



**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION OBSERVER
MISSION TO THE 8 NOVEMBER 2011 RUN-OFF PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

In response to an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Liberia, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Jean Ping, appointed and sent an Observer Mission to Liberia to observe the Presidential Run-off election held on 8 November 2011. In accepting the invitation, the African Union was mindful of the fact that, the conclusion of the electoral process which started with the 11th October 2011 Presidential, Senate and House of representatives elections was of paramount importance for the consolidation of peace and stability, democratic governance and the enhancement of the rule of law in the country.

The Mission is led by H.E. Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda. Other members of the Mission include African Ambassadors accredited to both Liberia and the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, delegates drawn from Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from various African countries. The Mission also included a technical support team from the African Union Commission Headquarters and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA).

The objective of the Mission was to make an honest, independent and impartial assessment of the conduct the Run-off based on the 2002 AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa

Upon arrival in Liberia, the Mission met and consulted with various stakeholders of the electoral process including officials of the National Elections Commission (NEC), the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the UN Mission to Liberia, the Chairperson of ECOWAS Commission, the head of ECOWAS Observer Mission, members of Civil Society Organizations, the Media as well as Members of the African Diplomatic Group.

The Mission expressed its concern over the withdrawal of the candidate of the CDC on the 4th November 2011 and the call to the party supporters to stay away from the run-off election.

The Mission was particularly concerned by the violent events of 7 November 2011 at the CDC headquarters that resulted in the death and injury of CDC supporters and wishes to appeal to all Liberian political and social actors to exercise caution and depart from any acts that could further worsen the existing political tension in the country.

Notwithstanding this event and taking into account the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, the new electoral law and the decision of NEC to proceed with the electoral process as provided by law, the AU Observer Mission deployed its members in several counties.

In the light of the aforementioned, the Mission to the Presidential Run-Off Election in Liberia observed and noted the following on the voting day:

- The poll was peaceful and held in accordance with the electoral law of Liberia;
- The call for boycott by the CDC, the fear of violence and voter apathy appeared to have deterred a larger participation in the electoral process;
- Most polling precincts were established in public institutions especially schools, churches and colleges of easy identification and access;
- Most polling stations opened on time;
- Polling officials were in place and on time for the opening of the polling stations;
- Unity Party agents were present in all polling precincts;
- Polling materials were of good quality, delivered in good time and generally sufficient, including the indelible ink which was used in all polling centers;
- Polling staff showed a high professional conduct and commitment to their duty throughout the duration of the process;
- Electoral registers included the identification details of the voters and their photographs;
- In general, the Polling staff handled the voting process in an efficient and transparent manner;
- There were no evident acts of intimidation or coercion during the voting;
- The secrecy of the vote was generally protected and the voting screens or booths were adequately placed in the voting centers;
- The presence of law enforcement agencies was visible but unobtrusive;
- Women, youth and persons with disability were well represented as electoral officials;

- Several domestic and international observers were generally present in most of the precincts and polling places;
- The counting process at the polling places was conducted in accordance with the law, in an orderly manner and the results were subsequently posted outside the polling places.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing, it is the considered view of the African Union Observer Mission that the run-off presidential election of 8 November 2011 was conducted in an atmosphere of peace and in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Liberia and in compliance with the AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa.

The Mission urges all Liberian political actors to engage in constructive dialogue as a way forward for ensuring peace, tolerance and inclusiveness in the best interest of the people of Liberia

**Issued at Monrovia, Liberia
On 9 November 2011**

**H.E. Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe
Mission Leader**