

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION**



**SECRETARIAT EXÉCUTIF
CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE
SUR LA RÉGION DES GRANDS LACS**

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION (ICGLR)**

**ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
TO THE 11th AUGUST 2016 ZAMBIA
GENERAL ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUM**

**13th August, 2016
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) sent a team of observers for the 11th August 2016 Zambia General Elections and the Referendum.

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) comprises twelve (12) countries namely Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Angola is the current chair of the ICGLR.

The election observation mission to Zambia was led by Sen. (Dr.) Wilfred Gisuka Machage, Senator of the House of Parliament, Kenya. The mission was composed of Observers from ICGLR Members States and the Forum of Parliaments of ICGLR, namely the Parliament of Kenya, the Parliament of Rwanda, the Parliament of Sudan, the Parliament of Uganda, the supporting staff from the Senate of Kenya and the Forum of Parliaments of ICGLR, and members of the ICGLR Secretariat.

The ICGLR Election Observation Mission followed the electoral process from 9th August 2016 to 13th August 2016 and deployed observers in the Districts of Chilanga, Chongwe, Kafue and Lusaka.

ELECTORAL PROCESS

Zambia held the 2016 General Elections and Referendum under a new Constitution. The Mission noted that the previous election campaigns in Zambia had been relatively peaceful and that this year's campaign had been characterised by unprecedented level of violence and uneven press coverage etc.

During the days before the polling day, the Mission held meetings with various stakeholders including the Electoral Commission of Zambia and the Heads of Diplomatic Missions of the ICGLR Member States accredited to Zambia. The purpose of the meetings was to exchange information on the status of preparations of the elections including challenges.

The Mission was thus able to

1. Observe the election and assess compliance with national and international standards including the ICGLR Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance;
2. Observe elections to establish if they were peaceful, free, fair and transparent as per ICGLR mandate and make recommendations.

3. Draw up recommendations for improvements of such processes in the Member States and advise the Secretariat of ICGLR on actions to be conducted in the future;
4. Prepare a comprehensive report on the process to be shared with the authorities and the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee of the ICGLR and the Summit of Heads of State as stipulated in the Protocol.

POLLING

According to the Electoral Commission of Zambia, there are 7,700 polling stations spread throughout the country. The total number of voters registered is 6,698,372. Contesting the elections are 9 presidential candidates, 651 for parliament, 331 for mayoral and 4,566 council candidates.

i. Opening of polling stations

The ICGLR Observers noted that all polling stations opened between 06:00 and 06:45 hours. All the opening procedures were followed according to the Electoral Law.

ii. Voting operations

The voting process was generally conducted peacefully and in a transparent manner but at a slow pace and this seemed to cause irritation amongst the voters who were queueing. However, polling officials were competent and acted professionally within guidelines issued in conformity with the Electoral Law of Zambia.

Political Party agents (mainly PF and UPND), local monitors and Civil Society organizations were present at the polling stations. We also observed the presence of other international observers. Political Party agents were given identical copies of the voters register. This was for the purpose of transparency and accountability in voter identification.

The ICGLR observers noted the higher voter turnout for the general election and very low turnout for the Referendum. They also noted that in some polling stations the voting booths were inadequate, the voting rooms were very small and in some polling stations poor lighting.

The security officers were present at each polling station and acted professionally.

iii. Closing of polling stations and counting of ballot papers

The ICGLR Observers witnessed the closure of some polling stations and noted that the closing procedures were followed according to the Electoral Law.

The closure procedure was followed by the counting of ballot papers which was done professionally. The votes were counted in the presence of agents of political parties, monitors or observers, members of the Public and announced at each Polling Station by the Presiding officer. The results were then delivered and transmitted to the District Talling Centre for onward transmission to the National Results Totalling Centre.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

It is our view that the elections exercise substantially met Regional and International Standards of conducting elections, especially Chapter 3 of the ICGLR Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. We are reasonably satisfied that the People of Zambia have been given an opportunity to freely express their political choices through the vote in conditions of peace.

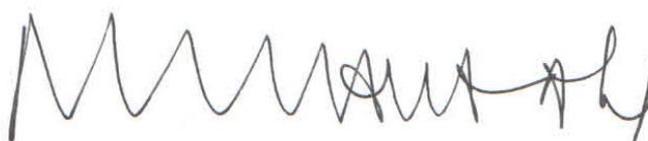
Despite observing that the vote exercise was satisfactory we are concerned with the time taken to tally the votes. We appeal to the Electoral Commission of Zambia to fast track the process without compromising the results.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the People of Zambia for having maintained peace on the polling day. We urge them to be patient and maintain this peace and order till and after the final declaration of results.

We are informed that a special court has been established to address electoral disputes. We encourage those with disputes to use this system.

We would like to thank the People of Zambia for their usual warm hospitality and demonstration for the love for peace.

Done in Lusaka, Zambia
13th August, 2016



Sen. (Dr.) Wilfred Gisuka Machage,
Head of Mission
ICGLR EOM