



**THE AFRICAN UNION OBSERVER MISSION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL, SENATE
AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
OF 11 OCTOBER 2011**

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. In response to an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Liberia and of the National Elections Commission (NEC), H.E. Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed and sent an Observer Mission to Monrovia in order to observe the Presidential and Legislative Elections which took place on Tuesday 11 October 2011.
2. The African Union (AU) Observer Mission is led by H.E. Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda. Members of the mission included African Ambassadors accredited to the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, delegates drawn from Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) of various African countries. The Mission also included a Support Staff from the African Union Commission and the Electoral Institute for the Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA).
3. African Ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Liberia namely from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa also worked closely with the African Union Observer Mission.
4. The African Union Mission observed the General Elections in the Republic of Liberia on 11 October 2011 within the spirit and letter of the Durban Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, as adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in July 2002. The main objective of the mission was to make an honest, independent and impartial observation and assessment of the organization and conduct of the Presidential, Senatorial and House of Representative elections.
5. In accordance with the African Union Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring, the Mission met and consulted with various stakeholders involved in the electoral process. These included Representatives of Political Parties, various Candidates, Civil Society Organizations, the Media, and the National Elections Commission (NEC). The African Observer Mission also interacted with other international Observer Missions namely; the Economic Community of Western African

States (ECOWAS), the Electoral Institute for the Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), the Carter Center, the Mano River Women Peace Network as well as the Liberian domestic Observers.

6. The African Union Observer Mission also interacted with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and wishes to express its profound gratitude to it for the logistic support it provided to the African Mission Observer Mission more particularly in airlifting some of its observers to 6 Counties.

7. The Observer Mission which arrived in Monrovia on 5 October 2011 witnessed electoral campaign of Political Parties which took place throughout the country in a peaceful atmosphere.

8. Members of the AU Observer Mission attended on 8 October 2011 a briefing organized by NEC for international observers in order to update them on its preparedness for the polls.

9. In the light of these consultations and observations, the African Union Observer Mission to the Presidential and Legislative Elections in the Republic of Liberia, notes that the electoral process was generally peaceful and held in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia and the new elections law.

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

10. The campaign was conducted peacefully as all Political Parties were free to carry out their political rallies across the country and there were no significant acts of violence in the run up to the elections.

11. The media played an active role in the electoral process.

DEPLOYMENT

12. The African Union Mission deployed its Observer teams to the following 8 Counties out of the 15 that constitute the Republic of Liberia:

- a) Bong;
- b) Grand Kru;
- c) Lofa;
- d) Maryland;
- e) Montserrado;
- f) River Gee;
- g) River Gedeh, and
- h) Sinoe.

13. The different teams carried out further consultations with relevant stakeholders in their areas of deployment and were able to observe the concluding stages of the election campaign, while identifying polling centers where they observed the voting and the counting.

THE VOTING AND COUNTING PROCESSES

The African Union Mission observed the following on the voting day:

- a- Most polling precincts were established in public institutions especially schools, churches and colleges of easy identification and access;
- b- Most polling stations opened on time;
- c- Polling officials were in place and on time for the opening of the polling stations;
- d- Most Political Parties and independent candidates' agents were present in the polling precincts and interacted among themselves and with the AU Observers in a cordial manner;
- e- Polling materials were of good quality, delivered in good time and generally sufficient, including the indelible ink which was used in all polling centers;
- f- Electoral register included the identification details of the voters and their photographs;
- g- There was a massive turnout of voters at the opening of the voting places in spite of the heavy rainfall;
- h- In general, the Polling staff handled the voting process in an efficient and transparent manner;
- i- The voting process was generally orderly and peaceful;
- j- The secrecy of the vote was generally protected and the voting screens or booths were adequately placed in the voting centers;
- k- The presence of law enforcement agencies was visible but unobtrusive;
- l- Women and youth were well represented as electoral officials;
- m- Persons with disability, the elderly as well as pregnant and nursing mothers were given preferential treatment, and where necessary, assisted to vote;
- n- Several domestic observers were generally present in most of the precincts and polling places;
- o- No evident acts of intimidation or coercion were observed during the voting process;
- p- The counting of the ballots at the polling places was conducted in accordance with the law, in an orderly and transparent manner and the results were subsequently posted outside the polling places.

14. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the AU Observer mission noted the following shortcomings:

- I- Deficient display of the correct polling places for the benefit of voters in certain electoral precincts;
- II- The lack of adequate lighting in certain polling places;

- III- A considerable number of elderly voters who did not know how to cast their votes resulting in a longer voting process;
- IV- The slow pace of the voting process from the identification of the voter to the actual casting of the vote;
- V- The difficulties of identification of the different ballot boxes for the three elections (Presidential, Senate, House of Representatives);
- VI- The inappropriate application of the indelible ink which led to the spoiling of some ballot papers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Based on observations and findings made by its different teams, the African Union Election Observer Mission to the 2011 General Elections in Liberia would like to recommend the following to the competent electoral authorities:

- 1- Ensure that the civic and electoral education is strengthened with the involvement of Civil Society Organizations, Non Governmental Organizations, religious leaders, women, youth and persons with disability associations, the media and other credible Liberian political or social actors;
- 2- Improve on the lighting of polling places;
- 3- Undertake to improve the *Modus operandi* of the polling process in order to reduce the time of voting;
- 4- Make sure that ballot boxes and respective booths are sequentially placed in the voting places in order to facilitate their identification;
- 5- Determine the use of the indelible ink at the last stage of the voting process.

CONCLUSIONS:

16. In view of the aforementioned the AU Observer Mission would like to declare that the Presidential and Legislative elections of 11 October 2011 in the Republic of Liberia were conducted in accordance with the Durban Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, as adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in July 2002.

17. The AU Observer Mission, therefore, states that the Presidential and Legislative Elections were Free, Fair, Transparent and Credible.

18. The African Union Observer Mission also wishes also to urge all the Political Parties, Candidates and other stakeholders to use the legally established channels or mechanisms to voice any dispute or electoral grievances they may have in relation the on-going electoral process.

19. The African Union Mission wishes to acclaim and congratulate the People of Liberia, Political Parties and Candidates for the political maturity they demonstrated during this electoral process.

20. The African Union Observer Mission also congratulates the National Elections Commission of Liberia, the security Agencies and all the stakeholders involved in the current electoral process, for the peaceful and orderly conduct of the 11 October 2011 General Elections.

21. The African Union Observer Mission urges all Political Parties and their respective Candidates to accept the outcome of the elections to be announced by the National Elections Commission.

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