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Final Statement on the April 2011 General Elections: National Assembly, Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections Wednesday, 18 May 2011

Delivered at Sheraton Hotel, Abuja

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, on behalf of the National Steering Committee (NSC) of Project 2011 Swift Count, it is our pleasure to welcome you to this press conference. As you may recall, Project 2011 Swift Count issued interim statements on our findings following the conduct of each of the three elections that took place in April--the National Assembly, Presidential and Gubernatorial. We invited you today to share our final findings on the conduct of these elections and also present our recommendations for the conduct of future elections in this country.

Executive Summary

Project 2011 Swift Count deployed over eight thousand (8000) stationary and mobile observers throughout the country to observe the elections. Our observers reported on the conduct of accreditation, voting and counting of ballots at polling units. We also followed closely the official results as announced by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the presidential and gubernatorial elections in six (6) states (Plateau, Borno, Kano, Oyo, Imo and Delta), representing the six (6) geo-political zones, and compared these results with the data submitted by our observers.

Based on the reports submitted by our observers, who were deployed to representative random sample of polling units across the country, Project 2011 Swift Count concludes that the Nigerian voting populace were provided with opportunity to exercise their franchise and in general their votes were counted. The April general elections were conducted within the frameworks of and conformed to the Nigerian Constitution, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocols on Democracy and Good Governance, and the African Union (AU) Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa. While the elections were not perfect and were marred with incidence of

intimidations and harassments, denial of accredited observers to access polling units, violence, ballot snatching, and other election malpractices and irregularities at some polling units, overall the elections were good, credible and transparent.

The elections marked a departure from flawed and sour elections that this country has experienced over the last twelve years, particularly the 2007 elections. The elections were generally characterized by the determination of INEC to halt the history of fraudulent elections and the desire of many Nigerians to restore and sustain the democratic process. The successful conclusion of the elections presents Nigeria with a sound platform to improve upon the electoral process and also aspire for more credible and violence-free future elections.

Background to the 2011 elections.

Before the April 2011 elections, the Nigeria electoral system has regrettably been an obstacle to credible election in the Country. The system was associated with serious problems of ineptitude and partisanship of election administration, coupled with very weak electoral laws, and inordinate politicians. Over the years, the manner of our electoral umpires has been unscrupulous and undependable. The electorate, too, have been very much dogmatic, indifferent, ambivalent and apathetic. Politics has been seriously monetized with political offices made so comfortable for politicians in a manner that has made the contest into political offices a do-or-die affair. It was against these unpleasant situations of weak electoral system and laws, that the April 2011 general elections were conducted with some changes or reforms to the electoral laws from the legislators who are constitutionally empowered to make laws.

However, Nigerians placed their hopes of better election on the promises of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, who had promised the world that he was going to institutionalized democratic governance through credible election to be monitored by local and international observers. In line with these presidential promises, he appointed Prof. Attahiru Jega to head the election management body -- the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The avowed presidential promises, the appropriate appointment of Prof. Attahiru Jega, combined with the National Consensus to spread out all hands to redefine the election in April 2011 and use its success to change the lives of Nigerians, irrespective of ethnic, religion and wealth status, helped to make the votes of the people count.

There is no doubt that the modified option A4 also known as “**simultaneous accreditation, simultaneous voting**” ensured the transparency of the election and gave integrity to the electoral system giving the electorate who so desires, to wait and obtain the result of the election in which he has participated. The overall general conduct of the 2011 elections dimmed the bad experiences witnessed in the 1959, 1963/1964, 1983, 1999, 2003, 2007 and positively built on the glimmer of hope built

by the 1993 presidential election to create a new template for future freer, fairer and non-controversial election in the country. This transparency fostered by its checks and balances in the electoral process created a more conducive space for local and international observers to observe the general conduct of the elections and verify the official votes declared by INEC which boosted the confidence of the people and uplifted the integrity of the electoral system.

