



COMMONWEALTH EXPERT TEAM
Cameroon Presidential Election
9 October 2011

15 October 2011

Dear Secretary General

Following your invitation to observe the 9 October Presidential Election in Cameroon, we have completed our final report and are pleased to forward it to you.

This was a largely peaceful election with some of the key benchmarks for democratic elections provided for, including freedom of association, expression, as well as universal suffrage and the right to vote. We noted the high expectations that accompanied this election, given that it was the first to be conducted by Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) since its establishment and subsequent appointment in 2008. We laud its establishment as a significant first step.

We recognise that some improvements have indeed been made in the overall management of this election as compared to previous ones, however there remain some major issues and concerns which we address in our report. Our major concern was that more could have been done to level the playing field, and to increase public confidence in the entire electoral process. Allegations of the abuse of incumbency continue to colour the electoral landscape in Cameroon.

Though we acknowledge that it is indeed in its embryonic phase, we felt also that ELECAM could do more to affirm its independence and to address the legal, administrative and logistical constraints it faced in managing this election. This had an adverse impact on the level of public confidence in its performance. It is vital that ELECAM inspires the confidence of the people of Cameroon as it looks ahead to the 2012 legislative elections, and further afield to future elections.

A particular challenge was the management of voter registration. We hope that further refinements will be adopted to overcome the problems which emerged in this election and led to the unfortunate disenfranchisement of some voters.

As we depart Cameroon, we hope that our recommendations will contribute to the further consolidation of democracy in Cameroon. It is our firm belief that any shortcomings highlighted in this report can be addressed through appropriate support. To this end, the Commonwealth Secretariat and other pan-Commonwealth institutions are urged to respond positively to these recommendations and to strengthen on-going engagement with Cameroon.

The people of Cameroon must continue to play a central role in this process and we wish them well for the future.

We wish to thank you for the opportunity to observe these elections and for the support provided by the Secretariat support staff team.


Yours sincerely

Frederick Mitchell MP
Chairperson

Mr Kamalesh Sharma
Commonwealth Secretary-General
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX


Ms Gabrielle Giroday


Mr Samuel Tembenu


Mr I. Abdool Rahman


Ambassador Bariyu Adekunle Adeyemi


Dr Tumelontle Thiba