



ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION FINAL REPORT

Organization of
American States

GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN GUYANA NOVEMBER 28, 2011

Secretariat for Political Affairs
Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation

Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs)
Organization of American States (OAS)



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OAS Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Final report of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the General and Regional Elections in the Republic of Guyana : November 28, 2011 / [Prepared by the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation].

p. ; cm. (Electoral Observations in the Americas series, no. 77) ; (OEA/Ser.D/XX SG/DCOE/II.77) ; (OEA/Ser.G CP/doc.4800/12)

ISBN 978-0-8270-5930-6

1. Elections--Guyana. 2. Election monitoring--Guyana. I. Organization of American States. Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation. II. Series. III. Series: OEA/Ser.G CP/doc.4800/12.

OEA/Ser.D/XX SG/DCOE/II.77

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 23, 2011 the Government of the Republic of Guyana formally invited the Organization of American States to observe the 2011 General and Regional Elections in Guyana. The Secretary General accepted the invitation, and on November 28, 2011 the citizens of Guyana went to the polls to elect members of 10 regional councils, 65 National Assembly representatives and their President. This was the third time that the OAS had observed elections in Guyana, following the deployment of missions in 2001 and 2006.

The OAS Electoral Observation Mission deployed by the General Secretariat consisted of 25 observers from a total of 14 countries: 12 member states (Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, the United States of America and Venezuela) and two observer nations (France and the United Kingdom). The Mission was installed in Guyana on November 20th, and international observers were deployed the week prior to the elections. On Election Day, observers were present in nine of the country's 10 administrative regions, with visits made to over 13% of polling stations. The Mission maintained a 24 hour presence in the tabulation center until the scheduled declaration of results, and departed Guyana on December 2nd, following the final declaration.

In the pre-electoral period, the Mission observed that the campaign was characterized by a perception of limited differentiation between the state and the governing party in terms of access to media and campaign finance for

political contenders. While the voting process was generally smooth, several late changes to the process, particularly changes in polling station locations, led to some voter confusion. Nonetheless, the significant efforts made by the Guyanese Electoral Commission (GECOM) to execute an overall inclusive and clean electoral process were in evidence on election day, as was the high level of training and dedication exhibited by GECOM staff in the polling centers. Following the close of the polls, the vote counting and transmission process lasted for three days before the official declaration of results and was characterized by a lack of uniform procedures.

Regarding the results of the 2011 General Elections, the incumbent People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) won 48.6% of the total valid votes, ushering in a fifth consecutive term for the PPP/C government. Mr. Donald Ramotar was elected president. The PPP/C obtained a total of 32 of the 65 seats in the National Assembly while the combined opposition parties won the majority of seats, resulting in the first minority government in Guyanese history. For the opposition, A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) received 26 seats with 40.8% of the total vote, the Alliance for Change (AFC) won 7 seats with 10.3%, and The United Force won 0.3% of the vote.

The OAS Electoral Observation Mission would like to express its gratitude to the Governments of Argentina, Chile, Serbia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America along with Elections Canada for providing contributions to this EOM.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS/EOMS)

OAS Electoral Observation Missions (OAS/EOMs) constitute a key instrument in the defense and promotion of democracy in the continent. They help guarantee the integrity, impartiality, and accountability of numerous electoral processes and strengthen the credibility of democratic institutions in Member States.

The presence of an OAS/EOM represents the solidarity and support of the Inter-American community towards the efforts undertaken by democratic institutions in states that organize and administer their own electoral processes. OAS Missions promote the recognition of political rights, particularly the right to suffrage, as the legitimate expression of the opportunity of every citizen to elect representatives and to be elected in an inclusive and free manner. OAS/EOMs also promote respect for the political will of the people as expressed through the ballot box.

Since 2007, the OAS has refined its election observation methodology, based on key documents of the Inter-American and International Systems, such as the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers. The Inter-American Democratic Charter emphasizes the importance of observing the diverse phases of an electoral process, as well as the need to carry out EOMs that are conducted in an “objective, impartial, and transparent manner and with the appropriate technical expertise.” The Declaration of Principles emphasizes the potential of international electoral observation to “enhance the integrity level of electoral processes, by deterring and exposing irregularities and fraud and by providing recommendations for improving electoral processes.”

Since 1962, the OAS has observed more than 180 electoral processes in the Hemisphere, though most of these initiatives have been undertaken within the last 20 years. During this time, the OAS has observed many different types of elections –always as requested by its Member States. These include general, presidential, parliamentary, and municipal elections, referenda, signature validation and collection processes, as well as primary elections within political parties.

B. ORGANIZATION AND NATURE OF THE MISSION

In an exchange of correspondence beginning in June 2011, the Government of the Republic of Guyana invited the Organization of American States to field an Electoral Observation Mission to observe the General and Regional Elections due to take place in the fourth quarter of 2011. The OAS responded positively to this request and set in motion preparations for an Electoral Observation Mission to observe the final days of campaigning, the conduct of the poll for the General Elections, the counting of ballots, and the immediate post-election process. Prior to Election Day, the OAS Mission signed an Agreement of Privileges and Immunities with the Government of Guyana as well as an Agreement on Observation Procedures with the Guyana Elections Commission. This was the third OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Guyana.

The EOM Core Group comprised specialists in the areas of electoral organization, logistics, political analysis, gender analysis and media, as well as a legal advisor. Regional coordinators and international observers were deployed on November 26th to the following areas: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, Region 6, Region 7, Region 9 and Region 10. The Mission left Guyana on December 2, 2011.

The Mission fielded 25 observers from 12 OAS Member States (Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, the United States of America and Venezuela) and from two OAS observer nations (France and the United Kingdom). In terms of gender, 48% of mission members were male and 52% were female.

C. METHODOLOGY TO INCORPORATE A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

During this Mission, the OAS Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) carried out a pilot of the project to incorporate a gender perspective into OAS Electoral Observation Missions. The Guyana pilot was the first opportunity for the methodology to be implemented in a Caribbean state. This methodology aims to mainstream the gender perspective through a systematic analysis of the equal participation of men and women at every level of the electoral process: as voters; as candidates for national and local elections; as leaders in State institutions; within electoral organisms; and within political party structures. The objective of the methodology is to identify obstacles

that impede the full political participation of men and women within the context of the electoral process that is observed.

A significant data source were the *in situ* interviews conducted by the gender team with government officials, academic institutions and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups. Consistent with the goal of mainstreaming the gender perspective in every aspect of the Mission's work, data gleaned from the gender methodology is incorporated in the applicable substantive sections throughout this report.

CHAPTER II. POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL ORGANIZATION

A. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Republic of Guyana is an independent semi-presidential parliamentary republic and member of the Commonwealth of Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The head of state is the President, a position which is elected indirectly. Prior to any electoral process, each party designates a leader who becomes president if that party wins the most seats in the National Assembly. The President appoints and supervises the Prime Minister as well as the rest of the Cabinet. The Prime Minister and the Ministers are required to be members of the National Assembly.

The Constitution of Guyana provides for a 65 seat unicameral National Assembly in which all members serve five-year terms. Twenty-five members are directly elected from the ten geographic constituencies. The remaining 40 are elected from a national list, colloquially called the 'top-up' list, based on the principle of proportional representation. Any party contesting seats for the National Assembly must nominate candidates in at least six geographic constituencies, or alternatively for at least 13 of the 25 national constituency seats. Parties that do not field the requisite number of candidates are not allowed to participate in the electoral process.

Guyana's gender quota states that one-third of the candidates validly nominated must be women. Furthermore, *no more than 20% of the geographic constituency lists of any party can be all-male*. Parties supply Geographic Constituency Lists of candidates and a separate National Top-Up List (a candidate may appear on one of the former and also on the latter). Parties also designate a leader, who will become President if that party receives the largest number of votes.

Guyana's electoral system operates with ten geographical constituencies, which coincide with its ten administrative regions. The distribution of seats contested in each constituency is as follows:

Region	Description	Number of Seats
Region 1	Barima-Waini	2
Region 2	Pomeroon – Supenaam	2
Region 3	Essequibo Islands – West Demerara	3
Region 4	Demerara – Mahaica	7
Region 5	Mahaica – Berbice	2
Region 6	East Berbice – Corentyne	3
Region 7	Mazuruni – Cuyuni	2
Region 8	Potaro – Siparuni	1
Region 9	Upper Essequibo – Upper Takatu	1
Region 10	Upper Demerara – Berbice	2

Source: GECOM, Gazetted Results of the 2011 General and Regional Elections

In Guyana voters mark the ballot for a party, not a named candidate. The number of candidates elected, both in each constituency and from the national PR list, is determined by the votes for that particular party. As a result, parliamentarians are not directly elected to represent specific constituencies. In fact, the ballots marked by voters do not indicate the names of any candidates. Political parties retain almost complete discretion over the selection of which candidates from the list will assume office. Unlike other countries in the region, the order in which candidates are placed on party lists does not relate to their election.

This electoral system has the potential to severely weaken the effectiveness of the gender quota. As a result, the number of women incorporated in candidate lists is rendered virtually irrelevant by a practice in which party leaders have discretion over which candidates gain seats in the assembly.

Nonetheless, since the passage of the quota in 1996, female representation in parliament has markedly increased: from 12 members (18.5%) in 1992 to 20 members (30.7%) in 2009. Prior to the 2011 electoral process, 21 out of the 70 members of the National Assembly (30%) were women.

Although the leader of the party that wins the most votes becomes President, the combination of Guyana's electoral arrangements and its multi-party system allows for the possibility of a mixed government, in which the Executive does not enjoy a parliamentary majority.

There are five additional non-elected members of the National Assembly: three non-elected ministers, one non-elected parliamentary secretary and the Speaker. A maximum of four non-elected ministers and two non-elected parliamentary secretaries may sit in the National Assembly at any given time. If the Speaker is not an elected member, he or she becomes a member of the National Assembly by virtue of holding the office of Speaker. The National Assembly may thus have up to 72 members at one time. The President has the authority to dissolve the Assembly, after which an election must be held within three months.

Political Parties

Guyana's population of over 754,000¹ is diverse; the three largest ethnic groups are the Indo-Guyanese (43.5%), the Afro-Guyanese (30.2%), who constitute the majority urban population, and those of mixed origin (16.7%) who live in the country's interior and are divided into a number of different groups. More than 90% of the population lives along the coastal strip.

Historically, political party support has roughly corresponded to the ethnic makeup of the country: Afro-Guyanese typically vote for the main opposition People's National Congress (PNC), while Indo-Guyanese tend to support the ruling People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C). The Alliance for Change (AFC) is seen as a mixed race party, whose avowed goals include the celebration of ethnic diversity and the unleashing of the energies of all people "regardless of race, class, religion, or gender."² The Amerindian vote is actively courted by all parties.

In the 2006 elections, the PPP garnered over 54% of the vote and 36 seats in the National Assembly while the PNC managed 34% and 21 seats. Prior to the 2011 elections, three smaller parties or alliances were represented in the National Assembly, the AFC, the Guyana Action Party/Rise Organize and Rebuild (GAP/ROAR) and The United Force (TUF). It is typical that the party ticket is split between the two dominant ethnic groups in Guyana; i.e. the Presidential candidate is Afro-Guyanese while the Prime Ministerial candidate will be Indo-Guyanese, or vice versa. All of the major parties that contested the 2011 elections continued with this custom.

The following four parties and alliances contested the 2011 general elections:

A Partnership for National Unity (APNU)

Symbol:



The APNU was formed on June 24, 2011 as a political alliance between major opposition party PNC and three smaller parties: the Guyana Action Party (GAP), the National Front Alliance (NFA) and the Working People's Alliance (WPA). The PNC, along with the PPP/C is one of the two largest political parties in Guyana. The PNC formed in 1957 after a split between leader Forbes Burnham and Guyanese "founding father" Cheddi Jagan, who ruled Guyana from independence in 1966 until 1992.

Alliance For Change (AFC)

Symbol:



1. World Bank, World Development Indicators 2010

2. Alliance for Change, Action Plan for Guyana (2nd Edition), available at <http://afcgyana.com/afcnew/wp-content/uploads/ap2web.pdf>

The AFC was formed in 2005 by three parliamentarians who had split from other parties: Raphael Trotman of the PNC, Khemraj Ramjattan of the PPP/C and Sheila Holder of the WPA. At the 2006 parliamentary elections, the AFC received 8.1% of the vote and won 5 of the 65 seats, becoming the third largest political force in Guyana. The AFC party platform includes making race a less important factor in Guyanese politics and reform of the political system.

People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)

Symbol:



The PPP/C, founded in 1950, was the first mass party in Guyana and is the country's oldest active party. Initially supported by a multi-ethnic base of workers and intellectuals and led by Cheddi Jagan until his death in 1997, the party won its first elections in 1953. Before the 1992 elections, the PPP entered an alliance with a coalition of prominent business and other leaders which became the "Civic" wing of the party. The alliance was victorious and the PPP/C has held power since that time.

The United Force (TUF)

Symbol:



The TUF is a conservative political party, whose main platforms include a revision of the tax system and the promotion of a business-friendly free market economy. Though the TUF first contested elections in 1964 (where it won seven seats), it lost support in the 1970s. It has consistently won one seat in all elections between 1992 and 2006.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The provisions governing the conduct and procedure of national elections are principally found in the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the Constitution (Amendment) Act, and in the Representation of the People Act.³

The Constitution and the Constitution (Amendment) Act contain general provisions regarding qualifications for electors, secrecy of the ballot, the timing of elections, the rules establishing the system of proportional representation for the election of members of the National Assembly and the President, and the establishment of and rules governing the Elections Commission.

The Representation of the People Act contains detailed provisions regarding lists of candidates, election agents, entitlement to vote, preparations for the poll, non-resident electors, the place, time, and conduct of the poll, the counting of votes and ascertainment of election results, election expenses, and illegal practices and election offences. According to this act, every person age 18 and above may vote in elections if s/he is either 1) a citizen of Guyana or 2) a Commonwealth citizen domiciled and resident in Guyana for one year or more. Only those whose names are listed on the Official List of Electors are eligible to vote. According to the Representation of the People Act, political parties are not permitted to engage in campaign activities within 200 yards of any polling station on Election Day.

Political parties do not have to register with the Guyana Elections Commission. In order to be eligible as a candidate for legislative elections, a person has to be a qualified voter, aged 18 or above with Guyanese citizenship, able to speak and read English language with a degree of proficiency enabling him/her to take active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.

C. ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES AND ELECTORAL JURISDICTION

Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM)

Articles 161-162 of the Constitution establish and set out the general authority of the Guyanese Elections Commission (GECOM). GECOM is a permanent, independent body responsible for the organization, administration and conduct of elections in Guyana. Previously, the Elections Commission was a temporary institution constituted

3. Other Acts dealing with ancillary issues include: *Election Laws Act*; *Election Laws (Filling of Vacancies) Act*; *Election Laws (Amendment) No. 15 of 2000*; *General Elections (Observers) Act*; *National Assembly (Validity of Elections) Act*; *National Registration Act*.

for each election, with time limits on members' period of service. The present GECOM, established in May 2000, is a permanent entity, which allows for greater administrative continuity.

Article 161(2)-(3) provides that the Commission shall consist of a Chairman, appointed by the President from a list of six candidates provided by the Leader of the Opposition after meaningful consultation with political parties represented in the National Assembly, and six additional members, three of whom are appointed by the President, at his own discretion, and three appointed by the President on advice from the Leader of the Opposition after meaningful consultation with non-governmental parties represented in the National Assembly. There is no specified term limit for the members of the Commission.

The Elections Commission is responsible for the appointment of all staff of the Commission's Secretariat and has authority over all matters related to the registration of electors and the conduct of elections. As set out in the Representation of the People Act, GECOM's functions include responsibility for the determination of electoral boundaries (polling districts and polling divisions, Art. 6(1)), approval and publication of lists of candidates (Arts. 17, 19), declaration and publication of results (Art. 99), and custody of election documents (Art. 102). In addition, GECOM has broad authority to make regulations under the Representation of the People Act (Art. 150).

GECOM is also responsible for setting policy for voter registration, maintenance of the voter's list, issuing national identification cards and the administration of all national, regional and local elections within the legislative framework, and for appointing all permanent and temporary staff working on Elections as well as the efficient functioning of the Secretariat.

GECOM Permanent Secretariat

The GECOM Secretariat is headed by the Chief Elections Officer, who is responsible for implementing the policies issued by the Election Commission, specifically the preparations for elections, including voter registration, training election workers, implementing civic education campaigns, and the transportation and reconciliation of Statements of Poll on election day. The Chief Elections Officer (CEO) is the person responsible for certifying the results of the elections, based on the compilation of the original Statements of Polls from each polling station and after having informed members of the Commission. The CEO is the only official authorized to announce the results of the election to the public.

District Level Polling Officials

At the District level, the Returning Officers are responsible for a particular polling district and the transmission of results directly to the CEO. They are accountable for the proper performance of each polling station in that District, and determine the total votes cast in favor of each List of Candidates in the District by adding the votes recorded on the statements of poll.

There is also a Deputy Returning officer assigned to each sub-district, who is responsible for supervising the arrangements for a group of polling stations and for immediate transmission of the results of the polling stations to the Returning Officer.

The Election Clerks assist with all duties, especially with arrangements for the distribution, transportation, and collection of election equipment and documents. The Clerical Assistant provides office support and reports to the Election Clerk.

Polling Day Officials

In Guyana, polling stations are typically staffed with four to six polling day officials: one Presiding Officer, one Assistant Presiding Officer, one or more Poll Clerks, one Ballot Clerk/Counting Assistant, one Police Officer and, in the cases where there are several polling stations within one voting center, an Information Poll Clerk.

The Presiding Officer assumes responsibility for the efficient functioning of the polling station, a responsibility which takes effect at least seven days before the poll, and for reporting results to the Deputy Returning Officer or Returning Officer the night of the election. The Assistant Presiding Officer is responsible for supporting the Presiding Officer, and in case of illness or other emergency, assumes responsibility for the operation of the polling station until the presiding officer resumes his or her duties or the Deputy Returning Officer makes final arrangements for the operation of the polling station.

On election day, the Poll Clerk is in charge of checking all documents to ensure the elector is entitled to vote. The Ballot Clerk supervises the ballot box and administers the electoral ink, and the Police Officer, working under the supervision of the Presiding Officer, is responsible for crowd control, maintenance of order and security of the Polling Station.⁴

4. Guyana Elections Commission Training Manual

Polling Districts

Guyana is divided into ten Polling Districts, which coincide with the country's ten Administrative Regions. The Polling Districts are divided into Polling Sub-Districts and Polling Divisions/Sub-Divisions. The Returning Officer, with the approval of the Chief Election Officer, establishes as many Polling Places and Polling Stations as may be required for each Polling Division or Sub-division. Polling Stations per District for the November 28th 2011 Election:

District	Number of Polling Stations	Total Registered Voters (OLE)
1	79	9,738
2	116	27,178
3	297	69,363
4	810	213,147
5	147	32,807
6	337	75,199
7	67	9,598
8	45	4,197
9	62	10,204
10	116	24,065
	Total: 2076	

Source: *Official Gazette of Polling Places dated November 8th 2011, Published OLE on GECOM's Website*

D. POLITICAL FINANCING

The legal framework governing the financing of political parties and campaigns is based on Guyana's Representation of the People Act, specifically Chapter 13 Article 120(1)-(5), as amended in 1990. The law stipulates that a report disclosing donors and other sources of funding must be submitted to the Chief Elections Officer by agents on behalf of a political party. Returns on election expenses, accompanied by a declaration, must be submitted no later than the 35th day after the declaration of election results. These provisions represent the sole legal requirement for parties to disclose election expenses.

The OAS/EOM views this disclosure requirement as a positive step towards creating accountability in party spending. Nonetheless, the fact that expenditures need only be reported after the election limits the ability of citizens to make informed choices at the polls and generally reduces the effective oversight of political financing.

The current system does not allocate any government funding, direct or indirect, for political parties or campaigns. Political parties and candidates are expected to raise their own campaign funds, which they do both locally and internationally from groups, individuals, and the private sector. Campaign contributions are unregulated, and there is no prohibition against donations by anonymous and/or foreign sources. This system effectively guarantees that all of political party working capital and campaign funds are based on private donations.

In general, the OAS/EOM considers the lack of regulation on campaign contributions as creating unequal conditions for electoral competition. The system also opens the door to the use of state resources for electoral purposes. In addition to the fact that the use of state resources by the governing party was a constant complaint made by the opposition, members of the EOM directly witnessed the presence of state sugar trucks at a campaign rally for the governing party. In Region 9, an OAS observer received a formal, written complaint that the Foreign Minister held a meeting on election day in which she promised that sewing machines and multi-purpose mills would be made available to the women gathered.

In addition, OAS observers noted significant disparities in resources available for campaign offices, events, and advertising throughout the country. According to GECOM's Media Monitoring Unit reports, between October and November, of the seven television channels and one radio station monitored by the MMU, 83.1% of electoral advertising promoted the PPP/C while 9.6% and 7.3% promoted the AFC and APNU, respectively. This disparity in resources, exacerbated by the fact that all campaign finance in Guyana is of private origin and essentially unregulated, reflects inequities in the potential to participate in electoral competition and the imbalanced playing field on which candidates compete for office.

CHAPTER III. MISSION ACTIVITIES AND OBSERVATIONS

A. PRE-ELECTORAL PHASE

On October 9, 2011, the President of Guyana announced that the General and Regional Elections would be held on November 28, 2011. Preparations for the election, including the training of poll workers and the certification of the voters list, had begun several months earlier, and GECOM had indicated to the government that they were ready to administer the electoral process.

Nomination day took place on October 27th, with all political parties interested in contesting the elections submitting their lists of candidates to the Chief Elections Officer. Seven political parties submitted their respective National Top-Up, Geographic Constituency and Regional Candidate Lists: A Partnership for National Unity (APNU); Alliance For Change (AFC); Fundamental Structure Group (FSG); Horizon And Star (HAS); People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C); The United Force (TUF), and The East Berbice Development Association (EBDA). However, only four parties (APNU, AFC, PPP/C and TUF) met all the statutory requirements to be approved for competition at the national level.

