

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
ELECTORAL OBSERVER MISSION TO DOMINICA
PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

On the invitation of the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) mounted a CARICOM Electoral Observer Mission (CEOM) to monitor the election system and processes, as well as the conduct of the General Elections held on 18 December 2009.

The Observer Mission was led by Mr. Hensley Robinson, former Chief Elections Officer of Barbados, while the other members of the Mission were drawn from Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Jamaica and the CARICOM Secretariat.

The CEOM arrived in Dominica on 15 December 2009.

Before observing the conduct of elections, the Chief of Mission paid courtesy calls on His Excellency President Nicholas Liverpool and the Prime Minister, Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit. The Mission also held consultations with the leadership of the Dominica Labour Party (DLP), the United Workers Party (UWP), the Dominica Freedom Party (DFP), the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) and the People's Progressive Party (PPP), as well as with the Dominica Electoral Commission, the Media Workers Association of Dominica, the Dominica Christian Council and Dominica Evangelical Association, the Dominica National Council of Women, the Dominica Bar Association and the Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce. These representatives engaged in a wide-ranging exchange of views which assisted the mission's assessment of the environment in which the elections took place.

The CEOM also observed motorcades and attended political party rallies held during the period of their stay in Dominica.

On the day of the elections the seven member mission monitored the electoral process, including the opening of the Poll, the voting process, the closing of the Poll and the counting of the ballots in a majority of the 236 polling stations established throughout the 21 constituencies for the elections.

The Mission noted that the poll workers executed their duties in a satisfactory manner which allowed for the efficient and impartial conduct of the voting process. The security was adequate and the officers displayed a very professional approach to the electors, which served to contribute to the calm atmosphere in the polling locations.

The Mission's assessment of the conduct of the Poll is that voters were able to cast their ballots without intimidation or harassment, and that the voting process was conducted in an orderly, free and peaceful manner. The process was transparent and the secrecy of the ballot was respected. The Mission believes that the outcome of elections was a true reflection of the will of the people.

The Mission commends the people of Dominica for the peaceful manner in which the elections were conducted reflecting the continuing commitment to the democratic process as practiced in the Caribbean Community.

A Report of the General Elections will be subsequently prepared and submitted to the CARICOM Secretary-General, His Excellency Edwin W. Carrington, which will include recommendations relating to best practice in relation to the electoral process.

The CARICOM Electoral Observer Mission is very pleased with, and grateful for, the cooperation received from the representatives of the various stakeholders with whom they met. The Mission particularly wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the warm welcome received from the electorate during the course of its mission.

**CARICOM Electoral Observer Mission
Roseau, Dominica.
19 December 2009**