

PRESS RELEASE

Port-au-Prince, 20 February 2016

For immediate release

Ongoing Engagement of Sectors Key to Success of Reconstituted Provisional Electoral Council (CEP)

The ParlAmericas Mission d'observation électorale en Haïti (MiOEH) calls for the incoming Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) to assume a strengthened outreach mandate that capitalizes on the unique skills and networks of commissioners drawn from sectors, to build confidence in the electoral process.

The Mission is encouraged that interim President Jocelerme Privert has called on religious, business, labour, civil society, human rights, women and media sectors to engage in consultations and nominate candidates to reconstitute the CEP. This represents another important step in ensuring that the February 6 political agreement between Haiti's executive and legislative branches leads to run-off elections on April 24, 2016.

The MiOEH urges sectors to demonstrate their commitment to the electoral process by undertaking open and inclusive consultations to nominate women and men with proven management and leadership skills that can build confidence in elections through the CEP. In addition, the MiOEH encourages sectors to maintain communication with each of their respective commissioners, while respecting the need for those commissioners to act autonomously in their duties as members of an independent body.

As part of its observation mission, the MiOEH is conducting consultations with key sectoral figures and with commissioners that each sector appointed to the outgoing CEP. Through these meetings, the mission has explored how the broad networks, diverse talents and unique experience of commissioners appointed through sectors can assist in building better public understanding about elections and the importance of electoral participation.

The Mission noted in its discussions that there is a strong commitment among all sectors to strengthen the credibility of the electoral process. In some cases, sectoral representatives indicated that they had productive, ongoing two-way communications with commissioners. Others conveyed the importance of clarifying the mandates and responsibilities of commissioners. There was consensus that incoming commissioners should engage in more strategic, practical, accessible and proactive communication with the media and key stakeholders such as political parties, candidates, civil society groups, and electors.

The MiOEH notes that Article 5 of the electoral decree requires the CEP to adopt all necessary measures to inform citizens about the electoral process. The decree further promotes transparency by requiring use of media and all other communication channels to publicize the activities of the CEP.

Outgoing commissioners also advised that new commissioners could benefit from more structured trainings to exercise informed judgment in oversight of professional election administrators and in their role as members of the National Electoral Complaints Bureau (BCEN). Noting the recommendations of the Independent

Electoral Evaluation Commission (CEEI) the MiOEH reinforces the importance of equipping all election administrators with not only rules of procedures, but guidelines on how to apply rules in a fair and consistent manner.

The MiOEH is encouraged that sectors are being asked to nominate a candidate from each gender group. This will allow the CEP to maintain gender balance and to ensure that decisions are taken in a way that benefits from the realities and experiences of both men and women and acknowledges that electoral processes affect women in different ways than men. In addition, the outreach efforts of the CEP are more likely to be successful if messengers reach all citizens.

“Finalizing the election process at the national and local levels is the surest path to enable Haiti’s democratic institutions to address the priorities of citizens in terms of economic growth, education, health and food security”, said Thomas Cormier, Chef de Mission of the MiOEH. “With a renewed focus on communication, the credibility and connectedness of Haiti’s sectors can ensure that the CEP can mobilize citizens to confidently participate in the upcoming elections.”

The MiOEH reaffirms its respect for the national sovereignty of Haiti and renews its commitment to continued observation of the electoral process within a broader mandate of support to democratic institution building and increasing women’s participation.

-30-

ParlAmericas – the network of the national legislatures of the Americas – serves as an independent forum for parliamentarians of the Americas committed to cooperative political dialogue and participation in the inter-American system.