



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT
IGAD ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE DJIBOUTI
09 April 2016, Djibouti

The IGAD Election Observation Mission deployed to observe the Presidential election held in the Republic of Djibouti on 08th April 2016, has concluded its mission successfully.

This is a preliminary Statement of the IGAD Observer Mission and covers the mission's findings from the date of arrival of the Mission; 5th April 2016 until the closing and counting processes on 08th April 2016.

IGAD deployed the Mission following an invitation extended to it by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti.

Members of the Election Observation Mission include 13 participants from IGAD Secretariat led by H.E. Mr. Ahmed Issack Hassan, Chairman of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of the Republic of Kenya and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Association African Electoral Authorities. H.E. Mr. Hassan is the Leader and Spokesperson of the IGAD Election Observer Mission.

IGAD's mandate include the promotion of democracy, good governance and the conduct of free and fair elections as some of the main elements contributing to the enhancement of peace, security and stability in the region.

The overall objective of the Mission therefore, was to observe the Republic of the Djibouti, a founding member of IGAD, in its efforts to conduct free, fair and credible elections by providing positive and constructive feedback. It is also part of IGAD's

broader aims to facilitate the development of a democratic culture in the region that helps avert conflicts related to election disputes.

The Observer Mission met with relevant Djibouti government officials and other stakeholders and was briefed on the status of preparation and reassured on their preparedness to conduct the election.

On Election Day, members of the IGAD Election Observation Mission were organized in four teams of two observers each and deployed to different polling centers in Djibouti City to observe the election.

The teams observed the poll opening, polling, poll closing and vote counting and tallying of the election processes on 8th April 2016.

The mission was able to visit 40 polling stations and observed the following:

- Most polling centers opened as scheduled at 06:00 am apart for few reported/isolated cases of late opening.
- The polling centers and polling stations were laid out in a manner that allowed easy flow of voters.
- Election materials were adequately distributed on time and in sufficient quantity in all the observed areas.
- Electoral officials demonstrated sufficient understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- There were a number of local and international observers.
- IGAD Election Observers had free access to the polling centers and polling stations.
- The voter turnout was low in the morning with gradual progress and high turnout in the late afternoon.
- The secrecy of vote was generally upheld.
- Every voter had the same number of votes (one person one vote) and all votes carried the same weight.
- The Mission observed the counting process and no incidents of disruption were observed.
- The Observer Team noted the strong presence and participation of women as organizers, party agents and as voters.
- Youth participation was also noticeable in the electoral process serving as polling officers, local observers and voters.

A comprehensive report with the detailed observations and recommendations will be submitted to the relevant authorities for the improvement of future similar processes.

CONCLUSION

IGAD Election Observer Mission was limited to three days observation only which entailed two days of pre-election assessment and the observation of the voting day on

the poll opening, polling, poll closing and vote, counting and tallying processes. Therefore, the Mission will not be in a position to provide complete and comprehensive conclusions on the entire election process. However based on what it has been able to observe, the Mission preliminary conclusion is that the 2016 Presidential election was conducted in a transparent, peaceful, and orderly manner and in accordance with the Constitution and the laws governing the Republic of Djibouti.

IGAD wishes to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Cooperation and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Djibouti, the Constitutional Council, the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) as well as the Media for the assistance rendered to IGAD to make the Observer Mission task easy.

Finally, the Observer Mission would like to congratulate the people of the Republic of Djibouti for the peaceful and orderly manner in which they conducted the election and wish them peace, continuous progress and prosperity.

*Done on 9th April 2016, Kempinski Palace Hotel,
Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti*