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Electoral Assistance Bureau

**EAB Final Report: General and Regional Elections, 28th August 2006,
Co-operative Republic of Guyana**

March 7th, 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The EAB wishes to thank the hundreds of volunteers who gave unreservedly of their time and personal resources to ensure the success of the Election Day observation exercise. It is indeed gratifying to record the deep sense of commitment to Guyana demonstrated by the over 2000 volunteers who manned the hotlines, trained observers, observed elections and gave freely of their time and resources to serve as supervisors.

We record our most sincere gratitude to our sponsor organisations and other private sector companies that assisted the EAB's Elections Observation Programme.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the members of the EAB's Council of Management, project staff, devoted long term volunteers and consultants for their generosity of spirit and the many long hours they contributed to the EAB Election Day Observation exercise.

We also wish to thank all the stakeholders and the public for their support and cooperation and our donors for their contribution of resources that made this exercise possible.

ACRONYMNS & ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	- Alliance for Change
CCWU	- Clerical & Commercial Workers Union
CEO	- Chief Election Officer
Council	- The EAB Council of Management
DL	- Divisional List
EAB	- Electoral Assistance Bureau
ECD	- East Coast Demerara
EVER	- Election Violence and Resolution Project
GAP-ROAR	- Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild
GBA	- Guyana Bar Association
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
GECOM	- Guyana Elections Commission
GL&SC	- Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission
GNC	- Guyana National Congress
GPSU	- Guyana Public Service Union
ID	- Identification
IRO	- Inter-Religious Organisation
JFAP	- Justice for All Party
LD	- Liberal Democrats
MMU	- Media Monitoring Unit
NDF	- National Democratic Front
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	- National Registration Centre
OLE	- Official List of Electors
PLE	- Preliminary List of Electors
PLE	- Preliminary List of Electors
PNCR-1G	- People's National Congress Reform – One Guyana
PPP/C	- People's Progressive Party/Civic
PRP	- People's Republican Party
PSC	- Private Sector Commission
RLE	- Revised List of Electors
SoP	- Statement of Poll
SQL	- Structured Query Language
The Project	- The "Supporting the 2006 Electoral Process" Project
TUC	- Trades Union Congress
TUF	- The United Force
WCB	- West Coast Berbice

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FOREWORD

Guyana took a tremendous and important leap in 2006 when the national elections were declared to be free, fair and peaceful for the first time since Independence. The struggle to attain this goal was long and hard and has left its mark on every aspect of our common life.

We continue to suffer from the effects of ethnic suspicion, economic stagnation and a general loss of vision. And always the main casualty is Guyana which we all pretend to love.

The Electoral Assistance Bureau by its involvement with the electoral process over the past fifteen years has put us all in its debt by its active support of one of the main pillars of good governance, namely a fair electoral system.

The opportunity to build on what has been achieved now beckons once again and this may well be our last chance to attain the social, political and economic goals we all seek as a nation.

Rt. Rev. Bishop Randolph George
Bishop of Guyana

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE BUREAU

The Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB) is a Guyanese, non-partisan, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It was formed in June 1991, with the main objective of assisting in the establishment, maintenance and preservation of democracy, particularly with regards to the election process. The EAB has functioned in the main as a citizen-based election monitoring organisation during both regional and national elections in Guyana since 1991.

Over the years, well respected citizens have served on the EAB's Council of Management, including the late Dr. Makepeace Richmond, Clairmont Lye, Eileen Cox, Nigel Hughes, Miles Fitzpatrick, David Spence and Philip Chan. For the 2006 Elections the Council of Management was made up of Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues, Chairman, Christopher Fernandes, Sheila George, Simone Mangal and Carl Sylvester. All directors serve on a voluntary basis.

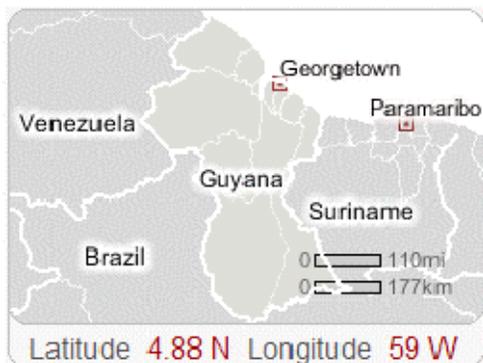
A team of full-time staff implemented programmes articulated by the Council. In 2006, the staff comprised David Yhann, Project Director; Samantha Philander, Project Officer; Elaine Constantine, Office Manager; Aslin Abrams, Office Assistant; and Shaneez Yarde, Office Attendant. Where required, volunteers assisted in programme implementation. The EAB has on file a total of over 2000 volunteers, some of whom gave voluntary service, others to whom a stipend was paid.

The EAB is funded in part by local donations, but the greater portion of its operations to date has been financed by the Donor Group. EAB is sponsored by the Anglican Church, the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana, the Clerical and Commercial Workers Union, the Guyana Bar Association, the Guyana Central Arya Samaj, the Roman Catholic Church, the Guyana Medical Association, the Guyana Council of Churches, the Consumers Advisory Bureau, the Guyana Consumers Association and the Private Sector Commission.

