

Report of the Commonwealth Expert Team

RWANDA
LEGISLATIVE ELECTION
(Chamber of Deputies)

16-18 September 2013



The Commonwealth

**Rwanda Legislative Election
(Chamber of Deputies)
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Table of Contents

Letter of Transmittal	iv
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Invitation	1
Terms of Reference.....	1
Activities.....	2
CHAPTER TWO.....	3
POLITICAL BACKGROUND	3
Political Parties.....	3
CHAPTER THREE.....	5
THE ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION	5
Legal Framework for the Elections.....	5
Constitutional Background.....	6
National Electoral Commission.....	6
Voter Eligibility and Voter Registration	8
Candidate Eligibility and Nomination.....	8
Complaints and Appeals.....	10
Key Issues.....	10
CHAPTER FOUR.....	11
ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA	11
Registration of Political Parties.....	11
Election Campaign	11
Political Code of Conduct.....	12
Campaign Finance.....	12
Media Coverage.....	13
Media Capacity	13
CHAPTER FIVE.....	15
VOTING, COUNTING AND RESULTS	15
Background	15
Observations on Polling Day	15
Voting Environment.....	15
Voting Process	17
Counting	19
Results Process	20

Participation of Women	20
Participation of Youth	21
Participation of Disabled.....	21
CHAPTER SIX	23
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23
The Electoral Framework and Election Administration.....	24
Election Campaign and Media	24
Voting, Counting and Results.....	24
ANNEX I: Commonwealth News Release	27
ANNEX II: Biographies of the Team	28
ANNEX III: Deployment Plan	29



The Commonwealth

**Commonwealth Expert Team
Rwanda Legislative Elections**

23 September 2013

Dear Secretary-General,

We have now completed our Final Report on the 2013 Rwanda Legislative Elections for the Chamber of Deputies held on 16-18 September 2013 and are pleased to forward this to you.

The 2013 Legislative Elections were peaceful and provided for the key democratic electoral benchmarks such as freedom of association, expression, and universal suffrage. The elections were the third to be held in Rwanda under the 2003 Constitution. We found that the National Electoral Commission was well prepared and mobilised to conduct the elections.

The Team noted the immense confidence and trust which Rwandans vested in the National Electoral Commission. We also took cognizance of the great strides taken by Rwanda since the 1994 post-genocide period to deepen democracy and foster a culture of consultative dialogue. The Team noted with satisfaction, the electoral reforms that have taken place since the 2010 Presidential Elections.

A number of recommendations made by previous Commonwealth Observers and other international teams have been implemented. Of particular note, is the establishment of the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) which now has the mandate to register political parties. While much progress has been made, the Team found that much more can be done to ensure continued confidence in the electoral process, particularly in respect to the counting and consolidation of votes, as well as the training of volunteers. Our report provides further recommendations on key aspects of the Rwandan electoral and related processes which we believe could bolster the country's electoral capacity for future elections.

As the Team departs from Rwanda, we would like to express our thanks to you for the privilege of serving on the Commonwealth Expert Team to the Rwanda 2013 Legislative Elections. It has been a pleasure to serve the Commonwealth in the beautiful country of Rwanda, and we hope that our recommendations will be accepted as constructive suggestions from partners who wish to see the continued deepening of democracy in Rwanda. In this regard, we urge the Commonwealth family to continue to support these efforts in Rwanda.

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Furthermore, I wish to profusely thank you for giving me the honour to Chair the Team, and for giving me a team of able support officers. We were immensely assisted by their professionalism and wealth of knowledge about Commonwealth policies and practices. I also want to acknowledge the cooperation I got from the other Team Member, Hon. Russ Hiebert.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Tiro G.G.G Seeletso
Chairperson



Hon Russ Hiebert

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Invitation

At the invitation of the Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda, Prof. Kalisa Mbanda, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Kamalesh Sharma, constituted an Expert Team for the Rwanda Legislative Elections (Chamber of Deputies) scheduled from 16th to 18th September 2013.

The Commonwealth Expert Team (CET) was led by Mr. Tiro G.G.G. Seeletso, Secretary to the Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana. He was joined by Hon. Russ Hiebert, a Member of Parliament from Canada. The CET was supported by a two-member staff team from the Commonwealth Secretariat (see **Annex 1** for press release and biographies of the Team).

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Team are as follows:

"The Team is established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the request of the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda. It is to observe relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the Legislative Elections (Chamber of Deputies) which are scheduled to take place from 16 - 18 September 2013, in accordance with the laws of Rwanda.

The Team is to consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole. It will determine in its own judgment whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which Rwanda has committed itself, with reference to national election-related legislation and relevant regional, Commonwealth and other international commitments.

The Team is to act impartially and independently and shall conduct itself according to the standards expressed in the International Declaration of Principles to which the Commonwealth is a signatory. It has no executive role; its function is not to supervise but to observe the process as a whole and to form a judgment accordingly. In its Final Report, the Team is also free to propose to the authorities concerned recommendations for change on institutional, procedural and other matters as would assist the holding of future elections.

The Team is to submit its report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will forward it to the Government of Rwanda, the Chairman of the National Electoral

Commission of Rwanda, political and civil society organisations and thereafter to all Commonwealth Governments.”

Activities

The Expert Team was present in Rwanda from 6 to 23 September 2013. During four days of briefings, the Group met with the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda, National Consultative Forum of Political Organisations, political party representatives and an independent candidate, Rwandan Bar Association and other civil society groups, media, Commonwealth High Commissioners, international organisations, domestic and international observer missions.

The Expert Team was deployed on 15 September, reporting from six districts within two provinces: South and Kigali City, and co-ordinated closely with other domestic, regional and international observers, building up a comprehensive picture of the conduct of the process.

During the deployment phase, Commonwealth Observers also met with Mayors, Provincial and District National Electoral Commission Coordinators, security officials, Regional and District representatives of political parties, polling agents, polling officers, voters and the media.

The Team's Report was largely completed in Kigali prior to departure.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The 16 - 18 September 2013 elections were the third Parliamentary elections in the history of post-genocide Rwanda after the adoption of the Constitution in 2003. The Expert Team were conscious of the unique history of Rwanda, and the ever-present legacy of the 1994 genocide, which cost the lives of around one million Rwandans, in just one hundred days. The Expert Team's assessment of Rwanda's current electoral arrangements was viewed in this unique historical context.

Rwanda's political system places the highest emphasis on national unity and reconciliation, and the Constitution enshrines the principle of power sharing, decision making by consensus and inclusiveness. The Constitution limits the ruling party to a maximum of 50 percent of Cabinet seats, with the rest of Cabinet seats divided proportionally among other parties represented in Parliament. Cabinet Ministers are barred from concurrently serving in the Legislature.

