

ANNEX 1: Biographies of COG Members

Dame Billie A. Miller - Chair (Barbados)

Dame Billie Miller is a former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados now retired from elective politics in 2008 after 32 years of service. She is an Attorney-at Law by profession. Dame Billie has a long record of work in the fields of the advancement of women and sexual and reproductive health. She was selected the Laureate for the United Nations Population Award for 2008. She is the only woman to have chaired the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the hundred years of its existence.

Dame Billie was the Vice-Chairperson of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group from 2000-2002. She has been a member of several international election observation missions. She was Head of Mission of the Organisation of American States Election Observer Mission to Antigua and Barbuda in 2009 and Deputy Head of Mission of the Caricom Election Observer Mission to Trinidad and Tobago in 2010. She is presently Deputy Chairperson of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Barbados.

Ms Sheila Roseau, CM (Antigua and Barbuda)

Sheila Roseau is a gender and human rights expert, working in the public sector and civil society to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in democratic processes. She presently serves as the Executive Director of the National Gender Machinery for Antigua and Barbuda since 1995. Her work is strongly focused on strengthening the participation of women in politics, leadership and decision-making. She is a co-founder of the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWIL), a non-partisan organisation working to break the proverbial glass ceiling limiting women's access to leadership roles by providing training, advocacy and support to women entering politics and contesting elections. She works with national, regional and international organisations including UN agencies and the Organisation of American States (OAS) and leads initiatives to advance good governance and democracy, through promoting women as equal partners in social development. She has also observed elections in the Fiji Islands, Guyana, and Nigeria and has worked with women contesting the general elections in several countries in the Caribbean.

Mr Kevin Kitson (Australia)

Kevin Kitson, First Assistant Commissioner of the Australian Electoral Commission, has more than 30 years experience in public administration in the United Kingdom and Australia. His role in the Australian Electoral Commission includes corporate leadership of the Commission's international outreach programs and the Commission's commitment to improving electoral participation by Australia's indigenous communities.

Tiro Seeletso (Botswana)

Tiro Seeletso is a career public servant, first appointed in 1979. He has been Secretary to the Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana since May 1998. Prior to this he served at several ministries in different capacities including District Commissioner, Director of Wildlife and National Parks, Deputy Permanent Secretary to the Delimitation Commission and Clerk of the National Assembly.

Mr Seeletso has observed elections in various SADC and Commonwealth countries. He has also assisted in the orientation of newly appointed Electoral commissioners in the SADC region.

Mr Christopher Cobb (Canada)

Mr. Cobb is a journalist and author and International Vice-President of the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA). A member of the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery in Ottawa, he has written extensively on politics, political communication and media ethics. He has travelled throughout the developing world both as a journalist reporting on development issues and as coordinator of numerous training workshops for reporters and editors.

Mr Ravindra Kumar (India)

Ravindra Kumar is Editor and Managing Director, The Statesman, a liberal newspaper he has been associated with for 31 years. He serves on executive boards of the Indian Newspaper Society (and chairs its Press Freedom Committee), Media Research Users' Council, Nachiketa Publications Ltd. and Asia News Network (a consortium of 21 Asian newspapers). He is a trustee of the C R Irani Foundation, which runs The Statesman Print Journalism School where he teaches regularly, and a member of the Advisory Board of the Asian Center for Journalism, Manila. He served on the board of a national wire agency - United News of India - from 1992 to 2008 and was twice its chairman, and was for some time a member of the Central Board of Film Certification. He writes on the politics of India, South Asia and South-east Asia and extensively on media issues. He won the Durga-Ratan award for investigative journalism in 1986.

Mr Aloisious A C Nthenda

Aloisious A.C Nthenda has for the past 15 years worked with civil society organizations and communities in Malawi and Southern Africa (SADC region) in the field of human rights, democracy, elections and governance. He has organized, supervised, monitored and observed elections in Africa and the United Kingdom. He was a member of the first ever team of election observers for the 2010 UK elections. He is an Election and Governance Expert. He is the Executive Chairman for Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN) and SADC Electoral Support Network (SADC ESN).

Mr John Walters (Namibia)

Mr Walters is the Ombudsman of Namibia since July 2004. The Ombudsman has national jurisdiction to investigate complaints relating to maladministration, violations of human rights, the environment and misappropriation of public money. Previously, Mr Walters was a public prosecutor and magistrate for several years and also spent some years in private practice. Before his appointment as Ombudsman, he was the Acting Prosecutor-General of Namibia. The Ombudsman is ex-officio member of the Law Reform and Development Commission.

Ambassador Pius I Ayewoh (Nigeria)

Pius Ikpefuan Ayewoh retired from the Nigerian Foreign Ministry after 35 years of continuous service. In the course of his career he held various positions and worked in different locations in Africa, US and Europe. He was a member of the Nigerian delegation to several sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, New York. He also participated in many UN conferences, in Bangkok, Singapore, India, Mexico, Colombia and Addis Ababa.

At a stage in his career he was Nigeria's Consul General in San Francisco and later Ambassador to Algeria. He retired from service as Nigeria's Ambassador and Permanent

Representative to the UN offices in Geneva. In Geneva he served as co-ordinator in the Human Rights Commission and was a member of the Bureau that organised the UN conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa.

From time to time he is invited by the African Union to participate in its observer missions, including to Rwanda, Algeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania.

Ms Melanie Lee (Singapore)

Melanie Lee is Singapore's deputy youth representative to the Commonwealth and in 2007 she co-wrote a book on youth issues in Southeast Asia. She works as a journalist for Reuters in Shanghai where she covers the technology beat.

Collin Ruqebatu (Solomon Islands)

Mr Ruqebatu is the General Secretary of the Development Services Exchange (DSE), the umbrella body for non-governmental organizations in Solomon Islands. He is a former school teacher and was involved in setting up the Solomon Islands National Teachers Association in 1985. Mr Ruqebatu was the first Secretary of Solomon Islands National Teachers Association (1985-1987). He is also a former Secretary of Solomon Islands School Principals' Association (1998-2005). He was involved with organizing the domestic observer group during the Ninth Solomon Islands Parliamentary General Election in August 2010.

Ms Vera Baird, QC (United Kingdom)

Vera Baird QC was Solicitor-General in the United Kingdom Labour Government from 2007 to 2010 and Under Secretary of State for Constitutional affairs from 2005 to 2007. She was MP for Redcar from 2001 to 2010 and before that was a practising barrister. She is a Visiting Professor to 3 Universities, the author of works on criminal law and on gender issues and a Director of Astraea Research and Training, a company to be registered as a charity which works primarily on issues of violence against women and more generally on equalities.

Ms Baird has observed elections in Kenya, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone.

Madam Justice Florence Ndepele Mumba (Zambia)

Justice Mumba is former Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Zambia. She has observed elections in Mozambique in 2009. For the most part of her career, she has served as a Jurist. She served as Judge of the Appeals Chamber of the UN International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. She served as Vice President of the UN ICTY, Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute Board, having served as Ombudsman in her country. She is currently an International Reserve Judge in the Extra-Ordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Justice Mumba is well versed in women's rights, having served on the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Commonwealth Secretariat Staff Team

Ambassador Ayodele Oke, Head, Africa Section – Team Leader

Mr Mark Stevens, Adviser and Head Democracy Section

Mr Manoah Esipisu, Media and Communications Adviser

Mr Linford Andrews, Political Adviser, Africa Section

Ms Zippy Ojago, Administration Officer, Democracy Section