The EAB has monitored the following elections: the 1992 National and Regional Elections, the 1994 Local Government Elections and the 1997 and 2001 National and Regional Elections. The programmes undertaken included testing of the voters' lists, the PVL and the FVL (all elections), voter education (1992 & 1994), media monitoring (1997), campaign and monitoring (1994 & 1997), and the fielding of local observers at polling stations. The EAB has produced reports on its activities since its formation in 1991.

The contribution made by the Electoral Assistance Bureau to the restoration of democracy in Guyana has been noted in the US Congressional Record, and has been attested to as well by the Carter Center of Emory University, the late President Jagan, and by the Guyanese people themselves.

COUNTRY BACKGROUND



The Cooperative Republic of Guyana, located on the northern coast of South America, achieved independence from Britain on May 26, 1966. Within its large, diverse geographical area of 83,000 square miles live 750,000 people. It is estimated that 90% of Guyana's population occupy 10% of the country, this being the narrow strip of fertile, coastal area bordering the Atlantic Ocean. The remaining 10% of the population is scattered throughout the remainder of the country, occupying the mountainous savannah and other hinterland areas.

Guyana's population comprises diverse ethnic groupings: East Indian (43.5%), African (30.2%), Mixed (16.7%), Indigenous Peoples (9.1%) and Portuguese (0.2%), Chinese (0.2%) and others (0.1%). Tensions exist in relations between the two major groups, the East Indians and the Africans, which impact major societal issues.

The Political Context

In January 1950, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) was formed with Cheddi Jagan as political leader and Forbes Burnham as chairman. The PPP won the overwhelming majority of legislative seats in 1953 general elections and Dr. Jagan led the first government elected under universal adult suffrage. 133 days after assuming office, the PPP Ministers were removed from office, and the Governor declared a state of emergency. Elections were not held again until 1957.

During this period of interim British rule, a split took place within the PPP. Mr. Burnham departed to form the People's National Congress. Political polarisation along racial lines became apparent. In the 1957 elections the PPP drew most of its support from Indo-Guyanese, while the PNC secured its support mainly from among Afro-Guyanese.

The PPP won the 1957 as well as the 1961 elections. By this time, the clamour for independence was growing - an issue on which the PNC and the PPP agreed. Anxious to contain the world-wide spread of communism, the US and British Governments were reluctant to grant independence under a PPP Government, which they viewed as being leftist.¹ Racially oriented civil disturbance broke out in 1962, which exacerbated the racial political divide.

The 1964 elections were contested under a change from the first pass-the-post to one of proportional representation, and so although the PPP won the most votes of any single party contesting the elections, the then governor of the colony invited the PNC and the smaller party, the United Force, to form a coalition. Mr. Burnham was called upon to form the new government and independence was granted in 1966. The PPP remained in opposition until 1992.

¹ SIRS Researcher. 1994, Social Issues Resources Series, Inc., pp 26.

The PNC held power from 1964 until 1992. During this period there were credible and persistent allegations of electoral irregularities, including vote rigging and list padding.

In 1985, the PNC Government (after the death of Forbes Burnham and the succession of Desmond Hoyte) embarked on a programme of economic reform. In 1990, Mr. Hoyte agreed to key reforms of the electoral process. In 1992 elections were held under the scrutiny of international, regional, and local observers. The process was not without flaw, and there was a brief period of civil commotion and uncertainty. However, the PPP won the majority of parliamentary seats, and the overall results were endorsed by the local and international observers.

Dr. Jagan died in March 1997 before the next scheduled National and Regional Elections were held. Mrs. Janet Jagan succeeded him as the PPP's presidential candidate and the PPP was declared to have won the majority of parliamentary seats in the December 1997 poll. The local and international observers endorsed the results, but acknowledged that administrative challenges persisted, and made several key recommendations in this regard. The period immediately following the poll was again marked by civil commotion and public protest, which extended into the New Year. An injunction was sought to prevent the installation of Mrs. Jagan and an Elections petition was filed in the High Court challenging the results. The PNC protested the results, and under a CARICOM brokered agreement, the PPP and the PNC signed the Herdmanston Accord on January 17, 1998. The accord agreed upon measures to be implemented over the next three years. These measures included constitutional reform and fresh elections.

In keeping with the 1998 Herdmanston Accord, new elections were scheduled for 15th January 2001, 36 months from the date of the signing of the Accord. However, in November 2000 the Chairman of the GECOM stated that the Commission would be unable to meet the requirements for conducting acceptable elections by that date. On 7th December 2000, representatives of the four parliamentary parties, the PPP/C, PNC/R, WPA and TUF met with President Jagdeo and agreed that the elections should take place on 19th March 2001. In the meanwhile, Elections petition was determined, and the court ruled that the incumbent government should continue in office "under virtue of the Order of the Court," until new elections were held.

Local and international observers generally endorsed the official results of the 2001 Elections. However, they acknowledged the presence of "administrative problems, training issues and some bad decisions."² The PPP won by a three seat majority,³ but racially motivated political unrest was once again evident⁴.

Based on the experience of the past three Elections, there was evidence that racially motivated acts of violence rose during an election period. As preparations advanced for the 2006 Elections, there was growing concern that increased availability and use of firearms could make a qualitative difference in the pre- and post- elections violence, as compared with 1997 and 2001.