In effect, areas that have hitherto been condemned as having been flawed in the past elections were given pass mark in the April election to the extent that the people, local and international observers adjudged the election as not only transparent, but also credible.

2011 April Elections: General Findings

A: Structure and composition of the election administration

INEC is currently established in accordance with Section 153(f) of the 1999 Constitution. The key functions are described in Part 1 (F) of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution. They are to organize, undertake and supervise all elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, as well as to the Senate, the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of each State of the Federation.

INEC is composed of a Chairman and 12 Commissioners, two from each of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The Chairman and Commissioners are directly appointed by the President after consultation with the Council of State and subject to confirmation by the Senate. INEC maintains a permanent office in all the 36 states and the FCT. These offices are headed by Resident Electoral Commissioners who are directly appointed by the President without Senate approval.

Since its foundation in 1998, INEC has not managed to successfully establish its own systems effectively. Various election observations by local and international observers have not adjudged the elections conducted by INEC since 1999 to 2007 as free, fair, transparent, legitimate and credible.

In this regard, Project swift count detest a situation in which the President cling to the selection of members of the commission so that wrong signal is not sent that INEC is been positioned to be the agent of the ruling party. The Uwais report should be revisited and reconsidered in this regard.

B: Administration of the 2011 elections

INEC was provided with a budget of over N87b for registration alone aside its normal budget for administration and election management ahead of the April 2011 election,

unlike in the past when funding was its major problem. This placed the INEC in a better stead than the previous elections. In addition INEC benefited from the UWAIIS report and enjoyed unhindered financial independence as its funding and administration were no more decided in the President's office. Political parties and civil society groups did not raise any serious issue regarding INEC's independence or interference from the Federal Government. This contributed to rising public confidence in both the government and INEC. In the period leading up to the elections, INEC itself engaged in serious constructive relation with all stakeholders with promises to listen to constructive advice and suggestions.

INEC shored up transparency in its decision and provided important information on a number of issues, including the final number of candidates and a transparently verifiable voters' register containing the number of voters per constituency. INEC provided observers with standard information and materials, including access to the voter register while it permitted observers to attend INEC meetings with political parties or the media.

In addition, local and International observers were accredited earlier than hitherto. INEC also made provision for results to be posted at polling stations or published at superior levels of the election administration.

Preparations by INEC to conduct the elections were faced with avoidable hiccups and witnessed some postponements. Notwithstanding, it was later straightened and a better election was conducted thereafter to the admiration of majority of Nigerians and their international friends.

INEC did not have difficulties in recruiting its ad-hoc staff who are members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) having provided similar services administering polling stations in previous elections in Anambra and Ekiti states and Abuja.

For security reasons, most Resident Electoral Commissioner (RECs) and Administrative Secretaries were reshuffled to different states some days to the election including public affairs officers.

C: Election related violence

Violence has been the greatest obstacle to credible election in Nigeria but it was limited before and during the election, except when it became a post election phenomenon, but it was quickly put down with many arrest made of people who participated in the post election mayhem. Peaceful campaign activities predominated the pre election period except in isolated cases where campaign rallies were halted by some hoodlums who were immediately arrested by vigilant security officials.

Project 2011 Swift Count views the rate of electoral-related incidents recorded on election days as very disturbing.

Our findings indicated a steady progression in levels of critical incidents from the national assembly through to the presidential and gubernatorial elections. For the National Assembly elections, our mobile observers reported a total of 201 incidents; this increased to 628 incidents during the presidential elections and jumped to a total of 937 critical incidents reported during the gubernatorial elections. The reports on critical incidents came from all parts of the country. The most frequently reported incidents of violence were: intimidation or harassment; political attacks, bullying, and ballot box snatching.

