



STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NEC

7 pm, November 8, 2005

□ INTRODUCTION

The NEC commends the Liberian people for coming out to vote in sizable numbers, and peacefully casting their ballots.

We remind you all that the process of counting now needs to move forward as successfully as polling has. Judging by the experience of October 11, tonight's work will demand significant time and effort. We hope that as we process the votes, you will all wait for the outcome of this election with a spirit of unity, and that we will all guard the peace we have enjoyed throughout this process.

□ STATUS OF POLLING PLACE CLOSURES

The closing time of polling places was 6:00 p.m. and the majority of polling places closed at this time, however those voters still in line at closing time were allowed to cast their ballot. As was the case on October 11, voting precincts processed the bulk of the voters earlier in the day, and polling dwindled as the day progressed

By 6:30 pm we have received reports from all 837 easily accessible voting precincts, and 271 out of 311 of precincts that are considered difficult. 142 voting precincts located in inaccessible areas have managed to transmit reports. The reports we have been receiving have been updates on the progress of work in the precincts; no major difficulties have been reported.

□ THE POLLING PROCESS

The polling process was reported to have gone at a steady pace, but much faster than in the October 11 election. We are pleased by how smooth the voting has proceeded and we are proud to say that this has been mostly due to the commendable conduct of the voters. The diligence and hard work by NEC staff in the short period following the October elections has been rewarded with a very well organized election. We wish to take this opportunity to recognise them all for their tireless efforts in the days leading up to today, and urge them all to continue with the same enthusiasm and commitment in the coming days.

Particular thanks must be paid to our county staff, from the 18 County Electoral Magistrates and their teams, their UNMIL counterparts and the approximately 16, 500 polling staff who assisted voters who turned out today. Most of them worked in the October 11 Elections and as

such we have relied on them heavily in this process. The NEC and the Liberian people are very grateful to them for stepping up, not once, but twice, to serve their nation.

☐ COUNTING PROCESS BEGINS

Since there is only one race going on, counting will begin immediately.

As was the case in the October 11 Election, only polling staff are allowed to handle any ballot boxes or materials at this stage. Security by LNP will be provided for the polling staff and for the materials they will be handling.

In the counting process, the ballots will first be reconciled to verify whether the number of ballots in the ballot box corresponds to the number of ballots issued less any remaining or spoiled ballots. The ballots will then be placed in separate stacks for each Presidential candidate and for invalid votes. A designated polling staff will read the count aloud, showing each ballot to the party representatives and observers after which the Presiding Officer will do a recount.

Once polling is complete, polling staff will conduct counting. Generators and lanterns will provide light for the staff counting the ballots tonight.

All ballots are counted on site, and we urge party representatives to stay for the duration of this period, and keep accurate records of these proceedings to enhance the transparency of the process. Party representatives will receive a copy of the results at the end of counting.

☐ NEC REIMBURSEMENT FOR POLL WORKERS

On the issue of poll workers withholding materials and results of the election in lieu of payment, a directive has been sent to all County staff outlining that Presiding Officers are obliged by their oath and by their contract to faithfully perform their duties, which includes returning the electoral materials at the end of counting. Failing to hand over electoral materials will result in both serious financial and legal consequences for non-performance of their duties.

At the same time, any individual responsible for transmitting funds to October 11 poll workers who does not deliver those funds will be subject to serious financial and legal consequences.

☐ FINAL REMARKS

As we part for this evening, we commend the people of Liberia for once again successfully participating in this important step in the election of our next leader. The counting process has begun, followed by the tallying process, through which we will know the choice of the people. We rely on your peaceful support, cooperation and commitment to the success of this process.

We wish to take this opportunity to remind the candidates and the Liberian people that the NEC is the only entity with the authority to announce official results.

While understanding that the stakes are high, we urge the two parties involved in this race to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. Any queries and challenges to the NEC official results must be supported by proof, not be based on hearsay or rumors and will be investigated. The Liberian people have made their choice through the ballot today, and we are all obliged to respect the choices made by the men and women of this nation.