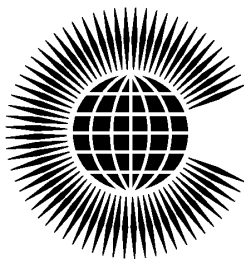


# **Sierra Leone Local Government Elections**

**5 July 2008**

## **REPORT OF THE COMMONWEALTH EXPERT TEAM**

Joint Commonwealth Secretariat and  
Commonwealth Local Government Forum Team





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# Letter of Transmittal

## **COMMONWEALTH EXPERT TEAM Sierra Leone Local Government Election 2008**

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10 July 2008

Dear Secretary-General,

Allow us first of all to express our gratitude for the opportunity to have observed Local Government Elections in Sierra Leone this year.

We feel fortunate and gratified that we were able in the short time here to have gained a good picture of the electoral environment and the election process.

We would particularly like to express our appreciation for the excellent professional support given by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum staff.

As you will see from our report, the Team has been impressed with the progress that the National Electoral Commission has made in four short years.

As we concluded, the election process was credible and well put together. However, we feel that we would not have completed our mission if we did not bring to your attention our concern about the political environment and our opinion that peace in this country is still on a tenuous footing.

Whereas the National Electoral Commission has made strides in preparations for and in the conduct of the poll, we would wish that this had been matched by comparable progress in the political landscape.

We trust that our frank reference to this environment would encourage the Commonwealth to vigorously use its good offices in continuing to support the deepening of democracy.

It is clear that Sierra Leone's post-hostilities reconciliation process still requires international attention, as we believe that this would coincide with the aspirations of the people of Sierra Leone for peace and progress.

Yours sincerely,



**Dolores Balderamos Garcia**  
Chairperson

Mr Kamallesh Sharma  
Secretary-General  
Commonwealth Secretariat  
Marlborough House  
Pall Mall  
London SW1Y 5HX



**Mr Milton Brown**



**Mr Vuyo Mlokoti**



**Mr Kanor Sanakey**



# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Sierra Leone on 13 May 2008 to the Secretary-General requesting a Commonwealth Observer Mission for the Sierra Leone Local Government Elections, the Commonwealth Secretary-General constituted a Commonwealth Expert Team comprising of four persons. The Team was supported by three officers from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. Members of the Expert Team were as follows:

**Ambassador Dolores Balderamos Garcia** - Former Minister of Human Development, Women and Civil Society, Belize

**Mr Milton Brown** - Mayor of May Pen and Chairman of the Association of Local Government Authorities, Jamaica

**Mr Vuyo Mlokoti** - Chairperson, Municipal Demarcation Board, South Africa, and member of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF's practitioners' data base)

**Mr Kanor Sanakey** - Executive Council Member of NALAG and Presiding Member of Dangme East District Assembly, Ghana

The Team was assisted by:

Ms Julie Broadbent, Assistant to Observers

Ms Zippy Ojago, Assistant to Observers

Mrs Nyasha Simbanegavi, Assistant to Observers

### Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference as defined by the Secretary-General were as follows:

*The Commonwealth Expert Team for the Local Government Elections shall observe the preparations for the election; the polling, counting and results process; and the overall electoral environment.*

### Activities of the Team

The Team arrived in Freetown and commenced work on 28 June 2008.

Following its arrival in Sierra Leone, the Team received briefings from representatives of political parties, non-governmental organisations, and other international organisations on issues relevant to the Local Government Elections. In addition to meetings with different stakeholders and interested parties, the Team attended a comprehensive briefing session held by the National Electoral Commission for a number of organisations. The Expert Team were the only

international observers apart from a large group of observers from neighbouring Liberia. The Team received an information packet which included: the List of Polling Stations, a Summary of Polling and Counting procedures, the Code of Conduct for Parties, a Voter Education Manual and an analysis of Voter Registration.

See Annex One for a list of meetings held.

On 2 July 2008, four small groups were deployed. These were:

The first team, Mr Kanor Sanakey and Ms Nyasha Simbanegavi went North to the Makeni area. A second team comprised of Mr Milton Brown and Ms Zippy Ojago went East to the Kono district and its environs, while a third team Mr Vuyo Mlokoti went to Bo in the South. The Chairperson as well as Ms Julie Broadbent remained at base in Freetown in order to cover the Western Urban and Western Rural areas.

