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NEC Co-Chairperson: Stakeholders Consultation is a Necessary Hallmark to the 2023 Elections

Monrovia..... The co-chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC) says regular consultation and dialogue are necessary hallmarks for a transparent and credible election in October.

Cllr. Teplah Reeves says stakeholders are key to the process of the 2023 general and presidential elections in October consequently regular and genuine dialogue



Co-Chair Reeves and stakeholders in group pic in Buchanan

with them is “is an important medium through which important ideas and misconceptions are resolved far head of the elections in October”.

The NEC Co-chairperson made the remarks when she made the formal opening declaration of the stakeholders’ dialogue on the impending Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County over the weekend.

The dialogue brought together more than 200 participants of the six counties of the first phase of the BVR (Gbarpolu, Bomi, Bassa, Cape Mount, Montserrado, and Margibi). The stakeholders included youths, women organizations, elders, superintendents, the Liberia National Police and the media.

The NEC is transitioning from the outmoded OMR (Optical Mark Recognition) the BVR beginning on March 20, 2023, in which, Co-chairperson Reeves says “will clear the way for inclusive and transparent election in October”. She says “NEC is aware that election is the central art of democracy and the Election Management Body (NEC) and the people must work together to drive the process with the aim of keeping the peace”.



Clr. Reeves continued that “a credible voter roll will serve as a strong foundation for free, fair, and credible election in October”. She therefore emphasized that “NEC needs all hands on desk to ensure the successful implementation of the impending biometric voter registration exercise”.

The NEC, unlike previous voter registration exercises, will introduce the biometric form of registration whereby unique physical human information, as finger prints and standardized photographs, will form part of information taken during the registration, beginning in next month.

The dialogue on the biometric form of registration set forth the platform where Liberians of all walks of life to shared notes and got firsthand education on the workings and benefits of the new technology. The Commission also demonstrated at the dialogue step-by-step processes of the BVR, especially for the purposes of attracting the full participation of first-time-voters. Participants were made to physically participate in a mock registration exercise where their temporary voting cards were printed out.

The Friday Buchanan dialogue, the Commission believes, has reduced the falsehoods and misconceptions of some segments of the voting population in the Country.

NEC is under ethical and national obligation to educate the citizenry on the new technology, which replaces the obsolete OMR (or optical mark recognition). Unlike the OMR, the biometric system, with the taken of finger prints and standardized photographs, deduplication of the voter roll will be easier and faster. It will discourage double registration or unscrupulous attempts to vote more than once and the infamous issue of “trucking”.

NEC therefore also believes the Buchanan dialogue has enhanced the fundamental intent of the migration from OMR to biometric voter registration (BVR).

The NEC will conduct the BVR in two phases of six and nine counties from 20 March to 11 May. Phase one (Montserrado, Bomi, Cape Mount, Bassa, Margibi, and Gbarpolu Counties) will run from 20 march to April 9, while phase two (rest of the nine counties) begins on 21 April to 11May.



Participants of the Buchanan dialogue were drawn from the six counties of the first phase of the BVR. Each of the Counties were represented by and through their Civil Society Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Women Organizations, Youth Organizations, Professional and Academic Institutions, Local and Traditional Leaders, District Commissioners, and Superintendents. Others are City Mayors, Transport Unions, Political Parties and Candidates, Tri and Motor Cyclist Unions, the Liberia National Police, the Liberia Marketing Association, and Media Organizations. Members of the Board of Commissioners will be in full attendance at the Buchanan stakeholders' dialogue on the conduct of the BVR.

Ahead of the historic BVR, NEC has already commenced training. The first sets of



NEC and Laxaton Conduct In-House BVR Training in Monrovia

trainings started on 1 March-5 February, involving election magistrates and other staff, both at headquarters and in the field. It will be followed by the Electoral Supervisors and then temporary staff. The trainings are jointly conducted by the Training and Procedure Section of NEC and Laxton and partners.

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