Fifty-three members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected for five-year terms by direct universal suffrage through a secret ballot, using a system of proportional representation, employing a party list. Separate electoral colleges elect women, Youth and Disabled Representatives indirectly. Candidates may be presented by a political organisation or may stand independently.

The Chamber of Deputies is composed of 80 members as follows: 53 were elected on 16 September based solely on proportional representation, 24 are women representatives and were elected on 17 September by women committees at all levels, and district and sector council members; 2 members were elected on 18 September by the National Youth Councils at district and national levels as well as 8 student representatives from secondary schools and eight from higher learning institutions; and 1 member was elected on 18 September by representatives of District, Provincial and National Councils of People with Disabilities.

The Senate has 26 members, who serve for eight years; 12 represent the provincial government councils, and 2 represent academic institutions. The other members are nominated, 8 by the President and 4 by the Parties' Forum.

Political Parties

There are 11 registered political parties. The Government of Rwanda places a strong emphasis on consensus and national unity in politics. All registered political parties are required (Article 58 of the Constitution) to join the Consultative Forum of Political Organizations in Rwanda, where parties meet to discuss government policies and promote consensus. The law prohibits political parties from organising on an ethnic, regional or religious basis. The most recent political party to be registered is the

Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (Green Party), which was registered on 9 August 2013, although it was not able to field any candidates in the 2013 election.

The 11 registered political parties are:

- Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF Inkotanyi)
- Liberal Party (PL)
- Union Démocratique du Peuple Rwandais (UPDR)
- Ideal Democratic Party (PDI)
- Social Democratic Party (PSD)
- Parti du Progrès et de la Concorde (PPC)
- Centrist Democratic Party (PDC)
- Parti Socialiste Rwandais Party (PSR)
- Solidarity for Solidarity and Progress Party (PSP)
- Social Party Imberakuri (PS - Imberakuri)
- Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR)

The 2013 Legislative Elections were contested by a total of eight political entities. These were the RPF - leading a coalition that included four small parties (PDI, PSR, PPC, and PDC), the Liberal Party, the PSD and PS-Imberakuri. In addition, four independent candidates contested the Parliamentary elections. These are: Venuste Bizirema, Clovis Ganza, Leonille Mutuyimana and Gilbert Mwenedata. Directly elected Parliamentarians are elected by a proportional representational system with closed lists in a single nationwide constituency. Only parties or independent candidates passing a 5 percent threshold are represented in Parliament.

Article 27 of the organic law governing political organizations and politicians, of 27 June 2003 stipulates that: "During an electoral year, Government shall, in its budget, provide for grants to political organisations and independent candidates for their campaigns. The grant is only given to political organisations and independent candidates who have obtained at least 5 percent of the electoral votes".

However, on an annual basis, the National Consultative Forum of Political Organisations in Rwanda, whose budget is provided by the Government, supports activities of political organisations.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Legal Framework for the Elections

The legal framework governing Legislative Elections in Rwanda consists of various laws including the 2003 Constitution, Law No 37/2013 of 16/06/2013, Modifying and Complementing Law No 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 relating to elections as modified and complemented to date; and Instructions of the National Electoral Commission No 03/2013 of 23/07/2013: Governing Legislative Elections, Chamber of Deputies September 2013. The original Electoral Law No. 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 was amended by Parliament to introduce new aspects intended to improve on Election Management Process including clear description of vote tallying and tabulation process. Some of the new aspects in the amended law include:

- Making voter registration a civil responsibility other than mandatory as was the case before;
- Polling shall start at 7am other than 6am in the morning as was the case;
- Increasing the number of electorate to elect women Members of Parliament from around 3,000 to 130,000 electorates;
- Voting using either a thumb or a pen other than the thumb alone as used to be the case;
- Clarification on the vote consolidation process; and administrative levels at which it shall be done;
- Provision for Rights and Responsibilities of Election Observers (originally this was only provided in the National Electoral Commission Regulations);
- Provision for Rights and Responsibilities of Election observers (originally this was provided in the National Electoral Commission Regulations);
- Removal from the electoral law to the Penal Code all election related penalties;
- Increasing the time given to candidates to complete their files (whenever necessary) between announcing provisional and final list of approved candidates;
- The National Electoral Commission was given the responsibility to ensure that Public media give equal access to candidates and political parties during election campaigns;
- Provision for on-Line Voter registration.

Rwanda's record of ratification of the UN human rights instruments is commendable, notably having ratified all of the eight treaties considered to be the core human rights instruments and Rwanda is thereby a signatory to the major regional and international instruments relating to elections, including:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights;
- The International Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women;
- The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
- The African Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981.

Rwanda is the only state within the East African Community to have ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of 2007.

Constitutional Background

The present Constitution came into force in June 2003, with the principal aim of promoting national unity and protecting personal liberties and human rights. The Constitution describes the powers of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It provides that legislative power shall reside with the Parliament, who is composed of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

As previously mentioned, a political party is required to obtain at least 5 percent of the votes cast in Legislative Elections to be represented in the Chamber of Deputies. Only the Rwanda Patriotic Front, Social Democratic Party and Liberal Party achieved this threshold in the September 2008 Legislative Elections, thereby gaining representation in the Chamber of Deputies, and hence Cabinet. The Constitution provides that the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and the President of the Senate are chosen from parties other than that of the President. The Constitution also provides that at least 30 percent of the members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate shall be women.

National Electoral Commission

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) came into being in June 2000 and was instituted by Law No 39/2000 of 28 November 2000. Article 180 of the Constitution provides for the creation of the NEC, and defines it as an "independent commission responsible for the preparation and the organisation of local, legislative, presidential and referendum or such other elections". The NEC is to ensure "that elections are free and fair" and is to submit each year its programme and activity report to the Parliament.

In terms of the structure of the NEC, it has a seven-member Commission, including the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The current Chair is Prof. Kalisa Mbanda. The Commission serves a three-year mandate, which is renewable once. At least two of the seven members must be lawyers and at least 30 percent of the Commission must be women.

For the nomination and appointment of the Commission, the Government presents names to the Senate for approval and members are appointed by Presidential order. According to the NEC's own materials, the seven Commissioners are from "different political parties and civil society". During the elections period the Commission works permanently from one month before elections until the publication of results.

A permanent Executive Secretariat, headed by an Executive Secretary, supervises the daily activities of NEC and manages personnel and property.

