

Annex 6

Commonwealth News Release Announcing Observer Group Composition



COMMONWEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Former Ugandan Foreign Minister Olara Otunnu to lead Commonwealth Observer Group for Sierra Leone Elections

The Commonwealth will observe Sierra Leone's National and Local Government Elections on 17 November 2012. Former Ugandan Foreign Minister Olara Otunnu will lead the Commonwealth Observer Group, which will be made up of nine observers, supported by five Commonwealth Secretariat staff.

Mr Otunnu, a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, will arrive in the capital, Freetown on 11 November.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma constituted the Observer Group at the invitation of the Government of Sierra Leone.

'The Commonwealth has a long history of engagement in Sierra Leone, and our presence on the ground confirms our commitment to strengthening democracy in the country,' Mr Sharma said.

These elections will be Sierra Leone's third since its decade-long conflict ended in 2002. The Commonwealth also observed elections in the country in 2002 and 2007.

The Commonwealth Observer Group's mandate is to observe and consider all aspects of the election process and assess compliance with the standards for democratic elections to which Sierra Leone has committed. Where appropriate, the Group may also make recommendations for the future strengthening of the country's electoral framework.

The Observer Group is impartial and independent and will conduct itself according to the standards of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, to which the Commonwealth is a signatory. It will submit its report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will in turn send it to the Government of Sierra Leone, the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone, political parties and eventually to all Commonwealth governments.

The Commonwealth Observer Group is expected to arrive in Sierra Leone on 9 November and to stay in the country until 25 November.

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COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

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Former Ambassador of Uganda to the United Nations
Uganda

Mr Paul Dacey
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Ms Martha Sayed
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Botswana

Ms Pauline Welsh
Director of Legal Affairs, Electoral Office
Jamaica

Ms Jane Godia
Media and Gender Expert
Kenya

Councillor Justus Kangwagye
Mayor, Rulindo District
Rwanda

Mr Andrew Simmons
Development Consultant
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Ms Rita Payne
Media Expert
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Mr Dennis Ngosa
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