



National Steering Committee Members

Dafe Akpedeye (SAN)
1st Co-Chair

Mashood Erubami
2nd Co-Chair

Dr. Aisha Akanbi

Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi

Priscilla Achakpa

Rev. Fr. Bernard Asogo

Reuben James

Farida Sada Yusuf

Honourary Members

Olisa Agbakoba (SAN)

Prof. Bolanle Awe

Hajia Bilkisu (mni)

Ex Officio

Victor Agbogun
Project Manager

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
April 17, 2011

Voting for Presidential Election Proceeds Smoothly, Condemns Detaining of Observers

Project 2011 Swift Count, a nonpartisan effort by four groups representing the rich diversity of Nigerian society, reported today that, despite isolated incidents of intimidation, citizens were generally provided with a meaningful opportunity to exercise their right to vote and the election process improved over the National Assembly election held last week.

In an Interim Statement, Project Swift Count's National Steering Committee (NSC) said "These elections were not without problems – in particular isolated incidents of intimidation, violence, and illegal voting – but these did not undermine the overall credibility of the process."

However, Project 2011 Swift Count also condemned the detaining of accredited observers by security forces and other groups. "The Independent National Election Commission (INEC) and the security forces must take all necessary steps to ensure accredited observers have free access to polling units and collation centres," the statement said.

"We are extremely concerned about accredited observers being denied access to polling units. In several states, Project 2011 Swift Count observers were harassed and in some cases detained by security forces," stated Dafe Akpedeye (SAN), Project 2011 Swift Count 1st Co-Chair. "This is unacceptable."

Mashood Erubami, 2nd Co-Chair stated, "The Presidential elections are not yet concluded. Results are still being collated and INEC has yet to announce the official results. Project 2011 Swift Count calls upon all Nigerians to remain calm during this period. We will continue to observe the process and will provide independent verification of the official results as announce by INEC."

Highlights of the PSC findings include the following:

- Accredited observers faced significantly more challenges gaining access to polling units for the presidential election. Of utmost concern is the situation in Warri North and Warri South West LGAs in Delta state where Project 2011 Swift Count observers were denied access to area and detained by the police.

PROJECT 2011 SWIFTCOUNT

- INEC's logistics further improved from the National Assembly election. As of 7:30 am, observers at 42% of polling units reported that officials were present and ready for the presidential elections. This is an improvement over the 13% of polling units which were ready at the same time on Saturday April 2nd and 28% on Saturday April 9th.
- There were polling units where, contrary to INEC procedures, voters were accredited and voted at the same time. In addition, at more than a third of polling units the majority of voters did not remain at the polling unit after being accredited. Both of these conditions could undermine the safeguards put in place by INEC to prevent multiple voting.
- 14% of our observers reported that people were accredited to vote after accreditation closed. This is slightly higher than the 11% reported for the National Assembly election. This issue was of greatest concern in South South where 26% of observers reported people being accredited to vote after accreditation closed.
- Only 7% of our observers reported that polling officials did not post the official results at polling units as required by INEC. This is an improvement over the National Assembly elections when results were not posted at 20% of polling units.

Project 2011 Swift Count's Interim Statement is based on reports from a representative random sample of 1,468 polling units in 767 of the 774 local government areas. The polling units were chosen as representative of Nigeria, using established statistical principles.

The National Steering Committee commended the people of Nigeria on their determination to exercise the right to vote. "Even though the conduct of the National Assembly elections and the Presidential election give us reason for optimism, the conduct of the State elections is not guaranteed. All Nigerians must redouble their efforts to make them a success," the statement said.

Project 2011 Swift Count is a joint initiative of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN); Justice, Development and Peace/Caritas Nigeria (JDPC), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). Reflecting the rich diversity of Nigeria, the project brings together civic organizations and religious groups (Christian and Muslim) to promote free, fair, peaceful, credible and legitimate elections through non-partisan, independent citizen observation.



Dafe Akpedeye
1st Co-Chair



Mashood Erubami
2nd Co-Chair

###

For media inquiries please contact:

Muritala Abdul-Rasheed: Tel. +234 8033231849 Email media@pscnigeria.org

Chibuike Mgbeahuruike: Tel +234 7036024736

Learn more about Project 2011 Swift Count at www.pscnigeria.org