



FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

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Mid-day statement on election day for the 2008 Presidential Election – 30 October

Introduction

In order to provide oversight of today's Presidential election, the Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) and its civil society partners deployed monitors to nearly all of the 9320 polling stream in the country. These observers and 213 supervisors at the constituency, district and provincial level have been in contact with the FODEP information center in Lusaka. It is from these reports that FODEP issues its mid-day observations on the 2008 presidential election. FODEP is pleased to report that polling has been generally peaceful with no major incidents to report. FODEP applauds citizens and stakeholders for maintaining a peaceful environment and calls on all to continue to renounce violence.

Opening of Polls

FODEP is aware of a few scattered incidents of polling stations opening late across the country. However there doesn't appear to be any systemic issues with polling station opening. Also, once open, lines moved quickly; late opening does not appear to have significantly disenfranchised voters.

Observation

FODEP experienced some isolated difficulties in receiving observer accreditation cards from the ECZ, and this led to situations where FODEP and other observers missing accreditation cards were denied access to the polling station. The ECZ quickly intervened to resolve the majority of such issues. For this, FODEP thanks the ECZ for its efforts to preserve the right of citizens to observe their elections.

Party agents have generally behaved in a manner consistent with the Electoral Code of Conduct. FODEP also noted that some political parties failed to widely place agents, creating a situation where they were overtly absent from the majority of polling stations. FODEP recommends that in the future political parties should ensure that they have an agent at every station to avoid unwarranted allegations of rigging targeted at ECZ.

Voting

FODEP is aware of scattered issues in regards to the proper identification and verification of voters, either permitting ineligible individuals to vote or refusing eligible voters. Further, FODEP has noted instances of voters who had applied for replacement voter cards being unable to find them upon arrival at the polls, as is the procedure.

Turnout appeared to be relatively low around the country by mid-day. In general we haven't witnessed lines as long as those seen in the 2006 Election. It is our hope that the afternoon will see an increase in turnout.

FODEP's Continued Observation

FODEP is also undertaking a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT), The general purpose of the PVT is to verify the accuracy of the election results reported by electoral authorities as they are transmitted from the counting centres to the central levels of the election administration and if properly implemented, the technique helps to deter fraud by increasing the prospect that manipulation during the tabulation process will be discovered, suggest a true vote count when fraud is attempted and enhances confidence in and acceptance of, official results if they are consistent with the PVT.

Conclusion

FODEP encourages Zambians to continue to remain calm and espouse peace through the close of polls and the announcement of results. FODEP will continue to update Zambians on our observations of this election. Our next update is scheduled for 1600 hours on October 31st.

May God Bless Zambia!

Thank you all.

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