During deployment, all four groups met with the local NEC operatives, the police, paramount chiefs, city officials, candidates, other local stakeholders and observers and assessed the electoral environment in the days leading up to the poll.

The Team observed polling around the country in one 101 polling stations and 32 of wards and observed the count in four locations.

After observing administrative and political preparations, actual voting and counting in the above mentioned regions, the Team reconvened in Freetown, completed their report and later departed on 12 July 2008.

## **Background on Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone is situated in West Africa bordered by Guinea and Liberia and the Atlantic Ocean. The capital city and main commercial centre is Freetown. The country also has three provincial capitals – Bo in the south, Koidu in the east and Makeni in the north.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Christian philanthropists established what was called the “province of freedom” of mostly freed slaves as well as ex-servicemen of the British crown in the American War of Independence.

The settlement became a British colony in 1807 with its inhabitants therefore becoming British subjects. After a tumultuous history, Sierra Leone became an independent nation within the Commonwealth in April of 1961.

According to the NEC, the population is estimated at five million.

Sierra Leone has a Republican system of Government based on English common law. There is a President and a 124 member Parliament.

For the country’s Local Government System there are 19 local councils, comprising five city council, thirteen district town councils and one municipal council, with a total of 394 wards.



Sierra Leone still has a primarily rural population, however the phenomenon of urbanisation continues. It is of note that there is over seventy percent illiteracy in the country, as well as high unemployment which have tremendous bearing on the political context and the conduct of elections, both Parliamentary and Local.

## **Chapter Two**

### **POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

Political independence in Sierra Leone was achieved in a peaceful climate. The 1951 Constitution had provided the framework for decolonisation and at Independence in 1961 Sir Milton Margai of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) was at the helm. In closely contested elections in 1967 the All Peoples Congress (APC) won a majority of seats, but the government did not take office as it was prevented from doing so by a military coup. Democratic rule was later restored with a civilian government in 1968 and the declaration of a Republican system of Government in 1971.

In 1972 elected local councils were abolished and replaced with appointed management committees. Later, in 1978 a new Constitution providing for a one-party system was approved. By 1991 another new Constitution marked a return to multi-party politics with elections scheduled for May 1992.

Again, a military coup prevented the 1992 elections from being held. The Constitution was suspended, the Legislature dissolved and all political activities were suspended.

Civil War began in the mid 1990s as an insurgency by radical youths and guerrillas supported by the then Liberian President Charles Taylor who helped to finance the newly formed rebel group the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

Initially the stated aims of the RUF were to overthrow the Government in Freetown and end perceived excesses and corruption, but the rebellion continued even after the April 1992 coup. It is often cited that the real reason behind the war was the struggle to control the diamond rich areas of the country where the fighting began.

Following international pressure to restore democracy, Presidential and Parliamentary elections were held in February 1996, but the following year a violent army mutiny drove President Kabbah into exile. A Nigerian led Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervened in 1998 and returned the exiled President to Freetown.

In May 1998 a ceasefire was declared and in July 1999 a peace agreement was signed in Lome which resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission (UNAMSIL). Hostilities did not officially end until 2002 with Presidential and Parliamentary Elections following in the same year. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP was returned to power.

#### **Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2007**

In the Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections last year there was a peaceful transfer of power from President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP to the APC led by Ernest Bai Koroma.

The Commonwealth Observer Group to these elections led by Dr The Hon Kenny Anthony was pleased to comment in their departure statement that "the elections were credible and conducted in accordance with internationally accepted standards and had indeed been landmark elections in the history of the country."

The Group also concluded that the NEC had performed very well and that the people of Sierra Leone now had a chance to consolidate the democratic traditions that were reinforced by the professional manner in which the elections were conducted.

However, they also opined that the charged political atmosphere after the Presidential Run-Off election caused the group to be concerned that the issue of ensuring post election stability would be a challenge.

