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ALNEF STATEMENT ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN DRC

The African Left Networking Forum welcomes the results of the presidential and legislative elections held on the 28th of November 2011 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The ALNEF notes with satisfaction that the Independent National Electoral Commission succeeded in organizing those elections in a very short period of time and in very difficult conditions.

By so doing, the Electoral Commission avoided a crisis of legitimacy that would have arisen from a failure to hold them before the end of the constitutional presidential term scheduled for December 6, 2011. Such a situation would have surely reignited instability in the country.

The ALNEF commends the Republic of South Africa, the People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of Congo for the logistical support they granted to the DRC government. The ALNEF also acknowledges the exceptional efforts made by the government of DRC itself which allowed them to finance the whole exercise by their own means.

However, the ALNEF is aware that a number of factors played a negative role on the whole electoral process and negatively impacted its outcome.

The organic law governing the seven-member Independent National Electoral Commission was adopted in July 2010. The four members of the commission from the majority were appointed in March 2011 while those appointed by the opposition were agreed on in May 2011, respectively eight and six months before the polls. The timeline of the polls was adopted in June 2011.

DRC is an immense country of 2,3 million sq. km covered of forests and traversed by numerous rivers with barely no reliable communication infrastructures. A huge section of the electorate is illiterate. For the

legislative elections, 14,000 candidates out of 18,000 competing for only 500 seats were registered the last day of schedule making the verification process very complicated.

Hundreds of political parties and more than 6,000 lists of candidates took part in the race for Member of Parliament in 169 constituencies making ballot papers very difficult to read for voters and the compilation of results almost impossible for poorly prepared, generally under-educated and untrained electoral officials.

A couple of months before the polls, the EU refused to fulfill its funding pledges while suppliers of electoral materials and equipments declared themselves unable to meet the agreed deadlines.

Poverty hit the majority of the citizens while at the same time negative practices such as corruption, individualism and tribalism inherited from the former reactionary regime are still common in the Congolese society.

Production of goods and services is in a standstill in most of sector of the Congolese economy. As a result, the society is divided between a tiny predatory bourgeoisie at one end and a huge peasantry at the other end with between those two classes an embryonic proletariat largely composed of miners located in the South Eastern part of the country, a large pauperized middle class and millions of unemployed citizens concentrated in the Capital City, Kinshasa. All these factors combined pull down the level of class or political consciousness.

Defense and security forces remain largely fragmented, under-equipped, under-trained and poorly paid as a consequence of proxy wars and imperialist aggressions that tore that country apart since the overthrow of the Congolese first democratically elected government led by Patrice Emery Lumumba, in September 1960.

Left and progressive forces are embryonic and fragmented while reactionary forces with the support of imperialist powers continue to draw the country back to the dark days of DRC history.

The ALNEF considers that despite the difficulties encountered in this electoral process, the results made public by the Independent National Electoral Commission reflect the current general level of political and economic development of the Congolese society.

The ALNEF shares the view that there were numerous malpractices that need to be addressed decisively. Nevertheless, the ALNEF exhorts all stakeholders to use only legal and peaceful means in seeking redress whenever and wherever they feel their rights were violated.

The ALNEF encourages left and progressive forces within the Congolese society to unite around the principles of struggle against imperialism, tribalism, individualism and corruption and for the defense of the interests of the poor as they strive for the reconstruction of national economy. Unity of progressive and left forces is needed to defeat neocolonial forces in DRC.

The ALNEF Secretariat urges ALNEF members to continue to provide support on a bilateral level to the left and progressive forces in DRC.

The ALNEF condemns any attempts through negotiations or otherwise by Western imperialist powers to impose upon the Congolese people a clique of predators and reactionaries some of whom are responsible of the tragedies the DRC went through during the past five decades.

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For the ALNEF Secretariat

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