Political Context/Electoral Campaign

At the time of the elections, incumbent President Bharrat Jagdeo, after two terms and 12 years in office, was constitutionally prohibited from contesting the election. The 2011 election represented the first time in history that the PPP/C did not have the face of a member of the family of Guyanese "Founding Father" Cheddi Jagan behind it. The 2011 electoral competition was also characterized by the formation of a new coalition in Guyanese politics and the increased participation of emerging parties. The APNU, a coalition jointly launched by several opposition political parties as described above, competed in the elections with an agreed electoral platform and a unified campaign organization. AFC leadership, on the other hand, repeatedly stated that the party would not align with either the governing party or the main opposition in the run up to the elections.

Ethnic tensions have defined politics in Guyana since before independence. While the racial nature of politics appeared to have subsided somewhat in the years leading up to the 2011 elections, as exemplified by the rise of the AFC on a post-racial platform, racial based

language was still evident in the 2011 campaign. During the campaign period, the Media Monitoring Unit report from October criticized a media outlet for using "racially divisive" language on several occasions. Accusations of vandalism or violence against party supporters surfaced on both sides in the press.

The issue of possible voter intimidation was mentioned to the EOM in meetings with various civil organizations. The mission was informed by at least two sources from different organizations that governing party operatives had made overtures to residents of hinterland communities to the effect that if they did not vote correctly, then state benefits and programs would not flow to their communities. Such acts, it was reported, had occurred in the weeks and months leading up to the elections. While the EOM generally did not witness first hand any such acts of voter intimidation, an observer in the Rosignol area of Region 5 reported that political party operatives were breaching the 200 yard limit and in one instance demanding identification of a voter.

A noteworthy positive aspect of the campaign period was GECOM's consensus-building efforts that resulted in the adoption of Codes of Conduct for both political parties and media to help promote fair play among stakeholders. All four major parties agreed to refrain from abusive, destructive or violent behavior; to respect the media; and to accept the results of the November 28th elections. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that these codes of conduct lacked any enforcement mechanisms.

In this election, the OAS/EOM noticed with satisfaction that the political platforms of all major parties focused on women's issues. In fact, three of the main political parties, APNU, AFC and TUF, highlighted the topic of gender equality in their manifestoes, and all of them included other key women's issues such as domestic violence, trafficking in persons, female economic empowerment and education. In addition, 31% of legislative candidates were women, reflecting the minimum of 30% set by the quota. Nonetheless, in this election, only one of the four major political parties (The United Force), fielded a woman at the top of its ticket: prime ministerial candidate Marissa Nadir.

Media Coverage

Issues of media access and media freedom became a key issue during the pre-electoral period. The only existing radio station in Guyana and the only television station with national reach belong to the state. As reported both by the media and observed by the OAS/EOM, government media dominance is particularly acute in the hard-to-reach interior, while the coastal areas enjoy a greater degree of media plurality. Additionally, the private CNS Channel 6's broadcasting license was suspended for nine days within the final 60 days leading up to the election. The OAS/EOM noted that these issues present a challenge to basic guarantees of substantively democratic elections: a level playing field for electoral competition and sufficient access to information so that voters are able to make an informed choice when casting their votes.

As expressed by the full range of stakeholders, citizens were often confused over the difference between Government Information Agency material broadcast on the state TV channel and other content, further blurring the distinction between government and party information. In view of these concerns, during this campaign period GECOM brokered voluntary accords that allowed for all political parties to be given equal access to state media. At GECOM's request, the allotted five minutes free air time per week for political parties was raised to ten minutes on the state TV channel, subject to the requirement that content be provided 48 hours in advance.

The reopening of GECOM's Media Monitoring Unit at the end of August provided a critical mechanism for transparency and analysis of the campaign period. According to the Media Monitoring Unit reports for October and November, of the given sample of news, talk shows, general programming and commentaries on state-owned radio and TV, approximately 81% of the political party coverage that qualified as positive or neutral referred to the PPP/C, compared with 10.7% for APNU and 8.3% for AFC.

In regards to securing a level playing field of media coverage in the future, announcements were made by the government in the days leading up to the election that it would issue additional radio broadcast licenses, as contemplated in the Broadcasting Act that was passed by the Assembly in July 2011. Although the bill gives the president the ability to fast-track the issuance of broadcast licenses, press reports claimed new licenses would not be issued until the post-electoral period in order to avoid potential accusations of government interference in the campaign. The law also calls for the establishment of the Guyana National Broadcasting Authority, which is responsible for the licensing of broadcasting agencies and the regulation and supervision of national broadcasting.

Organization, logistics, and management of the electoral process

The Government of Guyana paid the total cost of the November 28, 2011 elections, meaning that these elections were the first since 1992 in which Guyana did not receive official international financial assistance. Nonetheless, GECOM staff reported to the OAS/EOM that the provision of the full allotment of funds for the conduct of the elections from the government had been tardy, and that the approved amount for some resources (such as new mobile phones) was not made available upon request.

Regarding the technical preparations for the polls, the OAS mission noted the significant efforts made by GECOM since 2006 to improve procedures and execute an overall inclusive and clean electoral process on the day of the election. In particular, the mission commends the implementation of the 2008 house-to-house verification and its resulting enhancement of the credibility of the voter's list, as well as the high level of training and dedication exhibited by GECOM staff in the polling stations.

Despite having signed an agreement with GECOM that provided access to information regarding the electoral process (see annex), on numerous occasions the requested information was not provided in an opportune manner or denied to the observers by the highest electoral officials, yet was available and provided at other levels of the hierarchy. This limitation on access to information not only precluded the mission from fully evaluating the state of preparedness for the election, but also reflected a lack of effective mechanisms for communications, coordinated planning, and transparency within GECOM and the Secretariat.

Official List of Electors

In 2008 GECOM implemented a house- to -house verification of the voters list to update the Official List of Electors (OLE). New national identification cards were issued starting in October 2009; these new cards were used to verify the identity of electors who were listed in the 2011 OLE.

According to the registration manager, the Official List of Electors for the November 28th 2011 Election was closed on December 24th, 2010. GECOM allowed a period for claims and objections from May 9th to June 12th, 2011, during which a total of 16,778 claims and objections were received (see chart below).

On June 15th, the GECOM Chairman's *Address on the State of Preparedness for the General and Regional Elections*⁵ stated that the PNCR requested on June 3, 2011 that GECOM

5. Available at http://www.gecom.org.gy/media_releases.html as accessed July 20, 2012.

consider facilitating the registration of persons who might get their Birth Certificates after the close of the Claims and Objections exercise during the 21 days statutory period which is available for the CEO to revise the Preliminary List of Electors. GECOM's legal assistant advised that "it may be legally improper for claims to be made after the period specified in the Order" and that "the Commission concluded and agreed unanimously that an extension of the period for Claims and Objections was not warranted and that this would not be done."

Nonetheless, in July, 2011, GECOM Commissioners, in a narrow 3-2 vote, decided to re-open the voters list and add a further two weeks to the Claims and Objections period, which was conducted from July 25th to August 5th. Opposition forces claimed that GECOM succumbed to political pressure from the governing party to accommodate these unregistered persons.

The number of claims and objections registered per district, as reported by the registration officer, as well as the number of registered voters were as follows:

Official List of Electors and Claims and Objectives per District

District	Total First Period Claims and Objections	Total Second Period Claims and Objections	Total Registered Voters (OLE)
1	1439	1084	9,738
2	865	397	27,178
3	1921	656	69,363
4	6744	2264	213,147
5	990	391	32,807
6	2114	756	75,199
7	534	281	9,598
8	312	303	4,197
9	930	852	10,204
10	828	286	24,065
Total	16677	7270	

Source: GECOM Registration Officer, Published OLE on GECOM's Website

The total number of registered voters on the final Official List of Electors (OLE) was 475,496.

After this final phase of objections and claims, the OLE was finalized and certified by GECOM at the end of September. No party raised any serious objections to the

final list when it was officially published.

For the 2011 elections, the established procedures determined that if an elector was not in possession of his/her ID card, the presiding election officials were to administer an Oath of Identity. Electors presenting an ID card issued prior to October 2009 were also required to take the Oath of Identity since those ID cards were not accepted as a means of identification for voting. If the person was not listed in the OLE they were not to be allowed to vote.

Electoral Calendar

While the official election calendar was requested before the Electoral Observation Mission arrived in Guyana, it was not provided to the OAS until the Friday prior to the election. This general calendar reflected only 32 days of preparations. A separate timetable maintained by the Operations Department incorporated additional tasks not reflected in the general calendar, such as the timeframe for the determination of polling places. The day before the election, the Operations Department's work plan remained in draft format.

The lack of a central and final calendar was evidenced in several of the last minute changes noted throughout the following sections. One critical such change was seen as the Returning Officer for Region 4, the most populous region in the country, was replaced within a week of the polls. The week prior to the election, the new Returning Officer was still in the process of organizing the newly assigned district.

Election Officer Training

The *Official Manual for Presiding Officers and Other Polling Agents* and the *Official Manual for Returning Officers and Other District Staff* contained information that was presented in a clear and concise manner. Both manuals had copies of the forms election officials were required to complete on election day as well as examples of how to arrange the polling station and how to process voters for each special situation.

All Election Officers were required to attend training in order to carry out their work. Nonetheless, the Chief Electoral Officer was unable to provide verification that 100% of Election Officers attended training.

While the OAS was informed the week prior to the election by the Chief Electoral Officer that electoral officer trainings took place in September and there were no sessions available to attend, one of the Deputy Returning Officers informed the mission that final trainings taught by GECOM personnel were taking place in different locations. The mission was therefore able to observe the training of

more than 95 Election Officers on November 22nd, including polling station workers and Deputy Returning Officers.

The GECOM trainers covered the relevant matters for properly carrying out the polling station procedures, and through a dynamic and participatory session demonstrated how to attend to possible scenarios that could present themselves on election day. The trainers were well prepared to answer all questions brought up by election officers.

The official in charge of Civic and Voter Education for GECOM was also assigned as the Returning Officer for District 4, the most populous region in the country. Educational materials such as brochures, flyers, billboards, banners, posters, infomercials and the use of loud speakers were used to educate voters.

List of Electors assigned to Polling Places

According to the GECOM Secretariat, the number of electors per Polling Station shall not exceed 400.⁶ The number of voters assigned to polling places ranged widely in the same geographical area, for example between 392 and 3 voters within walking distance. Given the cost and effort to staff a polling station on one hand, and the potential for overcrowding and long lines on the other, this distribution did not appear to be designed to maximize either efficiency or speed of voting.

Assembly and Distribution of Election Material

The assembly of the election materials took place at GECOM's offices. Returning Officers were responsible for ordering supplies for all polling stations in their district, as well as paper ballots and tendered ballots. Paper and tendered ballots were stored in locked containers within the premises.

The assembly of the supplies started on November 19th. The ballot boxes were placed under tents and GECOM personnel distributed the material to the Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers, along with their staff, who were responsible for checking and packing the materials for each Polling Station into ballot boxes. All staff members working on the assembly of supplies were wearing identification badges.

After packing all sensitive materials, ballot boxes were sealed and placed in containers and container trucks, ready for dispatch to different locations in each district. Guyana Police escorted the deployment of the containers to their corresponding district.

