

Statement by Cllr. Jerome G. Korkoya
Chairman, National Elections Commission (NEC)
At Program Marking the Certification of Winners of the
2018 Senatorial By-elections in Montserrado and Bong Counties
James M. Fromayan Conference Hall
August 13, 2018

Madam Co-Chair and members of the Board of Commissioners
Senators Elect,
Leadership of the Coalition for Democratic Change
The Leadership and Members of the Tokpa for Senate Campaign
Staff of the Commission
Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to join Commissioner Dukuly to welcome you all to the Headquarters of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and to this certification program.

Today, we are gathered here to celebrate the end of the 2018 Senatorial By-elections conducted in Bong and Montserrado Counties with the certification of the winners of those elections. The Senatorial by-election came at a time that our country was transitioning from one democratically elected government to another in more than seventy years. Just as the government was transitioning, the NEC also was transitioning from one electoral cycle to another. We had commenced the post electoral period during which we take stock of successes made, challenges encountered during the preceding electoral cycle while at the same time reviewing relevant laws that governed the electoral process.

During the review of the 2017 Electoral process, the NEC identified as one of the positives from those elections that the people of Liberia have accepted the ballot box as the surest way of making change in the leadership of their country. We observed that voters understanding of the electoral process and trust in the work of the Commission have rapidly grown. All this is made possible by the system developed with the help of the Government of Liberia and our donor partners.

We note that assistance from international partners are being scaled down, therefore the greater responsibility to improve and sustain this system will rest on Liberians.

This is where your role comes in, Honorable Senators Elect. Over the coming months, the Commission will be submitting series of proposals towards reform of current elections laws. For example, we will be submitting proposal for adjustment in candidate registration fees. We believe people who aspire to lead must help to support the electoral process. Another area in which we need the help of the Legislature is in funding the Commission. In an effort to make the Commission truly independent, the law requires that the NEC submit its budget directly to the Legislature for approval (see section 11.2 of the Elections Law). As we seek to reform the electoral process, we need the help of the Legislature in ensuring that this law is observed.

Every time we have program of this nature, we usually point out issues we believe are relevant to improve the electoral process. It is however difficult to see if any changes have been made because the problems persist. As you take your seat in the Senate, we ask that you join us to reform our electoral process to serve the Liberian people better.

Before I perform the certification ceremony, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Liberia for providing the finance that was needed to conduct the 2018 Senatorial By-election. Our thanks and appreciation also go to our international partners, UNDP and IFES for their contribution to the by-election. Many thanks to the poll workers who worked under difficult conditions to conduct these by-elections. Thanks to the LNP and all other security forces for creating the necessary secured environment to conduct these elections. To all registered voters who turned out to vote on July 31, 2018, thank you for your show of love for country. And lastly, I want to thank the staff of the Commission for always standing up to the challenges even under difficult condition. You are indeed true professionals. I thank you all.