



WEST AFRICA ELECTION OBSERVERS NETWORK (WAEON) NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1– DECEMBER 31, 2017

Introduction

The WAEON Newsletter provides news and information on activities undertaken by the Secretariat; activities by network members in their respective countries; and updates on elections and governance issues within the West African sub-region. This edition, the second for 2017 features news and update on the WAEON activities as well as election and governance-related issues from member countries in the West African Sub-region.

WAEON Collaborates with NDI in the 2017 Liberia Elections

As part of WAEON's partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) on observation of the 2017 Liberia elections, the Network provided technical support to NDI's Liberia International Election Observation Mission (LIEOM) by making available one dedicated Long-

Term Election Analyst who was stationed in Monrovia. The Analyst also provided operational support to the observation mission and contributed significantly to the overall success of the mission. The Secretariat also facilitated the recruitment of two WAEON Members as Long Term Observers (LTOs) who were deployed as part of the NDI team of LTOs.

Deployment of Short Term Observers (STOs) for First Round of Elections in Liberia

After successfully recruiting four STOs from WAEON member organizations in late August 2017, the four joined two LTOs who were already stationed in Liberia and together formed part of a 35-member international election observation delegation deployed by the NDI from October 4 – 13, 2017.

The STOs were drawn from the under listed WAEON member organizations

from Togo, Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana, Benin and Sierra Leone:

- Togo - National Civil Society Consultation of Togo (CNSC Togo)
- Nigeria – Transitional Monitoring Group (TMG)
- Gambia - The Association of NGOs in the Gambia (TANGO)
- Ghana - Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)
- Benin - Cadre d'Appui aux Processus Electoraux (CAPE)
- Sierra Leone - National Election Watch (NEW)

WAEON Networking Meeting

Taking advantage of the presence in Liberia of WAEON STOs and members who were with other International Observation Missions, a 2-day Network meeting (12-13th October 2017) was held in Monrovia to primarily connect members and brainstorm on WAEON organizational matters. Officials from NDI, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-Liberia, participated in the meetings as well.

Key issues discussed in the two-day meeting included:

- Upgrading the status of some member organizations and representatives with respect to the vacancies in the Executive Council.
- Member organizations should adopt referencing affiliation with WAEON in the various reports and statements that they issue as a way of promoting 'visibility' of the Network.
- Under the banner of WAEON or in conjunction with WAEON, member organizations which observed the Liberia elections should consider organizing in-country lessons learned Round Table Discussions (RTDs) on the Liberia 2017 elections to promote visibility of the Network.
- More efforts should be made by the Secretariat to get dormant members actively involved in the Network's activities.
- The Secretariat should step up its efforts in raising funds to organize consultative meetings to review the Constitution and structure of the organization, as

well as develop a new strategic plan.

WAEON Observation of the Liberia run-off elections

Five (comprised of four STOs and one LTO) members from WAEON member organizations observed Liberia's run-off presidential elections on December 26, 2017 as part of NDI's 36-member international election observation delegation. These persons were representatives from the following WAEON member organizations:

- Togo - National Civil Society Consultation of Togo (CNSC Togo)
- Ghana - Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)
- Benin - Cadre d'Appui aux Processus Electoraux (CAPE)
- The WAEON Secretariat

WAEON member countries' Activities

Transitional Monitoring Group (TMG), Nigeria

The Nigerian observation group, TMG, in its bid to promote the conduct of transparent and credible elections in Nigeria, deployed 150 observers on November 18, 2017 to observe the Anambra State governorship elections.

See:<http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2017/11/anambra-poll-tmg-deploys-150-observers/>

On December 13, 2017, TMG met with an Ethiopian delegation to Nigeria for an experience sharing on violent extremism. The meeting sought to draw lessons and best practices from Nigeria on the institutions and mechanisms in place against violent extremism, legal framework and working modalities to promote religious freedom in general.

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

On September 23, 2017, CNSC-Togo joined with other organizations around the world to mark World Day of Citizen Action on the theme "SPEAK". The celebration aimed at creating space for reflection and discussion to create awareness for citizens to know their rights and speak out, as a way of participating in development of their communities.

On October 27, 2017 CNSC-Togo held a Citizen Debate at Agora Senghor on 'Commitments for a viable democracy in Togo' to reflect, discuss and find solutions to the social-political situation in the country.

Other News: Election and Governance Related

Highlights on Liberia Election Process

- October 25, 2017 – Results declared by the National Election Commission (NEC) indicated that George Weah of Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) and Joseph Boakai of the Unity Party (UP) polled 38.4 and 28.8 percent of the votes respectively as front runners. No winner was declared since no candidate obtained the 50 percent plus one vote required to be declared president.
- November 1, 2017 – The Supreme Court of Liberia halted NEC's preparation for a second round election scheduled for November 7, 2017 and ordered the NEC to hear petitions filed earlier by Presidential Candidate Charles Walker Brumskine of the Liberty Party (LP). The Unity Party (UP) later joined the suit filed by Brumskine and his Party .
- December 7, 2017 – The Supreme Court of Liberia ruled for the second round elections

to take place between George Weah and Joseph Boakai, as well as for NEC to limit the eligibility to vote to only voters found on the Final Registration Roll (FRR).

- December 26, 2017 –run-off elections held.
- December 29, 2017 – Joseph Boakai conceded defeat to George Weah.
- Final Results of the run-off elections is as follows:

George Weah (CDC) – 61.5%

Joseph Boakai (UP) – 38.5%

Voter Turnout for 2nd Round – 55.8%

Voter Turnout for 1st Round – 75.2%

See:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-07/liberia-s-supreme-court-says-runoff-vote-should-go-ahead>

<http://gnnliberia.com/2017/12/16/liber-ias-ruling-party-petitions-election-delay/>

Upcoming Elections in the West African Sub-Region

Sierra Leone: Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council

Elections is scheduled for March 2018.

Releases

Three statements were released by the Secretariat on behalf of the Network within this period of reporting.

- **WAEON statement on the upcoming Liberia 2017 Presidential and Legislative elections (Released on September 20, 2017):** It was a solidarity message from WAEON to the people of Liberia ahead of the elections. Key issues observed in the pre-election phase were raised and some recommendations were made to urge all stakeholders to ensure peaceful and credible electoral outcomes.

See:

<http://www.waeon.org/story-details.php?story=59C2DFA9D88A2&t=News>

- **WAEON statement on the Liberia 2017 election (Released on October 15, 2017):** The statement basically commended Liberians for a smooth and peaceful first round elections and also highlighted few lapses observed during the polls. It also encouraged

citizens to remain calm while they waited for the tallying of results to be completed by NEC.

See: <http://www.waeon.org/story-details.php?story=59E47B037C1C2&t=News>

- **WAEON statement on the impasse of the Liberia re-run of elections (Released on November 27, 2017):** The statement congratulated the people of Liberia for peaceful polls and touched on the election petition cases that were on-going. Towards an acceptable and credible resolution of the election petition before NEC and to an extent the Supreme Court of Liberia, the statement concluded with recommendations to major stakeholders in Liberia's electoral process.

See: <http://www.waeon.org/story-details.php?story=5A254AEF913EB&t=News>

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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 March 2018. Please send your entries to: info@waeon.org