The assembly of polling station supplies was conducted 24 hours a day nonstop for a week. During this intense period, electoral officials were notably exhausted while undergoing the process of looking for the correct supplies and confirming the number of ballots received. Staff worked such long hours and had so little rest that they were observed taking short naps on top of cardboard boxes before returning to their work. These conditions of tedious work in a short timeframe presented the likelihood that exhaustion would lead to susceptibility to making mistakes during a sensitive part of the electoral organization process.

In addition, while ballot boxes were prepared for District 4, it began raining and a section of the area where the assembly was taking place flooded. Electoral workers were able to save the ballot boxes and move the assembly to a different area, but some of the election materials needed to be replaced.

After the distribution of the supplies, Presiding Officers were required to check ballot boxes before Election Day to certify correctness and accuracy. The process observed by the OAS in at least one District was disorganized, and the Presiding Officers were confused about how to proceed during this phase of the opening and inventorying of all received materials.

Polling Places

On November 8th 2011 GECOM published an official list of polling stations for the November 28th 2011 Election. On November 25th, the Chairman announced in a training meeting in front of the press that "approximately eight" polling places had been changed and that the final list of polling stations would be available on November 26th, the day before the election. The Chairman said that voters would be notified by the posting of a sign at the old station and that loud speakers would notify the neighborhoods affected by the changes. OAS observers visited four of the affected locations, and no signs were posted with information regarding the change.

On November 25th the GECOM Secretariat' Operations Department provided the "Proposed Polling Places for 2011 General and Regional Elections" list to the OAS, dated that same day and the one being used for the logistical administration of the process to be held just three days later. The OAS/EOM conducted a thorough comparison of the official gazetted list from November 8 and the November 25th list and found that a national average of 6% of all polling stations had been changed in the weeks leading up to the polls.

6. Guyana Elections Commission Operations Department's Logistic Plan

A detailed summary of the discrepancies in the two lists can be found below:

DISCREPANCIES IN LOCATION OF POLLING PLACES				
District	Name of District	Gazetted, Nov 8	Changes, Nov 25	%
1	Barima-Waini	79	0	0.00%
2	Pomeroon-Supenaam	116	0	0.00%
3	Essequibo Islands-West Demerara	297	1	0.34%
4	Demerara-Mahaica (East Bank)	813	67	8.24%
5	Mahaica-Berbice	147	20	13.61%
6	East Berbice-Corentyne	337	10	2.97%
7	Cuyuni-Mazaruni	67	13	19.40%
8	Potaro-Siparuni	45	1	2.22%
9	Upper Takatu-Upper Essequibo	62	1	1.61%
10	Upper Demerara-Upper Berbice	116	13	11.21%
Total		2079	126	6.06%

Source: Official Gazette, November 8, 2011 and GECOM Proposed Polling Places for 2011 General and Regional Elections from November 25, 2011

While there was no legal violation associated with these last-minute changes, they could have led to confusion among voters and could potentially result in the disenfranchisement of certain electors who were not adequately informed of the changes.

Certificate of Work for Party Agents

Two days prior to the election GECOM decided not to issue certificates of work to party agents. A GECOM statement held that the law stipulates that only poll workers can apply for a certificate of work, which would allow them to vote at the polling station in which they are working despite the fact that their names do not appear on the official list of electors for that polling station.

Although the decision was in accordance with law, the issuance of such certificates in past elections created a reasonable expectation that they would be provided for the current process. In the 1997 and 2006 electoral process, party agents were also allowed to apply for this certificate. Thus the notice of the change to this procedure two days prior to the election may have created impediments for some party agents to both fulfill their duties and cast their vote.

Digital Tabulation Testing

The information technology manager and staff began setting up and testing computers for tabulation accuracy the afternoon of November 27th, the day before the election. The initial testing presented many problems, and the information was not registering correctly. After a postponement of the testing to later that night, modifications were made and the computers began reading the test statement of poll (SOP) correctly. Nonetheless, the lack of sufficient advance time to fully test the systems and make necessary adjustments in the case of continued failures presents a potential concern for GECOM's planning structures.

B. ELECTION DAY

Prior to deployment, all 25 observers completed a day of training that covered the rules and norms of OAS electoral observation, gender observation methodology, the Guyanese electoral system and the political context of the 2011 elections. The OAS EOM also attended an informational session given by the GECOM Chairman to all international observer groups present in the country.

Despite the limited number of observers and the logistical obstacles associated with travelling in Guyana's territory, the Mission was able to maintain presence in nine out of the ten regions. On election day, November 28, 2011, the Mission visited more than 241 voting centers, constituting over 13% of the country's polling stations. Throughout the day each observer arrived at a polling station between 5:00AM and 6:00AM to observe the preparation and opening of the polls. Observers were also present at the closing of the polls to witness the counting of the ballots and the transportation of statements of polls to the returning officers in each constituency.

The OAS observers collected information from the opening to the closing of the polls as well as the conduct of voting on special questionnaires. They reported their findings to the Mission's General Coordinator at three key moments of the day: following the opening of polling stations; in the middle of the day; and after the vote count had been completed.

Opening of the Polls

On Election Day, polling officials in Guyana are required to arrive no later than 5:00AM to ensure that necessary arrangements are made for the prompt opening of the poll at 6:00AM as mandated by law. Observers reported that the majority of polling stations (72%) opened on time at 6:00AM. By 6:20AM, all observed polling stations were fully functional, with the exception of two stations in an indigenous community that did not open until approximately 10AM. Nearly all observed polling stations were housed in adequate facilities, equipped with all indispensable electoral materials and staffed with a full complement of designated poll workers. Security forces were present at the vast majority (83%) of the observed voting centers, while the voter list was on display in 78%. These observations are indicative of a high degree of organization and reflect the significant efforts to prepare for the polls by both GECOM staff and other key stakeholders.

The OAS EOM also noted that domestic observers, notably the Electoral Assistance Bureau, were present to witness the opening throughout the Guyanese territory; national observer groups were present at 83% of observed polling stations. Poll-watchers from the various parties were also observed in all polling stations, though the representation of parties varied across voting centers and regions. In total, PPP/C agents were present in 94% of the polling stations observed by the OAS during the opening, APNU in 83%, AFC in 56%, and the TUF in 6%.

Composition of the Polling Stations

In terms of gender participation, the observed polling stations were comprised of more than 80% female poll workers, while 44% percent of the observed stations were staffed entirely by female poll workers. Over 70% of presiding officers, the person responsible for the efficient and effective functioning of the polling station, were women. In addition, women represented over 70% of party agents and domestic observers in those locations visited by the OAS Mission.

Voting Process

Observers noted a well-organized voting process throughout the nine regions in which they were deployed. OAS observers did not witness any incidents of violence,

voter intimidation, interruptions of the voting process, or restrictions of the right to a secret vote during the day.

By 1:00PM, data gathered by the Mission OAS/EOM indicated that approximately 50% of those on the voter list had exercised their franchise and that voters spent a little more than three minutes on average to cast their ballots. Large lines of electors waiting to vote were rare, with the exceptions of densely populated areas in Region 3 and in Georgetown, where the majority of the electorate is concentrated.

In light of the aforementioned last-minute changes to the electoral calendar in the pre-electoral period, along with the demographic differences across the regions, it is significant that the OAS electoral observation mission observed cases of voters being unable to find their names on the lists at the polling centers, long lines of over 50 voters for a single polling station, and voter confusion regarding where to cast their vote, particularly in Region 4. In Region 4, one observed polling station turned away the first seven voters for being in the wrong location.

Compounding the confusion regarding polling station locations in Region 4 was the lack of adequate signage on the polling stations, and in some cases they were missing. While GECOM habilitated a phone number for voters to locate their polling station, there was no answer to multiple calls that were made by OAS observers throughout the day. OAS observers at GECOM's offices observed the hotline location, which was staffed by two employees answering the phones for the entire country with the use of one computer. This lack of clear information regarding where to vote facilitated the presence of party agents who oriented voters with a laptop they brought into the polling station, as observed in at least one school by OAS observers.

Regarding voters with disabilities, the location of polling stations on the second floor of many schools created a challenge to casting their vote, as they were observed being carried around schools in search of their assigned station. In at least one case, three voters with disabilities were unable to vote because their polling station did not have the required "Oath of Friend of Incapacitated or Blind Elector" form.

Observers in several regions reported incidents of electioneering and/or voter canvassing within 200 yards of polling places, both of which constitute violations of the electoral code. Multiple parties were observed engaged in activities such as flying party flags and maintaining painted signs near the vicinity of polling places on election day. In Region 9, the Mission received a formal written complaint that the Foreign Minister was holding a meeting on election day in which she promised to distribute sewing machines and multi-purpose mills to the women gathered.

Closing of the Polls

According to observer reports, 100% of the observed polling stations closed within a few minutes of 6:00PM, the time when the law mandates the close of polls. While the law states that voters in line at this time must still be permitted to vote, the EOM was present in one instance where voters left in line at 6:00PM were not allowed to vote. In general, however, poll workers carried out the counting of the ballots according to legal procedures. No statements of poll were challenged, and agents from both governing and opposition parties were present during the counting at all stations observed by the OAS. The duration of the count varied from one to four hours, a fact largely explained by the uneven distribution of voters within the Guyanese territory.

Regarding security on election day, the isolated cases of tensions that arose during the day and after the close of polls in Georgetown were quickly addressed by GECOM officials and security forces. In this regard, the significant efforts to prepare for the conduct of the activities within the polling stations are to be commended.

Tabulation and Processing of Results

1. *Limitations on Transparency of the Process*

The vote counting and transmission process lasted for three days before the results were officially declared. The Mission considered it unfortunate that the smooth functioning of the process seen throughout the day of the election was replaced by inconsistent procedures and a lack of efficiency in the processing and release of the results.

The OAS observation mission maintained a 24-hour presence in the GECOM tabulation center between the close of polls and the time of the publicly scheduled declaration of results. Nonetheless, the level of transparency and access to information was limited for the OAS observers. These limitations included requests to Returning Officers for information on the status of the tabulation, denial of access to several meetings at the GECOM tabulation center, including one between Commissioners and a Returning Officer, and indications from several GECOM staff members and at least one Commissioner involved in the tabulation process that they could not provide requested information to the observers. In several cases information was provided to the OAS observers by GECOM staff who specifically requested not to be identified for fear of reprimand and dismissal for having provided the information.

Due to these limitations, the following account is based on what the OAS team was able to observe visually of the handling of statements of poll and parts of the tabulation process due to presence inside GECOM's tabulation center and the Returning Office for District 4.

2. *Tabulation process at the District and central levels*

The OAS observers were informed by GECOM personnel that the following procedures would be followed for the tabulation of the Statements of Poll (SOPs) at GECOM's offices:

- a) After tabulation by the Returning Officers at the District level, the official envelope containing the SOPs would be transferred to GECOM's headquarters.
- b) Upon arrival at GECOM, all SOPs would necessarily be verified by the Commissioners to detect clerical or mathematical errors. Rejected SOPs were to be sent back to the Returning Officers to be re-constituted with all original parties present.
- c) After the initial verification by GECOM Commissioners, the SOPs would be scanned into the computer tabulation center, inputted into the computer system, verified by a team of GECOM employees, and tabulated digitally.
- d) The original SOP hard copies were then to be sent to the office of the Chief Election Officer where a manual count would take place by a small group of GECOM staff.

