PRELIMINARY DECLARATION: ACP Observation Mission to the Legislative elections held in Togo on 25 July 2013

At the invitation of the Government of the Togolese Republic, a short-term election observer mission of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States visited Lomé from 23 to 27 July to observe the legislative elections held on 25 July 2013.

The ACP Mission was led by H.E. Mr. Amadou DIOP, Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal (Africa) to Brussels and included H.E. Mr. Roy Mickey JOY, Ambassador of Vanuatu (Pacific), Mr. Josué PIERRE-LOUIS, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of Haiti (Caribbean) and Ms. Michèle Dominique RAYMOND, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Political Affairs and Human Development at the ACP Secretariat. It arrived in Lomé on 23 July 2013. The Mission's mandate was to observe the final preparations and the voting process to ensure that voting took place in free, fair, transparent and democratic conditions.

Among its pre-election activities, the Mission engaged in a briefing session with the Chairman of the National Independent Elections Commission (CENI). The Mission also met with the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Land Administration, Decentralisation and Local Government. Its members also exchanged views with other accredited regional and international election observer missions, including those of the African Union, ECOWAS and UEMOA, as well as with the Ambassador and Head of the European Union Delegation and the UN Resident Coordinator in Togo.

Based on exchanges and information obtained by the ACP Mission on the eve of the election, its members noted:

- a strong determination to organise credible, transparent and peaceful elections in the best conditions possible, with a view to putting an end to the cycle of violent elections;
- sound logistical preparation so as to guarantee reliable results acceptable to all concerned;
- a desire to see the elections conducted calmly and peacefully;
- a consensus by the Togolese political class on the electoral process;
- mobilisation of adequate resources to organise the elections.

The Mission commended the sacrifice made by the Togolese State to finance the elections and the election activities of the nine participating parties (1 party in power and 8 in opposition).

On election day, the Mission visited a few polling stations in Togo’s capital – Lomé - and other electoral districts in rural areas. The large number of people seen in most of the polling stations was a clear indication of a high voter turnout. The Mission witnessed, in particular, the opening and closing of the polling station in the urban district of KodjoviaKope at the Ecole Alliance, where it observed the proper conduct of the operations, including the counting process.

In all the stations visited, the Mission noted the availability of election material and equipment, as well as the strict adherence to procedure.

In most polling stations, representatives of rival political groups were present. Voting took place in a disciplined and calm manner in the polling stations that the Mission visited and adherence to procedure was confirmed by the party representatives questioned by the Mission.

In general, the Mission did not observe any illegal practices or irregularities in the polling stations visited, where security personnel maintained a discreet presence.

The ACP Mission was pleased at the calm that prevailed before, during and immediately following the election. Based on what it saw, the Mission holds the view that the electoral process took place in an orderly and democratic manner. It calls on all the stakeholders in the election to comply with the electoral laws to accept the results and to use legal means to resolve any disputes.

The day after the election, the ACP Observer Mission was granted an audience with the Head of State and discussed the political situation in Togo with other election observers. The Mission will compile its observations and recommendations in a comprehensive report to be examined by the ACP Committee of Ambassadors in Brussels prior to being submitted to the Togolese Government and all other stakeholders in the electoral process in Togo.

The ACP Mission urges the Togolese authorities to continue its efforts to consolidate the democratic which is already underway.

The Mission extends its sincere gratitude to the Togolese Head of State and the Government for all the facilities made available to them to ensure the smooth conduct of its activities. It also commends the organisers, national and international
observers, political players, polling agents, civil society, the media and anyone else who contributed in any way to the success of the election.

Done in Lomé, 26 July 2013

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Source URL: http://www.acp.int/content/preliminary-declaration-acp-observation-mission-legislative-elections-held-togo-25-july-2013

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