



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Credible and peaceful elections good for Nigerians and Africa**

On Saturday, February 16, 2019, Nigeria will hold its Presidential and General Elections. This sixth consecutive election marks steady progress in the country's democratic journey since it reverted from military rule to multiparty democracy in 1999. Accordingly, there is the need for all stakeholders to work to consolidate gains made so far by ensuring credible and peaceful election outcomes.

The West Africa Election Observers Network (WAEON) acknowledges that election is a crucial pillar of democracy. Fortunately, most Nigerians share this view too. According to 2017 Afrobarometer survey, 72% of adult Nigerians support elections as the legitimate and best way to choose leaders, while 67% indicate that their most recent election (the 2015 general election) was "completely free and fair" or "free and fair with minor problems." These findings present an opportunity for electoral stakeholders to defy all odds to work assiduously to deliver to Nigerians' a free, fair, credible and peaceful elections. Such outcomes would help deepen gains made in institutionalizing democracy. Ahead of Saturday's elections, WAEON calls on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to remain impartial and transparent while ensuring the conduct of the elections conforms with international best practices. The security services are encouraged to exhibit high professional standards in discharging their duties during the polls and keep polling stations safe from threats of intimidation and violence, in order not to discourage voters from turning up for the polls. WAEON further urges the political parties, leaders and supporters to conduct themselves peacefully and tolerate dissenting views from opponents.

WAEON wishes the people of Nigeria a successful election which can only be touted as credible and peaceful if all stakeholders diligently contribute their quota in ensuring acceptable outcomes.

Signed

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*(For and on behalf of WAEON)*

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Dated: February 13, 2019



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### **About WAEON**

WAEON is an independent, non-partisan and non-religious organization of citizen observer groups from 13 West African Countries that aims at strengthening and supporting Citizens' Election Observation Groups (CEOGs) in the sub-region. It was formed in 2010, and has its secretariat based at the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) in Accra, Ghana.

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