OAS observers were posted both at the Returning Officer's office for District 4 as well as the GECOM headquarters. In this regard, while the SOPs entered into tabulation at the District Returning Office shortly after the close of polls, the first transfer of SOPs to GECOM's offices was not registered until 1:50AM on November 29th. Given that the travel time between the two locations was approximately 20 minutes, the lag between the number of SOPs in process at the Returning Office and centralized level was significant. As the following chart demonstrates, OAS observers noted the limited efficiency of the transfer of SOPs and processing speeds for District 4 throughout the first night of the tabulation process.

Table: SOPs processed in District 4 during the night of November 29th, 2011

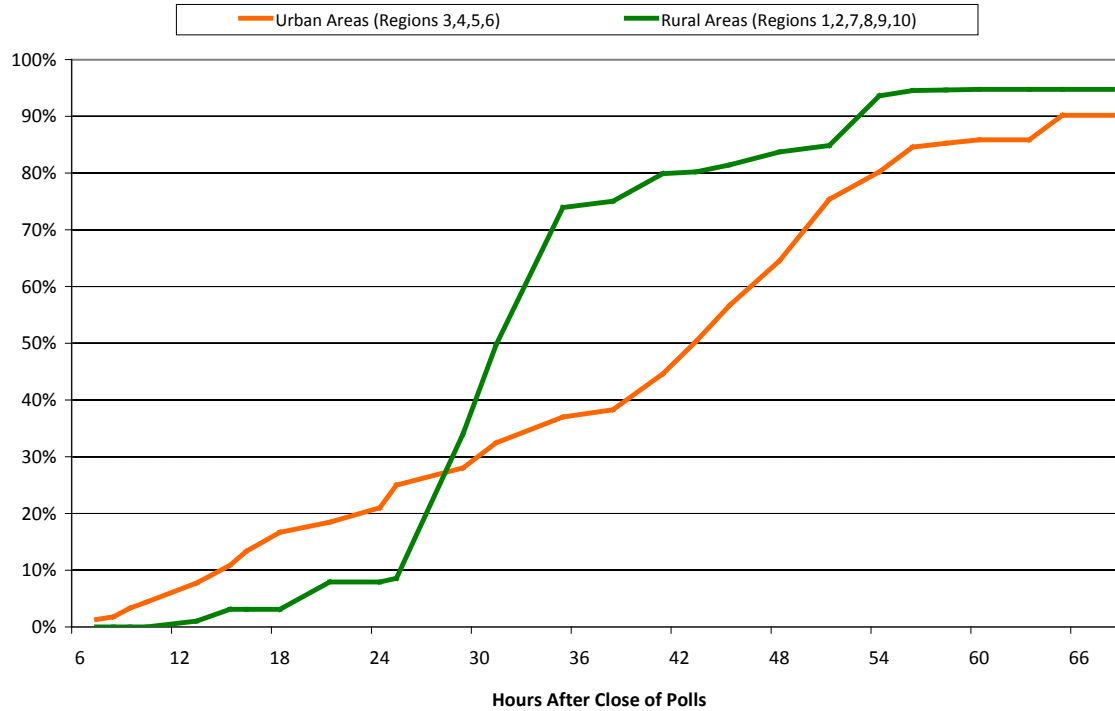
Time	SOPs processed at the District 4 RO Office	SOPs from District 4 entered into GECOM's tabulation system
1:50	232	42
2:32	280	57
3:07	326	78
4:00	486	112
5:00	576	113
5:30	660	152

Twenty-four hours after the close of polls, less than 10% of the SOPs from six regions had entered into the tabulation process, and only approximately 20% from the more centrally-located, urban regions had been entered into digital tabulation. The delayed processing of results represents a stark contrast from the reported ability of the major political parties to tabulate results within 24 hours through their designated party agents.

Source: OAS observation reports at the District 4 Returning Office, GECOM IT department tabulation reports

The following chart shows the progress in inputting the statements of poll (SOPs) charts into the electronic tabulation system over the three days during which OAS observers maintained a constant presence in the tabulation center. Given the geographic challenges in physically transferring the SOPs physically to Georgetown, the chart below demonstrates the delayed arrival for the rural areas.

Statements of Poll in Tabulation



Source: GECOM IT department reports during tabulation

The following chart demonstrates the progress made at the central tabulation center, by region, from the arrival of the first SOPs at 1:50AM on November 29th to the time of the first stated declaration of final results at 2PM on December 1st.

Statements of Poll in Tabulation by IT Center												
Hours After Close of Poll		Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10	TOTAL
11/29, 1:50 AM	8	0%	0%	0%	2.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	12	0%	0%	4.7%	10.8%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.9%	6.2%
	24	0%	0%	21%	21%	25.5%	19%	0%	0%	0%	33.2%	17.9%
11/30, 5:20 AM	36	56.3%	78%	31.6%	41.5%	41.8%	28.8%	53%	86.7%	87.9%	81.5%	45.6%
	48	78.5%	93.5%	67.5%	73.0%	60.9%	43.2%	54.5%	87.8%	87.9%	90.5%	69%
	60	95.6%	96.6%	96.5%	78.0%	95.2%	91.2%	93.3%	98.9%	91.9%	93.1%	87.9%
12/1, 2:00 PM	68	100%	99.1%	99.3%	83.1%	99.7%	97.6%	100%	100%	100%	100%	92.6%

Source: GECOM IT department reports during tabulation

3. Modifications to the established tabulation procedures

During the tabulation process, there were several incidents observed by the OAS which demonstrated the lack of application of uniform procedures. These issues included:

1. While the SOPs were supposed to arrive at GECOM's offices with a police escort, the OAS teams stationed at the tabulation center in Georgetown observed at least three envelopes containing statements of poll being delivered by unaccredited and unescorted drivers, by GECOM staff, or by Deputy Returning Officers. In addition, some of the arriving SOPs were not delivered in the pre-printed envelopes provided by GECOM for security of the process, but rather in a manila type envelope.
2. GECOM announced several delays to scheduled press briefings regarding partial results, and for the first 36 hours of the tabulation issued results to the press as a percentage of the voter registration list rather than votes cast.
3. For the majority of the process, GECOM's Commissioners examined and signed off on the original copy of each statement of poll upon arrival at the tabulation center, prior to their distribution to simultaneous manual and digital tallying processes. Nonetheless, on at least two occasions, statements of poll were seen to bypass this system and were delivered directly to the manual tabulation process by the CEO.
4. On the morning of November 29th, the procedure in effect was reversed by the GECOM Chairman to institute the direct delivery of statements of poll to the manual tabulation process, prior to verification by the Commissioners in order to speed up the process. After approximately half an hour, due to concerns expressed by some of the Commissioners over the change in procedures, GECOM reverted back to the original process. During this half hour time period, the OAS observed the Chairman deliver statements of poll contained in at least three envelopes to the manual tabulation center without having been scanned, copied, or distributed to the IT process.

In addition, prior to the declaration of results, the IT department was unable to finish processing all of the statements of poll, as 307 were not in the digital tabulation center's system half an hour before the originally scheduled declaration of results when the Chief Electoral Officer reported to the OAS Electoral Observation Mission via telephone that the count had been concluded and the

results were scheduled to be declared. Subsequently, the press conference to announce the results was postponed for more than two hours.

C. COMPLAINTS

Two complaints were received on election day, which are summarized in the following chart:

Location	Date	Target of Complaint	Facts
Lethem, Region 9	11/28/2011	PPP/C	Foreign Minister held meeting in St. Ignatius Multi-Purpose Building and made promises to provide sewing machines and mills to women gathered in meeting; allegedly constitutes campaigning on election day.
West Demerara, Region 3	11/28/2011	GECOM	Electors found name on list of electors posted outside polling place, but not on official list inside polling place

D. POST-ELECTORAL PROCESS

On December 1, 2011, the Chief Electoral Officer issued the final results of the November 28, 2011 General and Regional Elections. Three political party coalitions won representation in the National Assembly. The breakdown of parliamentary seats is as follows:

Political Party/ Coalition	Percent of Vote	Seats
Peoples Progressive Party/Civic	48.6%	32
A Partnership for National Unity	40.8%	26
Alliance for Change	10.3%	7
The United Force	0.3%	0

Source: GECOM, Gazetted Results of the 2011 General and Regional Elections

The results of the General Elections of 2011 gave the Presidency to Mr. Donald Ramotar from the People's Progressive Party/Civic, thereby ushering in a fifth term for the PPP/C government. In the National Assembly, the PPP/C obtained a total of 32 of the 65 seats, and the combined opposition parties won the majority of seats, resulting in a minority government for the first time in Guyanese history. For the opposition, A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) received 26 seats and the Alliance for Change (AFC) 7 seats. The United Force did not win a seat in the Assembly.

Donald Ramotar was sworn in as President on December 3, 2011. In light of the fact that the current government is the first divided government in Guyanese history, prior to the convening of parliament, debate erupted over procedural issues, particularly how to select the Speaker of the House. On January 13, 2012 Raphael Trotman of the AFC became the first opposition member to be elected Speaker of the National Assembly.

Two weeks after the election, GECOM's Commissioner reported to the OAS Mission that unrest relating to the electoral results continued to target the institution's headquarters in the form of street demonstrations that could threaten peace and stability. In light of this prolonged discontent and public targeting of the electoral authority, the mission considers it essential that significant reforms are carried out by GECOM prior to future elections to instill greater credibility of its actions.

CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSIONS

The OAS/EOM noted the participation of the people of Guyana, the Guyana Elections Commission, as well as party leaders, election officials and members of the Guyanese Disciplined Forces in ensuring the peaceful and orderly conduct of the General and Regional Elections of November 28, 2011. However, as is customary in reports of this nature, the Mission notes several areas where improvements could be made to make the electoral system more efficient and more equitable:

The campaign period was marred by perceptions of limited differentiation between the state and governing party in terms of access to both media and campaign finance. Throughout the country, the OAS mission observed significant disparities between parties in terms of the resources available for campaign offices, events, and advertising. Although it contains provisions regarding spending limits and reporting requirements, Guyana's legal framework does not sufficiently regulate campaign contributions. These regulatory gaps open the door for the use of state resources as part of the campaign and engender unequal conditions for electoral competition.

As of this writing, the Guyanese state owns the only radio station and the only television station with national reach in Guyana. The distinction between government information and party content is often blurred. Although the Broadcast Bill passed in July 2011, which contemplates the issuance of new radio licenses, represents a positive development, it has yet to be implemented. Media and political financing are both issues that threaten basic guarantees of democratic elections: a level playing field of electoral competition and the right of voters to access the information needed to make an informed choice when casting their ballots.

Regarding the technical preparations for the polls, the OAS mission noted the significant efforts made by the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) since 2006 to improve procedures and execute an overall inclusive and clean electoral process on the day of the election. In particular, the mission commended the implementation of the 2008 house-to-house verification and its resulting enhancement of the credibility of the voter's list, as well as the high level of training and dedication exhibited by GECOM staff in the polling centers.

The OAS electoral observation mission observed with concern the issues that arose during the post-electoral process, which were particularly unfortunate in light of the overall quality of the preparations for election day.

