



**Pre-Election Statement on the 2023  
Mayoral and Chairmanship Election  
Friday, May 19 2023**  
Delivered at the Bakadaji Hotel, Kololi-Gambia

**Gambia Participates Election Observation Mission Pre-Election Statement**

**Introduction**

On Saturday, May 20, 2023, the Independent Electoral Commission of the Gambia will be conducting the Mayoral and Chairmanship elections across all the 1,555 polling stations in the Gambia. The elections hold great significance as they will play a pivotal role in determining those who emerge as Mayors and Chairpersons of the Seven (7) administrative regions in The Gambia overseeing 120 community wards in 53 constituencies, for the next five (5) years. Thus, each vote carries immense value and will be crucial in determining the ultimate candidate who will stir the affairs of the respective constituents in the next five years.

As The Gambia's largest non-partisan and independent movement of citizen observers, Gambia Participates will be providing systematic, accurate and timely information on the election day process. While IEC has expressed confidence in the state of its preparedness, Gambia Participates urges the commission not to overestimate its capacity nor underestimate potential challenges that could undermine the election. The voters in The Gambia and Gambia Participates expect that IEC and security agencies will deliver credible, peaceful, and conclusive elections bereft of challenges of election logistics, inconsistent application of electoral laws and guidelines, electoral violence and vote-buying.

Six (6) out of the Eighteen (18) registered political parties and in The Gambia are on the ballot, having fulfilled all conditions for candidates' nomination. A total of 29 candidates will be contesting in the elections with only 2 female candidates in the contest. This election will be determined by 962,157 registered voters, of which 57% are women and 57% are youth.

This briefing is the first in a series of three planned press conferences to be hosted by Gambia Participates for this election. We equally invite you to join us at the Gambia Participates Election Data Center, at Bakadaji on Saturday May 20, 2023 at 13:00 where Gambia Participate will share its Mid-day Statement on the opening of polls and commencement of the accreditation and voting. We invite you to join us again on Sunday May 21, 2023 at 12 noon where Gambia Participates will share its Post-election Statement on the conduct of the elections.

**Gambia Participates' Election Day Deployment**

For the 2023 Mayoral and Chairmanship Elections, Gambia Participates will mobilize more than 207 observers, including 154 stationary observers and 53 constituency supervisors who will serve as roving observers in all 7 Regions and 53 constituencies of The Gambia. Gambia Participates will employ a systematic approach to data collection and analysis using a

standardized checklist to gather information on the quality of the process from across all the regions and constituencies where the elections will take place. The comprehensive deployment for the election will allow Gambia Participates to provide timely and precise information on the process of voting, counting and announcement of results at the polling stations.

Gambia Participates is fully prepared to observe the elections on behalf of the people of The Gambia, to ensure the people's votes are accurately counted.

**Conclusion and recommendations:**

As the election day approaches, we call on the IEC to ensure prompt deployment of its personnel and election materials and ensure proper and timely communication with stakeholders on the election day process and plans to address challenges and as they happen to inspire citizens' confidence in the process.

Gambia Participates calls on the security agencies to ensure adequate and effective deployment of its personnel to all polling stations where the election is conducted and ensure that security personnel deployed complies with the code of conduct on election security. This includes professionalism in their conduct, arrest of electoral offenders and respect for the rights of citizens, media, and observers, including the right to freedom of movement on Election Day for duly accredited observers and media practitioners.

We urge political parties, candidates, and their supporters to ensure peaceful conduct on election day and refrain from vote-buying and compromising the secrecy of the ballot. We call on electorates to resist efforts to purchase their votes, to turn out in their numbers and vote according to their preferences on Saturday, May 20, and remain peaceful during the election.

Gambia Participates restates its commitment to the objective, non-partisan and credible observation of the election.

Thank you and God Bless the people of The Gambia!

**Marr Nyang**



**Executive Director**  
Gambia Participates