### **Reintroduction of Local Government 2004**

After the abolition of Local Government in 1972, the reintroduction of Local Government did not occur until 2004 through the Local Government Act of that year. This was an encouraging development because it is widely felt that the concentration of excessive power in the hands of Central Government had been inimical to democracy and was indeed one of the factors which contributed to civil war.

The Local Government Act devolves significant powers to local councils in an effort to reduce the centralisation of power and decision making in the Capital. Key areas which local government are mandated to oversee are education, primary health care, social welfare, works and technical maintenance, and financial management.

Chiefdom councils are according to law part of the local government system in the country. Paramount Chiefs remain responsible for upholding custom and tradition which includes local justice in the Northern, Southern and Eastern Areas.

## **Chapter Three**

### **ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

The Local Government Act 2004 sets out the arrangements for local government in Sierra Leone. The conduct of elections in Sierra Leone is governed by the Electoral Laws Act 2002 (as amended).

#### **The National Electoral Commission (NEC)**

The NEC Act of 2002 was passed in accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone. By these provisions the Commission is confirmed to be an independent body. But with staff coming from the established civil service there were many challenges in relation to the autonomy of the Commission and the competence of staff.

In 2005, The NEC underwent a major restructuring exercise which resulted in the hiring of an almost completely new staff whose terms of reference better reflected its autonomy.

The NEC Act Of 2002 stipulates a five member body consisting of the Chairperson and four other members appointed by the President after consultation with the leaders of all registered political parties and subject to Parliamentary approval.

The current composition represents in our view progress towards gender balance with the Chairperson and two Commissioners being women.

Four of the Electoral Commissioners have regional responsibilities as well as their assigned functional roles. It is understood that the various Commissioners also have the responsibility of ensuring that the Commission's work is carried out in each of the four regions. The regionalisation of the Commission might remove the objective national character desired for a National Electoral Commission and may contribute to an affiliation with a particular region as opposed to an independent national voice on electoral matters.

The Team feels that, as was the case in the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, all political parties and other organisations continue to have confidence in the competence and impartiality of the NEC. We received no major complaints about its credibility and the method in which it conducted its activities.

However, concerns were raised about the delimitation of wards, the timetable for the announcement of results and the registration of voters after nominations. However the general opinion is that under the leadership of Dr Christiana Thorpe strides have been made in building this confidence.

It became clear to the Team that with the collaboration and support of international agencies the NEC has increased its technical capability for the conduct of elections. The Team was impressed with the professionalism of key technical staff. From our observation, it was no small accomplishment that Polling Centre Managers, Presiding Officers and other staff for 394 wards had been well trained and were ready to administer the poll effectively and efficiently.

We note with concern however that financing of the NEC is largely based on international contributions with the government providing approximately 15% of its budget.

### **Political Party Liaison Committee**

The NEC has instituted a Political Party Liaison Committee in order to provide a regular forum with the political parties. This forum provides the opportunity for the NEC to interact with the political parties on issues of procedure as well as address any concerns and issues that the Political Parties may wish to raise.

The Team welcomes this development and recognises that a Political Party Liaison Committee is a valuable tool not only for building confidence of the political parties in the process but more importantly as a useful mechanism to dilute any tensions which may arise from the political parties.

### **Political Parties Registration Commission**

The Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) came into being in 2005 pursuant to legislation that was passed in 2002. The Act confers on this body full independence in carrying out its functions.

The role of the PPRC is to: provide for the registration of all political parties; monitor the affairs of political parties; monitor the accountability of parties to their members and to the electorate; promote inclusiveness, pluralism and the spirit of the Constitution; mediate and resolve conflicts or disputes within or among political parties.

The PPRC comprises a Chairperson, being someone who has held judicial office or is eligible to be appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court, as well as three members, one being the Chairperson of the NEC, another nominated by The Bar Association and the third nominated by the Trade Unions.

In addition to meager Government resources the Commission receives much of its funding from the international community. This paucity of resources in addition to a lack of sanctioning powers have affected the Commission's ability to deliver on its mandate. For example district offices have no resources with which to operate. The Commission has therefore had a tentative start.

