

Annex 3

Arrival Statement



Commonwealth Observer Mission Pakistan General Elections 2013

Statement by Hon. Sir Douglas Kidd Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Mission

Speaking in Islamabad, Sir Douglas Kidd, former Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, said: 'It is my honour and privilege to have been asked to lead the Commonwealth Observer Mission for the 2013 Pakistan elections. I am also pleased to lead a team of eminent persons drawn from across the Commonwealth.'

The Commonwealth Observer Mission comprises 13 persons in total (see attached list), including a staff team from the Commonwealth Secretariat, and will deploy teams in Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad in order to observe the voting and counting processes. Prior to deployment to the Provinces on 9 May, the Mission has been meeting with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), representatives of political parties, civil society and Commonwealth High Commissions.

Sir Douglas highlighted the importance of the polls: 'The transfer of power from one elected civilian government to another will be a key milestone for Pakistan. It is also significant that these elections will be held under a series of new Constitutional amendments which have, among other things, strengthened the ECP. We have met with the ECP and they have told us that they are ready for the polls and we very much hope this is the case.'

'We have heard reports that the Electoral Roll has been much improved, which is encouraging. However, there is a high level of insecurity related to the polls, with some parties facing a particular threat, and the loss of life in election-related violence, notably in some areas, is of great concern. I very much hope that this will not continue and polling day can be conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. I wish the people of Pakistan well and I also wish to pledge the unwavering solidarity of the Commonwealth as you go into these elections.'

The Commonwealth Observer Mission is mandated to consider all the factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process and will assess whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which Pakistan has committed itself. The Commonwealth Mission is impartial and independent and will issue an Interim Statement after the election and a final report at a later stage.

Islamabad, 9 May 2013

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