



The Commonwealth

ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY HON SATO KILMAN LIVTUVANU

CHAIR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP

SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION 2019

We are privileged to be here in Solomon Islands to observe the National General Election to be held on 3 April 2019. The Commonwealth has been an active partner in supporting the country's democratic processes and has deployed observer groups to Solomon Islands since 2001.

I am honoured to have been invited by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland, to lead a Group of eminent Commonwealth citizens to support Solomon Islands national democratic process.

Our Group members are from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. We are supported by a staff team from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The Commonwealth attaches great importance to the conduct of credible and peaceful elections as a means of giving citizens an opportunity to choose their leaders and to hold them accountable. The Commonwealth Charter is very clear on the "inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes, in particular through free and fair elections in shaping the society in which they live. Governments, political parties, and civil society are responsible for upholding and promoting democratic culture and practices and are accountable to the public in this regard."

Our Group will observe and report on relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of this election, including the environment in which it is held. We will consider the key factors that could impact on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole, and assess whether this election have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which Solomon Islands has committed itself and as outlined in the country's Constitution and the Electoral Act 2018. We will be objective and impartial.

We have met with some of the political parties and other stakeholders. The Group received a briefing from the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) on the various aspects of the new Electoral Act 2018 under which this election will be conducted. We are pleased to note that some of the recommendations submitted

by previous Commonwealth Observer Groups were accepted and implemented as part of the country's electoral reforms.

We plan to deploy teams to several provinces including here in Honiara City, to observe the vote, the count and the results tabulation process. We will coordinate with other international observers and we welcome the participation of domestic observers who have been deployed throughout the country. Our Group will return to Honiara to write and finalise our report before we depart the country.

This election is critical for sustaining the peace dividend the people of Solomon Islands have worked hard to secure. We commend the role that the Pacific Forum region played through RAMSI in supporting the country's efforts to pursue its peace and development objectives. We urge all the candidates and voters to participate peacefully in the country's election and be assured of the Commonwealth's commitment to strengthening your national democratic processes and institutions.

Tank yu tumas.

Honiara

29 March 2019.

The Commonwealth Observer Group is composed of:

Hon Sato Kilman Livtuvanu, Chairperson - Former Prime Minister of Vanuatu

Ms Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls - Board Chair, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and Co-Chair, Board of Directors, Global Fund for Women (Fiji)

Mr Pesi Fonua - Editor and Publisher, Maitangi Tonga Online (Tonga)

Mr Hendrick Gappy - Former Chairman, Seychelles Electoral Commission (Seychelles)

Ms Kimberly Gilbert - Board Member for Training and Development of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council (Trinidad and Tobago)

Mr Ahmed Issack Hassan - Former Chairperson, IEBC Kenya

Ms Beverly Joeman - Vice Chair, Sabah, Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0), (Malaysia)

Mr Reuben Kaiulo - Former Election Commissioner (Papua New Guinea)

Dr Rajen Prasad - Former Member of Parliament and former Commonwealth Envoy to Lesotho (New Zealand)

Senator Lisa Singh - Senator for Tasmania (Australia)

Mr Wilson Toa - CEO, Transparency International (Vanuatu)

The Group is supported by a Commonwealth Secretariat staff team comprised of:

Mr Albert Mariner - Head, Asia/Europe/Caribbean/Pacific Section, Governance and Peace Directorate, (Staff Team Leader)

Mr Jonathan Cheng - Political Officer, Asia/Europe/Caribbean/Pacific Section, Governance and Peace Directorate

Ms Sonali Champion - Programme Officer, Commonwealth Electoral Network, Governance and Peace Directorate

Mr Abubakar Abdullahi - Programme Officer, Good Offices Section, Governance and Peace Directorate

For more information, or to organise media interviews, please contact Sonali Champion

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Note to Editors

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