Under the Constitution, the Prime Minister, who is appointed/removed by the President, signs the order for appointment or termination of the Commissioners and the Executive Secretary as well as other senior officers of the Commission.

The Executive Secretariat comprises technicians who manage the day-to-day affairs of NEC and the electoral process. The Executive Secretariat includes three departments, each headed by a Director. These are: Administration and Finance; Electoral Operations; and, Information and Communication Technology.

The electoral framework in Rwanda is decentralised. The Constitution provides that the country is divided into Provinces, Districts, Sectors and Cells. For the purpose of organising the elections, NEC establishes branches for each of the four Provinces and for Kigali City, each of which has a Co-ordinator.

NEC also establishes a branch for each of the 30 Districts, with a responsible officer as well as a series of Sector Co-ordinators within each District. NEC utilises volunteers to work in the polling stations on the day of the election, supplementing its regular electoral staff. NEC had 72,000 election staff and volunteers in total working on the 16 September Election Day itself.

Subsequent to a Presidential Order, the polling dates were set over four days as follows:

- Voting in the Diaspora- 15 September 2013
- General Elections for Members of Parliament drawn from political party lists and Independent Candidates- 16 September 2013
- Election of 24 Women Members of Parliament- 17 September 2013
- Election of 2 Youth and 1 People with disabilities Members of Parliament - 18 September 2013.

Provisional results were to be announced not later than 20 September 2013, while final election results were to be announced not later than 25 September 2013. This was in line with Article 136 of the 2013 *'Instructions to the National Electoral Commission'*.

NEC informed the CET that they had budgeted for 4.546.069.000 Frw (\$6.7 million). Ninety-six percent of this amount was provided from the national budget, and the remaining 4 percent raised by NEC Printing Services and UNDP Support. In the 2008 elections NEC had used 7,651,880,812frw, of which the Government of Rwanda availed 4,816,285,404frw or 63 percent. The remaining 37 percent came from development partners through the NEC managed Joint Basket Fund. In this election, the NEC reduced expenditures on each voter from USD2.9 in 2008 to USD1.4. The Government of Rwanda and the NEC deserves special commendation for this achievement.

Voter Eligibility and Voter Registration

In accordance with Article 10 of the 2010 Electoral Law, persons eligible to register on the voter's register must be a citizen of Rwanda, at least 18 years of age and be registered to vote. The right to vote is also afforded to Rwandans registered in Embassies abroad.

Persons denied the right to vote are persons defined as those:

- Convicted of genocide or crimes against humanity
- Convicted of murder or rape
- Prisoners
- Refugees

The CET was informed that NEC updated the Voter List annually and published the revised Final Voter List on 1 September 2013. Based on the existing computerized voters' register, the NEC announced that a total of 5,953,531 million voters were registered to vote. Subsequently, 1,184,303 (25 percent) new voters (mainly youth) were registered. Of these registered voters, 3,232,983 (54 percent) are women, 2,720,546 (46 percent) are men and 3,696,335 (62 percent) are youth.

Rwanda's population is estimated at just over 11.6 million.

The Voter Lists are initially drawn from the National ID card database and are then, as stated, updated through a process of public verification. Further, the photos from the National ID database are incorporated onto the Final Voter List used in the polling stations on Election Day.

Candidate Eligibility and Nomination

In order to be eligible as a candidate, according to Article 49 of Instructions of the National Electoral Commission No 03/2013 of 23/07/2013 governing the elections, a person must:

- Be of Rwandan nationality;
- Be at least 21 years of age;
- Be a person of integrity - being irreproachable in behaviour and relationships with others;
- Not have been convicted of the crime of genocide or genocide ideology;
- Not have been convicted of the crime of discrimination or divisionism;
- Not have been sentenced to a prison term of 6 months or more, or having been rehabilitated if they have been;
- Not have been permanently dismissed from public service;
- Not have been convicted of corruption or embezzlement of public funds;
- Not be temporarily disenfranchised as a result of being in preventative detention, serving a detention sentence, or for showing signs of mental illness or disrupting public order at a polling site. (From Article 49, Law No 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 Relating to Elections as Modified and Completed to Date)
- Not be prohibited from registering on the voters' register as a result of:

- a) Being deprived the right to vote by a court, without rehabilitation or amnesty;
- b) Being sentenced for murder or genocide;
- c) Confessing

For the purpose of this election there were eight names on the ballot, representing four parties (# 2, 4, 5, 6) and four independent candidates (# 1, 3, 7, 8). The ballot order, based on the order of registration, was:

1. BIZIREMA, Venuste
2. UMURYANGO FPR-INKOTANYI
3. MWENEDATA Gilbert
4. PS IMBERAKURI
5. PSD
6. PL
7. MUTUYIMANA Leonille
8. GANZA Clovis

Political parties or coalitions are permitted to submit lists of a maximum 80 candidates for the 53 seats in the directly elected Parliament a minimum of 35 days before Election Day. In this election, the RPF led coalition submitted a list of 80 candidates, the PSD had 76, the Liberal Party had 64 and PS Imberakuri had 45 candidates.

The law provides that independent candidates, in addition to the general requirements mentioned above, must also submit a list of at least 600 registered voters, which includes a minimum of 12 persons domiciled in each District. Four candidates were able to fulfil these requirements. It is difficult to gain a seat on an independent basis, as the 5 percent of the total votes cast threshold that applies to political parties being represented in Parliament, also applies to independent candidates.

The CET is of the view that the 5 percent threshold of votes needed for Independent Candidates is not equal to the number of total votes per MP elected by parties. For example, in this election, each successful party had only 1.85 percent of the total vote for each MP elected. RPF got 41 MPs with 76.2 percent, PSD got 7 MPs with 13 percent, and PL got 5 MPs with 9.3 percent. We are of the view that this is a substantial barrier to independent participation.

The 5 percent threshold for parties and independent candidates could also lead to imbalances. For example, had 7 of 8 candidates/parties received just less than the 5 percent needed in this election, the victorious party could have gained every seat in Parliament with only just over 65 percent of the vote.

According to Article 116 of the Constitution, "Members of Cabinet are selected from political organisations on the basis of their seats in the Chamber of Deputies...However, a political organisation holding a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies may not exceed 50 percent of all the members of the Cabinet." In the unlikely event where one party secures the majority of votes, and the other contestants fail to make the required 5 percent threshold, this could lead to a situation where all the positions of Cabinet cannot be filled. The CET is concerned that this could lead to a constitutional crisis. We therefore recommend that the Government, in consultation with all registered political parties, civil society and

other relevant stakeholders, consider reviewing this provision.

