



2025 Gabon Presidential Election

**Arrival Statement by H.E. Danny Faure,
former President of Seychelles
Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group**

07 April Libreville, Gabon

Gabon's presidential election being held on 12 April 2025 will mark a significant milestone in the country's transition to inclusive democracy and will shape the course of governance in the country.

On 27 March, five candidates contesting the presidential election signed a Voluntary Code of Conduct. Their pledge to uphold principles of peace, integrity, and respect for democratic institutions during the electoral period, facilitated by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), is commendable.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Gabonese authorities in organising this election and undertaking other initiatives, such as the national inclusive dialogue, as part of a series of programmes aimed at strengthening the country's commitment towards participatory democracy. The November 2024 referendum, in which citizens overwhelmingly voted for a new constitution, marked another significant milestone in Gabon's democracy, which the Commonwealth was present to witness.

A Commonwealth Expert Team (CET) was deployed to Gabon to observe the Constitutional Referendum. The team noted both the positive outcomes from the referendum and highlighted recommended areas for improvement. The referendum also marked our first observation process since Gabon joined the Commonwealth family in 2022 and forms part of the Commonwealth's larger commitment to walk with Gabon as it continues through its transition journey.

The Commonwealth is here to reaffirm its solidarity with Gabon and re-assure its people of its support.

I therefore, consider it a great honour and privilege to have been asked to lead the Commonwealth Observer Group to Gabon's 2025 Presidential Election.

I am grateful to be joined by seven other experts selected from across the Commonwealth. They bring together a diversity of experience, in the fields of electoral management, law, civil society, politics, human rights, and the media, amongst others.

In keeping with the Commonwealth methodology on election observation, this Group was deployed by the Secretary-General, following an invitation from the Government of Gabon.

The Group has now assembled in Libreville and will commence their stakeholder briefings.

We will be meeting numerous stakeholders, including, political parties, the police, civil society groups, citizen observer groups, the media, domestic and regional observers and the diplomatic corps.

Our group of experienced election observers will be assessing the electoral process against international standards and Commonwealth values.

Our mandate, as set out in the Commonwealth's 'Revised Guidelines' for election observation, is to observe and evaluate the pre-election environment, polling day activities and the post-election period. We will consider whether conditions exist for a credible, transparent, and inclusive election, including whether there is a level playing field for candidates; whether public media has been impartial; whether the administration of the electoral process has been transparent; and whether the rule of law has been adhered to.

Our Group has no executive role; its function is not to supervise but to observe the process as a whole and to make recommendations accordingly.

From 10 April, we will deploy our observers in small teams to different parts of the country to observe electoral preparations and meet with local stakeholders in their respective locations.

On election day, which is 12 April, our Group will observe the opening, voting, closing, counting and the results management processes.

Following the election, our Group will issue a preliminary statement on 14 April. The statement will assess whether the election was conducted in accordance with the standards to which Gabon has committed itself and consider whether the administration of the election aligns with international good practice.

After that, the Group will compile a first draft of its final report which will be prepared in-country, with the report submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General Hon Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey. It will then be shared with the Government of Gabon, relevant stakeholders and the public.

As we observe the electoral process, we encourage all stakeholders to work together to promote peaceful, credible, and inclusive election for the people of Gabon.

Thank you.

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