In the future, the mission urges GECOM to address the challenges observed in the tabulation procedures and to work diligently to develop additional transparency and safeguards that instill citizen confidence in all phases of the electoral process. The OAS mission hopes that the newly elected government and Assembly will further the consolidation of Guyana's democratic processes toward guaranteeing a level playing field for electoral competition in future processes.

On the issue of enhancing gender participation, Guyana has made significant progress in the promotion of gender equality in the political process, as it is the only country in the Caribbean with a gender quota in effect. The observed polling stations were comprised of more than 75% female poll workers. The OAS/EOM noted with satisfaction that the political platforms of all major parties focused on women's issues such as domestic violence and women's economic empowerment. Three of the major parties highlighted the topic of gender equality in their campaign manifestoes. Nonetheless, only one of the four major political parties fielded a woman at the top of its ticket, and for this election there was no female participation at the Commissioner level in GECOM.

The quality and transparency of elections in Guyana has progressed significantly since the watershed electoral reforms in 1992 that instituted a preliminary vote count within polling stations and determined the current composition of the Guyana Elections Commission. It is especially commendable, in light of the ethnic and racial nature of Guyanese politics, that this, along with the other electoral processes dating back to 2001 have been carried out in an environment of relative peace and mutual respect. The Guyanese electorate's active and peaceful participation in these elections constitutes a testament to the commitment of political leaders, civil society groups and the Guyanese people to the exercise of democracy. As such, it is critical that Guyana continues on the path to the consolidation of more transparent, equitable and inclusive electoral processes.

CHAPTER V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the many positive attributes of the Guyanese electoral system and in the spirit of constructive engagement, the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Guyana presents the following recommendations, which are critical to ensuring that future electoral processes in Guyana are inclusive, clean, competitive, and credible.

1. Employment of mechanisms to guarantee more equitable access to media and political financing.

In order to ensure equal opportunity and the ability of voters to make an informed choice, the OAS electoral observation mission recommends that several steps be taken:

- The further institutionalization of GECOM's Media Monitoring Unit both legally and financially, the incorporation of mechanisms that ensure its impartial composition and accountability to further provide guarantees to all political actors, and the determination of legal mechanisms that include oversight and enforcement capabilities beyond the voluntary codes of conduct.
- The development of mechanisms to ensure the independence of members of the forthcoming Board of Authority contemplated in the Broadcasting Act. As the Board will be responsible for all licensing decisions, the OAS electoral observation mission emphasizes that regulations made pursuant to the Act should limit the discretion of the Board and set out in detail both the conditions governing licenses and clarifying the general terms used in the Act.
- In order to instill more equitable campaign conditions, a legal review is necessary to require disclosure of campaign expenditures prior to the elections, determine criteria for private and foreign contributions, and consider instituting public financing for campaigns.
- A review should be carried out regarding options for proportional access to paid and free advertising time for all political parties during prime time slots, without the existing requirement by state channels for a 48 hour prior submission for review.

2. Review of the electoral system and legal framework.

The OAS mission also recommends that the various political stakeholders review the existing electoral

legal framework to redefine the structural basis for citizen representation and oversight of the electoral process. This includes the following areas:

- The OAS mission reiterates its 2006 recommendation to address political party reform and modernization, including internal democratization for the selection of candidates.
- A review of the composition of the Electoral Commission. Reformulating the current political designation of Commissioners to incorporate technical criteria and establish mechanisms that guarantee plurality could enhance GECOM's independence and reduce the perception of politicization of the electoral process.
- In addition, some of the existing legal provisions for electoral procedures are extremely detailed, while other matters allow for a large degree of discretionary power by the Commission regarding issues such as the timeframe for changing polling station locations. In this regard, the OAS mission recommends that the legal framework be reviewed to incorporate safeguards and detailed regulations to ensure that the Commission's actions are fully independent and guarantee full and effective participation by all citizens.
- Guaranteed availability of the approved allotment of resources for the electoral process on a regular, scheduled basis during electoral years. The timely disbursement of such funds to the GECOM Secretariat would help enable proper administration of the electoral process.
- As recommended by the 2006 OAS electoral observation mission, constitutionally mandated local elections should be held as soon as possible to increase the inclusivity of the political system.

3. Determination of and adherence to timely and standardized procedures for the electoral process.

The OAS mission exhorts GECOM to work to incorporate stringent deadlines for, and mechanisms to ensure sufficient time for, the planning, testing, and troubleshooting of issues that pertain to the following areas: changes in procedures prior to election day, the standardization of the electoral calendar with specific

deadlines and milestones, and the issuance of preliminary and final results.

In order to speed up the results process and to diffuse the tensions associated with a three day lag between election-day and the proclamation of results, during which political parties are able to declare their results and citizen concerns can mount, the OAS Electoral Observation Mission encourages GECOM to consider implementing preliminary results for the presidential election alone or other similar measures that would ensure a high degree of transparency and the timely provision of results to the public.

4. Definition of the tabulation process and ensuring the chain of custody for electoral results.

A complete review of the results transmission, tabulation, and declaration of both preliminary and final results procedures is essential to ensuring a timely and transparent process as well as the credibility of future processes. The mission also recommends that additional mechanisms to secure electoral materials are implemented throughout the course of their transfer between the polling stations, regional offices, and GECOM's central tabulation center that include the accompaniment of multiple accredited individuals, clear processes for secure receipt of sensitive materials, and a defined procedure for their incorporation into the tabulation process that allows for political party oversight.

5. Improved communications with stakeholders and within GECOM.

In order to ensure transparency and instill additional confidence in the process, the OAS mission recommends strengthening the following parts of GECOM's communications processes:

- As stated in the 2006 OAS electoral observation final report, the implementation of regular communications with political parties and media throughout all phases of the electoral process regarding the decision-making process.
- The timely provision of voter information regarding the location of their polling stations, including expansion of the service provided in the hotline center.
- Preparing in advance and standardizing clear explanations of and communications regarding technical electoral issues for the public, particularly regarding the tabulation of results.
- Review of GECOM's internal communications structure regarding the resolution of potential incidents and ensuring a rapid transmission of preliminary results between the polling stations and tabulation center.

6. Strengthening the promotion of gender balanced participation throughout the electoral process.

Given that party leaders have complete discretion in deciding which candidates from the list actually gain seats in the assembly, the OAS electoral observation mission recommends further mechanisms to ensure the continued participation of women in the political arena, both within political party structures, by supporting training programs for female candidates, and throughout the hierarchy of GECOM.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. LETTER OF INVITATION



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

"Takuba Lodge"
254 South Road & Shiv Chanderpaul Dr.,
Georgetown, Guyana.
Telephone: 592-226-1606/8 Fax: 592-225-9192
Email: minfor@guyana.net.gy
Website: www.minfor.gov.gy

NOTE NO.: 786/2011

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guyana presents its compliments to the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) and has the honour to inform that General and Regional Elections will be held in Guyana in the 4th quarter of 2011, at a date still to be decided upon.

In the interest of ensuring that electoral best practices are maintained during the elections, the Government of Guyana is hereby inviting the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States to mount an Electoral Observer Mission to Guyana's General and Regional Elections, comprising suitably qualified representatives of Member States.

The OAS Electoral Observer Mission would be allowed to operate independently in keeping with international best practices for such Missions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guyana avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) the assurances of its highest consideration.

GEORGETOWN

JUNE 23, 2011



APPENDIX II. LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

June 28th, 2011

Honourable Minister,

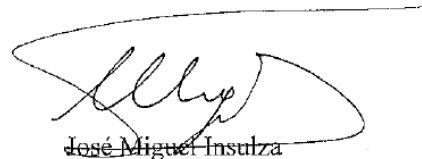
I have the pleasure to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 24th, 2011 in which the Government of Guyana requests the Organization of American States (OAS) observe the General and Regional Elections that will be held in the 4th quarter of 2011.

Through its observation and technical assistance efforts, the OAS remains committed to strengthening the electoral processes in the Americas and I am pleased to respond positively to this request.

I have instructed the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) of the OAS Secretariat of Political Affairs to prepare a proposal and budget that contemplates the observation of the different facets of this important exercise and maximizes coverage of the polling stations on the date of the elections. As is customary, the size and scope of this mission will ultimately depend on the voluntary contributions received from the OAS Member and Observer States.

Should you have any questions regarding the preparation of this mission, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Charlotte McDowell, Chief of DECO's Electoral Observation Section, who has been tasked with preparation of this mission.

Sincerely,



José Miguel Insulza

The Honourable Caroline Rodrigues-Birkett
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and
International Cooperation
Takuba Lodge, Georgetown
Guyana

APPENDIX III. AGREEMENT ON PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

**AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA
AND
THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
REGARDING
THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE OAS
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION
FOR THE 2011 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

**AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA
AND
THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
REGARDING
THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE OAS
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION
FOR THE 2011 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

The Parties to this Agreement, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (hereinafter referred to as the “GS/OAS”) and the Government of the Republic of Guyana (hereinafter referred to as the “Government”),

WHEREAS:

On June 23, 2011 the Government of the Republic of Guyana invited the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (hereinafter referred to as the “OAS” or the “Organization”) to observe the General and Regional Elections to be held in the Fourth Quarter of 2011 in the Republic of Guyana.

The Secretary General of the OAS, in a letter dated June 28, 2011, informed the Government that he accepted the invitation to establish an Observer Mission (hereinafter referred to as the “OAS Observer Mission”) for the General and Regional Elections in Guyana, subject to obtaining the necessary resources to finance the establishment of the OAS Observer Mission in the Republic of Guyana (hereinafter referred to as the “Mission” or the “OAS Mission”);

The OAS Observer Mission will be comprised of officials of the GS/OAS and other persons contracted at GS/OAS headquarters, as well as any other international observers specifically under contract to the GS/OAS for the OAS Observer Mission (hereinafter referred to as the “Members of the OAS Observer Mission” or the “Members”); and

The basic privileges and immunities enjoyed by the OAS, the GS/OAS, and its staff in Guyana are set out in the Charter of the Organization and in the Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States on the Functioning of the Office of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States and Recognition of its Privileges and Immunities, signed by the Parties on April 18, 1994,

NOW, THEREFORE THE PARTIES HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER I

PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE OAS OBSERVER MISSION

ARTICLE I

The privileges and immunities of the OAS Observer Mission shall be those accorded to the OAS, to its organs, and to its Staff.

ARTICLE II

2.1. The property and effects of the OAS Observer Mission, located in any part of the territory of the Republic of Guyana and in possession of any person, shall enjoy immunity against any type of judicial proceeding; save in those specific cases for which said immunity is expressly waived in writing by the Secretary General of the OAS.

2.2 However, it is understood that said waiver of immunity by the Secretary General of the OAS shall not have the effect of subjecting any such property and effects to any type of measure of execution.

ARTICLE III

3.1 The premises occupied by the OAS Observer Mission shall be inviolable.

3.2 Moreover, the property and effects of the OAS Observer Mission, in any part of the territory of the Republic of Guyana and in possession of any person or entity, shall enjoy immunity against search and seizure, confiscation, expropriation and against any form of intervention, be it executive, administrative, judicial or legislative.

