Press Statement by Cllr. Jerome G. Korkoya  
Chairman, National Elections Commission  
Updating the Liberian People on the Pending Combined By-elections

July 22, 2019

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

1. We have called you here today to provide an update on the pending combined Montserrado County Senatorial and District #15 Representation by-elections.

2. A little over a week ago, we informed the public that the NEC was challenged with having all of the materials for the by-elections brought into the country. At that time, we assured the Liberian people that the Commission was working with the vendor to ensure that he delivered the remaining materials to Liberia, after which the final date for the combined by-elections would be set.

3. Today, we are pleased to inform you that the last batch of materials (prepacked materials) arrived into the country onboard a special Kenya Airways chartered cargo flight on Thursday, July 18, 2019. With this development, the Commission hereby confirms that all of the materials necessary to hold the combined by-elections have now arrived into the country. The NEC operations team has been busy packaging the materials for deployment.

4. Following the arrival of the last batch of materials, the Board of Commissioners met with all the candidates for the combined by-elections on Friday, July 19, 2019 to inform them and to announce the new election date of July 29, 2019. We are pleased to report that the meeting was cordial without any disagreement.

Accordingly, the new date for the combined Montserrado County Senatorial and District #15 Representative By-elections has been set for Monday, July 29, 2019.
5. In view of the above, political campaign which is still in progress will end at midnight on Saturday, July 27, 2019. Meanwhile, the NEC is pleased to report that there has so far been no report of any campaign related violence. For this, we thank the candidates and their supporters.

6. Ladies and gentlemen of the press, as an election management body, we are mindful that the process we manage belongs to the Liberian people, as represented by their political institutions. As such, we owe it as a duty to listen to the concerns of the people through their various political parties and take corrective actions where necessary to ensure that all who participate in the electoral process do so with the highest level of confidence in the ability of the NEC to deliver free, fair and credible elections. You may recall that in the last weeks, there have been some unfounded speculations from some quarters in the Liberian public about the issuance of new voter ID cards and the possibility of people who are not duly registered to vote in place of registered voters. Even though these kinds of speculations are not possible in the face of the safeguard and control measures we have in place, the NEC has adjusted its polling procedure on the identification of voters to allow a more open process of voter identification as follows:

   a. The names of all voters appearing at a polling place will be called aloud;

   b. If any party/candidate agent is not convinced that the name called is on the voter register, that agent shall have the opportunity to verify the name on the voter roll in the hand of the VIO;

   c. Party/candidate agents shall have the opportunity, in the interest of time, to select at most two of their colleagues to sit with the VIO to verify the names of voters as they arrive at the polling place;

   d. Let it be known that this procedure will be time-consuming and it might, in some cases, lead to disagreement. It is however necessary for the sake of transparency.
7. The NEC wishes to state categorically that only people who have valid registration cards from the 2017 General Elections and whose names are on the Final Registration Roll that was used for the 2017 elections will be allowed to vote. As such, all candidates will be given copies of the voters’ roll on a flash drive. Additionally, for transparency purposes, the Commission will also provide copies of the voters’ roll to stakeholders including the Press Union, Election Coordinating Committee, Liberia Elections Observation Network, The Carter Center, the European Union, the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Program, the Inter Religious Council and other partners. This is necessary in order to advert any attempt by any one or a group of persons to change the list with the aim of undermining the credibility of the electoral process.

8. Let me also state that political actors also have the right under our laws to observe various aspects of the electoral process and I encourage political parties and candidates to thoroughly check the voters’ roll and compare with what was given to them in 2017. Besides, we encourage parties/candidates to be fully represented at each polling place on the day of election.

9. The NEC wishes to use this occasion to thank the Government of Liberia for paying the initial 1.5 million dollars of the 2.5 million budget. With the combined by-elections date now set for July 29, 2019, we call on the government to pay the balance of the funds to enable the NEC to finance the remaining activities including payment for polling staff.

10. Finally, the Commission expresses thanks to the voting population, the government and the Liberian people for their patience during these challenging times in our democratic process. The NEC remains committed to a delivering credible elections and we call on all to work together for the peaceful conclusion of these elections.

THANK YOU