



Republic of Liberia
National Elections Commission (NEC)



25 October 2005

TALKING POINTS
CLLR. FRANCES JOHNSON-MORRIS
CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION

☐ ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINAL RESULTS

The NEC will declare the final results of the October 11 election on Wednesday, October 26, at 10am. The venue for the announcement will be the Centennial Pavilion in Monrovia. All the candidates for President/Vice-President, Senate and House of Representatives, dignitaries and the media have been invited to the declaration ceremony. Guests are requested to arrive as early as 9:00 am due to security screening. Media have to bring their NEC Media Badges.

☐ VOTER EDUCATION

The NEC is continuing its voter education activities sharing important information with voters. The key messages the Commission wishes to emphasize are:

- **Voting will take place on November 8, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm**
- **Voters will vote in the same place they voted on October 11**
- **A voter can still vote in Run-Off even if their candidate isn't in the Run-Off election or they didn't vote on October 11**
- **Keep your voter registration card safe because you need it to vote**

Voter education materials are arriving and being distributed throughout the country. These materials include posters, flyers and stickers with these key messages. UNMIL Radio is already playing radio messages and featuring guests speaking about the Run-Off Election. NEC will soon release a variety of radio messages and jingles as well.

The NEC National Civic Educators, with international and national partners in voter and civic education continue sharing these messages in the counties.

☐ BALLOTS FOR RUN-OFF

Ballots for the November 8th Elections have been procured and are expected to be in secure NEC/UNMIL storage before the end of the week, so as to be deployed to the counties in time for polling day.

☐ TRAINING FOR RUN-OFF ELECTION

The NEC and UNMIL Electoral Division training units have today started training staff from all the Counties on the procedures for the run-off election. The procedures in this training include amendments to accommodate the specific circumstances of the November 8 election; in terms of assignment of duties of polling staff, packing of materials, tallying and other procedures.

At the completion of today's training, the Staff will be tasked with instructing the rest of their teams, who will transfer the information to the polling staff.

☐ NEC HOLDS HEARINGS

The NEC legal office held its first hearings on election-related complaints yesterday at 10:00 AM. Hearings for four complaints were scheduled. In one complaint, because the candidate appeared on a ballot of a district different from that which they registered to vote, the case was dismissed because there is no requirement for a candidate to run in the district where they are registered.

In another, both complainant and respondent failed to appear, and the matter was adjourned to a date to be determined.

In the third case, on the total number of Senate votes exceeding the number of registered voters in the county, the complainant was absent. The respondent asked that the matter be heard, and the Hearing Officer agreed. The complaint was dismissed because each voter was allowed to cast two votes for Senate, not just one.

The fourth complaint, related to the Senate race in Bomi County, was investigated and the data from the Presiding Officer's Record of the Count for the 98 Polling Places in Bomi County was compared with the Declaration of Preliminary Tally Results and found to match. A formal ruling is being drafted and will be sent to the complainant.

☐ ASSISTANCE TO VOTERS

As clarification on the procedures for Presiding Officers assisting voters in the run-off, as announced on Friday October 21, the NEC wishes to make clear that the Presiding Officers will also be serving as Queue Controllers.

It is therefore more important than ever for those voters needing assistance to bring someone with them. As required by law, any registered voter may assist another person to mark a ballot, and the register should indicate those voters who requested assistance and the reason for the assistance.

□ SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Asked how many polling staff the NEC will recruit for the November 8 presidential Run-Off, the Chair said the Commission plans to recruit approximately 12,000 poll workers, scaling down the number of poll workers used for the October 11 elections by 6,000.

On whether the premature announcements by some candidates that they have won the elections pose an embarrassment to the NEC, the Chair said such pronouncements were unhealthy for the electoral process. She said preliminary results released by the NEC must not be mistaken for final results. She noted that the final test for the validity of results rests with the NEC, and the Commission is the only body that has the obligation and authority to certify and announce the final results.

Answering a question regarding whether it was proper for parties/candidates that have apparently lost the presidential elections to openly declare their support for either of the two candidates expected to contest the Run-Off, the Chair said such open declarations of support destroy the secrecy of the ballot. She said candidates/parties should use the ballot box to demonstrate their support for any of the two candidates rather than making public pronouncements about whom they prefer. Cllr. Johnson-Morris said this could make a candidate overly confident of victory and therefore become reluctant to accept the election result if it proves contrary to his/her high expectation.

The Chair also expressed concern that some people were introducing tribal sentiments in the electoral process. She said it is wrong and a violation of the Constitution to practice politics along tribal lines. "This is not good for this country," the Chair stated.

Regarding rumour that she no longer sleeps at her home due to recent death threats from anonymous caller(s), the Chair dismissed this as completely false, stating that she has nothing to run from. "Only wrong doers will hide from their victims; I have done nothing wrong to run away from," she said.

Asked how long after the Run-Off the NEC will announce the final results, the Chair said, since there will be only one election, she expects the results to be ready within a shorter timeframe than was required for the October 11 elections. She however said the NEC could not give a definite time for the announcement of results because some of the unfavourable conditions that prevailed then still persist. She cited inaccessibility of some areas as well as heavy rains, bad roads, damaged bridges, and other obstacles. "If these conditions get better, the announcement of results could be much faster," the Chair said.

Requested to explain how the NEC will enforce the ultimatum it had issued to all political parties to comply with the campaign finance reporting requirements, now that elections have been held for all houses, and only two parties are left to participate in the Run-off, the Chair said the NEC will pursue the matter even after the elections since parties are not entities which will cease to exist following the election. The Chair said

parties that are found to be in violation of the Election Law may be de-registered or subjected to any other penalties as stipulated in the law.
