



## The Commonwealth

**Statement by HE John Mahama**

**Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group Missions to the Kenya Elections**

Since we arrived in the country on 31 July, our Group has met a cross section of interested parties in these elections, and heard about the preparations and concerns that could impinge on the credibility of the elections.

The coming election should be a time for Kenyans to be able to cast their votes freely and in peace. This crucial election will be a test of leadership. Much will rest on the shoulders of those who seek office as the world watches and assesses Kenya's democracy.

As the people of Kenya go to the polls on Tuesday, we would like to call upon all those involved in the electoral process to play their roles with due diligence to ensure that the process on Election Day, the counting, the announcement of results and events thereafter proceed smoothly and without incident. Leaders of parties, and those who are listened to in communities, should use their influence constructively as votes are counted, transmitted and reported.

We understand that, in all elections, unexpected events and issues of concern often emerge. The role of a leader in such circumstances is to allow the processes in place to work through from start to finish, to challenge only through the recognised channels and maintain a vision of a Kenya that emerges more united and able to take advantage of the opportunities this great country has to offer.

We appeal to everyone involved in the election process to respect the laws of the land and the Constitution, and to do Kenya, Africa and the Commonwealth proud by conducting a credible election that meets the standards to which the country has subscribed to.

We have been assured by all those we have met that they are indeed committed in good faith to ensuring that these elections will be conducted peacefully, and I therefore call upon all political party leaders and their supporters to show restraint and magnanimity as the results process unfolds in the days following the poll.

Democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights including the right to vote, and to choose leaders freely without intimidation and violence, are some of the core values and principles of the Commonwealth. There is no better occasion to uphold them than during elections. The people must be confident that their vote will count and that there will be freedom, peace and calm after voting.