However, the Team feels that in the context of building stability in a post-war environment, the PPRC can and should play an important watchdog role to reinforce the Code of Conduct for Political Parties which was signed by most parties in 2006 and to ensure a healthy milieu in this multi-party system.

## **The Political Environment**

The 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections resulted in the first transfer of power from one elected civilian government to another in a relatively peaceful manner.

This was clearly a significant step forward for Sierra Leoneans in their quest for peace and the consolidation of democracy. It is within this context that the NEC has been able to achieve the strides referred to earlier.

Political parties have been able to present their platforms through door to door campaigning and political rallies in a schedule that was mutually agreed and made public. It was widely felt that not as much was at stake this year being the year following major elections. Despite this, people generally displayed enthusiasm to participate in the political process, and there was a general consensus of no return to war or hostilities.

Having said this however, the Team was concerned that some political parties seemed more intent on complaining about their opponents than on bringing their messages and manifestos to the electorate and doing the tough political work in the trenches.

The Team believes that on all sides of the major political parties there was a level of belligerence and finger pointing. Both the PMDC and SLPP as well as civil society groups complained that the ruling party (APC) was making use of a "task force" to intimidate their opponents and create fear and apprehension during the campaign process. We also received reports that other political parties were involved in disturbances.

The Team was disturbed to hear in some of their briefings some senior operatives of opposition parties speaking in "fighting" terms of their readiness to defend themselves. This view was in tandem with an expressed lack of confidence in the police to ensure a safe environment.

We received allegations of high-handedness and political intimidation at campaign level by the ruling APC, with one of the hotspots mentioned being Kono in the Eastern region where the ruling party seemed to be seeking to consolidate its advantage in an area traditionally a stronghold of the opposition SLPP.

The Team is of the opinion that the people's perception of the history of the political parties affects significantly their confidence or lack of it in the political system.

In particular the PPRC mentioned making a visit to the Eastern Region to investigate reported skirmishes at which it was alleged that the police did not intervene adequately or in a timely manner. The visit by the PPRC and the complaint by them to the police were after the fact, so there seemed little that the PPRC could do.

This unease as well as scattered reports from Freetown of clashes between political parties was of concern to the Team, as was a climate of fear in some regions. We therefore feel distinctly that peace in the country is still fragile.

We noted that there has clearly been some good progress with regard to calls from the NEC and civil society bodies for peaceful elections and the building of political tolerance and respect.

It is important to mention the Peace Rally held on Thursday 3 July through the streets of Freetown and at Victoria Park. The rally, sponsored by Artists for Peace and the Sierra Leone Female Musicians Association supported by UNDP and UNIFEM, saw musicians, artists, comedians and amputees themselves deliver messages of non-violence, tranquility and hope. The rally also had the participation of NEC Chairperson, Dr Christiana Thorpe, who addressed the gathering with her own powerful message of peace. Similar rallies were held in other parts of the country.

The media also played a notable role in transmitting this message of peace.

## **Chapter Four**

### **THE CAMPAIGN**

#### **Political Parties Contesting Elections**

There were three main political parties contesting the Local Government Elections: All Peoples Congress (APC), Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) fielded five (5) candidates. In addition there were a number of independent candidates. 1126 candidates were fielded by the political parties and 198 were independents. Seventeen percent of all candidates were women.

#### **Withdrawal of Candidates**

There was a total of 71 candidates who withdrew their candidacy before and after the close of nominations. From the information gleaned as well as from direct that many were pressured or intimidated.

Several organisations shared with the Team that they were made aware that various candidates had been victims of intimidation including attacks on people's homes and various forms of threats. There were also reports of the "buy out" of candidates who wished to participate but did not enjoy approval from party stalwarts.

These unfortunate occurrences have evidently impinged greatly on the political climate and must be seen as a hindrance to developing an atmosphere of healthy competitiveness.

#### **Women Candidates**

An unprecedented number of women candidates offered themselves to run for their respective local councils and/or for district chairperson or mayor. Out of the 225 women contesting we were informed that approximately 215 received some form of political training.

An International Non-Governmental Organisation which supported women's participation and had trained a large number of women candidates, shared with the Team that it had received many calls from women complaining of serious intimidation including death and rape threats especially in Kono. There was unrest as well in various other districts related to the intimidation of candidates particularly women.

