

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Haiti: ParlAmericas MiOEH Appeals for the Completion of the Electoral Process

The ParlAmericas Mission d'observation électorale (MiOEH) reaffirms its mandate to observe the electoral process that began on August 9, 2015 to restore representation in Haiti's legislative institutions and to ensure a democratic transfer of executive power.

Despite challenges in the electoral process, the Mission notes that the October 25 elections have resulted in a multiparty national legislature, initiated the restoration of municipal councils throughout the country where more than 30% of women are being elected due to an obligatory quota, and confirmed two candidates for a runoff presidential election.

The MiOEH has noted the interruption in the electoral process announced by the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) on January 22 2016. The mission calls on sectoral and political representatives to continue efforts to swiftly reach a consensual, time-bound and inclusive agreement for the resumption and completion of the ongoing electoral process.

The Mission strongly urges the inclusion of women in the current discussions so they can share their valuable perspectives, knowledge and leadership to find a solution to the political impasse that resumes the electoral process. The mission stresses the importance of addressing declines in representation of women. It underlines with great concern that this is the first time in recent history that Haiti's Parliament has been sworn in without a single elected woman.

The CEP that is responsible for administering elections must be rendered operational as soon as possible with broad representation from key sectors to restore confidence and further implement recommendations by the Independent Electoral Evaluation Commission (CEEI) that were supported by a broad range of actors. The MiOEH notes the important steps already taken

to increase confidence by requiring mandataires to vote at polling stations where they are registered, and to clarify rules concerning accreditation of domestic observers.

The mission echoes calls heard by its 14 long term observers who have met with hundreds of citizens, candidates, political party and CSO representatives as well as CEP officials in all departments in strongly condemning acts of violence and intimidation and maintaining an environment that allows peaceful expression and association, which are enshrined in Haiti's constitution. It highlights testimonies shared with observers by women candidates and women's organizations that identified fear of violence as a critical barrier to political participation and empowerment.

"Haiti's democratic institutions belong to the Haitian people. We have witnessed Haitians across all walks of society working to support the electoral process and who have publicly recommitted to the importance of ensuring that the process reaches a conclusion," said ParlAmericas Chief of Mission Thomas Cormier. "The MiOEH highlights the importance of maintaining the current process and seeking solutions that promote transparency and demonstrate support for credible elections as the pathway for economic and social progress."

The mission and its observers express appreciation to election administrators, candidates and political parties, civil society groups and women's organizations in every department across the country for their consistent willingness to share perspectives. The mission also wishes to express its strong continual support to efforts by national organizations that observe elections in a non-partisan and objective manner. Their investment and direct engagement in support of the electoral process is crucial to instilling confidence in elections and strengthening electoral practices.

Completing the second round of presidential and remaining legislative elections will enable Haiti's elected officials to move forward in pursuing the economic and social priorities of the Haitian people.

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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.