



## **CENTRE FOR WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE**

### **STATEMENT OF THE CEWIGO OBSERVER TEAM ON THE PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016**

Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO) was one of the civil society organizations that set out to observe the Uganda general elections scheduled for February 2016. The cardinal purpose of holding regular elections is to promote democracy and the rule of law. Any elections must be able to meet minimum requirements and stakeholder expectations as well as established international standards.

CEWIGO's observation work was based on the Electoral laws and Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, among other regional and international election instruments. The principles of impartiality, neutrality, comprehensiveness, transparency, inclusiveness and objectivity guided the CEWIGO Observer Team. CEWIGO deployed 7 observers in Kampala, Wakiso, Kalungu, Mbarara and Ibanda districts where they observed women's participation during the electoral process including voting, counting and declaration of results for the position of president and Member of Parliament (Woman Member of Parliament and Direct Member of Parliament) in the said districts. The observers visited 24 polling stations.

The CEWIGO Observer Team noted the following:

- Polling officials followed voting procedures consistently and voting proceeded efficiently under the scrutiny of agents for political parties and candidates. Safeguards including the use of indelible ink were used to prevent multiple voting.
- The sick, pregnant, medical personnel, visually impaired and disabled persons were given first priority in the voting process in most polling stations except in one particular polling station in Kalungu where this did not happen.
- Out of the eight presidential candidates, one was a woman candidate who scored very low at most of the polling stations.
- Generally women voter turnout and overall women participation at different polling stations was good. There was 65% voter turnout at the polling station observed.
- 50% of women participated as polling assistants, presiding officers and party agents. However many of the presiding officers and party agents were male.
- There were fewer women contesting for the position of Direct Member of Parliament and even then they secured fewer votes compared to men. In Wakiso district it was 1 woman against 7 men while in Nakawa it was one woman against 7 men. Both women did not win.

- There was at least one police officer at each polling station that helped in securing the electoral environment and the voting process. In some areas, there were more police officers. However, many of the officers were men, although women police officers also featured prominently in some polling stations.
- Polling stations in areas where CEWIGO observed were adequate and conveniently located in public places that were easily accessible to the voters. However, some areas were gazetted with more than 2 polling stations for example at church and school premises.
- In some areas in Wakiso and Kampala, Voting materials were delivered quite late. This angered the voters who were waiting under the scorching sun. For instance in Gaba Market Areas Polling Station, the late arrival of materials almost sparked violence when some of the voters grabbed the ballot paper box and run away with it. This incident resulted in postponement of voting in that area to the next day.
- No incidents of violence, intimidation, undue influence, coercion, bribery or any other unfair inducements were witnessed by the team.
- The results of the vote counting were duly recorded in the official results declaration forms and copies of the results were provided to all party and candidates' representatives.
- The electoral officials did not seem to know what to do in some instances indicating that they may not have been adequately trained. For instance, some of the officials seemed not to know how to use the Biometric Voter Verification system (BVVS) well.

We wish to congratulate Ugandans for taking part in the general elections 2016. We are aware that some voters may not have had their preferred candidates win. We urge all those not satisfied with the outcomes of the elections to follow the legal procedures provided under the electoral laws.

**Accredited Observer team, Centre for Women in Governance**