² EAB 2001 General and Regional Elections Report

³ Refer to Appendices VIII-X

⁴ Refer to Appendix XI: Post-elections incidents and occurrences

The Economic Context

With a per capita income less than one-fifth the South American average, Guyana ranks among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. After growing at an average of almost 4% during the period 1970-1975, the Guyana economy went into decline. The accumulated growth of total gross domestic product (GDP) for the period 1976 -1990 was -32.8%.⁵ A crippling external debt (around US\$1.2B⁶), though considerably reduced from a high in the early 1990's of US\$2.1B) has hampered and continues to hamper efforts aimed at restoring the nation's dilapidated physical and social infrastructures.

Beginning in 1989 the government, via international assistance, sought to reduce its payment arrears and to raise new funds. The government began to implement measures that moved Guyana towards a market-based economy. The government's stabilisation programme - aimed at establishing realistic exchange rates, price stability, and a resumption of growth - required considerable public administration capabilities and continued consumer patience.⁷ Turnaround of the mining and agricultural sectors led to an average growth rate of real GDP of about 7% during the period 1991-1995.⁸ Economic growth declined significantly towards the end of the 1990s, and went into negative growth in 2000 and 2003. The post 1997 and 2001 election turmoil and the resultant political instability are widely regarded as being a major contributing factor to the sluggish economic performance in recent years.

Continued growth is threatened by the weakness of key infrastructural areas such as electricity, water and roads. Heavy migration, which has continued unabated for over 3 decades, together with an inadequate system of education, contributes to a severe lack of trained personnel to sustain the recovery effort. The reduction and eventual removal of the preferential price regime for Guyana's sugar in the European Market will put efforts to expand the economy under further stress.

Electoral Context

In 1991 President Desmond Hoyte agreed to a menu of electoral reforms. One of the most important reforms brought overall control of the elections process, including responsibility for the production of the voters' list, under an independent Elections Commission. GECOM was established consisting of a full-time Chairman and members. Under an arrangement first suggested by President Carter, and now adopted in the Constitution, the Chairman of the Elections Commission is "appointed by the President from a list of six persons ... submitted by the Leader of the Opposition, after meaningful consultation with the non-governmental political parties represented in the National Assembly."⁹ Three members are appointed by the President "acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition tendered after meaningful

⁵ ECLAC 1991. Vol.1, United Nations, Santiago, Chile, 1993.

⁶ CIA, CIA World Fact Book, Rank-Order-Debt-External, 17-Feb-2006, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2079rank.html>

⁷ World Atlas MPC. Vol.4.01, 1993.

⁸ Guyana: Selected Socio-Economic Indicators 1991-1995. Bureau of Statistics, State Planning Secretariat, Guyana, 1996.

⁹ Refer to Article 161(2), Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

consultation with non-governmental political parties represented in the National Assembly ..., [and three members are] appointed ..., acting in his own deliberate judgement.”¹⁰ The Commission oversees the work of the National Registration Centre (NRC), which carries out the tasks of registering voters, issuing identification cards and arranging the logistics of Election Day activities.

National Needs

Elections Commissions in Guyana have historically had to contend with high participation in and significant public scepticism about the electoral process. Past experiences with flawed voters' lists, seizures of ballot boxes by the military, the abuse of state resources by the incumbent party and the use of violence, particularly on Election Day, make the work of GECOM critical to national development. The conduct of the 2006 elections will have an affect on investments and job creation as both foreign and Guyanese investors assess the risk factor.

The crises of confidence surrounding the 1997 and 2001 electoral processes is, as has been stated elsewhere by EAB, a direct result of electoral flaws - not fraud – compounded by a lack of political good will and trust. When added to misinformation, inflammatory statements and actions, the potential for civil commotion increases significantly.

An important aspect of GECOM's work, in ensuring a free and fair election, is the compilation (or updating) of the preliminary and final voters' lists. As a local civic organisation, EAB has played a critical role in past monitoring efforts, especially in testing the voters' list. Various tests at various times have been able to calm fears. Testing of the 2006 voters' lists has similarly served to support the electoral process.

EAB has always opted for local observers to emphasise the belief that the electoral process exists for the greater good of Guyana. By encouraging civic involvement, EAB hoped to contribute to the creation of a new political culture where citizens avoid passivity and develop a stronger voice in all national issues.

EAB has developed critical core competencies and experience in local elections monitoring. One hundred and twenty five observers were fielded at the 1994 local government elections while almost 600 observers were deployed at the 1997 national and regional elections and close to a 1000 in 2001 national and regional elections. Local observers have played a vital, non-partisan role in recording the events of Election Day. They have been an objective source of information available in assessing the conduct of past elections. EAB's experience confirms that local observers are not merely good deterrents of electoral fraud but they continue their work as concerned citizens after elections in other spheres of national life.

EAB recognises the critical role which international observers have played in supporting Guyana's elections. The voice which such groups can bring to bear on electoral issues has a resonance which compliments groups like EAB. In recognition of this critical role as well as the inherent weaknesses of international observer groups (small numbers, limited time on the ground etc.) EAB is aware of the value of close cooperation and coordination amongst (and between) local and international observer groups as a means of achieving the mutual reinforcement of both efforts.

¹⁰ Ibid.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Electoral Assistance Bureau (*EAB*) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organisation that was established in 1991 to assist in the establishment, maintenance and preservation of democracy in Guyana, and particularly in the establishment and maintenance of democratic elections. Since its establishment in 1991, the EAB has monitored and observed the 1992, 1997, and 2001 National and Regional Elections, and the 1994 Local Government Elections. The EAB seeks to verify whether elections are conducted in a free and fair manner in order to inform stakeholder confidence in specific elections events and to promote public confidence in a national electoral system.

