



## **COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE PRE-ELECTION MEETING OF HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER MISSIONS TO THE 7 MARCH 2018 ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE**

The following international election observation missions (IEOMs) present in Sierra Leone: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), The Commonwealth, Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), European Union (EU), and The Carter Center (TCC).

**Recognise** that the 2018 elections in Sierra Leone, the fourth since the end of the civil war, are critical to the maintenance of peace and stability in the country. Based on consultations with Sierra Leonean stakeholders over the past weeks, have noted the efforts of the National Electoral Commission, the Political Parties Registration Commission, the Judiciary, the Office of National Security, the Sierra Leone Police, civil society, the media and other key institutions towards the conduct of peaceful and transparent elections.

**Call on** the political leaders, parties and their supporters to ensure peaceful elections and respect for the rule of law as they go to the polls tomorrow and through the results tallying process. Further urge them to uphold their commitments under the 'Freetown Declaration', which was signed by presidential candidates on 28 February 2018.

**Further call on** the NEC and party polling agents to conduct their duties in a professional manner, which would ensure that these elections are transparent, credible and conducted in accordance with prescribed laws and regulations.

**Encourage** candidates to accept the outcome of the elections in line with Article 9 of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) and, in the event of complaints or disputes, encourage candidates to seek redress through legal channels whilst at all times refraining from acts of violence and intimidation.

**Look to** the government of Sierra Leone to uphold its constitutional obligations to provide a secure environment that guarantees the safety of candidates, voters, NEC officials and electoral materials. The missions

urge the security agencies throughout the country to demonstrate professionalism and to enforce the law in a neutral and proportional manner.

The different IEOMs have deployed over 250 international observers across the country to follow all aspects of election day and some will remain to observe the tallying process and post-election period.

The IEOMs present in Sierra Leone would like to take the opportunity to wish the citizens of Sierra Leone well in the exercise of their democratic rights; and pledge our unequivocal commitment to support the people of Sierra Leone to ensure a peaceful and credible conclusion of the electoral process.

**6 March 2018**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone**