

Monrovia, Liberia, 13 October 13 (Infosplusgabon) - The 1995 FIFA World Player of the Year George Weah has maintained an early lead in Liberia's 10 October presidential election garnering 39.6% of the preliminary votes announced.

The figures come from 33.71% (547,965) votes processed nationally, the National Elections Commission (NEC) announced on Friday.

Weah, 51, stood on the ticket of Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC).

Joseph Nyuma Boakai, incumbent vice president and candidate of the ruling Unity Party (UP), is second with 31.1 per cent.

Charles Walker Brumskine of the Liberty Party (LP) is third with 9.3%; Alexander B. Cummings of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) is fourth with 6.7%; Prince Yormie Johnson is lying fifth with 4.8% while the only female candidate, Madella Cooper is eighth with 0.8% of votes processed.

There were 20 candidates from 17 parties and three independent candidates. The winner should have more than 50 per cent of the valid votes cast or there will be a runoff next month.

Jerome G. Korkoya, NEC Chairman, told a press briefing on Thursday that these were "the only official results" from the poll.

"The Commission asks all other organizations to refrain from announcing anything other than the official results released. Candidates and political parties should also be patient and await the official results and not rush to premature conclusions."

Korkoya said the Commission was committed to the timely release of the results, but this could not be done at the expense of accuracy.

"Please do not report results that are not verified by the Commission. This can lead to problems and expectations that cannot be met. It is important for all to be responsible at this point. This includes the media," he added.

Korkoya also asked any person or party that had a complaint to use the established legal channels, saying "our complaints process will investigate thoroughly any complaints and we ask aggrieved parties to submit evidence to support their claims. We also call on all parties to be responsible in any allegations they make".

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