In the past, the EAB focused on various aspects of the preparations for Election Day, including testing for the accuracy of the Preliminary and Revised Lists of Electors (PLE and RLE), monitoring of political party campaigns and media coverage

thereof, voter education and information, and Election Day observation.

For the 2006 elections, the EAB's programme of activities started with two main components:

1. Testing of the 2006
(a) PLE and (b) RLE
(Field, In-house, and
Computer tests)
2. Observing the voting
processes on Election
Day.

However, as the project began to be elaborated, it was deemed appropriate to add three more components:

3. Monitoring elections-
related violence
4. Voter information
5. Promotion of a
peaceful climate.

2 ELECTORAL STRUCTURE

Constitutional & Legal Framework

The National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana is elected through General and Regional elections. These elections have in the past taken place simultaneously and are based on hybrid system of proportional representation and geographic constituencies. Guyana's Constitution provides for Parliament to be dissolved no later than five years from the date the National Assembly first met after the previous dissolution. The Constitution was amended in May 2006 to extend by one month the mandatory requirement to hold General and Regional Elections within three months of the date of dissolution. The prerogative of choosing the date for elections is that of the President.

The Parliament consists of 65 Members who are elected in the General Election. Forty (40) are elected from the National "Top-up" lists and twenty five (25) from the 10 Geographic Constituencies, which correspond to the 10 Administrative Regions.¹¹ The geographic seats are allocated according to the Constitution.

A vote in the General Election for a particular list is deemed a vote for the presidential candidate of that list. The President is declared from the list receiving the most votes. The distribution of the 40 "Top-up" seats is arrived at by dividing the total number of valid votes cast in the General Election by 40 and allocating proportionally according to this "electoral quota" the seats gained by each contesting list of candidates. Upon a party being

allocated its number of seats, the representative of each party's list extracts from the list the names of candidates who are to become Members of the National Assembly.

Table 1 Electoral District/Geographic Constituency

District	Area	No. of Seats
1	Barima/Waini	2
2	Pomeroon/Supenaam	2
3	West Demerara/ Essequibo Islands	3
4	Demerara/Mahaica	7
5	Mahaica/Berbice	2
6	East Berbice Corentyne	3
7	Cuyuni/Mazaruni	2
8	Potaro/Siparuni	1
9	Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo	1
10	Upper Demerara/Berbice	2

The distribution of geographic seats allocated for each geographic constituency is arrived at by dividing the total number of valid votes cast in that constituency by the number of seats allocated for that constituency and allocating proportionally according to this constituency electoral quota.

Guyana is divided into ten administrative regions. This constitutes the basis for the Regional Elections. In these Elections, electors vote for regional lists of candidates.

Guyanese citizens and Commonwealth citizens resident in Guyana for at least one year who attain the age of eighteen years are eligible to be registered as voters. A person must be registered to be able to vote.

¹¹ Refer to Table 1

Administrative Structure

For the first time, the 2006 Elections will be administered by a permanent Elections Commission. It was established under amended Article 161 of the Constitution, and is responsible for "exercising powers or performing duties connected with or relating to the registration of voters and the administrative conduct of the elections."

The Commission consists of a Chairman and six other members. The Chairman is appointed by the President from a list of six persons submitted by the Leader of the Opposition after he has meaningfully consulted with the non-governmental political parties represented in the National Assembly. The six members comprises three nominees from the ruling party and three from the parliamentary opposition parties. Each Commissioner has a single vote, with the Chairman having a casting vote.

The compilation of the voter register is administered by the Commissioner of Registration, while the running of the elections itself is the responsibility of the Chief Election Officer. Historically, however, both these functions had been the responsibility of one person. For the 2006 elections these positions were held by Mr. Gooool Boodoo, who had also carried out these functions in 2001.

The process of voter registration and objections to the inclusion of persons' names on the preliminary voters' list is carried out by Electoral Registrars and their assistants, who are responsible for specific geographical areas.

Election Day activities are supervised by Returning Officers, one for each of the country's ten Regions. These Officers are in turn assisted by Assistants and Deputies.

Each polling place is attended by a Presiding Officer and Assistant Presiding Officer, two Poll Clerks, and a Ballot Clerk/Counting Assistant. Every contesting political party or group is permitted to have a representative polling agent (poll watcher) to observe Election Day proceedings in each polling place.

Votes are counted at the place of poll in the presence of party polling agents and observers, and a Statement of Poll is sent by the Presiding Officer to the relevant Returning Officer (or his deputy) who then collates all the results for polling divisions under his jurisdiction, and forwards them to the Chief Election Officer.

Polling is required by law to be carried out over a period of twelve consecutive hours, traditionally from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Formation of the Elections Commission

Utilising the formula suggested by President Jimmy Carter in 1991 for the formation of the Elections Commission, a consensus Chairman was chosen by President Jagdeo from a list presented by the leader of the opposition, Mr. Robert Corbin in September 2002. Three Commissioners were appointed by the governing party, while three were to be appointed by the opposition Parliamentary parties. The Commission was formed with Dr. Steve Surujbally, Chairman, the governing party's members, Mr. Moen Mc Doom, Dr. Keshav Mangal and Mr. Mohamood Shaw, and the opposition parties' members, Mr. Haslyn Parris, Mr. Lloyd Joseph and Mr. Robert Williams.

