



**DEPARTURE STATEMENT BY COMMONWEALTH DEPUTY-SECRETARY  
GENERAL, MRS MMASEKGOA MASIRE-MWAMBA, AFTER VISITING  
NIGERIA**

Ladies and gentlemen of the press,

The Commonwealth is at an advanced stage of preparations for the monitoring of elections in Nigeria. The objective of our visit is to engage key actors and stakeholders involved in the forthcoming elections, and re-affirm the Commonwealth's support and expectations for a peaceful and credible process.

The Commonwealth takes a keen interest in elections across its membership. Nigeria is a valued member with whom we have a strong and mutual beneficial engagement. It is also a key member of the association which contributes and participates actively in Commonwealth activities—including hosting CHOGM in 2003, and producing a Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Nigeria is a leader on the continent, playing a significant role in promoting peace, and in regional economic growth and development.

It matters to the Commonwealth, Africa and the world that Nigeria and other member states conduct credible elections.

Since arriving in Abuja on Sunday, I have met with leaders of political parties, The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), civil society representatives and the international community. I have listened to their views on how the process is going, and discussed the progress as well as the challenges. In all our meetings, we have had candid and open discussions.

Stakeholders have noted positive steps in the preparations so far. I am hopeful that if all actors—politicians, civil society, the public, and you, members of the media continue to play your expected roles, there can be an outcome that reflects the will and aspirations of the people.

Any election is a complex and challenging undertaking and requires the cooperation and support of all stakeholders. Political leaders and parties must display political will to ensure a credible process. The people need to show faith in the democratic process and participate in it. It is crucial that violence is avoided by all means, and the rule of law must be allowed to prevail. All must ensure that both the process and outcome meet Commonwealth values as well as international and regional electoral benchmarks to which Nigeria has committed itself.

On our part, we will remain engaged and offer support and assistance as requested.

We wish the people of Nigeria a most successful, peaceful and credible election.

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**Abuja**

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