



**STATEMENT BY CLLR. JEROME G. KORKOYA,
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION (NEC)
ON THE RELEASE OF PROVISIONAL INFORMATION ON THE 2017
VOTER REGISTRATION EXERCISE, FEB.1-MAR.14, 2017
March 23, 2017**

Introduction:

Commissioners of the National Elections Commission (NEC)
Representatives of Partner Institutions
Members of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to welcome you to the headquarters of the National Elections Commission and to this press conference. This press conference is being held in line with our commitment to keep the Liberian people informed on the electoral process and to provide preliminary report on the 2017 Voter Registration Exercise. Issues that will be addressed in this press conference include:

1. The 2017 Voter Registration Exercise;
2. Retrieval of Registration Forms
3. Data Processing
4. Exhibition of Provisional Voter Roll
5. Lofa County District #1, By Election and
6. Call to Political Parties for the Exhibition Exercise.

I. 2017 Voter Registration Exercise

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Consistent with Article 77(b) of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia and Section 3.1 of the New Elections laws of Liberia, the National Elections Commission on February 1, 2017 inaugurated the National Voter Registration exercise which lasted until March 7 and was subsequently extended to March 14, 2017.

The extension was intended to accommodate women, physically challenged and elderly persons, many of whom had to travel long distances to register. Additionally, the extension was to compensate for the lost time at the beginning of the exercise when the VR process encountered equipment malfunction.

Today, the National Elections Commission is pleased to report that the 2017 Voter Registration Exercise was successfully completed on March, 14, 2017 at all of the 2,080 centers across the 73 electoral district in the 15 counties of Liberia.

A. Retrieval of Registration forms

Following the close of the VR process, the Commission is in the process of retrieving registration forms and materials from the field. As at today, March 23, 2017, the Commission has received and recorded a total of **2,026,426 (Two Million Twenty Six Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Six)** forms in its warehouse. This figure represents total forms received from eleven of the fifteen counties including:

1. Montserrado
2. Margibi
3. Grand Bassa
4. Gbarpolu
5. Bomi
6. Bong
7. Grand Kru
8. Maryland
9. Sinoe
10. River Gee
11. Rivercess

The Commission is awaiting the remaining batches of forms from Lofa, Lower Nimba, Grand Gedeh and Grand Cape Mount counties.

B. Data Processing

As at today, March 23, 2017, the NEC Data Center has received 1,366,473 forms. Registration forms scanned so far amount to 655,423. Male registrants account for 53% of scanned forms while female represents 47%.

At this junction, it is important to provide a graphic picture of the scanning process to give you an appreciation of the enormity of the task at hand.

The processing of data goes through several stages to derive at the provisional voter roll. First, the batches received from the field are prepared for scanning. The OMR forms are then fed into the scanners to collect information of each registrant. Once the data is collected from the form, it goes to the quality control stage, where the information is validated to ensure that the age, name, registration center of each registrant is captured correctly.

The data checked at the quality control stage is then cleansed where the entire scanned process is reviewed to ensure accuracy.

The Commission will begin the release of registration figures within two weeks from today. Said reports will include disaggregated figures on age and gender and county specifics. We ask that the Press and the Liberian people be patient as the scanning process is technical and therefore requires care to handle.

C. Exhibition of the Provisional Voter Roll

Members of the press, Ladies and Gentlemen, consistent with Chapter 3, Sub-chapter C, Section 3.11(2a) of the New Elections Law of Liberia, the Commission will conduct an Exhibition of the Provisional Voter Roll from June 12-17, 2017 at designated centers in the 73 Electoral Districts across the country.

This exercise is essentially designed to correct errors captured on the particulars of registrants during the VR exercise and to provide the platform for claims and objections, if any. The National Elections Commission would like to encourage all Liberians to participate in the Exhibition Exercise in order to produce a clean voter roll and identify specific areas to correct personal data.

Claims and objection to a name on the Voter Roll may include objection to registration of a person either because the registrant is a non-Liberian citizen or had not attained the age of 18 years and above.

Currently, forms and exhibition stationery have been procured and are packed in the central warehouse. The Exhibition procedure manuals as well as the provisional voter roll are being developed. Operation Department is taking stock of all equipment and materials retrieved from the field.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the final figures of registered voters in the country will be released on July 15, 2017 in line with the Key Dates of the October, 10, 2017 Presidential and Representative Elections.

II. The Registration Malpractice

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you will recall that during the VR process the Commission reported that one Amos Siebo and some registration staff from the Goba Town Public School were arrested by the Police for attempting to defraud the electoral process while using equipment and materials belonging to the NEC. Contract agreement between the NEC and staff involved in that scam have since been nullified. At the moment, the case is in court and the Commission is awaiting the final verdict.

III. Lofa By-election:

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the press, you will recall that the Commission on February 28, 2017 conducted a Representative By-election in Electoral District #1, Lofa County, to fill a vacancy created by the death of Hon. Eugene Fallah Kparkar. On Thursday March 2, 2017, the Commission declared Mr. Francis Sakila Nyumalin, candidate of the Union of Liberian Democrats (ULD), as winner of the by-election. He obtained 3,149 or 32.0% of the total valid votes. Following the election, the candidate of the Movement for Economic Empowerment (MOVEE), Mr. William Tamba Kamba and the County Coordinator of the party, Mr. Kpalloe F. Sandikie, filed a complaint with the Commission. They alleged that votes which belonged to their candidates were counted as invalid in four precincts. The complaint was investigated by the Hearing Officer and dismissed for lack of evidence. The national leadership of the party excepted to the ruling and announced an appeal to the Board of Commissioners.

While the Board was reviewing the appeal within the statutory period, the complainants, Mr. Tamba and Mr. Sandikie informed the Commission in two separate letters; one addressed to the national leadership of MOVEE and another to the Commission that they were no longer interested in pursuing the protest.

On account of said withdrawal and considering that there was no other protest against the victory of Mr. Nyumalin, the Commission on March 22, 2017 certificated him as winner of the by-election.

IV. Call to Political Parties

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as we enter the exhibition period on June 12, 2017, the Commission would like to call on political parties to cooperate by calling on their supporters to review the provisional lists to correct the voter roll.

We also want to call on all Liberians to take keen interest in the Exhibition Exercise. A successful exhibition exercise will lead to a clean registration roll which is crucial to the conduct of credible elections. Remember, Election is Everybody's Business!

I thank you.