Accreditation of Observers

Like the other local observers, the EAB was accredited by the GECOM, at its discretion, under Section 17 of Chapter 1:11, Election Laws, of the Laws of Guyana. Section 17 states that “The Elections Commission may approve of local organisations observing the democratic process involved in any election providing such organisations fulfil such conditions as may be stipulated by the Elections Commission.” However, international observers are accredited by the Office of the President under Chapter 1:10, General Elections (Observers) Act, which sets out clear rights and responsibilities for international observers. The fact that GECOM was not required to accredit local observers or to facilitate them in the execution of their functions and duties as elections observers, served to undermine the quality of the EAB’s 2006 electoral project.

Voting Procedures

Typical voting procedures require that upon entering the polling place, the voter gives his National ID card to the Poll Clerk who locates the voter's name and serial number on the voters’ list and announces this for the benefit of the party agents. The Poll Clerk then ticks off the voter’s name on the list and returns the ID card to the elector.

The voter thereafter proceeds to the Assistant Presiding Officer (APO) who takes the ID card, satisfies himself as to the

voter's identity and ensures that the name is on the list. The APO then selects a ballot paper, writes the voter's serial number on the counterfoil and stamps the back of the ballot paper with the official six-digit mark of the polling place. The APO next shows the voter how the ballot paper should be folded, directs the voter to the polling booth, marks the voters’ list to indicate that the ballot paper was issued, and returns the ID card to the voter. The voter then goes to the poll booth, marks his ballot, and proceeds to have his finger inked by the Ballot Clerk. Finally, the voter puts the ballot in the ballot box and leaves the polling place immediately.

In cases that deviate from the norm, voters are attended to by the Presiding Officer. Such cases include:

1. Where an elector's name had been ticked but he claims he had not voted.
2. Where details on the ID card differ from those on the list.
3. Where a person voted as proxy.
4. Persons with Certificates of Employment that have been issued by GECOM.
5. Handicapped voters.

3 ELECTORAL PREPARATIONS

Pre-election Period

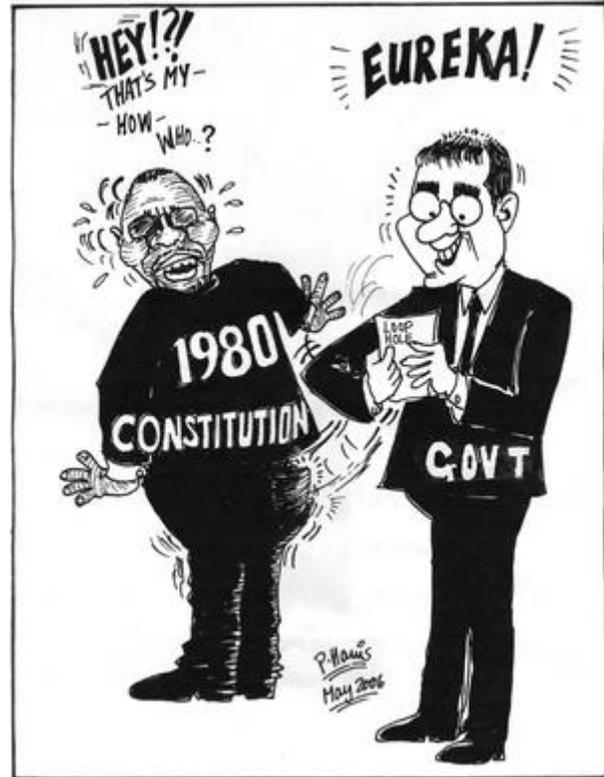
Extension of the life of parliament

According to the Guyana Constitution the life of the 8th Parliament would have expired on 2nd April 2006 and the 9th Parliament would have been required to meet on 2nd August 2006. Therefore, in keeping with the time table specified by the Guyana Constitution, General and Regional elections would have had to be held on a prior date to facilitate the convening of the first session of the new Parliament.

However, when it became evident that the GECOM time table for holding elections would have been outside of the constitutional timelines, Parliament voted by simple majority to extend its life by a month and to amend Article 61 of the Constitution to extend the period for the holding of elections after the dissolution of parliament from three to four months. Consequently, the new constitutional deadline for elections was 2nd September 2006. It is important to note that Article 69, which sets the timeframe for holding the 1st session of a new parliament after elections, was not amended.

Voters' list

The 2006 Official List of Electors (OLE) was based on the 2001 OLE, which was produced from the 1997 house-to-house registration exercise. The National Registration (Amendment) Bill 2005 cleared the way for the 2001 OLE to be used as the basis for new registration for the 2006 OLE. The passage of the bill also allowed GECOM to undertake verification exercises at any stage during the registration process.



Courtesy Stabroek News

During the parliamentary debate of the bill the opposition members contended that the list was flawed and called for a house-to-house verification exercise to remove records of those persons who had died or migrated. The opposition also called for finger print biometrics to reduce the possibility of multiple registrations. However, the ruling party expressed its general satisfaction with the quality of the voters' list and with the safeguards that were to be put in place to prevent multiple voting. The differences in opinion produced a tense political environment, especially in the period following the publication of the Preliminary List of Electors (PLE).

