

THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (NEC) JOINED ECOWAS IN THE COMMISSIONING OF THE ECONEC SECRETARIAT IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE ON TUESDAY 16TH APRIL, 2013

The ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC), on Tuesday, 16th April, 2013 commissioned its secretariat in Freetown, Sierra Leone. ECONEC is a network of Electoral Commissions in the West African sub –region established in 2008, in Conakry, Guinea. ECONEC is currently chaired by Dr. Christiana Thorpe, Head of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) in Sierra Leone.

The objectives of ECONEC are to serve as a regional platform for the exchange of experience and expertise, enhance best practices among electoral commissions and also promote and assist Electoral Commissions’ capacity building effort.

The Commissioning ceremony was chaired by Commissioner Miatta French, of the National Electoral Commission, Sierra Leone. In her brief remarks, she reminded the audience of the role ECOWAS has played in promoting democracy and good governance in the West African sub- region. She particularly emphasized that the creation of ECONEC in 2008, was a clear manifestation of the determination of ECOWAS to create an avenue for further experience sharing among Electoral Management Bodies in the sub - region.



In his key- note address, the Vice President of ECOWAS, His Excellency Dr. Toga Gayema Mackintosh, underscored the fact that the commissioning of the ECONEC secretariat symbolizes, a giant step towards regional re-integration and cooperation, thus, a testimonial of the spirit of the ECOWAS family. The event, according to Dr. McIntosh, ‘...demonstrates the solidarity and good will of the 15 member states Electoral Management Bodies’.



Dr. Mackintosh further went on to express that the decision by NEC Sierra Leone to host the secretariat, has again ‘... demonstrated its highly rated generosity and commitment to the security and development of West Africa’. Dr. Mackintosh, further emphasized that the ECONEC secretariat will serve as a ‘... power house for the promotion and further strengthening of West Africa’s Democracy and that it will serve as an engine that will generate the necessary synergies among all stakeholders within the respective member states’.

In conclusion, the ECOWAS Vice President assured ECONEC that the ECOWAS Commission would give full support to the Secretariat to grow and to perform its task, so that, according to him, “...the West African sub region will be safe from all forms of electoral induced conflicts and bring sustainable developments to its people.”

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ebusu, assured the ECOWAS Commission and ECONEC of her government’s continued support to ECONEC activities in Sierra Leone. She expressed the hope that ECONEC would live up to the expectations of ECOWAS which is to serve as a pillar for experience sharing and best practice in the management of elections in the West African sub region.

The Official hoisting the ECONEC flag was done by Dr Christiana Thorpe (President of ECONEC and Chief Electoral Commissioner, NEC Sierra Leone).

ECONEC FLAG AND LOGO

The ECONEC Flag has a logo that is made up of a ballot box which is draped with the national flags of ECOWAS member states and supported by a pair of helping hands. The ballot box signifies the importance of elections in promoting democracy and good governance in the sub region and also ensures and encourages democratic compliance among member states.

