



The Commonwealth

**40** YEARS  
The Commonwealth  
**OBSERVING  
ELECTIONS  
SINCE 1980**

## *40 Years of Commonwealth Election Observation: Evolving, Responding, Innovating*

# Expert Forums

2020 marks 40 years of Commonwealth Election Observation. This milestone presents a unique opportunity to review and commemorate the Commonwealth's work in international election observation and how it contributes to the promotion of democracy in member countries.

Join us for this four-part series where leading experts from around the Commonwealth delve into the key trends and current challenges to elections and international election observation.

### *Expert Forum I*

## **Challenges to Contemporary International Election Observation**

**23 September 2020, 3:00 pm BST**

This forum will consider core criticisms of international election observation, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and opportunities for strengthening observation for the future.

### **Confirmed Speakers**

#### **Cynthia Barrow-Giles**

Senior Lecturer in Political Science,  
University of the West Indies, Barbados

#### **Chris Cobb**

Vice President, Commonwealth Journalist  
Association, Canada

#### **Patrick Merloe**

Senior Associate and Director for Election  
Programmes, National Democratic Institute

#### **Regina Opondo**

Chair, Elections Observation Group  
and Executive Secretary, Constitution and  
Reform Education Consortium, Kenya

#### **Marcella Samba-Sesay**

Chairperson, National Election Watch,  
Sierra Leone

#### **Moderator: Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu**

Executive Director, Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka



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## *Expert Forum II*

### **Examining Trends: Representation and Inclusion**

30 September 2020, 9:00 am BST

This forum will explore trends and gaps and leverage Commonwealth good practice to contribute to the aspirations of SDG 16 'broadening and strengthening representation and participation'.

#### **Confirmed Speakers**

**Susan Grey**

Executive Director, femLINKpacific, Fiji

**Terry Dale Ince**

Organizational Development Consultant,  
CEDAW, Gender and Human Rights  
Advocate, Trinidad and Tobago

**Samson Itodo**

Founder and Executive Director, Yiaga Africa,  
Nigeria

**Ahmed Mohamed**

Chairperson, Maldives Association  
of Persons with Disabilities

**Moderator: The Hon Maryan Street**

Former Minister of Housing, New Zealand

## *Expert Forum III*

### **Rule of Law, Conflict Sensitivity and Elections**

8 October 2020, 3:00 pm BST

This forum will consider elections as a critical opportunity to establish and underline the rule of law. Speakers will discuss the importance of strategic and holistic approaches to mitigating conflict around the electoral space to promote credible elections and peaceful transitions.

#### **Confirmed Speakers**

**Radhika Coomaraswamy**

Former UN Under Secretary General and  
Special Representative on Children and  
Armed Conflict, Sri Lanka

**Dr Simon Munzu**

Former UN Secretary-General's Deputy  
Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire  
(2014-2016)

**Moderator: Justice James Munange Ogoola**

Former Principal Judge of the High Court of Uganda



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*Expert Forum IV*

## **Electoral Technologies and Social Media: Truth and Trust in the Digital Age**

21 October 2020, 2:00 pm BST

This forum will explore the impact of election technologies on citizens' trust in electoral processes, and the challenges and opportunities associated with them. It will also consider the impact of social media on elections, as well as the impact of disinformation and hate speech on political inclusion and participation.

### **Confirmed Speakers**

**Melanie du Plessis**

Manager, Business Systems, Independent  
Electoral Commission of South Africa

**Dr Kushal Pathak**

Director, ICT, Election Commission of India

**Moderator: Dr Ian Brown**

Former Professor of Information Security, Oxford University

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