



# Commonwealth Observer Group

Mozambique Parliamentary and Presidential Elections  
December 2004

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## *News Release*

### **ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY DR VAUGHAN LEWIS, CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

In response to an invitation from Mozambique's election management body, CNE (Comissão Nacional de Eleições), the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Don McKinnon, has constituted a Commonwealth Observer Group for the 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections.

An Assessment Mission visited Mozambique in October 2004 in order to establish whether there would be support for the presence of Commonwealth observers. Consultations were held with CNE, the political parties, civil society and others. The Mission concluded that there would be broad support for the presence of Commonwealth observers.

The Secretary-General then sent an Advance Group of Observers which has just concluded an extensive tour throughout Mozambique. It had the opportunity of meeting people throughout the country, including representatives of the political parties, as well as domestic and other international observers.

All the members of the Commonwealth Observer Group are now present in Maputo. They are eminent citizens from various Commonwealth member countries. They have been selected in their individual capacities, but represent the Commonwealth as a whole. The Group will be independent of the governments of the countries from which its members are drawn, any organisations to which they may belong and the Commonwealth Secretary-General himself. The Group will act impartially and abide by the laws of Mozambique.

We have been mandated to observe relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the elections. We will consider all the factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole. Our two key tasks are to determine, in our own judgement, whether the conditions exist for a free expression of will by the electors, and if the results of the elections reflect the wishes of the people.

We will travel extensively, consult widely, and take every opportunity to see the process for ourselves. We look forward to meeting as many people around the country as possible.

Later today we will meet with the President and members of CNE. From tomorrow we will meet with senior representatives of the political parties, non-governmental organisations and others. On Thursday we will meet Commonwealth diplomats and on Friday we will meet other observers. Our teams will deploy to their base locations on Saturday 27 November.

After we have witnessed the end of the campaign, both polling days, the count and as much of the results process as we can see, we will reassemble in Maputo to compile our report, which we will complete and sign before we depart. A continuing Commonwealth presence will be retained when we leave.

Our report will then be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will in turn forward it to the Government of Mozambique, CNE, the political parties and all Commonwealth governments. The report will thereafter be made publicly available, in Mozambique and throughout the Commonwealth, in printed form and on the internet.

We are all pleased to be in Mozambique for these elections. A Commonwealth Observer Group was present for the 1999 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, and a Commonwealth Expert Team was present for the Local Elections in 2003. I very much look forward to continuing the Commonwealth's engagement with the democratic process here in the weeks ahead.

Hotel Avenida  
Maputo  
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