We understand that political parties conducted internal primaries to select and decide the placement of candidates on their respective party lists. Stakeholders we met, suggested that obtaining the highest votes in internal primaries did not guarantee placement on the final party lists, and the party chiefs still had a strong influence in this process.

Candidates for the indirect elections (women, youth, and disabled) must be women, aged between 21-35, or disabled, respectively, depending on which indirect election they are contesting. They are not required to fulfil the requirements of independent candidates. There was strong competition for the indirect seats, with 103 women candidates (for 24 seats), 23 youth candidates (for 2 seats) and 15 disabled candidates (for one seat).

Complaints and Appeals

The NEC can receive and deal with complaints regarding voter registration and is also charged with handling complaints regarding the election campaign. It can also receive complaints regarding the conduct of the process by lower level branches.

Complaints against the result of the election are to be made to the Supreme Court within 48 hours of the result being announced and the Supreme Court then has five days to make a decision.

Complaints can also be lodged in the polling station, where an official representative of a candidate feels there is something irregular. In such an event, the representative could note an observation in the official polling station protocol. The official in charge of the polling station deals with such disputes.

Key Issues

Composition of the National Electoral Commission

The NEC is considered to have largely done a good technical job in the organisation of the election. With regard to its composition, the law sets out some basic criteria, establishing the number of Commissioners, and the fact that at least two must be lawyers and at least 30% must be women.

However, and as previously pointed out in the Commonwealth Observer Group's report on Rwanda's 2010 Presidential Elections, the NEC's website states that members are drawn from "different" political parties and civil society. Again, we emphasise that it would be helpful to be clearer about the background and/or affiliation of members as it is vital that the body responsible for managing the electoral process is inclusive and representative. Ideally such a body either needs to be completely independent of any political affiliation or comprise a good representative balance.

CHAPTER FOUR

ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA

Registration of Political Parties

The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) is the legal authority with responsibility for registering political parties. The RGB was established in 2011, and according to its website, it also has responsibility “to promote the principles of good governance and decentralization, monitor the practices of good governance in public and private institutions and conduct research related to governance for achieving good service delivery, sustainable development and prosperity.”

The 2010 Commonwealth Observer Group Report on Rwanda’s Presidential election commented that it might be “advisable for registration of political parties to be handled by an independent body, such as the NEC or a specially designated body, and for the procedures to be as inclusive as possible”. The CET therefore welcomes and commends the subsequent establishment of the Rwanda Governance Board.

Election Campaign

Articles 28-30 of the electoral law provide instructions regulating electoral campaign, the conduct of meetings and rallies, the use of posters, and the various prohibitions during the electoral campaigns.

The election campaign was a 20-day period between August 25 and 15 September 2013. The CET noted that the electoral atmosphere was peaceful and quiet. Rwandan citizens, registered political parties and other stakeholders who spoke with the Team, conveyed that they welcomed the opportunity to exercise their franchise and did not report any instances of intimidation during the campaign. Registered political parties expressed satisfaction with the cooperation of relevant agencies, in ensuring they could campaign freely.

The governing Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) was undoubtedly the most visible Party, during the campaign. Other political parties had minimal campaign presence, and only one independent candidate, Gilbert Mwenedata, appeared to have made a visible impact with posters and billboards throughout the country.

The Team observed two election rallies in Kigali city, organised by the RPF and the Liberal Party (PL) respectively. Both rallies were peaceful and appeared to proceed without restraint.

The CET commends the work of the National Consultative Forum of Political Organisations (popularly called the Forum), which was established in accordance with

Article 56 of the Rwandan constitution. The Forum is also responsible for consolidating national unity.

The body provides a platform for dialogue and the exchange of ideas among political parties on Rwanda's major issues and national policies. The CET was informed that the Forum is an independent body, both in its administrative and financial management. The CET finds this to be a pioneering model and has clearly been of tremendous value to Rwanda's democratisation efforts. The CET noted the professional approach of the Forum, and its role in finding consensus between political parties. Indeed, the CET recognises the Forum as a useful and creative model for the facilitation of political dialogue in Rwanda, which other jurisdictions may wish to review.

Political Code of Conduct

The Forum polices the Political Code of Conduct and insists that all its members subscribe to it. Political parties informed the CET that they found the Forum very useful, and that they appreciated the continued dialogue between political parties. The Forum lists the fundamental principles guiding its Code of Conduct of political parties as:

- Promotion of the democratic values of national consensus.
- Fighting the genocide ideology and divisions.
- Mutual respect for independence of each member Political Organisation.
- Freedom of expression of Political Organisations.

Where necessary, the Forum refers persistent breaches to its General Assembly - the Forum's supreme organ, which is constituted of members of all political parties. The CET was informed that such measures has not usually been necessary, as the dialogue facilitated in the Forum has proved effective to resolve disputes between political parties.

Campaign Finance

Article 24 of the organic law which governs political parties and politicians, requires political parties to inform the Rwandan Governance Board within 30 days, should they receive donations to the value of 1 million Rwandan francs. Furthermore, political parties are not allowed to accept donations and bequests from foreigners or businesses in which foreigners are shareholders. Article 25 states that contributions that are "likely to undermine independence and integrity of the Country" are strictly forbidden.

Most stakeholders who interacted with the CET said they found these provisions reasonable, though the CET did receive representations that these measures could have an impact on the development of Opposition Parties. The CET recognises these concerns, and believes that the National Consultative Forum of Political Organisations provides an initial mechanism for such concerns to be discussed in an atmosphere of consensual dialogue, and in accordance with the Constitution.

Media Coverage

Article 34 of the Constitution states:

“Freedom of the press and freedom of information are recognized and guaranteed by the State. Freedom of speech and freedom of information shall not prejudice public order and good morals, the right of every citizen to honour, good reputation and the privacy of personal and family life. It is also guaranteed so long as it does not prejudice the protection of the youth and minors.”

Furthermore, Article 67 of the Electoral law (Law No. 27/2010), provides that the National Electoral Commission should ensure that equal access to State media is granted to all independent candidates, political organisations and political parties in coalition.

There are a variety of media outlets operating in Rwanda, both public and private - and Rwanda is slowly developing its media capacity. The two dominant media outlets, Rwanda Television (RTV) and Rwanda Radio are state owned. RTV is also the only television station in the country, and the CET heard from stakeholders that the television station had adhered to relevant electoral laws. The Team also heard that radio has proven to be the most accessible medium in Rwanda, and that this medium was also in compliance with the relevant electoral law.

