

Annex 3

Arrival Statement



**Commonwealth Observer Group
Ghana Presidential and Parliamentary Elections
2012**

NEWS RELEASE

**Arrival Statement by HE The Hon Dr Pakalitha Mosisili, MP
Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group**

Following an invitation from the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Kamallesh Sharma, has constituted an Observer Group for the 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Ghana. It is my honour and privilege to have been asked to lead the Group, and to be here in the country for these important elections.

I am also pleased to lead a team of twelve eminent persons drawn from across the Commonwealth, including politicians, members of election management bodies, judiciary, academia, civil society, youth and the media.

The Commonwealth has a long tradition of support for elections in Ghana, including observing the 2008 polls. We are pleased to be in the country to contribute to the further consolidation of Ghana's democracy.

For Ghana, the 2012 elections represent an opportunity to further enhance the country's democratic reputation, and I am hopeful that this will be the case. These elections are crucially important for the people of Ghana, as they elect their representatives. It is therefore imperative that the electoral process is transparent, fair, credible and free of violence.

We are encouraged by, and wholeheartedly support, the recent peace pact by political leaders and various calls by civil society and community leaders for peaceful elections. We call on all political parties and stakeholders to play their roles responsibly, to live up to their pronouncements and to adopt a constructive approach to the entire electoral process in

order to ensure a peaceful poll.

Our task as the Commonwealth Observer Group is to consider all the factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole, and assess whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which Ghana has committed itself, with reference to its own election-related legislation as well as relevant regional, Commonwealth and other international commitments.

In conducting our duties and undertaking our assessment, we will be impartial, objective and independent. We are here in our individual capacities as eminent Commonwealth citizens. The assessment by the Group will be its own, and not that of any member government.

In the pre-election period we will meet a wide range of stakeholders, including the Electoral Commission of Ghana, representatives of political parties, civil society and media, as well as High Commissions and representatives of other international and national observer groups.

Prior to polling day, Commonwealth teams will deploy to a variety of locations around the country to observe the voting, counting and results processes. Our teams will co-ordinate with other observers in the field in order to maximise our overview of the process. We will issue an Interim Statement after the election and a final report at a later stage.

These elections are an opportunity to make Ghana, Africa and indeed the Commonwealth proud. I wish the people of Ghana well. I also wish to pledge the unwavering solidarity of the Commonwealth as you go into these elections.

Accra, 4 December 2012