



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

Community Director of Kounkuey Design
Initiative (KDI) and Chair of the Elections
Observation Group (ELOG), 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.

Confirmed Speakers

Susan Grey

Executive Director, femLINKpacific, Fiji

Terry Dale Ince

Managing Director of TDI & Associates and Founder of the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT)

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

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

Justice James Munange Ogoola

Principal Judge Emeritus, Uganda

United Nations, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

Eamon Courtenay

Senior Counsel and Former Foreign Minister, Belize

Dr Asha Kissoon

Leader of The New Movement Party, Guyana

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Former Under-Secretary-General of the

Robert Phiri

Executive Director, Malawi Public Affairs Committee

Moderator: Dr Hume Johnson

Political Scholar and Professor of Public Relations, Roger Williams University



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Expert Forum IV

Electoral Technologies and Social Media: Trust and Truth 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

Dr Kushal Pathak

Director, ICT, Election Commission of India

Melanie du Plessis

Manager Business Systems, Electoral
Commission of South Africa

Senator the Hon Matthew Samuda

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of
National Security, Jamaica

Moderator: Michael Meyer-Resende

Executive Director, Democracy Reporting International

Akua Gyekye

Public Policy Manager, Africa and MENA
Elections, Facebook

Senel Wanniarachchi

Co-Founder, Hashtag Generation, Sri Lanka

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