



Commonwealth Observer Group

Mozambique Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

December 2004

News Release

INTERIM STATEMENT

Dr Vaughan Lewis, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group, this morning issued the following statement:

"Since the end of the polling station counts I have been in touch with each of the Commonwealth Observer Teams which deployed around the country at the weekend.

We have concluded that overall the voting phase of the elections went well. We came across few serious irregularities. Everywhere the secrecy of the ballot was assured; polling station staff adhered to the prescribed procedures, were efficient and helpful to voters; agents from the main parties were present at most stations visited and made few complaints; security was light but effective; all stations we visited were well equipped; and the key materials were stored safely overnight on Wednesday. Although it took a very long time, the counting of the votes at the polling stations was meticulous and transparent, and generally in line with procedure.

Unfortunately some polling stations did not open at all and some opened a day late; and in places there was confusion about the location of the polling station. As a result some people were unable to vote. In rural areas distances to polling stations were sometimes excessive. These are unwelcome shortcomings.

Mozambique has now moved into the results phase. We followed the polling station results through yesterday and today. We will continue to observe after we reassemble in Maputo tonight to begin the preparation of our Report, which we will complete and sign by the time we depart Mozambique on 8 December.

Before we leave we will be joined by other Commonwealth colleagues who will then remain until 20 December, so that there will be a continuing Commonwealth presence for the rest of the results process. We hope that other observers, the political parties and our Commonwealth colleagues can be given full access to and information about the rest of the results procedures.

As I made clear at our arrival press conference on 23 November, for Observers to make judgments on the process they need to be able to have full access to and detailed information about it. This is as important for the credibility of the next part of the process as it was for the part which has just been completed."

Maputo
4 December 2004

FURTHER INFORMATION: contact Mwambu Wanendeya on 082 331834