In any election campaign it is expected that the media will be fair to all candidates/parties. It is also expected that the media will be equally robust in covering the government and the opposition. It appears to us that NEC generated great confidence in its objectivity, by using a well thought-out and easy to explain rationing/quota system to measure the weight of the coverage of political candidates/Parties. The NEC made it clear to candidates, political parties and the public, that they were operating a system of fair and equitable allocation of airtime to all concerned.

During the campaign period, the traditionally expected extensive coverage of election related issues by the media was not evident. Further, there was minimal interrogation of the policy platforms of the candidates by media. Various stakeholders informed the CET, that a lack of training and investment in raising professional standards in journalism has contributed to the tendency of several, especially new, journalists to report erroneous stories.

Further to extensive consultations, the Team became seized that the more financially resourced candidates/political parties, could access private media without regulation. It does not appear that private media were actively encouraged to operate under the same regulatory microscope.

Media Capacity

Rwanda benefits from a Media High Council (MHC) and the role of MHC is to build capacity and develop skills aimed at promoting professional media.

The team was informed that the MHC in collaboration with the NEC, offered election coverage best practices workshops for journalists. Media personnel reported that while these workshops were welcomed, not all election field journalists would have attended, and significant self-censorship was a concerning factor.

The CET notes the 03/2013 of 08/02/2013 law that now governs the Media High Council. The law was promulgated on March 11, 2013 together with law 02/2013 of 08/02/2013 regarding media regulation and law 04/2013 of 08/02/2013 related to access to information. Article 2 of the reformed MHC law states that the institution shall be an independent one responsible for 'media capacity building.'

The 2010 Commonwealth Observer Group report on Rwanda's Presidential elections recommended a separation of the roles of the Media High Council, so that its focus on regulating the media does not overshadow its goal to promote media freedom. The CET therefore noted with interest that the MHC no longer has the responsibility to regulate media in the country. In 2011, Rwanda adopted a self-regulatory approach to media, where it is expected that media organizations will regulate themselves over content and interaction with public over complaints in compliance with new media law.

The CET was told that private media in Rwanda struggle to be objective, mainly out of fear that their business may not be sustainable if they do so. The CET believes that low salaries for journalists, and a MHC which could benefit from further strengthening of its capacity, make the industry susceptible to lowered standards like extensive self-censorship or biased reporting. The team recognizes views that the 'perception', rather than the real prospect of intimidation or being targeted legally for critical reportage, could certainly be an explanation for the lack of journalistic rigour.

There is great need for more training of journalists on how to effectively report and cover elections and for increased public awareness so that Rwandan's view the media as a valid forum for robust debate and consensus-building, as well as the source of accurate news and information to assist them in making informed choices. The Commonwealth and other partners could be of help in this area.

CHAPTER FIVE

VOTING, COUNTING AND RESULTS

Background

Polling stations are determined in accordance with the provisions of Article 31 of the 2010 Electoral law as amended and the Article 11 of Law No. 37/2013 of 16/06/2013 modifying and complementing law which provides that “polling stations and rooms must be set up in public buildings or facilities in which public services are provided and in any other places as determined by the National Electoral Commission” .

There were 2285 polling centres and about 17,858 polling stations. The overall management of the polling stations is the responsibility of NEC. NEC reported that the voters’ register had 5,953,531 voters including persons from the diaspora who were allowed to vote.

Article 46 of the 2010 Electoral law as amended, stipulates that “Voting is an obligation to every Rwandan who fulfils the requirements as provided by this law.” Announcing the results, the Chairman of National Electoral Commission, Prof. Mbanda Kalisa said that among the 5,953,531 Rwandans eligible to vote, 5,881,874 (which represents 98 percent), voted in this election.

Observations on Polling Day

Voting Environment

The CET observed the voting and counting in Kigali City and the Southern Province. In Kigali City, the CET observed in the following Sectors: Gahanga, Gatenga, Gitega, Kagarama, Kicukiro, Kigali, Ndera, Nyamirambo and Nyarugenge. In the Southern Province, the CET observed in Busasamana, Huye, Kinazi, Ngoma, Rusatira and Save.

Rwandans welcomed 16 September 2013, and we noted the enthusiasm to vote, as well as the early arrival at polling stations. There was a jovial atmosphere and local folk music played throughout the day at all polling centres. Elections proceeded in a peaceful and calm manner. The CET recognises the cultural appreciation for music in Rwandan society. The CET was informed that the music on Election Day was “chosen and committed by NEC” and was also used during civic education sessions. The CET is of the view that the music played on Election Day should be agreed by all candidates and political parties contesting the elections.

Overall the NEC managed the logistics of the three Election Days competently. We saw the benefits of the NEC's work in preparing voters, and general voter education on the smooth running of elections over the three days. We observed, in addition to the

presence of older voters, participation by large numbers of women and youth not only as voters but also as polling staff. Notably, the organisation of the internal layout of the polling station, which included positioning the voting booths were prepared the previous day by volunteers, and were beautifully and extensively decorated.

In accordance with Article 88 of the 2013 03/2013 of 23/07/2013 '*Instructions of the National Electoral Commission*', standard electoral materials ought to be included in the polling station kit provided to polling stations in good time for 16 September. However, some polling stations did not have pens, in order to enable voters to use that option in the casting of their votes.

Some polling stations in the more rural areas suffered from poor lighting as rooms had little natural light. We would urge that in future, provision is made for proper lighting where natural light is not readily accessible to the venue.

Polling stations opened at 0700hrs and this was generally adhered to. However, in some cases the start of actual voting was delayed by up to 20 minutes because of pre-voting preparations. Pre-voting preparations included the opening of the polling station to staff, taking and signing of the oath before the present population, and an explanation from the presiding officer on how the election will be conducted.

At one polling centre in Nyamirambo, polling station staff displayed the empty ballot boxes to the present population in the square of the polling centre. The box was sealed, and taken into the polling stations, while the viewing public remained in the square. The CET believes this practice impinges on the transparency of the process. The general public should be able to very closely observe every aspect of the electoral process from start to finish.

More critically, the CET observed that some ballot boxes at large polling stations in Gatenga and Kicukiro only had two seals in place and the lids of the ballot boxes could easily be shifted. In one instance when a CET member queried why this was the case, an anxious polling staff tried to demonstrate that the lid was properly sealed, only for the lid to ease away in her hands, just slightly held together by the two existing seals. In polling stations where this was observed, CET members were told this was because ballots would be added from other polling stations. Further clarification was difficult to obtain. We find this occurrence alarming and would urge that NEC ensures the credibility of the process is protected, by preventing such practices in future elections.

The CET observed that whilst the seals used on ballot boxes had serial numbers, the serial numbers were not recorded by polling agents. It appears the purpose of the serialised seals was not appreciated by polling staff. Regardless of the type of seal used, election best practice requires that the serial numbers of the official seals used should be declared to the present population at the polling station, and written in the voting record book and on any other appropriate form. These procedures are very important, as they constitute the start of an important audit trail. Controls on the process of manufacturing the official seals used by the electoral management body must provide adequate guarantees that seal substitution will not be possible. The CET recommends a review of the relevant laws to ensure that these best practices are enshrined.

To enhance the credibility of the voting process we recommend that the ballot papers bear serial numbers. The CET also recommends that ballot papers should be packaged in chequebook style booklets to facilitate accountability. In order to allow secrecy, ballot forms that include serial numbers are typically prepared with a perforation between the main ballot and the tear-off tab where the number is printed. The election official tears off this tab at the time the ballot is given to the voter, and at the close of polls, the number of torn tabs must equal the number of ballots cast or spoiled. This will allow proper verification and accountability. To ensure and preserve the credibility of the elections, it is advisable that a system of strict accounting for all ballots issued and cast is in place, and that ballot papers are printed in such a way that they are adequately difficult to counterfeit.

Most polling stations observed by the CET had no Party Agents. Where the presence of a few Party Agents was indeed observed, they belonged to the ruling political party. Political parties should appreciate the value of their participation at all levels of the electoral process. The presence of Party Agents lends credibility to the electoral process on voting day. In other jurisdictions, Party Agents are involved on Electoral Day from the delivery of materials through to the completion of counting, even receiving a copy of the respective Statements of Poll. Undoubtedly, Party Agents give confidence that the electoral process is in order and that the results are credible. The CET implores political parties to become more vigilant in this regard.

Security arrangements on Election Day were in the hands of the police. No instances of security breaches were brought to our attention. The process was peaceful and the atmosphere calm. The police had a commendably visible presence at polling centres and were not at all intrusive.

Voting Process

In accordance with Article 37 of the 2010 Electoral Law, outlines polling room arrangements on Election Day as follows:

“Every polling room shall be under the charge of three (3) polling agents:

1. A person responsible for verifying whether a voter fulfils the requirements of this law;
2. A person responsible for issuing a ballot paper;
3. A person to place a mark on the voter’s card.

Duties were allocated to polling staff in accordance with the above-mentioned law at most polling stations. Voters were processed one at a time, and entry into the station was controlled at the door by the polling staff. This temporary delegation worked very effectively and we congratulate the NEC and its volunteers for fulfilling this role admirably.

Queues formed early on polling day at many of the stations, but these were efficiently processed. Voters were well directed to the appropriate polling station. Officials were very polite and courteous and respectful of the importance of voting.

Every good election starts with a reliable voter register and a credible voter identification system. All relevant stakeholders conveyed their views to the CET that the NEC had done a good job to produce a clean and reliable register.

Throughout Election Day on 16 September, the CET observed stacks of voter registration cards at polling stations. The CET was informed that those individuals who had not previously received their cards could collect them at polling centres. However, the CET was concerned that there were no lists to verify the identity of the individuals collecting these cards. Appropriate controls for the issuance of these cards at polling stations should be put in place to ensure the credibility of the process.

With regard to voter identification, the CET is of the view that greater priority should be placed on ensuring the voter identification process is more transparent. On five occasions, the CET observed that voters presented only an unstamped voter card and no additional identification. Article 92 of the 2013 O3/2013 of 23/07/2013 provides for such an individual to vote "after a control". The CET did not observe any such control measures or further actions, which verified the individual's identity.

Critically, at the Mukingo polling centre in Nyanza District, in addition to not seeing a control measure used to confirm identity, the CET observed a voter being given a ballot even though this voter had already been recorded in the register as having voted. More rigorous checks on voter identification are necessary to prevent double voting and to ensure that the integrity of the ballot is not compromised.

Additionally, CET observers noted that when a voter presented him/herself to cast their vote, in almost all cases, there was no checking for the presence of indelible ink on the fingers before a ballot was issued. The use of indelible ink in elections is a mechanism to prevent multiple voting. The strength of this mechanism is weakened and the credibility of the process minimised, if polling staff do not check if the presented voter has already cast his/her ballot.

Article 102 of No 03/2013 of 23/07/2013 states that "the assessor who gives the ballot paper to the voter must show him/her how to hold it. Before voting, the way of folding the ballot paper must be identifiable but the voter receives it unfolded." The CET observed that polling staff had pre-folded the ballot papers before giving them to voters. It was normal to find piles of pre-folded ballot papers on desks in almost all polling stations. While the CET does not believe this compromised the ballot, it would be remiss not to state that the law was not adhered to.

The CET observed that persons who cast their ballot using their thumbprint and ink, usually left a distinctive mark on the underside of the ballot paper. The CET recommends that the back of the ballot paper, behind where the voter makes his/her mark, should be blocked with a black ink strip to enhance the secrecy of the ballot.

The quality of ink provided was not satisfactory: the ink was not indelible thus resulting in the possibility of multiple voting. The CET met individuals who voted, and had managed to successfully remove the ink from their fingers before the end of the day.

The purpose of the indelible ink is to enable a longer-term mark on the fingers of voters to prevent multiple voting.

During the counting process, the CET also observed that when the ballot paper was folded, the ink transferred quite dominantly from the area chosen by the voter, and sometimes into the area marked for other candidates. This caused the serious consequence that a ballot is rendered void. The CET recommends that the quality of ink used, and the ballot is considerably improved.

Counting

The stipulated closing procedure at polling stations was generally adhered to. It appeared that where there had been a 15-20 minute delay in the commencement of actual voting, the polling centre coordinator allowed the same amount of time post 1500hrs. The CET witnessed the ceremonial announcement of the closing of voting. In some instances the procedure for the transition from a polling to a counting station was also announced. Observers and members of the public were able to come in to witness the counting process.

Article 59 of the Electoral Law provides that the person responsible for the counting of votes should “determine the number of voters registered on the electoral list” and announce it. It further requires a public opening of the ballot box, the counting of the ballot papers and the public announcement of the number. The CET did not observe any adherence to this legal stipulation.

The CET also did not observe a reconciliation of the ballot papers before the beginning of counting. In one instance, the Coordinating Officer entered a polling room, and realising no reconciliation procedures had been done, overturned the ballot box in anger, forcing other polling staff to carry out the required reconciliation. Article 59(2) of the 2010 electoral law, provides that after counting the number of ballot papers in the box, the polling agents should announce the number. The CET is of the view that to ensure the credibility of the process, the relevant electoral law should be amended to also allow for the recording of the number of ballots retrieved from the ballot box.