Many women were participating in spite of not receiving support from their respective political parties.

Stakeholders spoke of educational and cultural barriers as well as the first past the post system not having been good for women candidates who contested the 2007 national elections. This could have affected women's confidence to offer themselves as candidates in local government constituencies.



However, there were also various positive messages encouraging women's participation, sponsored by various organisations. Many international and local groups made a great effort to encourage, support and advocate on behalf of women candidates.

### **Access to Media**

The most common medium of communication used in Sierra Leone is the radio, followed by the print media and lastly television. The major political parties own their own newspapers and radio stations as a tool to disseminate their message. Apart from the United Nations radio there is no single radio station in the country that has nationwide coverage. The UN radio provided a set number of free slots for all political parties to address the electorate.

In addition, there is an Independent Radio Network of approximately twenty (20) community radio stations. They pool their resources in order to create a greater reach during the time of elections and play an important role in educating the public on the electoral process.

There was an admirable level of vibrancy with which the radio stations were used in order to market candidates and manifestos. The regional aspect of radio stations actually provided an advantage for the Local Government Elections as it enabled community centred issues to be discussed.

### **Role of Paramount Chiefs**

Sierra Leone has an established structure of chiefdoms, and Paramount Chiefs as traditional leaders in the social and cultural life of their communities play an influential role in community life.

Section 27 of the Local Government Act 2004 provides that Chiefdom Councils shall cooperate with Local Councils in the performance of the functions of the Local Councils.

These historical and traditional roles have been noted by the Team to have a significant impact on the party political process. There were allegations of interference by Chiefs who can clearly use their position to influence the vote.

## **Chapter Five**

### **THE POLL, COUNT AND RESULTS PROCESS**

#### **PREPARATIONS FOR THE POLL**

##### **Delimitation of Wards**

Prior to the Local Government Elections, the National Election Commission (NEC) undertook a process of delimitation of wards. This process was primarily done through an analysis of the population, but it is felt that many persons did not understand the process that was used.

There was a challenge in some parts of the country of obtaining detailed maps which could have assisted residents in understanding ward boundaries.

It is felt that the NEC could embark on a more comprehensive consultation process and where applicable simplify it.

##### **Voter Registration**

A Voter Registration exercise was completed prior to the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. This register was updated from 29 May to 4 June 2008 to allow citizens who had become eligible to vote since last year to become registered and to allow for the transfer of electors to new locations.

The Register used for the Local Government Elections was comprehensive and accurate. We did not see any persons being rejected on the basis of their names not being on the list or not being in possession of an ID card. We only observed a few instances where persons presented themselves at the wrong polling station. NEC must therefore be commended for the accuracy and quality of the Voters Register.

The Team noted with concern that some persons who appeared to be under age were on the Voters Register, possessed voter ID cards and were therefore entitled to vote.

##### **Voter Education**

It is clear that extensive efforts have been made by NEC to promote voter understanding of the process and to facilitate persons to exercise their franchise. The Team noted, for example, that before ballot papers were handed to voters they were folded lengthwise so as to prevent a transfer of ink which could potentially invalidate a vote. This clearly displayed sensitivity and the preparedness of NEC to facilitate the large number of voters who would not have been able to read or write.

In addition ballot papers displayed photographs of candidates as well as party symbols. The polling staff made great effort to bring to voters attention the correct process in multi-member wards where persons could vote for two (2) or

more candidates. In some polling stations polling staff seemed to be providing on the spot voter education prior to issuance of the ballot.

The media played an important role in announcing the location of polling stations and disseminating information on the processes involved and other relevant facts.

It is felt that, although there have been extensive efforts on the part of the NEC and other international and local organisations, there are still some gaps in voter education. We observed, in all the parts of the country visited, the difficulty by a number of voters as to what to do in order to cast their votes. This was particularly evident among older electors, many of whom seemed confused and even intimidated by the process.

We suggest that it should be reinforced that persons who need assistance may bring a friend or relative as is provided for in the voting regulations.

More voter education will result in a reduction in the number of invalid ballots. For example in one box for the Freetown area, of the 154 ballots cast there were some sixteen that were declared void.

