



WEST AFRICA ELECTION OBSERVERS NETWORK (WAEON) NEWSLETTER

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(July – September, 2018)

Introduction

WAEON's Newsletter provides news and information on activities undertaken by the Secretariat; Network members in their respective countries; and updates on elections and governance issues occurring in the West Africa sub-region. This third edition for 2018 (July to September) features news and updates on WAEON member organizations' activities, election and governance-related issues of member countries and fundraising efforts by the Secretariat.

WAEON Member Organizations' Activities

Transitional Monitoring Group (TMG), Nigeria

As part of its efforts to promote electoral integrity in Nigeria, the Transitional Monitoring Group (TMG) deployed 300 observers for the September 22, 2018 Osun state

governorship elections in 30 local councils. During the subsequent re-run elections held on September 27, 2018, TMG deployed observers to 7 polling units across 4 local councils.

National Civil Society Consultation of Togo (CNSC-Togo), Togo

CNSC-Togo embarked on a project activity focusing on "Promotion of fiscal civism in three communities – Badou, Agou and Vogon" from August 20 to September 21, 2018. Sixty (60) participants from varied backgrounds – municipal administration, women and youth, civil society, operators of bus stations and markets – were trained on building a culture of fiscal civism to promote local governance development. Radio programs were used to sensitize the population on their role in promoting fiscal civism in their communities.

Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Ghana

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) observed a Limited Voter Registration Exercise organized by Ghana's Electoral Commission as part of its preparations to conduct a referendum for the creation of new regions. The exercise, which took place in 4 regions, was held from September 16 – 25, 2018. CODEO deployed its roaming observers to Nkoranza North and South districts in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Krachi West district in Volta Region, Juabeso in the Western Region, and Sawla – Tuna and Chereponi in the Northern Region.

In a [statement](#) issued by CODEO, observers noted that the system for online registration of voters was intermittently slow in some of the districts. The Coalition recommended that the EC must take steps to improve its IT infrastructure during future exercises.

National Election Watch (NEW) and Sierra Leone's Troubled By-Elections

The National Election Watch (NEW) deployed observers to all 17 polling stations in a by-election held in Ward 196, Constituency 58, Tonko Limba

Chiefdom, Kamba District on September 29, 2018.

A press statement issued by NEW, and based on observation reports indicated the by-election was marred by gross intimidation of voters, display of thuggery and excessive violence precipitated by transportation of youth supporters from other parts of the country, and accompanying senior political figures into polling station vicinities, etc.

Observers reported violent clashes between supporters of Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All Peoples Congress (APC) led to the death of a 14-year-old boy and destruction of election materials. Owing to this, the poll was eventually cancelled.

Elections and Governance Related News

Mali: 2018 Presidential Elections

Amidst insecurity from insurgents, Mali managed to hold first round of presidential elections on July 29, 2018 with 24 candidates. None of the candidates obtained 50% of the valid votes cast to become the winner.

The opposition challenged the results of the first round elections at the Constitutional Court. However, on August 8, 2018 the Constitutional

Court ruled that the applications made by the opposition was inadmissible.

The second round of elections was held on August 12, 2018 between the two leading contenders declared by the Constitutional Court, incumbent President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and Soumaila Cisse who polled 67.17% and 32.83% respectively.

Ghana gets new Chairperson and members to its Electoral Commission

Ghana has a new Chairperson and two deputies for its Electoral Commission. The appointment of the three new executive members and one non-executive member followed the dismissal in June 2018 of the then Chairperson, Mrs. Charlotte Osei and her two deputies, Mr. Amadu Sulley and Mrs. Gerogina Opoku Amankwa on grounds of stated misbehavior. The new Chairperson is Mrs. Jean Mensa, a civil society person and was the Executive Director of Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and two Deputies, Dr. Bossman Asare, Senior Lecturer at the Political Science Department, University of Ghana, and Mr. Samuel Tettey, Director of Elections at the Electoral Commission. The President also appointed Ms. Adwoa Asuama Abrefa, a corporate lawyer as a non-executive member of the Commission following the retirement of one of the existing

Commissioners. These persons were subsequently sworn into office by the President on August 1, 2018.

Fund Raising

The Secretariat is pleased to announce that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has approved a grant to support activities under a project titled “*Engaging WAEON Members on the Increasing Role of Technology in Election Administration*”.

The project among other things will seek to stimulate discussions among WAEON members on emerging challenges to election observation of technologically-driven election administration; and also develop guidelines to enhance election observation efforts of WAEON members.

Releases

Within this period, the Network released two statements, which focused on Mali’s 2018 Elections.

Mali’s July 29, 2018 Presidential Elections: WAEON Calls for Peaceful and Credible Polls Amidst Security Threats (Released on July 26, 2018). The [statement](#) called for peaceful elections and urged all stakeholders to conduct their affairs in accordance with the laws.

Mali Elections: Address Security Concerns To Inspire Confidence In The Electorates – WAEON (Released on August 10, 2018). Ahead of the second round elections, the [statement](#) from the Network condemned violent attacks mounted by jihadists and armed groups during the first round of elections. The statement strongly urged the government and security services to step up security efforts to ensure smooth polling.

Other News

Reviving potential WAEON - ECOWAS partnership

Dr. Franklin Oduro, the Project Manager of WAEON, was in Abuja, Nigeria in September to revive discussions with the Elections Division of the ECOWAS Secretariat regarding collaboration with WAEON. The discussions also explored partnership with ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC).

In Transition

Co-Chair of Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), Ghana passes on

[CODEO](#) joined Ghanaians to mourn the passing of Justice VCRAC Crabbe whose death occurred on September 7, 2018. Justice Crabbe, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana had

been Co-Chair of CODEO well over a decade. He was 94.

Upcoming Project Activities

Search for an Election Technology Consultant

The Secretariat of WAEON is seeking to engage an Elections Technology Consultant to develop guidelines for election observer groups. Competencies required:

- Technical knowledge about the back-end systems of technologies deployed by Election Management Bodies (EMBs);
- Experience working with EMBs and election observers' groups; and
- Experience in developing manuals, guidelines and developing technical reports.

Visit [WAEON's website, www.waeon.org](http://www.waeon.org) for further details on this call. Interested candidates should send their application letters and CVs to info@waeon.org. *Deadline for submission has been extended to October 31, 2018.*

Upcoming Elections in the West African Sub-Region

- National Assembly Elections in Mali – November 2018
- Referendum on proposed creation of new regions in Ghana – December 2018
- Presidential Elections in Nigeria – February 2019

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Note to WAEON Members

WAEON Network members are encouraged to submit news entries to the Secretariat for inclusion in the WAEON Newsletter. Kindly send us with your views, comments and suggestions on what could be done to improve the network. The next edition will be released at the end of December 2018. Please send your entries to: info@waeon.org