The accounting for ballots typically involves reconciling the number of ballots found in the ballot box at the end of the election with the number issued to voters during the voting period, and the number stocked at the polling place at the beginning of the election. At the end of the day, all ballots must be accounted for as either voted, spoiled or never issued. We hope that future training on ballot paper management will include the reconciliation of issued, used and spoilt ballot papers at the counting stage.

The CET noted that during the counting process, a number of invalid ballots were counted. At a polling station in Nyarmirambo, it was observed that quite a number of ballot papers with more than one mark on separate ‘voting area’ sections of the ballot paper, were accepted as valid.

Furthermore, in some polling stations, it was observed that invalid ballots were not excluded from the batch of accepted ballots during counting. Both valid and invalid

ballots were grouped together. This of course, affects the best practice process of reconciling the number of ballots.

There was minimal rigour in the examination of questionable ballots, as counting staff seemed eager to complete the process because of counting fatigue. It seemed to us that a better balance between speed, accuracy and reliability need to be found in order to ensure greater confidence in final election results.

Additionally, we would urge uniformity in counting procedures to ensure best practice is adopted across the country.

Results Process

To ensure the credibility of the process and confidence in the results, the tabulation of results must be completely transparent. As noted, the general public must be able to very closely observe every aspect of the electoral process from start to finish. The method of transmission of results from the polling station, through the polling centre, to the polling district and ultimately to the national office must be administered in such a fashion that there can be no doubt the numbers are consistent.

The CET heard from various relevant stakeholders that there were deficiencies in this overall process of tabulation. It was reported that the number of votes cast for candidates disclosed to Observers at the District level were different than those reported at the national office for that same District. Doubts were also raised about the accuracy of votes recorded for candidates. It was also reported that Observers were denied access to the tabulation process. This is of concern to members of the CET and we urge greater transparency in the tabulation and transmission of election results. As previously iterated in this report, the general public and accredited Observers should be able to very closely observe every aspect of the electoral process from start to finish. Publication of results with greater transparency should be adopted to avoid perceptions that results may have been altered.

The CET is of the view that the transparency of the consolidation of election result process is encumbered by the vague provisions of Article 128 of the 03/2013 of 23/07/2013, which only requires that "an appropriate statement" summarising the results be sent to the NEC. Consideration should be given to review the law and require that results at every level - polling station, polling centre, District and the NEC - of the consolidation process be announced, openly posted, and open to observation by the general public and accredited Observers.

As the vote was not traceable through the entire process of tabulation, the CET sees the result as having its credibility compromised.

Participation of Women

In accordance with Article 109 of the 2010 Electoral Law, and Article 104 of the 03/2013 of 23/07/2013 '*Instructions of the National Electoral Commission*', 24 female Deputies are elected by secret ballot by the Electoral College.

The CET observed that the voting for women's seats on 17 September got off to a late start as there is a requirement that a two-thirds quorum of Women Electoral College is reached before voting can commence.

It was our observation that voting proceeded swiftly after the two-thirds quorum was reached and voting concluded without any undue concerns.

Rwanda is the only country in the world with a female dominated parliament, having first achieved the feat in the 2008 polls when women took up 56 per cent representation in the House of Representatives - a world-leading figure.

Besides the 24 exclusive women seats which were decided on the 17 September, women also won 26 of the 53 openly competed for seats in the general election of 16 September, as well as one of the two seats reserved for the youth. Consequently, women will occupy 51 out of the 80 seats in the Lower House. Rwanda stands as a beacon to the Commonwealth and the rest of the world on how women can be active participants in the political process.

Participation of Youth

Article 110 of the 2010 Electoral Law and Article 104 of the 03/2013 of 23/07/2013 *'Instructions of the National Electoral Commission'* provides that 2 youth candidates with the most votes would be elected to the Chamber of Deputies.

The CET observed the most notable example of electoral best practice during the counting process for the youth votes. Youth candidates presented themselves well to observe the process. They were extremely professional, orderly, engaged, technologically savvy, and clearly conversant with the requirements of the electoral law and international electoral best practice. The CET observed no notable issues of concern during the counting process for the youth votes. The enthusiasm and political awareness of the Rwandan youth is certainly to be commended.

Participation of Disabled

Article 111 of the electoral law provides for the election of 1 disabled candidate. Fifteen candidates contested for the seat, and 241 members of the Federation of the Associations of the Disabled voted on 18 September at a polling station in Kigali.

The CET understands that Severin Gisaza Rwamucyo, the closest competitor to the declared winner Gaston Rusiha, petitioned the court, claiming that the former offered money to some College Electorate voters and engaged in vote buying to win the polls. He also accused Rusiha of abusing his position as President of the Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPDs) to win over voters.

On 26 September, the Supreme Court ruled that the claims were not supported by empirical evidence and confirmed Rusiha as the winner of the seat. The CET commends the use of the courts by persons who are aggrieved by the electoral process.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This was the third Legislative Election conducted in Rwanda since the 2003 Constitution. It represents an important step in the evolving electoral system of the Republic. As Rwanda consolidates its democracy, no doubt further adjustments to its electoral model will be necessary.

We noted the high expectations of competence that citizens held of the NEC, the body tasked by law to be independent of the government and to administer the elections. The existence of an election management body that has managed to gain such trust and confidence from the people is to be commended as part of the development and maturing of the democratic process in Rwanda.

This was a 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. Voters who could vote expressed their will freely.

We wish therefore to commend the leadership of NEC for their work in organising the election, for their forthrightness in their discussions with us, and their general openness with the broader international observer community and us. We note that the NEC is keen to continually improve its operations. This deserves commendation and will serve to deepen democracy in Rwanda. We also commend NEC's efforts to collaborate with independent candidates, political parties and other stakeholders; and, in the organisation of Diaspora Voting.

In spite of shortcomings in logistics and administration, the CET believes the election has further bolstered the confidence of Rwandans, who are committed to rebuilding their country in the post-1994 genocide period.

We believe that this country has to examine in the future how the issues that were brought to our attention, and those we have highlighted can be addressed so as to enhance the democratic credentials of Rwanda.

It is hoped that our recommendations below will be taken in the constructive spirit in which they are intended and that necessary reforms will be made in time for the next elections to be held in this country. The people of Rwanda must play a central role in this process.

It has been our honour to provide this service for the people of Rwanda in the hope that in the fullness of time, democracy will grow and flourish within their beautiful country.