### **Role of Political Party Agents**

In evidence was a lack of preparedness on the part of political party agents. The team observed that party agents were present at every polling station visited, however as they did not have the Voters Register they seemed to be mere spectators to the process.

The Party Agents expressed satisfaction with the process of voting as well as with counting procedures, but were not vigilant in preserving their respective party's positions. This speaks to the need for more understanding and training which should be addressed by political parties.

### **NEC Training**

The training of staff was extensive, and there have been many gains since the last Local Government Elections in 2004. The NEC started the planning process not long after the last Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, which allowed time to ensure trained and efficient staff at all levels including the temporary staff recruited for polling day.

The Team commends the NEC staff at all levels for their dedication and professional conduct of the elections. .

At all polling stations visited, polling centre managers, presiding officers and their staff were knowledgeable of the procedures and confident in the execution of the process.

## **Arrangements and Voting Procedures**

### **Polling stations**

The layout and facilities of polling stations were adequate despite ageing infrastructure at schools and community centres. Secrecy of the ballot was generally assured except at some polling stations which did not have suitable privacy curtains.

Police presence was discreet and not intrusive assuring confidence of voters as they went through the process.

Polling officials administered their duties calmly and with sensitivity to voters. However, the Team repeats its concern that more assistance should be offered for the disabled, the elderly and others who need help.

### **Counting Arrangements**

Counting took place immediately after the close of polls at 5pm in each polling station. Again election officials were well briefed on procedures.

The Team feels that although small lanterns were provided lighting was still not sufficient. A lengthy process of counting in this environment leaves the process vulnerable.

The two-step process of removing and reapplying seals for reconciliation and actual counting may have increased NEC's confidence in the process, but the Team is of the view that this was time consuming and did not necessarily add value for transparency and accountability.

After counting, results were noted and signed by the NEC officials and party agents. The results were then placed in a Tamper Evident Envelope (TEE) for submission to the Tally Centre. Results were then posted on the wall at each polling station.

### **Tally Centre**

The results of each polling station were submitted to the Tally Centre at NEC Headquarters in Freetown where a comprehensive cross checking exercise was being carried out prior to the release of the official results.

The Team observed the process at the Tally Centre and noted the inclusive nature of the process as well as efforts being undertaken to ensure transparency.

## **Chapter Six**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Conclusion**

The Team, during its time observing the Local Government Elections in Sierra Leone, has been able to cover a cross section of locations, and interacted with many persons and organisations. We were therefore able to get a fairly good picture of the overall environment.

We are pleased to conclude that the National Electoral Commission (NEC) has improved significantly and is better prepared to administer elections than they were at the Local Government Elections of 2004.

We wish to commend the Government of Sierra Leone for providing the enabling environment in which these achievements have taken place.

The Team observed a low voter turnout on polling day. The Domestic Observer Group, National Election Watch who claim to have deployed approximately 3200 observers nation-wide described the turnout in their interim statement of 6 July as “disappointingly low”. The NEC however stated that “on the whole, turnout was satisfactory”.

The Team was impressed with the willingness of those Sierra Leoneans who participated in the process although this did not translate into a high voter turnout.

Prior to polling day, the NEC stated that these elections were important as they would be,

- 1) a crucial step in the consolidation of the peace process;
- 2) crucial to the Government of Sierra Leone’s programme of decentralisation;
- 3) a further test of NEC’s operational capacity to conduct elections in a professional manner.

In our opinion there was success in all three areas, as these elections marked the first time that there was direct election of Mayor and Chairpersons as well as Councillors for multi-member wards. We encourage the Central Government and all stakeholders to build upon these successes in order to deepen democracy.

Our view is that the process of polling was credible. We however noted that the political environment was not always conducive to the enhancement of democracy.