Another contentious issue was whether Guyanese citizens were required to be resident in the Guyana to be eligible for

inclusion in the voters' list. Several legal opinions for and against were put forward, including one from the Attorney General who offered the view that residency was not a requirement.

On completion of the PLE, the law requires relevant copies to be posted up in public places all over the country. A period of time to be determined by the Commission is then given for Claims – the examination of the lists for the purpose of correction of details of registrants or for the addition of eligible new registrants. An additional period is provided for the purpose of Objections to names (for example, of dead persons) on the list.¹²

Claims & Objections

Consequent on the publication of the PLE, a 34 day period was allowed for members of the public to submit claims to be entered on the list and objections to records contained in the list. The Claims and Objections period was extended by 12 days, in part to make up for delays in start up of operations at some registration centres. The PNCR called for a further extension of the Claims and Objections period, 'saying that the time allocated for the exercise was "wholly inadequate to ensure that eligible voters have a fair opportunity to get their names on the voters' list."¹³ The PNCR alleged that GECOM Officers were hampering their "objections" work.

Between 12,000 and 15,000 objections to entries on the PLE were filed. The PPP/C alleged that bulk objections were filed by

¹² National Registration Act, Chapter 19:08, Section 15

¹³ Stabroek News, Article: *PPP/C says PNCR filing bulk objections to delay elections*, disenfranchise-main opposition in new call for extension, Monday Stabroek, June 12th 2006, Guyana Publications Inc., Guyana

PNCR activists to delay elections and disenfranchise voters.



Courtesy Stabroek News

Hearings were held to determine the validity of the claims and objections submitted, but only approximately 5 % were upheld. The PNCR has alleged that "GECOM departed from the [Regulations stipulated in the National Registration Act] by initiating the hearings two days in advance of the statutory start date,"¹⁴ not holding the required investigations and not posting the list of objections in accordance with the regulations. The PNCR also claimed that "objections were filed after field visits were carried out to establish if voters were still resident at the addresses given on the list, and multiple visits were made at different times in the day to ensure accuracy."¹⁵ From

¹⁴ Andre Haynes, Article: *PNCR filed thousands of objections, 95% rejected*, Thursday Stabroek, July 6th 2006, Guyana Publications Inc., Guyana

¹⁵ Ibid.

reports in the media, the majority of the “objectees”, most of whom did not appear at the hearings, may not have received notices because these were held up in the local postal system. Overall, it appears that the process for managing the Claims and Objections for the PLE was affected by administrative failings.

EAB List Tests

The EAB conducted in-house, computer and field sample tests of the 2006 Preliminary and Revised Lists of Electors¹⁶ (PLE and RLE). The sample test of the RLE found that out of sample of 1159 records drawn from the RLE, 93.87% were accounted for and 6.13% were not accounted for. This translates into the sample result of voters accounted for lying between 90.93% and 96.81%. The 93.87% accounted for is made up of two categories: persons interviewed (61.34%) and persons for whom information was received from third parties (32.53%). Based on the findings of the tests, the EAB also concluded that:

- Less than 1013 possible duplicates exist on the RLE, representing less than 0.21% of the total number of electors.
- No person under the age of 18 years at the qualifying date (15th July 2006) was on the 2006 RLE.
- No person who had not been assigned a National ID number was on the 2006 RLE.
- 99.67% (+/- 2.89%) of the addresses in the records of electors in the RLE had been placed in the correct division.

¹⁶ Refer to **EAB Report: Analysis of 2006 PLE** and **EAB Report: Analysis of 2006 RLE**

Legal Challenges

Two members of the PNCR’s executive approached the law courts for a determination on matters pertaining to the elections. The first was filed in May 2006 and “challenged the constitutionality of the government’s amendment of Article 61 of the Constitution, which extended the period between the dissolution of the parliament and the holding of elections from three to four months.”¹⁷ The second, filed in July 2006, sought the court’s determination on “whether electors have to satisfy a residency requirement in order to vote at the elections.”¹⁸ The Chief Justice found that the law requires that the matters raised in their applications would have to be dealt with by way of an elections petition after the Elections would have been held. (The PNCR-1G¹⁹ has since made it public that its lawyers are appealing the Court’s decision).²⁰

Nomination Day

On Friday, 21st July the Chairman of GECOM informed the President of Guyana that the Official List of Electors (OLE) was ready for publication. On that same day the President announced that Elections would be held on Monday, 28th August 2006. It was subsequently announced that Nomination Day would be Wednesday, 26th July 2006 and that voting by members of the

¹⁷ Stabroek News, Article: *Appeals filed against CJ’s ruling in elections cases*, Thursday Stabroek, August 24th 2006, Guyana Publications Inc., Guyana

¹⁸ Stabroek News, Article: *Decisions in poll cases deferred*, Thursday Stabroek, August 17th 2006, Guyana Publications Inc., Guyana

¹⁹ The PNCR contested the 2006 Elections as the major party in a coalition called the People’s National Congress Reform - One Guyana (PNCR-1G).

²⁰ Letter to the Editor by Robert Corbin, Leader PNCR-1G, Stabroek News, Saturday, 16th September 2006, pg. 6

Disciplined Service would take place on Monday, 21st August 2006.