Project 2011 Swift Count also recorded a number of cases where observers were chased out from polling units, and in some instances kidnapped, by political party agents, local government chairmen, party thugs, and community members. It is significant to note that some of the harassed and kidnapped observers were rescued by security agencies. However, Project 2011 Swift Count received reports that at some polling units, some INEC officials and security forces looked unconcerned when observers were intimidated and chased out. This observation is an indictment on the security personnel who failed to perform their constitutional duty of providing security to all persons as required by the constitution.

Overall, credible reports were received from our observers and international and domestic media indicating that at least the elections were freer, fairer and not violent ridden in large part of the country.

D: Participation of women in the electoral process

The Nigerian constitution prohibits discrimination for whatever reason, including gender. Nigeria has also ratified both Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which prohibits discrimination against women in the exercise of their right to vote and to stand for election. In 2007, a National Gender Policy called for 35 per cent affirmative action for female representation in all levels of government. In their 2011 code of conduct, political parties resolved to ensure the promotion of active participation of women in electoral processes and committed themselves against violence or intimidation of any kind.

However, women remain clearly under-represented in public life. This was visible in the very low proportion of women candidates standing for election and winning at the end of the day. Generally there was a very poor performance of women in the primaries. Perhaps the political parties do not have gender policy, or if they have, it was jettisoned during the primaries. Although efforts are being made to improve on

gender representation in this regard, women still made up of an average of 8% of representation in the legislature and appointed offices whereas in some countries, political parties and regional or intergovernmental bodies had adopted voluntary quotas in an attempt to address this, with the United Nations (UN) currently aiming to achieve over 30% female representation.

E: Results Verifications

- Presidential

The methodology adopted for observing the April elections enabled Project 2011 Swift Count to verify the accuracy of the Presidential results as announced by INEC. Project 2011 Swift Count deployed observers to a representative random sample of 1,497 polling units located in every state and every LGA of the country for the presidential election. Our presidential results estimates, which were based on reports received from 1,441 (96%) out of 1497 sampled polling units, closely matched with the official results as announced by the INEC Chair on April 18, 2011.

Political Party	Swift Count Estimate	Margin of Error	Swift Count Range	Official INEC Result
PDP	58.7%	+/- 1.2	57.5% to 59.9%	58.9%
CPC	30.8%	+/-1.2	29.6% to 32.0%	32.0%
ACN	5.3%	+/-0.3	5.0% to %5.6	5.4%
ANPP	2.7%	+/-0.3	2.4% to 3.0%	2.4%

Note: Swift Count variance based on a 95% confidence level

Swift Count estimates were calculated for political parties who received more than 1% of votes cast. Swift Count data was checked for internal consistency to confirm its accuracy. To ensure the highest level of data quality, two observers were assigned to each sampled polling unit and both were required to send in reports, including the official results, via coded text message. All Swift Count data used for the estimates are based on the official results as announced by polling officials at polling stations.

Based on the official results collected by our observers from a representative random sample of polling units, and as we stated in our interim statement on April 18, 2011, Project 2011 Swift Count can confidently confirm that the official results as announced by INEC for the presidential election are consistent with the Swift Count estimates.

- Gubernatorial

Project 2011 Swift Count also verified the official results of the gubernatorial elections held on April 26, 2011 in 4 (Plateau, Borno, Kano and Oyo) out of the 6 states

expected. Using the same deployment plan as in the presidential election, Project 2011 Swift Count deployed to a total of 2,392 sample polling units in the six states (approximately 400 sampled units per state). Based on the official results collected by our observers from a representative random sample of polling units, Project 2011 Swift Count once again can confidently confirm that the official results as announced by INEC are consistent with the Swift Count estimates as follows.

Plateau

Plateau: Swift Count Gubernatorial Election Estimates				
Political Party	Swift Count Estimate	Margin of Error	Swift Count Range	Official INEC Results
ACN	3.3%	0.3%	3.0% to 3.6%	3.1%
LP	34.8%	1.9%	32.9% to 36.7%	35.4%
PDP	58.4%	1.9%	56.5% to 60.3%	58.8%
ANPP	2.2%	0.6%	1.7% to 2.8%	2.1%

Note: Swift Count variance based on a 95% confidence level

Borno

Borno: Swift Count Gubernatorial Election Estimates				
Political Party	Swift Count Estimate	Margin of Error	Swift Count Range	Official INEC Results
ANPP	50.1%	1.06%	49.04% to 51.2%	50.5%
CPC	5.0%	0.29%	4.7% to 5.3%	4.9%
PDP	42.7%	0.96%	41.7% to 43.7%	42.8%

Note: Swift Count variance based on a 95% confidence level

Kano

Kano Swift Count Gubernatorial Election Estimates				
Political Party	Swift Count Estimate	Margin of Error	Swift Count Range	Official INEC Results
ACN	2.2%	0.23%	2.0% to 2.4%	2.2%
ANPP	42.8%	0.79%	42% to 43.6%	43.5%

CPC	7.5%	0.42%	7.1% to 7.9%	7.3%
PDP	46%	0.72%	45.3% to 46.7%	46.0%

Note: Swift Count variance based on a 95% confidence level

Oyo

Oyo: Swift Count Gubernatorial Election Estimates				
Political Party	Swift Count Estimate	Margin of Error	Swift Count Range	Official INEC Results
A	24.2%	0.73%	23.5% to 24.9%	24.5%
ACN	37.8%	0.83%	37.0% to 38.6%	37.4%
CPC	1.4%	0.08%	1.3% to 1.5%	1.4%
PDP	33.9%	1.06%	32.8% to 35.0%	34.4%

Note: Swift Count variance based on a 95% confidence level

Imo

We stated in our interim statement on April 30, 2011 that we were unable to verify the results of the Imo state gubernatorial elections because of the inconclusiveness of the polls. While Project 2011 Swift Count actually deployed to observe the accreditation, voting and counting processes of the rescheduled supplementary elections in the selected LGAs in the state, we could not conclusively verify the official results due to logistical and technical challenges. However, based on the reports received from our observers, Project 2011 Swift Count is confident that the overall outcomes of the Imo gubernatorial election reflected the wishes of the electorates.

Delta

Project 2011 Swift Count also could not confidently verify the accuracy of the Delta State gubernatorial election results because we were unable to observe the elections in 14% of our sampled polling units in the state. As we stated in our April 30 interim statement, the high levels of harassment and intimidation that our observers were subjected to in three (3) LGAs--Warri North, Warri South West, Warri South--did not allow us to receive data from the 57 sample points in these areas. As a result we are not in a position to confidently verify the credibility of the total results announced for Delta state.

Project 2011 Swift Count wishes to reassure the good people of this country that the projections for the presidential and the 4 gubernatorial elections were based on the

results as announced and/or posted by INEC officials at the polling units, prior to collation. Nigerians can be rest assured that their votes were counted and that the votes reflect the desire of majority of the voters. Project 2011Swift Count congratulates the winners and at the same time encourages those candidates who legitimately lost to concede defeat in the spirit of sportsmanship. Those dissatisfied with the results or outcomes still have the opportunity to resort to the election petition tribunals to seek redress. It is incumbent upon them to avoid instigating any acts of violence. They must take note that one of the strengths of any democratic system is that there will always be another election.

Commendations:

1. Project 2011 Swift Count commends and congratulates the Chair of INEC, Professor Attahiru Jega, for his sterling leadership qualities and the transparent manner he administered affairs of INEC during the elections. We believe that the INEC Chair has brought the yearning respect to the commission, not only in Nigeria but in the international community;
2. We also commend the entire leadership of INEC, its staff, the Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), and its adhoc staff for their commitment and dedication towards the electoral process;
3. In particular, Project 2011 Swift Count commends the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for the untiring efforts and contributions to democratic development in Nigeria. We regret the loss of NYSC members due to election violence and we commiserate with their families. While urging the authorities to apprehend and bring to justice those behind this deplorable acts of violence, Project 2011 Swift Count commends government for its program to rehabilitate the victims of these violent acts and also offer support to the families of the dead. Project 2011 Swift Count, however, recommends to government to go a step further by immortalizing those NYSC staff who lost their lives to demonstrate a recognition of their contributions to Nigeria's democracy;
4. Project 2011 Swift Count commends all political parties, security agencies, civic organizations, domestic and international observers for their contributions to credible and successful elections. Without all the stakeholders, joining hands with INEC, this country would not have pulled off this incredible election outcome;
5. We commend the civil society community and the media for your steadfastness and resilience in the defence of our democracy;

6. Project 2011 Swift Count commends international observer groups for staying the course and expressing faith in Nigeria's democratic process;
7. Finally, Project 2011 Swift Count commends the people of Nigeria for being patient and for their resolve to make democracy succeed in this country. Undaunted by the stream of violence in some parts of the country, millions of Nigerians went out on each election day to exercise their franchise and this alone demonstrated the desire of Nigerians to sustain the democratic process

Condemnations:

1. Project 2011 Swift Count unreservedly condemns the levels of violence that characterized the pre-election, election and post-election periods. The level of violence experienced, especially in the aftermath of the presidential polls in the northern part of Nigeria, has no place in a democracy. It is heartening that the government has instituted a 22-member commission of inquiry to investigate the causes of the post-election violence that occurred. Project 2011 Swift Count hopes that the commission will be diligent in its work and not only will perpetrators be brought to justice but also that the work of the commission will lead to the prevention of such violence in the future.
2. Project 2011 Swift Count condemns the significant levels of intimidation and harassment that were perpetrated against observers. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1789 guarantees the right of Nigerians to participate in the affairs of their country. *"Any person has the right to take part in the direction of the public affairs of his or her country; either directly or via freely elected representatives"*.

The article also establishes that free elections are the only legitimate basis for the authority of a government. It states thus *"The will of the people is the base of the power of the authorities, this WILL must be expressed by honest election which must take place periodically."*

These rights are also restated in the charter of the United Nations in 1945 and in the ECOWAS supplementary protocol on democracy and good governance 2001.

The acts of intimidation against accredited observers no doubt are appalling and could undermine citizens' engagement with the democratic process, as

they illustrate the level of desperation on the part of politicians and their associates.

3. We strongly condemn leaders of local communities, in particular local government chairmen, who by their actions and inactions deprived citizen groups, accredited by INEC, of their mandate to observe the elections. Local government chairmen are not INEC officials and are also not members of the security agencies. They should not take the law into their hands by doing things that they are not mandated to do.

We urge the relevant appropriate authorities, in particular the security agencies and INEC, to investigate these acts of violence, harassments and intimidations that were witnessed during the elections and bring perpetrators to justice as a deterrent measure. It is important that some people (culprits found compromising the integrity of the elections) are made to face the law so as to deter other would be violence perpetrators in future elections.

Recommendations:

The April 2011 general elections have come and gone. Based on our findings and the lessons from the April 2011 elections, Project 2011 Swift Count recommends the following:

A

Future voting procedures

- INEC should ensure that ballot papers include the names and pictures of candidates and not only the party symbol and party abbreviation.
- INEC should ensure that the required numbers of staff are present in polling stations throughout election day.
- INEC should ensure that voting booths are distributed in sufficient time to all polling stations and all polling staff are trained to erect them and fully implement all procedures designed to ensure secrecy of the vote.
- INEC should publish on its website, names and contact phones and addresses of all electoral officials both ad hoc and permanent

Future the election petition process

- The electoral act should be review in a way that all election-related disputes would be determined before certificate of return is handed to the winner or assumption of office of those elected.

- Consideration should therefore be given to amending the Constitution in order to provide a more realistic timeframe between the date of the election and the inauguration into office.
- New Electoral Act should enable voters, domestic observers or other election stakeholders to file election petitions based on their observations and findings.

Participation of women in the electoral process

- Political parties should establish effective policies to facilitate participation by female candidates in all elections. International support should be directed towards such efforts
- INEC on its own must make conscious efforts to ensure greater involvement of women in the election administration at all levels.

Independence of the judiciary

- New reform measures should be introduced to ensure that the authorities do not interfere in the judicial process. In addition, INEC in the discharge of its duty should continue to adhere to the rule of law and observe at all times all judicial declarations.

Security, Human Rights and Elections Policing

- Law enforcement agencies should strengthen their impartiality and capacity to police polling booths, materials, electoral officers and election materials. INEC should conduct regular and continuously review the voters register and protect the conduct of elections in an effective and credible manner throughout the country.
- INEC staff, political party agents, observers and other election stakeholders should receive appropriate security protection throughout the election process.

B

To INEC:

- Independent National Electoral Commission should allocate appropriate time and resources to election planning, staff capacity building, the voter registration process, the candidate selection process, data management, polling staff recruitment and training, voter and civic education and compliance mechanisms
- INEC should demonstrate democratic commitment to work with all

stakeholders to ensure peaceful and credible elections, working together with the security agencies and explore ways of ensuring that all accredited observers are able to observe elections in future without inhibitions.

- The right of domestic observers to observe the entire election process should be guaranteed by law.
- The Electoral Act should be amended to establish a clear procedure, including appropriate criteria, for approval or rejection of an application for accreditation. Accreditation for observers should be published and accessible for completion by observer institutions from the date that INEC announces the election timetable.
- Adequate visibility and accreditation materials should be printed by INEC and distributed to accredited organization with their accreditation circulated to all INEC offices and police formation
- INEC should address its logistical challenges. The voter registration exercise and the elections exposed INEC on this front. Careful and proper logistical planning hold the key to credible and legitimate elections on election days. It is important that INEC conducts a retrospective exercise to determine its weaknesses and finds ways to address it for the integrity of future elections; Conduct operations transparently and conduct outreach activities with political parties, domestic monitors and international observers, and security services.
- Create unhindered access to all aspects of the election process to political party, candidate agents, domestic election monitors and observers.
- Partner with the press to ensure that accurate information on the electoral process is provided to the public.
- Take all measures to ensure the accessibility of the voting process to marginalized groups.
- INEC should intensify its call for setting up of the electoral offences commission, recommended by Justice Muhammad Lawal Uwais-led electoral reforms committee, as part of its approach to address electoral violence. Such a commission should bring the Police administration on board to find ways of dealing with election-related violence that are of criminal in nature.
- Widespread **voter and civic education should be executed** by the State Independent Election Commission in collaboration with civil society organizations;
- Appointment into INEC should not be on the basis of party loyalty but ceded to distinguished persons with character and the will to serve, as only people of impeccable character and track record can uphold the ethics of elections with

integrity.

- In the administration of future elections, INEC should be unbundled of its various tasks by creating a party registration commission and an election crime commission.
- Finally, INEC should consider organizing a consultative post-election stakeholder conference to draw lessons from the just ended general elections. Such a forum should bring INEC leadership, political parties, civil society groups, particularly domestic observer groups, and security agencies to outline and articulate the things that worked well with a view to sustaining or improving on them as well as identifying the flaws that emerged from these elections and make appropriate recommendations for deepening the electoral reforms and process in Nigeria.

To political parties:

1. Even the playing field to ensure credible, domestic and peaceful elections by advocating for electoral and regulatory framework.
2. Take proactive actions to promote and participate in multi-stakeholder and inter-party dialogue platforms to ensure a transparent and inclusive electoral process.
3. Commit to peaceful actions during electoral periods, sign and enforce codes of conduct and educate party activists to honour their provisions.
4. Ensure that voter register is display at appropriate for people to contest and periods make claims.
5. Involve in issue-based campaign and politicking derive manifesto from the people and ensure that the documents serve the cause of the electorate.
6. Conduct democratic and transparent candidate selection processes.
7. Use the time between elections to recruit and educate members, and prepare women and youth leaders for positions of leadership, within party structures and as candidates for elected office.

For domestic and international observer groups:

1. Adhere to international standards and principles guiding their actions. Monitors and observers must be selected on the basis of competence and impartiality, and codes of conduct should be enforced for all involved in observation and monitoring efforts.
2. Endeavour to observe and report on all aspects of the electoral process,

including factors that affect the overall political environment.

3. Conduct activities in a fully impartial and transparent manner
4. Endeavour to coordinate, to the fullest extent possible, efforts between groups and within coalitions.
5. Pledge to work with all other stakeholders to ensure peaceful and credible elections

To security and military services:

1. Review and reinforce institutional mechanisms to ensure full impartiality in the conduct of official duties during the entire electoral process.
2. Play a discretion led and proactive roles in national, sub-national and local-level electoral coordinating bodies in order to maximize intra-government cooperation and coordination throughout electoral processes.
3. Maintain high standards of professionalism during electoral periods

To the media:

1. State owned and state controlled media must subscribe to and enforce codes of conduct prohibiting biased news or other coverage and must guarantee accurate, fair and equitable coverage of electoral contestants.
2. State owned and state controlled media must provide free (unpaid) access, without prior censorship, on an equitable basis for all electoral contestants across their distribution channels
3. State owned and state controlled media must provide robust voter education to ensure citizens know voter registration and polling day procedures.
4. Private media should adopt codes of conduct, ethical standards and professional guidelines requiring unbiased, accurate and equitable news coverage of political parties and electoral candidates.
5. State owned, state controlled and private media must assume responsibility for training journalists and media personnel within their establishments in order to cover elections accurately, effectively and professionally.

Conclusion

Project 2011 Swift Count reiterates its position, based on its findings, that the April 2011 general elections were credible and a marked departure from previous elections. The elections were neither perfect nor faultless; they revealed persistent challenges, including logistical problems and election-related violence. Nevertheless, the elections provided a genuine opportunity for citizens to exercise their right to vote and for their votes to count. The elections reversed the downward trend in our electoral processes and set a new benchmark for credible elections in Nigeria.

The outcomes of these elections should inspire Nigerians to deepen the discourse on electoral reforms aimed at a more transparent and credible electoral processes as well as legitimate outcomes. We, on our part, will continue to work with relevance stakeholders to ensure that our electoral processes conform to national and international standards.

Once again, Project 2011 Swift Count wishes to express its appreciation to all Nigerians, INEC, security agencies and civic groups for collaborating to ensure that the elections were generally credible.

We also thank our international partners, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) for providing the necessary technical assistance and funding to undertake this innovative domestic election observation exercise in Nigeria.

Finally, we commend our state coordinating committees (SCCs) in all the thirty-six (36) states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the Local Government Area (LGA) Supervisors for their hard work in ensuring that this innovative project succeeds. We also salute the courage, commitment and patriotism of thousands of our volunteered observers nationwide who indeed really own it and made this project possible even in midst of intimidation and harassment, and at the peril of their lives.

Thank You and God Bless Nigeria



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Learn more about Project 2011 Swift Count at www.pscnigeria.org

Project 2011 Swift Count

Project 2011 Swift Count is jointly carried out by the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Justice, Development and Peace/Caritas (JDPC), the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). This partnership of these four groups reflects the rich diversity of Nigeria; it brings together Christians and Muslims as well as other non-governmental organizations with citizen election observation and legal expertise. The primary objective of Project 2011 Swift Count is to help promote free, fair, peaceful, credible and legitimate elections in Nigeria that are conducted in accordance with international standards, including the "*Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organisations*", regional standards as well as the laws of our country.

