

Statement announcing the COG observers for Sierra Leone elections

19 February 2018 - Secretary-General Patricia Scotland will deploy a Commonwealth Observer Group to observe the forthcoming general elections in Sierra Leone, scheduled for 7 March 2018.

Further to the invitation of the Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone to observe the forthcoming elections, the Group was constituted. The 15-member Group will be led by Mr John Dramani Mahama, former President of Ghana. The Group is comprised of 14 eminent persons drawn from across the different regions of the Commonwealth, including Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean and the Pacific. They bring a wealth of experience from across the social and political spectrum including civil society, women's and youth groups, human rights organisations and the media.

The Group's mandate is to observe the electoral process and consider the factors that could impinge on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole. This includes observing the pre-election environment, polling day, the count, and post-election period.

As with all Commonwealth Observer Groups, it will function with impartiality and independence, and will conduct itself according to the standards set out in the International Declaration of Principles for Election Observation, to which the Commonwealth is a signatory.

The Group will submit its final report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will in turn send it to the Government of Sierra Leone, the National Electoral Commission, political parties and eventually to all Commonwealth governments. Thereafter it will be made public.

The full list of the Commonwealth Observer Group is:

Mr Paul Dacey
Former Deputy Electoral Commissioner
Australia

Dr Jeannine Comma
Organizational Development Specialist
Barbados

Ms Alice Mogwe
Founder and Director
DITSHWANELO - The Botswana Centre for Human Rights
Botswana

Dr Chris Fomunyoh
Senior Associate and Regional Director
National Democratic Institute
Cameroon

Mr Manuj Bhardwaj
Attorney and Coordinator
"Not Too Young to Run initiative in India
India

Ms Marjorie Walla
Electoral Expert
Kenya

Ms Felleng Makeka
Retired Diplomat
Lesotho

Advocate John Walters
Ombudsman
Namibia

Hon Maryan Street
Former Member of Parliament
New Zealand

Ms Idayat Hassan
Director
Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
Nigeria

Dr Eric Kwa
Secretary Constitutional Law Reform Commission
Papua New Guinea

Hon Pelagie Uwera
Commissioner
National Electoral Commission
Rwanda

Ms Charmain Naidoo
Former Journalist Sunday Times
South Africa

Mr Harold Acemah
Retired Diplomat
Uganda