



Republic of Liberia
National Elections Commission (NEC)



STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NEC

14 October 2005

11:00 am

PROGRESSIVE RESULTS FROM TALLYING

974 polling places have reported. As of this morning, 311, 064 votes have been counted and tallied. The recorded turn out for the polling places which have reported amounts to 73%.

Presidential Candidates receiving more than five percent of the vote based on the polling places which have reported are as follows:

CANDIDATE	NUMBER OF VOTES	% PERCENTAGE OF VOTES
1. GEORGE WEAH	79,366	26.6
2. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF	49,687	16.7
3. CHARLES BRUMSKINE	33,635	11.3
4. WINSTON TUBMAN	33,430	11.2
5. VARNEY SHERMAN	28,124	9.4

Please be advised that detailed reports will be distributed at the end of the press conference.

RETRIEVAL OF MATERIALS

Sinoe County: There will be retrieval of materials from today from 13 polling places in inaccessible areas.

SECURITY

Nothing significant to report.

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Asked why there is a high number of invalid votes from polling places reported thus far, the Chair said it would be more realistic to answer the question of invalid votes after the Commission receives all of the results. She said when all results have been



Republic of Liberia
National Elections Commission (NEC)



reported and the final percentages calculated, the NEC will be in a better position to provide comments.

The Chair said polling places in the leeward counties can be expected to record a higher percentage of invalid votes because of the high illiteracy rate among voters in those areas. In Montserrado, where voters had greater access to civic/voter education and information-dissemination through the media, there could be fewer invalid votes, she noted.

Addressing a concern that tally results for Montserrado were coming in too slow, the Chair said NEC has put in place a mechanism to speed up the process, with more staff assigned to do the tallying. She pointed out that Montserrado accounts for over 400,000 registered voters, which is more than 1/3 of the total number of registered voters in Liberia, therefore the tallying of Montserrado votes requires an extra effort.

In response to a question about whether a journalist may report results for a county or town if he/she has collected information from all polling places in that county or town, the Chair said there is no problem with that provided the information is gathered from the official report posted by the NEC County Magistrate. She however said that to do this the journalist needs to state clearly the total number of polling places in that area and also the number of places that he/she visited.

Commenting on a point noted by the NDI/Carter Center international observer delegation's preliminary statement about inadequate voter education on marking of the ballot, the Chair said the NEC has received a copy of the report and was reviewing the recommendations. She said the Commission is grateful for the report and will make provisions to intensify voter education in the event of a second round presidential race.

On whether elections results may not have all come in by October 26 and a subsequent delay of the announcement of final results would occur, the Chair stated categorically that all the returns of the elections will be available in time, and the NEC will ensure that the October 26 deadline is kept.

Concerning reports that some registered voters in Margibi County did not vote because the voting precinct where they registered to vote had been moved by NEC and they were required to travel to another voting precinct where they could vote, the Chair said no such report had been brought to the attention of the Commission. She said the NEC County Magistrate had earlier informed the Commission that due to the very small number of people registered in a certain voting precinct in Margibi, it had to be merged with a nearby precinct, but since polling day no one has reported to the NEC that those registered voters did not turn out to vote because of this consolidation.

Asked how the Commission would respond if a candidate refused to accept the election results, the Chair noted that the election process had been transparent and free,



Republic of Liberia
National Elections Commission (NEC)



with vote counting done in full view of party representatives and observers, therefore she saw no reason why any candidate would refuse to accept the verdict of the people. “All candidates must be willing to accept the results,” she urged.

In response to a question about whether, in the event of a run-off presidential election, a political party can transfer its votes obtained in the first round to either of the two presidential candidates contesting in the second round, the Chair said this is outside the election procedures. She explained that if no single presidential candidate obtains 50% plus 1 vote in the first round, every registered voter will have the opportunity to vote in the run-off for a candidate of his/her choice.

Asked if NEC was pushed to begin announcing the election results, the Chair said the Commission decided in its own wisdom to announce progressive tally results knowing that the public would be anxious to hear them as soon as possible. The Chair said NEC was initially considering getting complete results from a county before releasing them, but the Commission later decided to release the results as they come in instead so that the public could be regularly kept abreast of the outcome of the elections.
