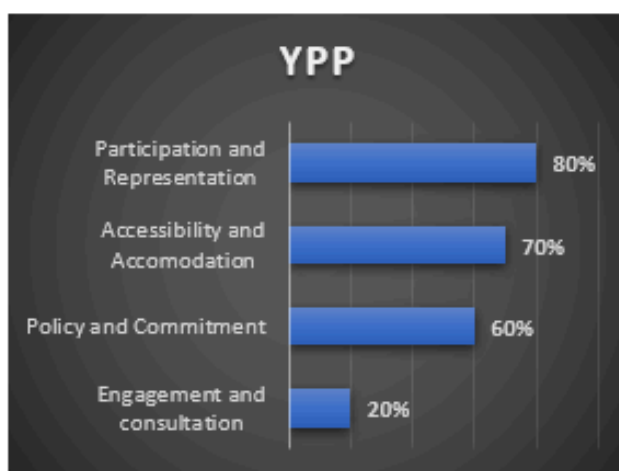
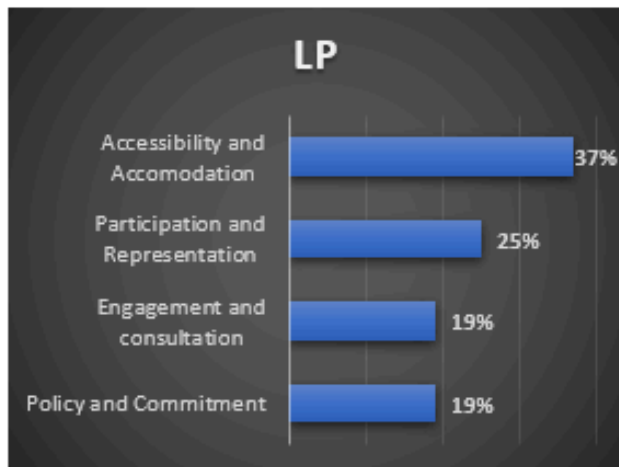




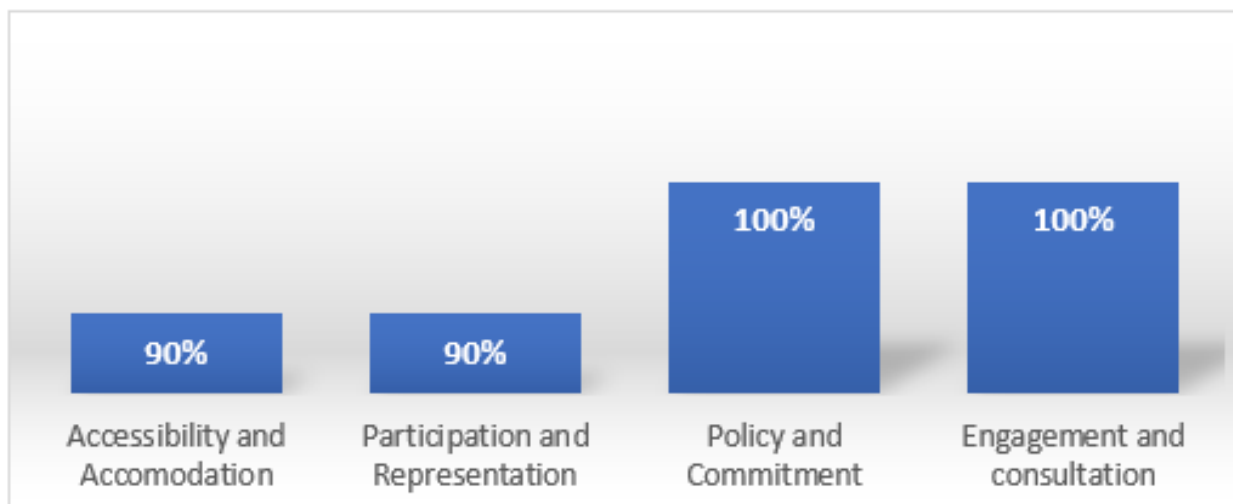
B. Security



C. Political Parties



D. INEC



APPENDIX II: POLITICAL INCLUSION INDEX TOOL: ASSESSMENT RESULTS FROM THE INSTITUTIONS



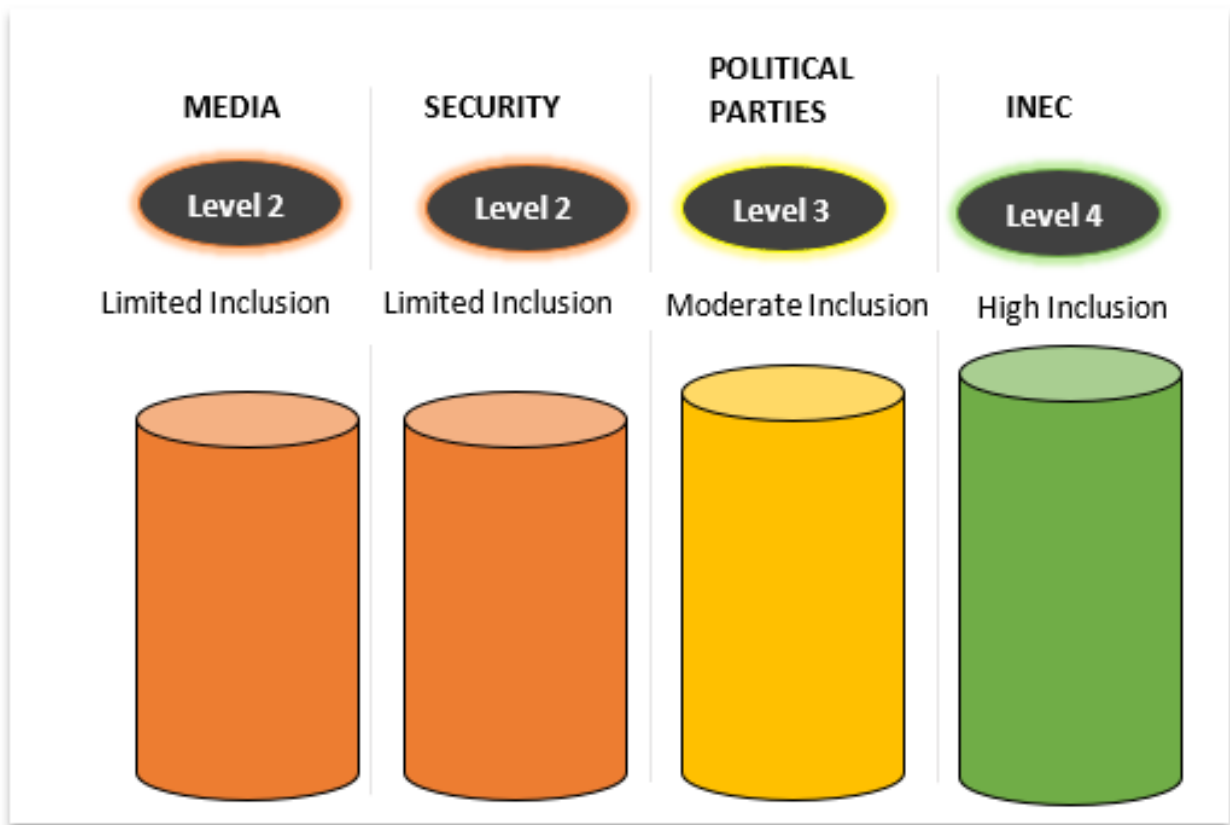
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Political Inclusion Index Report

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POLITICAL INCLUSION LEVELS OF INSTITUTIONS



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