ARTICLE IV

The files of the OAS Observer Mission and all of the documents pertaining thereto or in the possession of any person or entity shall be inviolable wherever they are located.

ARTICLE V

5.1 The OAS Observer Mission shall be:

a) exempt from any internal taxation, it being understood, however, that it may not claim any type of tax exemption that is in fact remuneration for public services;

b) exempt from any type of customs duty, prohibition and restriction in respect of articles and publications that it may import or export for its official use. It is understood, however, that any articles imported duty-free may be sold within the Republic of Guyana only in accordance with conditions expressly agreed upon by the Parties; and

c) exempt from ordinances, regulations or moratoria of any kind. Moreover, it may have currency of any type, carry accounts in any foreign currency and transfer funds in foreign currency.

ARTICLE VI

The OAS Observer Mission may establish and operate in the territory of the Republic of Guyana an independent radio communication system to provide an on-going

communications link between the Members and the vehicles used by the Members with Mission offices and regional headquarters, such as the central office in Georgetown and between the latter and the headquarters of the GS/OAS in Washington, D.C., United States of America. The Government shall provide all the technical and administrative support necessary for this to be achieved.

CHAPTER II MEMBERS OF THE OAS OBSERVER MISSION

ARTICLE VII

The Members of the OAS Observer Mission shall be those persons who have been designated by the GS/OAS and accredited with the Guyanese authorities.

ARTICLE VIII

8.1 For the period during which the Members of the OAS Observer Mission exercise their functions and during their trips to and from the Republic of Guyana, they shall enjoy the following privileges and immunities:

- a) Immunity from personal detention or arrest as well as immunity from any type of legal proceeding in respect of their actions and statements, be they oral or written, done in the performance of their functions;
- b) The inviolability of all papers and documents;
- c) The right to communicate with the GS/OAS via radio, telephone, telegraph, email, satellite or other means, and to receive documents and correspondence through messengers or in sealed pouches, enjoying for that purpose the same privileges and immunities accorded to diplomatic mail, messages, and pouches;
- d) The right to utilize for their movements throughout the national territory, any means of transportation, be it by air, by water or over land;

e) Exemption in respect of their persons and that of their spouses and children, from any type of immigration restriction and registration of aliens and any type of national service in the Republic of Guyana.

f) The same privileges accorded to the representatives of foreign governments on official mission in respect to foreign-currency restrictions;

g) The same immunities and privileges in respect of their personal baggage as are accorded to diplomatic envoys; and

h) Such other privileges, immunities and facilities as are compatible with the foregoing, and enjoyed by diplomatic envoys, with the exception that they shall not enjoy any exemption from customs duties on imported merchandise (that is not part of their personal effects) or sales taxes or consumer taxes.

ARTICLE IX

The provisions contained in the preceding Article do not apply to nationals of the Republic of Guyana working as local contract staff in the OAS Observer Mission, except in respect of official acts performed or statements issued in the exercise of their functions.

CHAPTER III

COOPERATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES

ARTICLE X

The OAS Observer Mission shall cooperate with the relevant authorities of the Republic of Guyana to prevent any occurrence of abuse in respect of the specified privileges and immunities. Similarly, the relevant authorities shall do whatever is possible to provide the cooperation requested of them by the OAS Observer Mission.

ARTICLE XI

Without prejudice to the immunities and privileges accorded, the Members of the OAS Observer Mission shall respect the laws and regulations existing in the Republic of Guyana.

ARTICLE XII

12.1 The Parties shall take any measures necessary to procure an amicable arrangement in the proper settlement of:

- a) Any disputes that may arise in contracts or other questions of private law; and
- b) Any disputes to which the OAS Observer Mission and/or any of its Members may be parties with respect to matters in which they enjoy immunity.

CHAPTER IV NATURE OF PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

ARTICLE XIII

13.1 The privileges and immunities are granted to the Members of the OAS Observer Mission in order to safeguard their independence in the exercise of their functions of observing the General and Regional Elections of the Republic of Guyana, and not for personal gain or to perform activities of a political nature within the territory of the Republic of Guyana.

13.2 The Secretary General of the OAS may waive the privileges and immunities of any of the Members of the OAS Observer Mission in the event that he determines, in his sole discretion, that the exercise of those privileges and immunities may obstruct the course of justice and so long as the Secretary General determines that such waiver does not prejudice the interests of the OAS or of the GS/OAS.

CHAPTER V
GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE XIV

14.1 The Government recognizes the "Official Travel Document" issued by the GS/OAS as a valid and sufficient document for purposes of travel by the Members of the OAS Observer Mission who possess this document.

14.2 The Government shall issue to each Member of the OAS Observer Mission a visa to enter the country and to remain therein until the end of the OAS Observer Mission.

ARTICLE XV

The Government agrees to extend the privileges and immunities of the present Agreement to Members of the OAS Observer Mission designated by the GS/OAS, who have been accredited by the Guyanese authorities.

ARTICLE XVI

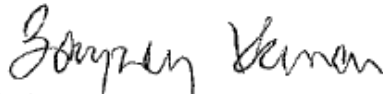
This Agreement may be amended by mutual consent in writing by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties.

ARTICLE XVII

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of its signature and shall cease to have effect once the Members of the OAS Observer Mission have completed their mission, in accordance with the terms of the request made by the Government.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, duly authorized, do hereby sign this Agreement, in duplicate, on the date and locations indicated below.

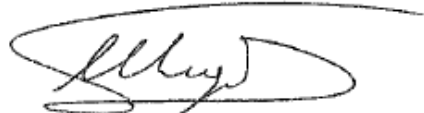
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA:



Ambassador Bayney R. Karran
Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Guyana
to the Organization of American States
Place: Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Date:09/01/2011.....

FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF
AMERICAN STATES:



Mr. Jose Miguel Insulza
Secretary General
General Secretariat of the
Organization of American States
Place: Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Date:09/01/2011.....

APPENDIX IV. AGREEMENT ON ELECTORAL GUARANTEES

**AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AND
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION
ON THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION PROCESS OF THE
2011 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

**AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AND
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION
ON THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION PROCESS OF THE
2011 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN
THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

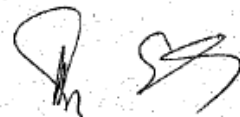
The Parties, the Republic of Guyana Elections Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Elections Commission") and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (hereinafter referred to as the "General Secretariat");

CONSIDERING:

THAT on the 23rd day of June 2011, the Government of the Republic of Guyana (hereinafter referred to as "the Government"), through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, invited the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary General") to send an Electoral Observation Mission (hereinafter referred to as "the Mission") to the Republic of Guyana for the purpose of witnessing the General and Regional Elections to be held in the Fourth Quarter of 2011 (hereinafter referred to as the "General Elections");

THAT in Resolution AG/RES. 991 (XIX-O/89), the General Assembly of the OAS recommended to the Secretary General that "when a member state so requests in the exercise of its sovereignty, missions should be organized and sent to said state to monitor the development, if possible at all stages, of each of its electoral processes;"

THAT Article 24 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states in pertinent part as follows:



The electoral observation missions shall be carried out at the request of the member state concerned. To that end, the government of that state and the Secretary General shall enter into an agreement establishing the scope and coverage of the electoral observation mission in question. The member state shall guarantee conditions of security, free access to information, and full cooperation with the electoral observation mission.

Electoral observation missions shall be carried out in accordance with the principles and norms of the OAS. The Organization shall ensure that these missions are effective and independent and shall provide them with the necessary resources for that purpose. They shall be conducted in an objective, impartial, and transparent manner and with the appropriate technical expertise; and

THAT the Secretary General responded affirmatively to the Government's request to send the Mission with the objective of observing the General Elections of 2011;

WHEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

First: Guarantees

- a) The Elections Commission guarantees the Mission access to all facilities for the adequate fulfillment of the observation of the elections in 2011 until conclusion of the General Elections process in the Republic of Guyana, in conformity with the laws and standards of the Republic of Guyana and the terms of this Agreement.
- b) The Elections Commission, on the day of and after the day of the elections, shall guarantee the Mission access to all polling stations and other locations and facilities related to the election until the official count is tabulated nationally and the General Elections process is concluded.
- c) The Elections Commission shall guarantee the Mission complete access to the locations in which the process of counting and tabulating votes will take place both before and during this process.
- d) The Elections Commission shall guarantee the Mission access to all electoral bodies responsible for vote counting and tabulation. Similarly, the Elections Commission shall permit the Mission to conduct any evaluations deemed necessary by the Mission of the voting system and of the communications utilized to transmit electoral

results. At the same time, the Elections Commission shall guarantee the Mission complete access to the complaints process and quality controls that occur before and after the electoral process that are of interest to the Mission.

e) The Elections Commission further guarantees the Mission access to all polling stations and other bodies throughout territory of the Republic of Guyana. Upon request of the Mission, the Elections Commission guarantees to make available by the end of the voting process and, before the closing of the polling stations, copies of all documents printed electronically.

Second: Information

a) The Elections Commission will furnish the Mission with all information referring to the organization, direction and supervision of the electoral process. The Mission may request of the Elections Commission such additional information as is necessary for the exercise of the Mission's functions, and the Elections Commission shall promptly furnish all such information.

b) The Mission may inform the Elections Commission about any irregularities and/or interference, which the Mission might observe or of which the Mission might learn. Similarly, the Mission may request that the Elections Commission provide any information regarding the measures which the Elections Commission will take in relation to such irregularities, and the Elections Commission shall promptly furnish all such information.

c) The Elections Commission shall provide the Mission with information related to the electoral list and other electoral data referring to the same. Similarly, the Elections Commission shall provide all other information relative to the computer systems used on Election Day, and shall offer demonstrations of the systems' operation to the Mission.

Third: General Provisions

a) The Secretary General will designate a Chief of Mission, to represent the Mission and its members before the Elections Commission and before the Government.

b) The General Secretariat will communicate to the Chair of the Elections Commission the names of the persons who will comprise the Mission, who will be duly identified.

c) The Mission will act impartially, objectively and independently in the fulfillment of its mandate.

d) The General Secretariat will send to the leadership of the Elections Commission a copy of the final report of the Electoral Observation Mission following the General and Regional Elections.

e) The Elections Commission will make known and disseminate the contents of this Agreement among all electoral bodies and among all personnel involved in the electoral process.

Fourth: Privileges and Immunities

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as an express or implied waiver of the privileges and immunities of the OAS, its Organs, its personnel and its assets under the Charter of the Organization; under the Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States on the Functioning of the Office of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States and Recognition of its Privileges and Immunities, signed by the Parties on April 18, 1994; and under the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States Regarding the Privileges and Immunities of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the 2011 General and Regional Elections in the Republic of Guyana, signed by the Parties on the First day of September, 2011; or under international law.

Fifth: Resolution of controversies

The Parties shall attempt to resolve through direct negotiations any disputes arising in relation to the interpretation and/or implementation of this Agreement. If the negotiations do not result in the resolution of the dispute, the matter shall be submitted to



a dispute resolution procedure mutually agreed to by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties.

Sixth: Amendments

Amendments to this Agreement shall be made in writing and signed by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties and attached hereto.

