

The East African Community Election Observer Mission to the Uganda General Election slated for Thursday, 14 January, 2021 has been formally launched.

Speaking during the launch of the mission at a Kampala hotel, the Head of the Mission, Domitien Ndayizeye, who is also a former president of the Republic of Burundi, said that the Community attaches great importance to the promotion of democracy, which will in turn guarantee political stability in the entire region.

“Further to the invitation of the Electoral Commission of Uganda, the EAC is deploying an Election Observation Mission to the General Election in the Republic of Uganda. The mission will observe the presidential and parliamentary elections,” said Ndayizeye.

“EAC believes that regional observation can play a critically important supportive role that would enhance the credibility of the elections, reinforce the work of domestic observer groups and increase public confidence in the entire electoral process,” he added.

The Head of Mission said that the mission aims at contributing to strengthening political accountability amongst political actors and the Government of Uganda in addition to providing an opportunity for other EAC Partner States to share experiences on election management with a view to learning from each other and sharing best practices.

He said that the mission was in line with Article 3 (3) of the Treaty for Establishment of the EAC, which requires Partner States to adhere to the universally acceptable principles of good governance, human rights and social justice.

H.E. Ndayizeye said that in its assessment of the electoral process, the mission would be guided by the democratic principles and values outlined in the African Charter for Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the EAC Principles for Election Observation and Evaluation.

The mission comprises 74 observers and support staff drawn from the East African Legislative Assembly, East African Court of Justice, EAC Secretariat and the Electoral Management bodies, Ministries of EAC Affairs and Human Rights Commissions of the EAC Partner States.

The team that will undergo contextual training ahead of field deployment and will

be deployed equitably to the various parts of the country on 12th January, 2021.

Also present at the launch ceremony were the Deputy Head of Mission, Dr. Oburu Oginga, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote and the Mission Coordinator, Mr. Charles Njoroge.

The objectives of the Mission are to:

- Observe the electoral process and to offer a balance and informed assessment of the elections;
- Create public confidence in the electoral processes by encouraging the voters and other stakeholders to participate freely in an environment that promotes competition and tolerance without intimidation and violence;
- Identify the challenges, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths that can be harnessed into best practices for the region through peer learning by the Electoral Management Bodies;
- Assess the legitimacy of the electoral processes and outcome in accordance with internationally accepted standards, and;
- Make recommendations for strengthening of electoral processes for the benefit of not only the Republic of Uganda but for the EAC region as a whole. (End).