Nomination day went smoothly, except for minor incidents which were recorded under the EAB/IFES Election Violence Education and Resolution Project (EVER).

Table 2 Lists of Candidates accepted by the Chief Election Officer

No	Abbreviation	Political Party	Presidential Candidates/Leader
1	AFC	Alliance for Change	Mr. Raphael Trotman
2	GAP-ROAR	Guyana Action Party-Rise, Organise And Rebuild	Mr. Paul Hardy
3	GNC	Guyana National Congress	Mr. Samuel Hamer
4	JFAP	Justice For All Party	Mr. C.N. Sharma
5	LD	Liberal Democrats	Mr. Malek Abubekr Cave
6	NDF	National Democratic Front	Mr. Joseph Bacchus
7	PNCR-1G	People's National Congress Reform – One Guyana	Mr. Robert Corbin
8	PPP/C	People's Progressive Party/Civic	Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo
9	PRP	People's Republic Party	Mr. Aubrey Garnett
10	TUF	The United Force	Mr. Manzoor Nadir

Prior to nomination day, at least 33 parties were in existence to contest the Elections. However, on Nomination Day the lists of Candidates for the General and Regional Elections of ten (10) Political Parties were accepted by the Chief Election Officer (CEO) as having fulfilled the requirements for nomination.²¹ The Leader of the United Muslim Party was requested by GECOM to resubmit his party's list of candidates as it did not satisfy the requirement to bear the signatures of persons submitting their list in accordance with the regulations.²² The party

²¹ Refer to Table 2

²² (1) A list of candidates comprising registered voters who are eligible to be members of the National Assembly may be submitted by not less than three hundred and not more than three hundred and thirty persons for national top-up lists, and for each geographical constituency not less than one hundred and fifty and not more than one hundred and seventy-five persons whose names appear at the time of submission on the preliminary list mentioned in section 2(3), whether or not that list has at that date been modified as required by that section and shall be handed together with one copy thereof to the Chief Election Officer by the representative or the deputy representative of the list or by two of the persons named as candidates on the list at the time or by two of the persons named as candidates on the list at the time and place appointed; and the Chief Election Officer shall forthwith cause the copy of the list to be posted in a conspicuous place outside his office.

was given until Friday, 28th July 2006 to resubmit, but it did not do so.

Political and Social environment

In the lead up to elections the major issues that generated tension in the society were the debates over the acceptability of the list, GECOM's readiness to hold elections, and the increase in the number violent crimes. These issues engendered a general sense of unease among the population and fuelled speculation regarding the prospects for a constitutional crisis should the constitutional time table not be met.

A marked escalation in violent crime, especially after the announcement of the date for Election Day, exacerbated the tense social and political atmosphere. Most notable were the execution-style murders of TV personality and political activist Ronald Waddell, Agriculture Minister, Satyadeow Sawh and family members, and five employees of the publishers and printers of the Kaieteur News daily newspaper. The double robbery at Albion on the eve of Elections also increased the level of apprehension among the citizenry.

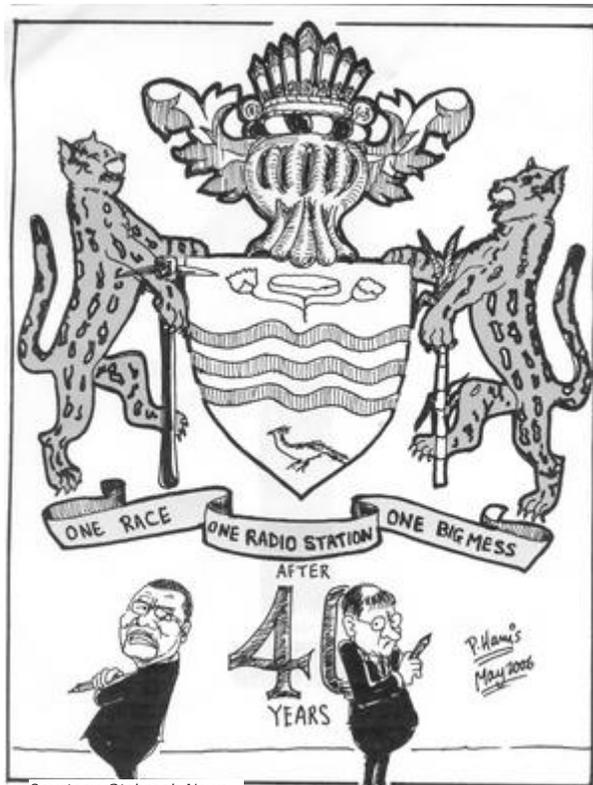
Media Coverage

For the 2006 Elections, GECOM established the Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) to monitor media coverage of the elections campaign and matters related to the elections. Most members of the media, individual practitioners and editors and

(2) A list of candidates shall be in Form 2, and the submission shall bear the signature of each person submitting the same together with his name and the serial number of his registration card.

media owners, undertook to abide by a Media Code of Conduct.

The concern of the media monitoring unit revolved around whether the individual media practitioners, editors and media houses lived up to...or failed to live up to – those standards to which these practitioners were signatories



Courtesy *Stabroek News*

The yardsticks used were fairness, accuracy and balance in the reporting of election “news” particularly as Election Day drew closer and interest rose. Inevitably, the Media Monitoring Unit had to look at political coverage from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

As early as the July 2-25, 2006 Report the Unit was stating, inter alia, that “some media houses have shown measurable improvement during July,” (such a statement highlights the concern the media performance before July was causing) while,

as the Unit continued, “others continue to breach certain aspects of the Media Code of Conduct.” This was in July.