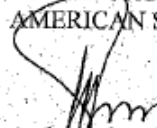
Seventh: Entry into Force and Termination

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date and upon the signature of then duly authorized representatives of the Parties. This Agreement shall remain in force until the Mission has concluded its observation mission of the 2011 General and Regional Elections.

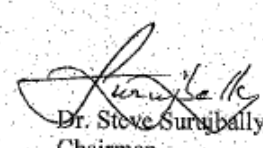
This Agreement may be terminated by either Party with or without cause. Termination must be effected by means of no less than five days' written notice to the other Party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed this Agreement in duplicate on the date and locations indicated below.

FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF
AMERICAN STATES:


Ambassador Gordon Shirley
Chief of Mission
Georgetown, Guyana
Date: 22nd November, 2011

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA
ELECTIONS COMMISSION:


Dr. Steve Surujbally
Chairman
Republic of Guyana Elections Commission
Georgetown, Guyana
Date: 22nd November, 2011

APPENDIX V. LIST OF OBSERVERS



Organization of American States

Electoral Observation Mission - Guyana General and Regional Elections - November 28, 2011

CORE GROUP				
1	Gordon Shirley	Jamaica	M	Chief of Mission
2	Charlotte McDowell	USA	F	Deputy Chief of Mission
3	Paul Spencer	Antigua & Barbuda	M	Electoral Analyst
4	Tyler Finn	USA	M	General Coordinator
5	Sarah Davidson	Canada	F	Legal Analyst
6	Karin Accorinti	Argentina	F	Electoral Organization
7	John Enright	Canada	M	Press/Media Specialist
8	Rosa Serpa	Colombia	F	Administrative Officer
9	Sara Mía Noguera	Venezuela	F	Gender Specialist
10	Juliette Maughan	Barbados	F	Regional Coordinator
11	Constance Almquist	USA	F	Regional Coordinator
12	Lynda Francisque	Martinique	F	Regional Coordinator
13	Alan Andrade	Mexico	M	Regional Coordinator
14	Joel Teurtrie	Canada	M	Regional Coordinator
15	Fernanda Massaccesi	Argentina	F	Regional Coordinator
16	María de la Paz García Calvo	Argentina	F	Regional Coordinator
17	Rafael D'Armas	Venezuela	M	Gender Specialist
18	Timothy Laing	UK	M	Observer
19	Indira Rampersad	Trinidad & Tobago	F	Observer
20	Curtis Michael Jacobs	Trinidad & Tobago	M	Observer
21	Olaf Fontanelle	St. Lucia	M	Observer
22	Diego Preciado	USA	M	Observer
23	Ulrike Puccio	Chile	F	Observer
24	William Joyce	Canada	M	Observer
25	Ann Joyce	Canada	F	Observer

APPENDIX VI. PRESS RELEASES

OAS Electoral Mission to Observe Elections in Guyana

September 1, 2011

The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Government of the Republic of Guyana today signed an Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) for the general and regional elections in Guyana to be held at the end of 2011.

In a ceremony held at OAS headquarters in Washington, DC, Secretary General José Miguel Insulza and the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the OAS, Ambassador Bayney R. Karran, signed the document, while at the same time expressing their wishes for the elections in the Caribbean nation to take place in an environment of normalcy and transparency.

Secretary General Insulza thanked the Government of Guyana for the opportunity it brings to the OAS to observe this electoral process and recalled the strong presence the country has had in regional and international relations. "I hope that all this international activity will now be accompanied by a very good coop in matters that are really of concern for the Guyanese democracy," he said. "Your country has a solid democratic vocation and a clear will from its authorities to carry out an election that is transparent and satisfactory for everybody."

For his part, Ambassador Karran recalled that since 1992 his country has achieved great progress in the strengthening of electoral democracy, and that "the Organization of American States has played a very important role in that area." "We are looking forward to having elections that are going to express the free will of the Guyanese people and establish the bases for the continuing strengthening of democracy," he concluded.

Also present at the signing ceremony on behalf of the ALADI Group was the Interim Representative of Argentina to the OAS, Martín Gómez Bustillo.

A gallery of photos of the event is available [here](#).

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Organization of American States Electoral Observation Mission Established in Guyana

November 22, 2011

Professor Gordon Shirley, the Chief of Mission for the Organization of American States Electoral Observation Mission in Guyana (OAS/EOM) arrived yesterday in Georgetown, Guyana to prepare for the OAS/EOM that will be deployed for the November 28, 2011 Guyanese General Elections. Professor Shirley is currently the Principal of the Mona campus at the University of the West Indies and a former permanent representative to the OAS.

The OAS/EOM Guyana is conducting this observation mission following an invitation from the Government of Guyana and the mission will formally begin its work today following the signing of the electoral observation agreement between the OAS and the Guyana Elections Commission.

Leading up to election day Professor Shirley and members of the OAS/EOM team will be meeting and conducting interviews with the electoral authorities, political, governmental and international community representatives as well as with members of the media and of civil society in Guyana.

Also, later this week the OAS/EOM will deploy some 25 international electoral observers across Guyana in preparation for the election. These observer teams will also be in place throughout election day to observe the electoral process from the opening of the polls to the counting of results.

The OAS/EOM has noted with interest that both political parties and the media have each adopted and signed a Code of Conduct in view of ensuring that the electoral process unfolds in a fair and equitable manner, with respect and non-violence as cornerstones of a fair democratic process. The OAS/EOM urges all participants in the electoral process to adhere to these agreed to codes and conduct themselves according to the agreed to principles.

The OAS/EOM encourages all electoral participants to ensure that the November 28 election is conducted in a framework of peace and normalcy.

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Reference: E-970/11

Integrating a Gender Perspective into OAS Electoral Observation Missions

November 24, 2011

Professor Gordon Shirley, the Chief of Mission for OAS/EOM Guyana wishes to announce that at the November 28, 2011 general and regional elections in Guyana, the Organization of American States (OAS) through its Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) will for the first time in the Caribbean implement a methodology to incorporate the level of gender participation in its electoral observation missions. This methodology will allow the OAS to assess the full and equal participation of both women and men in the electoral process at all levels, as well as contribute recommendations to member states on how to improve in this area. The methodology assesses women and men's participation at the following levels:

- As voters;
- As candidates and political activists; and
- As leaders within state institutions.

"In general, the methodology will analyze the diverse factors that directly and indirectly influence the opportunities and the barriers to participation in the political process specifically faced by women", said Professor Shirley. "This gender mainstreaming initiative will contribute a significant new level of data on women's political participation throughout the region", he added.

The project was initiated in November 2009 with support from the governments of Canada, Germany, and Spain. Other pilot projects of this methodology to date have been conducted in the Latin American countries of Paraguay, Peru, Guatemala and Colombia.

"The OAS/EOM wishes to highlight the fact that Guyana is the only country in the Caribbean that to date has established a gender quota for party lists. The OAS/EOM hopes that this legal advance will be reflected in practice with the active participation of women in the coming election and that the country will continue to promote women's participation in all aspects of public life", said Professor Shirley.

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Reference: E-973/11

Organization of American States Electoral Observer mission in Guyana trains and prepares to deploy election observers throughout Guyana

November 25, 2011

Professor Gordon Shirley, Chief of Mission for the OAS\EOM Guyana is pleased to announce that the international team of OAS\EOM Guyana election observers will be receiving their training tomorrow, Friday November 25, 2011 in preparation for deployment throughout Guyana in view of the Monday November 25, 2011 general and regional elections.

"I am delighted that the OAS\EOM Guyana has been able to field the largest number of international observers at this election," said Professor Shirley. "Some 25 election Observers from 14 countries will begin to be deployed tomorrow and will be present throughout Guyana in the period leading to election day and will be present across Guyana on election day from the opening of the polls until the last ballot is cast" he added.

The OAS\EOM Guyana is represented by observers from the following countries:

- Antigua & Barbuda
- Argentina
- Barbados
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Jamaica
- Martinique
- Mexico
- St. Lucia
- Trinidad & Tobago
- UK
- USA
- Venezuela

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Reference: E-974/11

Organization of American States Electoral Observer Mission in Guyana summarises its work thus far

November 26, 2011

(Georgetown, Guyana - November 26, 2011) Professor Gordon Shirley, Chief of Mission for the OAS/EOM Guyana reports that he and members the OAS/EOM team have conducted a large number of meetings and interviews over the past week in view of assessing the political and social context in these days leading up to the Monday November 28, 2011 general and regional elections.

"I have personally met with representatives of political parties, the electoral authorities, civil society, and the media to assess the environment in the period leading up to election day," said Professor Shirley. "Following these meetings, I am encouraged that all interveners in the electoral process have confidence in the general and regional elections of Monday November 28, 2011, that preparations for the vote are well in hand and that there are no significant impediments to delivering a smooth and inclusive general and regional election", he added.

In the past few days the Chief of Mission and his team have met or will be meeting with:

- Senior Governmental officials
- All parties fielding Presidential candidates
- Amerindian groups
- Civil society organisations
- Various levels at GECOM
- Security forces
- Diplomatic and international community
- Print and broadcast media representatives
- Private Sector representatives, and,
- Local observation organizations

Contact:

Press Officer 614-8147

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Reference: E-977/11

OAS\OEM calls on all actors in the electoral process to conduct themselves with dignity and respect for others

November 26, 2011

Professor Gordon Shirley, Chief of Mission for the OAS\OEM Guyana, urges all actors in the electoral process to demonstrate responsible leadership in the final days of the election campaign. "I encourage all political actors to publicly call upon their supporters to remain calm and respectful and to display restraint and tolerance in these final days leading to the Monday November 28, 2011 general and regional elections," he said.

"I also wish to remind political parties, and their candidates and supporters, to adhere to the Code of Conduct that the political parties have all signed and agreed to, and to promote peace and good order on elections day and the days that will follow", said Professor Shirley. "I trust that all interveners will conduct themselves in compliance with all electoral laws and regulations," he added.

The OAS\OEM has fielded 25 observers from 14 countries throughout Guyana in view of Monday's general and regional elections. "Our observers have been deployed and will be present in 9 of the country's 10 administrative regions until the close of all polling places," said Professor Shirley.

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Reference: E-983/11

OAS\EOM in Guyana Continues to Actively Observe the Results Tabulation Process

November 29, 2011

Professor Gordon Shirley, Chief of the Organization of American States (OAS) Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) in Guyana, said today that the OAS\EOM continues to monitor the results gathering process following the November 28, 2011, regional and general elections.

"We currently have observers present at the GECOM tabulation centre and in the office of the returning officer in region 4 who are following each step of the result gathering and tabulation process. These observers have been present on a 24-hour basis since the close of polls," said Professor Shirley. "I urge all actors in the electoral process to remain patient in awaiting the official voting results and to refrain from releasing unofficial election results before the GECOM have completed their work," he added.

"Credible and timely results are the cornerstone of any electoral process and the only official results are those released by the duly constituted electoral authority. Releasing unconfirmed and unverified election results may lead to confusion among electors and party supporters and are not constructive," said Professor Shirley.

The OAS\EOM will soon issue its preliminary report and recommendations on the Guyana general and regional election process.

The OAS\EOM has fielded 25 observers from 14 countries throughout Guyana in view of Guyana's general and regional elections, and observers have been present in 9 of the country's 10 administrative regions.

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

Reference: E-981/11



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