We summarise our recommendations below.

The Electoral Framework and Election Administration

That:

1. The background and/or affiliation of NEC members are made clear. It is vital that the body responsible for managing the electoral process is inclusive and representative. Ideally such a body either needs to be completely independent of any political affiliation or comprise a good representative balance.
2. Consideration is given to extending the 3-year term for Commissioners to enable institutional memory.
3. Consideration is given to ensure fairly equal requirements for registration of independent candidates and political party candidates. At present, it appears the requirements for independent candidates may be too onerous.
4. Consideration is given to review the laws relating to the 5 percent threshold for political parties and independent candidates to ensure a fairer electoral system.

Election Campaign and Media

That:

1. Consideration is given to lengthening the campaign period as it is felt that political parties would benefit.
2. The capacity of the media is significantly strengthened, particularly in terms of investigative reporting and political commentary and analysis. This includes strengthening the Rwandan Journalists Association so that it can promote the interests and welfare of journalists. With the recent legislation that media would self-regulate, this recommendation is especially urgent.
3. More journalists are periodically trained on how to effectively report and cover elections.
4. The Media High Council benefits from further strengthening of its capacity.
5. Private media is also actively encouraged to operate under the same regulatory microscope relevant to State media during election periods.

Voting, Counting and Results

That:

1. All contesting candidates and political parties agree which music is played on Election Day.

2. All polling stations are equipped with all necessary equipment for the voting to take place, including basic supplies such as pens.
3. Provision is made for proper lighting where natural light is not readily accessible to the polling venue.
4. The general public is able to very closely observe every aspect of the electoral process from start to finish.
5. All ballot boxes are affixed with four seals, in accordance with the electoral law.
6. The law is reviewed to provide that the serial numbers of the official seals used on ballot boxes, are declared to the present population at the polling station, and written in the voting record book and on any other appropriate form.
7. All ballot papers bear serial numbers to enhance accountability and the credibility of the elections.
8. Consideration is given to packaging ballot papers in chequebook style booklets to facilitate accountability. Ballot papers should be printed in such a way that they are modestly difficult to counterfeit.
9. There is efficient reconciliation of issued, used and spoilt ballot papers at the counting stage. In this regard, we also recommend that NEC and all future polling staff benefit from further training on ballot paper management.
10. Appropriate controls are put in place for the issuance of voter cards at polling stations.
11. Greater priority is placed on ensuring the voter identification process is more transparent.
12. Greater priority is given to checking for the presence of indelible ink on the fingers of presented voters before a ballot is issued.
13. The quality of indelible ink is significantly improved to prevent the possibility of multiple voting.
14. The back of the ballot paper, behind where the voter makes his/her mark, is blocked with a black ink strip or similar, to enhance the secrecy of the ballot.
15. Consideration is given to review the electoral law to require that results at every level - polling station, polling centre, District and the NEC - of the consolidation process be announced, openly posted, and open to observation by the general public and accredited Observers. We urge greater transparency in the tabulation and transmission of election results.

16. There is uniformity in counting procedures to ensure best practice is adopted across the country.

ANNEX I: Commonwealth News Release

Commonwealth to observe Rwanda Legislative Elections

6 September 2013

A COMMONWEALTH EXPERT TEAM (CET) WILL OBSERVE RWANDA'S LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 16 - 18 SEPTEMBER 2013, COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL KAMALESH SHARMA HAS ANNOUNCED.

Mr Sharma said the Team will be led by Mr Tiro Seeletso, Secretary to the Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana. He will be joined by Mr Russ Hiebert, a Member of Parliament from Canada. The two will be supported by staff from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The CET was constituted by the Secretary-General at the invitation of the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda.

Speaking from London, Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma said the Commonwealth is pleased to observe elections in its newest member.

"Democracy and development are the twin pillars of the Commonwealth, and fair and credible elections are the foundation on which responsive government, inclusive development, and respect for diversity are built in our member states," Mr Sharma said.

The mandate of the Team is to observe the preparations for the election; the polling, counting and results process as a whole and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the future strengthening of the electoral framework in Rwanda.

It is tasked to act impartially and independently, and to conduct itself according to the standards expressed in the International Declaration of Principles for Elections Observation, to which the Commonwealth is a signatory.

The Team's report will be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will in turn send it to the Government of Rwanda, the National Election Commission of Rwanda and political parties, and thereafter made public.

The Team will arrive in Rwanda on 10 September and stay until 23 September 2013.

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ANNEX II: Biographies of the Team

Mr Tiro Seeletso (Botswana – Chair)

Tiro Goaletsa Gabriel G Seeletso is a Career Public Officer for over 34 years during which he coordinated Election activities in different capacities from 1979 to date. Twenty-three (23) years of his service were at Deputy Permanent Secretary and Permanent Secretary Levels. He is currently Secretary to the Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana (CEO and Accounting Officer), a position he has held since the inception of the Commission in May 1998. He holds a BA Degree from the University of Botswana and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA. He is married with three children.

Hon. Russ Hiebert (Canada)

Russ Hiebert was first elected to Canada's Parliament in June 2004, and re-elected in 2006, 2008 and 2011. He has served on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. At the beginning of his second term, he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, and continued in his role as Co-Chairman of the Border Caucus. In 2006, he was first elected Chairman of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), a post he has been re-elected to six times by his fellow MPs.

In his current term, Russ serves on the Standing Committee on International Trade and served on the International Human Rights Sub-Committee. He is currently a member of the following Parliamentary Associations: Canada-Africa, Commonwealth, Canada-China, Canada-United States, and the Canadian Section of Parl-Americas.

Commonwealth Secretariat Support Staff

Dr Tres-Ann Kremer, Staff Team Leader

Ms Diane Mensah-Bonsu

ANNEX III: Deployment Plan

Team	Province	Locations	Names
1	Kigali City	Gahanga, Gatenga, Gitega, Kagarama, Kicukiro, Kigali, Ndera, Nyamirambo and Nyarugenge.	Mr Tiro Seeletso (Botswana) Dr Tres-Ann Kremer
2	Southern Province	Busasamana, Huye, Kinazi, Ngoma, Rusatira and Save.	Hon. Russ Hiebert (Canada) Ms Diane Mensah-Bonsu

Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation

The Commonwealth Secretariat is a signatory to both the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the associated Code of Conduct for International Election Observation Missions, which were commemorated on 27 October 2005 at the United Nations in New York.

Commonwealth Observation missions are organised and conducted in accordance with the Declaration and Commonwealth Observers undertake their duties in accordance with the Code of Conduct.