

Commonwealth Observer Group in Sierra Leone Ready for Election Day

4 March 2018

With just a few days to go before Sierra Leone holds its historic 2018 General Elections, Commonwealth Observers have journeyed to different cities and towns across the country as they prepare to observe the opening of the polls on March 7.

The 14 Observers representing Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, and the Pacific who arrived in the country on 28 February are led by former President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama.

An experienced African leader who has both won and lost elections, Mr. Mahama says at election time it is always helpful that as politicians and citizens we remind ourselves that whether we win or lose, we should put our country first and pursue any concerns that arise through proper and peaceful processes.

“Sierra Leone has made significant strides on its journey towards consolidating its democracy, and if the country is to make these gains and move forward, it is important that Sierra Leoneans are able to cast their vote in a credible election, where all parties are given access to a level playing field,” Mr. Mahama said.

“Our duty as Commonwealth Observers is to pay close attention to how these elections are being conducted, to see if they meet up to the standards for democratic elections to which Sierra Leone has committed itself, and to determine whether the credibility of the electoral process as a whole is intact.”

Commonwealth observers have been holding briefings with a cross section of persons including representatives of political parties, civil society, the security force and the media to assess the electoral environment.

16 parties have put forward candidates in the country’s presidential race. The winning candidate is required to secure 55% of the votes. In addition to voting for presidential candidates on March 7, Sierra Leoneans will also elect parliamentary, and local government leaders.

“As a member of the Commonwealth family, we hope that as Sierra Leone takes another step forward in strengthening its democracy, that our presence here conveys a message of support to the Sierra Leonean people,” said Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group, Mr. John Dramani Mahama.
