



FUTA NEWS

INEC CHAIRMAN SPEAKS ON RE-STRUCTURING AND CREATION OF NEW POLLING UNITS

Professor Attahiru Jega, Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has called on Nigerians to set aside primordial sentiments and view the forth coming electoral process with dispassion and patriotism. Jega made this call at a press conference specifically called to address issues surrounding the restructuring and creation of new polling units by the Commission.

Jega who urged the nation to take into account the lofty objectives the restructuring and creation of new polling units intend to achieve explained that the commission had recently come under unjustified criticism regarding its decision to sanitize the polling units' structure ahead of the 2015 general election. He said "the criticism has centered largely on an alleged conspiracy theory that the commission has done a disproportional distribution of the polling units across Nigeria under the new arrangement, which is aimed at foisting the dominance of one section of the country over the others for political advantage".

He emphasized that INEC's decision to re-configure the structure of polling units as well as create additional ones is driven by collective aspirations by Nigerians to reform and improve upon the electoral process for free, fair, peaceful and credible elections in 2015 and beyond, stressing that there is no sectional or parochial agenda in the decision.

Jega explained further that the basic aim of the restructuring and creation of additional polling units is to ease the access of voters to the ballot box by decongesting over-crowded polling units, locating polling units within commuting distances, relocating polling units from the front of private houses and other unsuitable places, locating polling units inside classrooms and other suitable enclosures in line with international best practices, splitting large polling units and creating additional polling units to cater for the splitting large polling units and new settlements.

He reiterated that the current polling units structure which was created in 1996 and had serviced four general elections required restructuring and expansion following the nation's exponential growth in population and demographic shift resulting from new settlements in major urban areas. In his words therefore, "it is imperative for the commission to re-configure and create additional polling units, if we are to improve on the conduct of elections and make 2015 better than 2011".

However, the commission has not begun the creation of the additional polling units. State officials are expected to have used the maps provided in the approved framework and guidelines and propose new polling unit sites for each state before the creation commences.