



WAEON's Statement on the upcoming Liberian 2017 Presidential and Legislative Elections

The people of Liberia on October 10, 2017 will go to the polls to elect a President and Members of the House of Representatives. These elections will mark the third since the civil war ended in 2003 and the subsequent transition to multi-party democratic form of governance. Also worthy of note is the fact that these elections will be the first after the war that is managed and conducted mainly by Liberians. The upcoming elections provide yet another test for Liberia's democratic process, and the forward march to consolidate the peace and stability of the country.

The West African Election Observation Network (WAEON) has followed with keen interest the pre-election environment and preparations by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) for the conduct of the Polls. Through the Liberian-based Institute for Research And Democratic Development (IREDD), a member organization of WAEON, and the Liberian Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC), WAEON notes that the Voter Registration exercise held in February and March of 2017 was generally successful, though few challenges were observed¹. It should be noted that NEC was proactive in swiftly responding to the challenges observed. WAEON notes the remedial steps NEC has taken to clean the Provisional Voter Register to ensure its integrity². However, there is urgent need for the Final Voter Register to be made public to allow other stake holders in the elections process plan their respective activities.^{[3][4]}

WAEON commends the transparent approach that the NEC has adopted to provide weekly updates to the general public and views this effort as a confidence booster for the electoral process. WAEON wishes to draw the attention of the NEC and other stakeholders to the following recommendations as we approach the polling day:

- NEC should work towards the timely release of the Final Voters Register to allow ample time for voters to verify their details ahead of polling day.
- NEC should endeavor to recruit non-partisan and impartial people as its polling officials and instill increased professionalism in their training;
- NEC should continue to be open and transparent especially on Election Day to allay the fears and anxieties of the general public;
- Political parties should endeavor to conduct their campaign activities in a peaceful manner respecting the laid down rules and procedures in dealing with grievances;
- Civil Society groups observing the electoral process, particularly, the ECC should continue to exhibit independence, neutrality and impartiality in their observation effort and
- Citizens are also encouraged to take active part in the electoral process and conduct themselves responsibly and in accordance with the law.

¹ Referred to Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) final press statement on the Voter Registration Observation issued on April 5, 2017. And also The Carter Centre Statement on the Voter Registration Process, issued on March 3, 2017. See: <https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/pr/liberia-030317-voter-registration-full-statement.pdf>;

² The Carter Center's Pre-Election Statement on Liberia's Election issued on September 12, 2017. See: https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/ieom-liberia-pre-election-statement-final-091117.pdf

³ 42 Days to Election Day Published by NDI on August 29, 2017. See: https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Election%20Spotlight_updated.pdf

⁴ NDI Delegation Statement release on September 8, 2017. See: <https://www.ndi.org/publications/ndi-delegation-releases-statement-pre-election-environment-liberia>



WAEON calls on all stake holders to carry out their roles and responsibility professionally and with integrity to guaranty peaceful, free, fair and credible electoral outcomes. WAEON will continue to observe the electoral environment leading to the polling day and partner with its member organization and the ECC to support the Liberian people in ensuring credible outcomes of the polls.

WAEON is an independent, non-partisan and non-religious organization of citizen observer groups from 11 West African Countries that aims at strengthening and supporting Citizens' Election Observation Groups (CEOGs) in the sub-region. It was formed in 2010, and has its secretariat at the Accra-based Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana).

Signed

James Lahai
Acting Chairman
(For and on behalf of WAEON)
Contact Number: +232-76-962-233

Dated: September 20, 2017

For follow up information on the statement, please contact James Lahai on +232-76-962-233 and/or Dr. Franklin Oduro of the Secretariat on (+233 – 0302) 784293/4; 777214.

Secretariat Contact Information

WAEON Secretariat

CDD-Ghana

Physical Address: No.95 Nortei Ababio Loop North Airport Residential Area, Accra, Ghana

Email: info@waeon.org

Tel: (+233 – 0302) 784293/4; 777214