



Republic of Liberia
National Elections Commission (NEC)



PRESS BRIEFING NOTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2011 @ 11:00AM

HON. JAMES M. FROMAYAN
CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Fellow Citizens, Members of the Press

❖ **TOMMOROW IS REFERENDUM DAY**

The National Elections Commission (NEC) wishes to remind all 1,798, 930 registered voters that tomorrow August 23, 2011 is National Referendum Day. The polls will be opened at 8 a.m. and will close at 6 p.m. But voters in queues prior to the close of polls will be allowed to cast their votes.

All registered voters will go to the same centers they registered during the voters' registration to exercise their democratic franchise and to have a say in the decision whether to change four (4) provisions of the 1986 Liberian Constitution or not. The four provisions are: Articles 52 (b); 72 (c); 83 (a) and 83 (b).

❖ **NEC RELEASES PROVISIONAL LIST OF CANDIDATES**

The National Elections Commission has today released the Provisional List of Candidates for President, Vice President, Senate and House of Representatives. The list will be subsequently exhibited at NEC local offices and other strategic locations in the fifteen counties. From this indicative listing, 16 are presidential candidates, all from political parties. Independent Candidates for the Senate stand at 15; while 131 are for the House of Representatives. Political Parties, Coalitions and Alliances have fielded 84 applicants for the Senate and 662 for the House of Representatives bringing the total number of candidates on the provisional list to 924.

❖ **CIVIC/VOTERS' EDUCATION**

Civic voters' education has winded-down with just 24 hours before the start of the voting in the referendum. As indicated in previous press briefing sessions, the Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has recently placed in the field over 200 civil society and community based organizations to help with the delivery of civic/voters' education messages and other materials for the conduct of the referendum. Just on Saturday August 20, 2011, Football for Hope, one of the organizations, staged a soccer showpiece in New Kru Town as part of

the ongoing awareness. Other groups are similarly engaged with awareness in the counties.

At the moment, a team from the Civic Education Section is monitoring CVE content delivery for the conduct of the impending referendum across the 19 magisterial areas as these groups scale down their activities. The Association of Liberia Community Radio (ALICOR) has been very instrumental in relaying CVE messages to rural populace in the vernacular that they understand. Essentially, the messages delivered by ALICOR were aimed at teaching registered voters how to mark the ballot papers and to reason to turn out and vote on August 23.

❖ **LOGISTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE REFERENDUM**

The Commission is pleased to inform the public that deployment of logistics which include sensitive and non-sensitive materials will be concluded during the early hours of August 23 in time before the polls open. The Commission has hired about 58 trucks, 209 Pick-ups, 112 Motor Bikes, 842 porters, 68 Canoes to help with the deployment exercise. UNMIL Helicopter MI 26 & MI 6 helped to airlift referendum materials to 6 magisterial areas in the country.

❖ **TRAINING OF POLLING STAFF**

The last phase of training of electoral supervisors and other polling staff has ended across the country successfully. Twenty Three Thousand Liberians recruited in various communities from across

Liberia benefited from the training and will serve as poll workers during tomorrow's referendum.

The Commission, as a matter of policy, recruited poll workers from the communities in which they reside to serve as polling staff. There will be 4,457 polling places spread across 1,980 voting precincts.

❖ **ACCREDITATION OF LOCAL, INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS AND THE MEDIA**

The National Elections Commission has accredited 367 International Observers and 1,328 Local Observers. Accordingly, the observers were briefed on the field coordination and logistical movement and polling staff deployment, polling and counting procedures for the referendum and also given an overview of the four propositions of the referendum.

Over 240 local and international journalists have also been accredited to cover the referendum.

Only accredited journalists and accredited observers will be allowed to have access to the Voting Precincts. The media observer card carries the picture, name and institution of the bearer.

❖ **SECURITY**

Security arrangements for the referendum have been concluded with the Liberia National Police. UNPOL will provide back-up security to the process. About 1,900 officers have been deployed across the country for the referendum.

❖ **CAMPAIGNING FOR THE NATIONAL REFERENDUM ENDED YESTERDAY**

The Board of Commissioners of the National Elections Commission (NEC) wishes to state that in keeping with the timetable for the conduct of the National Referendum, the campaign period for the Referendum which commenced on May 1, 2011 ended at midnight on Sunday, August 21, 2011. Beginning August 22, 2011, no political party, organization or individual will be permitted to canvass for votes either against or in favor of any of the four proposed amendments to the constitution. NEC wishes to remind all political parties, organizations and individuals that it is an electoral offense to broadcast, publish or display any campaign material for the referendum after midnight of August 21, 2011.

❖ **GOL MAKES GOOD ITS PLEDGE TO REFERENDUM**

We are pleased to announce that the Government of Liberia (GOL) has kept its commitment to the national referendum by making available to the National Elections Commission a total of US\$1.6 Million. This money will be used to pay the poll workers, facilitate

the vehicular movement of NEC Staff and cover other logistical operations for the process.

Finally, I urge all Liberian the registered voters to turn out in large numbers at the polling places and peacefully cast your ballots in the referendum on Tuesday, August 23, 2011 to vote YES or NO to change four provisions in the Constitution. I look forward to a large turnout of voters and a peaceful polling day.

I thank you.