

**COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO****THE ECOWAS OBSERVATION MISSION****TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN SENEGAL****FEBRUARY 26, 2012****PRELIMINARY DECLARATION**

1. In pursuance of the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, **HE James Victor Gheho**, deployed an observer mission of one Hundred and Fifty (150) members to observe the Presidential elections of February 26, 2012 in Senegal.
2. This mission led by Mr. Koffi Sama, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo, is part of the ECOWAS effort to support Member States in their process of consolidating democracy and good governance. It aims primarily at ensuring the proper conduct of free, fair and credible elections in Senegal.
3. The Head of Mission in carrying out his activities as part of the Joint AU/ECOWAS Peace Mission endorsed by the 40th Ordinary Session of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of States and Government, met with the various stakeholders in the electoral process including the President of the Republic, most Presidential candidates, the leaders of June 23 Movement (M23), the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Constitutional Council, religious bodies, civil society organizations, the Group of ECOWAS Ambassadors, the European Union Ambassadors. He also held consultations with some Observer Missions deployed in Senegal, such as the African Union and the Goree Institute.
4. During these consultations, the ECOWAS Observer Mission noted the commitment of various stakeholders in ensuring peaceful elections. In particular, the Mission took note of:

- The organizational and security measures taken to guarantee a conducive environment for the holding of a credible and transparent election;
 - The preventive steps taken by some religious bodies, especially through various appeals for peace on the eve of the election;
 - The efforts employed by the Joint AU/ECOWAS Peace Mission to promote dialogue among the various stakeholders and whose initiatives have helped ease tension considerably before the elections;
 - The messages of most Presidential candidates calling on voters to exercise their right to vote in peace and tranquility.
5. The Mission, was informed of, and regrets the violence that marked part of the election campaign resulting in loss of lives and injuries. It was also informed about some concerns related mainly to the process of voter card distribution.
6. Based on information gathered by the observer teams deployed throughout the country (except in the regions of Matam, Ziguinchor, Sedhiou and Kolda), and after assessing the voting process, the Mission noted the following:
- The orderliness that prevailed throughout the voting process;
 - The availability of adequate election materials in most polling stations;
 - The effective presence of representatives of some candidates of Coalitions of political parties especially Fal 2012, Bennoo Sigil Sénégal (BSS), Macky 2012, Bennoo Ak Tanor, and REWMI in most of the polling stations;
 - The respect of procedures by electoral officials and their ability to operate in a professional manner;
 - The effective presence of security agents in most polling areas;
 - The smooth conduct of the counting and collation processes in accordance with electoral standards.
7. The Mission is of the view that there were no major incidents and irregularities. While awaiting the end of the tallying process, which is being observed by ECOWAS in some regions (Dakar, Thies, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaolack, Kaffrine), the Mission considers that, globally, the 26 February Presidential elections have been held in acceptable conditions of freedom and transparency.

8. Consequently, the ECOWAS Mission commends the Senegalese authorities and all other stakeholders for ensuring a peaceful conduct of the elections. These positive elements testify to the political consciousness and maturity of Senegalese in consolidating their democratic process.
9. The Mission considers this election as a crucial step for national cohesion, consolidation of democratic gains and political stability in the country. In this regard, it is of the view that peace must prevail and triumph in the best interest of the nation. Therefore, the Mission especially calls for individual and collective responsibility of all Senegalese nationals, political leaders, their supporters and followers to ensure, at all times, respect for order and discipline. It particularly urges them to refrain from all acts of violence and resort to legal channels for the settlement of any electoral dispute that may arise.
10. The Mission also urges all stakeholders to promote the spirit of dialogue and sacrifice, in the political and economic interest of their country.
11. The ECOWAS Mission expresses its gratitude to the Senegalese authorities, and all other stakeholders involved in the organization of the Presidential election for facilitating logistical and security measures for effective deployment and performance by the observers.

Done in Dakar, February 27, 2012

The Head of Mission