Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Headquarters of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and to this press conference. In today’s press we will provide further briefing on the Senatorial By-elections in Montserrado and Bong Counties.

You will recall during our briefing on July 2, 2018, we informed the Liberian people on the following:

a. Receipt of Joint Resolution LEG-003/2018 from the Honorable Legislature;

b. Date of the Senatorial By-elections;

c. Funding to the By-elections;

d. Political Campaign; and

e. International Procurement

For the purpose of reminding citizens who may not have followed that statement, we informed the Liberian people that the NEC received a Joint Resolution from the National Legislature directing that we conduct the Senatorial By-elections in Montserrado and Bong Counties no later than July 31, 2018. Consistent with said resolution, we announced July 31 as the date for the Senatorial By-elections.
Since that press conference, the Commission has undertaken a number of activities hence this press conference.

**Funding to the By-election**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to announce that the Government of Liberia has met its obligation to the Commission with respect to funding the Senatorial By-elections.

**International Procurement**

As announced in our recent press statement, all items, including prepacked kits and ballot papers procured outside the country, have arrived and are stored under security pending deployment at various voting precincts across the two counties. For your ease of reference, there are 669 voting precincts and 2,292 polling places in the two counties.

**Recruitment and Training of Polling Staff**

Ladies and gentlemen, the NEC has completed the recruitment of staff in various capacities for the by-elections. Seventy-Seven Civic Educators and Gender Mobilizers were recruited, trained and deployed across the two counties. Thirty-five are in Montserrado while 42 are deployed in Bong County. These Civic Educators are mobilizing voters to turn out on July 31 and at the same time putting up reading materials such as posters, banners and flyers across the counties.
Seventy-Eight Data Center Staff were recruited to beef up the strength of Data Center personnel. In addition to Data Center Staff, the NEC recruited 148 Electoral Supervisors and 12,956 polling staff including Presiding officers, Voter Identification Officers, Ballot Paper Issuer, Inker/Ballot Box Controller and Queue Controller. Training for these staff will commence on Tuesday, July 24, 2018 in the two counties.

**Civic and Voter Education**

As mentioned earlier, the NEC recruited a total of 77 Civic Educators and Gender Mobilizers for the Senatorial By-elections. These civic educators and gender mobilizers are undertaking door to door civic education activities and putting up reading materials such as posters, flyers and banners in the two counties.

In addition to civic educators deployed in the field, the Commission in collaboration with IFES, has produced jingles and dramas which are being aired on a number of radio stations in Bong and Montserrado Counties. Additionally, the NEC hired the services of the Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives (LMDI) to assist with the dissemination of information on the By-election. LMDI has held series of town hall meetings and debates in Bong County. The group commence its work in Montserrado and as we speak, political debate among the seven candidates are ongoing in Brewerville City, Montserrado County. The CVE activities will be climaxed on Friday July 27, 2018 in Browerville City Montserrado County.
Political Campaign

Political campaign for the Senatorial By-election began on July 2 and will end on July 29, 2018 at 11:59pm. Since declaring campaign open, the NEC has not received any complaint of campaign violence. We want to encourage candidates to remain on this peaceful path during the remaining days of the campaign.

Security

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, as you all are aware, security for elections are provided by the state. In the lead up to this by-election, we met with the Liberian National Police and it was agreed that the LNP would submit a security budget to government for consideration. Due to the critical role of the LNP towards the by-election, we are calling on the LNP, Finance and Justice Ministries to ensure the presence of security at all polling places during the by-election on Tuesday, July 31, 2018.

Closing

We want to thank the Government of Liberia for its support to the By-election. We also want to thank our international partners for remaining engaged with the Commission. We call on all registered voters in the two counties to turn out on Tuesday to vote in the by-elections. I thank you.