

Letter of Transmittal



**COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP
SIERRA LEONE NATIONAL AND LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS
17 November 2012**

23 November 2012

Dear Secretary-General

The Commonwealth Observer Group has completed the final report of its observations of the National and Local Council Elections held on 17 November 2012 in Sierra Leone and we are pleased to submit it to you.

The elections were the third conducted since 2002 and, significantly, were the first which Sierra Leone has administered itself, and also the first time that four elections were conducted simultaneously.

The elections were conducted in a free, peaceful and transparent manner. The Group is pleased that the people of Sierra Leone demonstrated strong commitment to their democratic process by turning out in large numbers to vote, especially women and youth. The people of Sierra Leone are to be congratulated on a remarkable achievement.

The organisation and conduct of the elections met international standards and benchmarks for the conduct of multi-party elections, including freedom of association, expression, as well as universal suffrage and the right to vote. Voters expressed their will freely and the secrecy of the ballot was assured.

In spite of the shortcomings discussed in our report, it is the Group's considered view that the magnitude of these shortcomings has not affected the overall integrity of the electoral process.

As we depart Sierra Leone, we hope that our call to all political parties, their supporters and other stakeholders, to show restraint and responsibility in upholding their commitments to peace as the remainder of the electoral process concludes, will be heeded.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Commonwealth Secretariat Staff Team for the support provided to the Group throughout the mission.

We would like to express our gratitude to you for the opportunity to observe these elections and hope that our recommendations will be taken up in the constructive spirit in which they are intended. We urge the Commonwealth Secretariat and other pan-Commonwealth institutions to offer appropriate assistance in support of this as needed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Olara Otunnu'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a checkmark at the end.

Olara Otunnu
Chairperson



Mr Paul Dacey



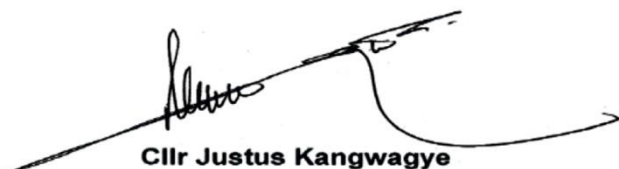
Mrs Martha Sayed



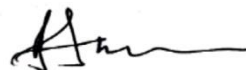
Ms Pauline Welsh



Ms Jane Godia



Cllr Justus Kangwagye



Mr Andrew Simmons



Mrs Rita Payne



Mr Dennis Ngosa