## Recommendations

- The Government of Sierra Leone should agree on a timetable for a phased increase in financial support to the NEC, in order to reduce the heavy reliance on international donors.
- The NEC should continue working with the Political Parties Liaison Committee and increase its role at local level as a method of strengthening dialogue and tempering the political atmosphere.
- Specific education should be provided to inform those voters who need assistance that they can bring a person to help them.
- The Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC) must be given powers to sanction violations of the Political Parties Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the PPRC should be strengthened and the outcomes of their investigations referred to a relevant entity which has powers to prosecute if this is deemed necessary.
- The PPRC should be allocated an adequate budget from the Government in order to ensure that it can discharge its functions effectively.
- We encourage political parties to operate effectively within a competitive multi-party system without resorting to unhealthy rhetoric and undercurrent messages of violence.
- We emphasise the need for ongoing and increased voter education taking into account the literacy levels in the country. This will be a task for the NEC and multiple stakeholders.
- As was stated in the recommendations of the 2004 Report of the Commonwealth Expert Team to the Local Government elections we reiterate the call for increased participation of women in governance and political life. Definite steps should be taken towards meeting the agreed Commonwealth target of at least 30% representation.
- The Team recommends that the counting process be streamlined to make it less cumbersome and time consuming whilst preserving the integrity of the count. It would be instructive for NEC to investigate best practices in other Commonwealth countries.
- Political Parties should make every effort to step up the training of their agents who represent them during elections. The provision of and how to use the Voters Register should be considered.
- We encourage the NEC to adopt a system of timely and periodic updates of the Voters Register as opposed to having a short period for the registration of new voters just before an election.

## **Annex One**

### **List of Meetings Held**

National Electoral Commission  
People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC)  
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)  
Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC)  
50/50 Group  
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)  
National Democratic Institute (NDI)  
National Election Watch  
Sierra Leone Peoples Party  
All Peoples Congress (APC)  
UNDP  
Centre for Coordination of Youth Activities

## **Annex Two**

### **BIOGRAPHIES OF COMMONWEALTH EXPERT TEAM**

#### **Dolores Balderamos Garcia (Belize)**

Dolores Balderamos Garcia is an Attorney-at-Law by profession. She also holds a Master of Arts Degree in English. She is a former Minister of Human Development, Women and Civil Society and has served as an elected representative and Senator in the National Assembly of Belize. She has also served the Government of Belize as Ambassador/ Special Envoy for Children, Gender and HIV/AIDS. As such she has had wide experience in gender affairs, community development, politics and governance. She has employed her advocacy skills in both local and national contexts. She was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group for elections in Tanzania in 2005.

#### **Mayor Milton Brown (Jamaica)**

An Electrical Engineer by training, Milton Brown has been an elected councillor in the Parish of Clarendon since 1998. He is the Mayor of the town of May Pen and Chairman of the Clarendon Parish Council and has been since 2003. Milton did post graduate studies in Management and Education. He a member of several boards in Jamaica and member of several civic organisations. An active member of the Commonwealth Local Government fraternity he is the elected president of the Association of the Local Government Authorities of Jamaica (ALGAJ) and a Vice – President of the Caribbean Local Government Authorities (CALGA). As a practicing politician Milton boasts not to have had a party political campaign meeting for all the three elections and has instead done house to house campaign on all occasions. A truly Local Government advocate and practitioner.

#### **Vuyo Mlokoti (South Africa)**

Vuyo Mlokoti is the Chairperson for the Municipal Demarcation Board South Africa. He has been involved in local government for the past 13 years in various capacities. He is a former Chairperson of the Drakensburg District Council(1995). He has also been a Director for Local Government (1995-2001). He is a former Municipal Manager for Amathole District Municipality(200-2004). He has expansive international local government experience through local government studies and conferences in Germany, Bulgaria, USA, Scotland and New Zealand.

#### **Hon Kanor Sanakey (Ghana)**

Kanor Sanakey is currently the Presiding Member of the Dangme East District Assembly and Executive Council Member of the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana. Kanor Sanakey taught in a number of schools and colleges in Ghana and Nigeria for sixteen (16) years. In 1998, he joined the Ministry of Finance and Economics Planning as a Budget Analyst attached to the Yendi District Assembly for 5 years and the Dangme West District Assembly for 12 years. In 1992, Kanor Sanakey served as a Deputy Returning officer during the referendum on the Constitution and the Presidential and Parliamentary elections that followed later.



## Annex Three

### Map of Sierra Leone

