



CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION PRELIMINARY STATEMENT, NEVIS ISLAND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, 22 JANUARY 2013

The CARICOM Electoral Observer Mission (CEOM) was invited by the Government of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis to observe the Nevis Island Assembly Elections held 22 January 2013.

The Mission was tasked with the responsibility, among other things, of observing the electoral machinery specifically with respect to the conduct of the vote to the Nevis Island Assembly. Prior to deployment, the Mission held discussions with the electoral management body with the objective of achieving greater understanding of the state of readiness of the machinery and any issues having the likelihood of impacting the election. Meetings were sought with several other stakeholders with the said intent, however due to the short time span between the arrival of the Mission and its deployment, these meetings did not materialise.

The CEOM deployed its members to the five (5) constituencies where the conduct of the poll was observed in all locations. The Mission took note of and generally observed the following as preliminary findings:

1. The poll was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere without any incidence of intimidation observed or being reported. The citizens of Nevis exercised their democratic right in a civil and responsible manner demonstrating respect for the electoral process.
2. Polling Stations, in the majority of instances, opened on time and it was observed that all the Polling Officials were present. The Police provided adequate security at all polling stations.
3. Polling Stations appeared to be suitable in terms of location and capacity to accommodate elections. The Stations seem to have been adequately supplied with the necessary material and the staff fairly knowledgeable about polling procedures. Most of the Presiding Officers and other electoral officials appeared confident and composed, and despite inconsistencies in the application of procedures, generally operated within the framework of the law.
4. Supplementary Lists were distributed on the morning of the Election. The production of these lists resulted from an affidavit filed in January 21, 2013 and the subsequent order of the High Court. The CEOM observed that in several instances, the list arrived within the first four hours after the opening of the stations.

5. The CEOM is also aware that there are several areas in the administration of the electoral process which require urgent attention, details of which will be provided in the Mission's final report to be submitted to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
6. The CEOM makes reference to the report of the previous CEOM submitted following the July 2011 elections, noting that several of the recommendations contained therein bear currency to this election and perhaps merit consideration.
7. The CEOM notes improvement in the general logistic arrangements, especially as it related to areas such as the relocation of the polling stations previously situated at Ivor Walters School in the constituency of St. Johns (Nevis 2). The Stations were relocated to the Special Education School. The CEOM also notes that in the said constituency an additional polling station was established at Cox.

Finally, the Mission wishes to congratulate the People of Nevis on their commitment to the principles and traditions of democracy demonstrated by the voter turnout and the discipline, goodwill and general camaraderie displayed at the polling stations.

Charlestown, Nevis
23 January 2013