By the end of the exercise the unit had continued to see some improvement in the performance of the print media in so far as fair, accurate and balanced reporting from both qualitative and quantitative aspects were concerned. In other words, much of the print media tried to be fair, to be objective, to provide opposing view points and not to deliberately raise the tension level. So the print media – or at least some of the print media – were making an effort – never mind the occasional lapse.

However, there appeared to be lapses galore (with the possible exception of two news broadcasts) in so far as the electronic media were concerned. The Talk Show programmes, on both side of the divide, seemed to display a taste for both making damaging and decidedly inflammatory remarks (and for allowing these damaging and inflammatory remarks to be made by call-in contributors) and for a persistent and consistent failure to provide any sort of proof for claims which seemed deliberately destined to inflame. So, all in all, for the Talk Show programmes, opposing points of view were a major casualty.

Although certain trends that emerged very early on seemed to camouflage from time to time, certain basics remained for all the media. As the Unit stated in its report for the period Aug, 12-19, 2006, “It is as if, in the excitement and imminence of the poll, some editors are losing their grip on the concept of equitable coverage. Some never had such a grip. Others have indeed held the line and are to be congratulated.”

Campaign period and Election Related Incidents

Under the auspices of the Inter Religious Organisation (IRO), twelve political parties signed a Code of Conduct on 2nd May 2006. The list of signatories appears below. Though the PNCR did not formally sign to the Code, it did give public assurances that it would abide by its terms.

1. A Good & Green Guyana
2. Alliance For Change
3. God Bless Guyana
4. Guyana Action Party
5. Justice For All Party
6. National Front Alliance
7. National Republican Party
8. People's Bread & Butter Party
9. People's Progressive Party/Civic
10. Rise, Organise And Rebuild
11. The United Force
12. United Party

Up to the time of publication of this report, the EAB/IFES Election Violence and Resolution (EVER) project produced reports covering election-related violence and incidents in the pre- and post-election period and Election Day (20th June – 4th September).

Overall it was found that the periods leading up to and after election were one of the more peaceful in Guyana's recent election history. However, there were a few incidents/events that were worth noting since they could have escalated into widespread violence. In addition to this, there were a number of peace initiatives which contributed to the maintenance of peace during the election period and after. It should be noted that the EVER project was created to monitor, report and analyse election-related violence, potential violence and efforts for peace that could have assisted stakeholders and the

public in effectively preventing and mitigating violence and diffusing conflicts.

Of the events that attracted national attention during the pre-election period, most striking was the opposition by the PNCR-1G and the WPA among other parties to the voters' list. According to the PNCR-1G, the voters' list was unacceptable and needed to be verified because it included persons who had either died or migrated. Their objection was so strong that one time their slogan was "no verification, no elections." In spite of this position they still contested the election. Their dissatisfaction with the list led to the first reported election-related violence when they symbolically burned a copy of the PLE in front of GECOM Headquarters in Kingston, Georgetown. The PNCR-1G further protested the list when two executive members walked out of a workshop for political parties on the electoral system organised by GECOM. Added to the protest of the party, one of the opposition nominated GECOM Commissioners resigned mainly because he had not received satisfactory responses to his concerns about election preparation and the readiness of the voters' list. The WPA on the other hand declared that it was not contesting the elections because it believed that the voters' list was not at an acceptable standard for the election to be free from fraud.

During the campaign period the few minor election related incidents that were reported by our Monitors and the media were perpetrated mainly by the supporters of the PPP/C and the PNCR-1G. These acts of violence included the destruction of opposing parties' campaign material (posters, bill boards, etc), disturbing opposing political rallies and the harassment of EAB/EVER monitors. In a few cases supporters of one party suffered physical abuse at the hands of opposing party

supporters. Also supporters of the PNCR-1G harassed members of the media. It should be noted that a few of the incidents could have been avoided had there not been political rallies by both the PPP/C and PNCR-1G on the same day, time and location.

The rhetoric that emanated from the platforms of the various political parties was civil and void of race hate and incitements of violence, even though these were accompanied by or seemed to inspire certain regrettable incidents. Also, on the platform, most speakers spoke about the plans and policies they would implement if they were elected instead of attacking the character of their opponents. All the politicians should be commended for their condemnation of all forms of election-related violence perpetrated by their supporters as well as for exhorting their constituency to refrain from violent activities and confrontations. It could be argued that this stance by the various political leaders contributed to the relative peace and calm during the election period.

In addition to the commitment to peace by the leadership of the various political parties, the peace efforts by civil society also contributed to the peace and tranquillity during the election period. The Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) held a number of meetings that sensitized the public about election-related violence and its prevention. Also there was a peace forum in which political parties discussed their ideas about uniting Guyana before and after the elections. As election-day approached, the peace efforts intensified with a peace vigil and church groups throughout the country held prayer meetings in which leaders and members offered prayers for peace and love. These calls were bolstered by the Spirit of Guyana Movement which sponsored television advertisements urging Guyanese to keep the peace.

Generally, Election Day proceeded peacefully (without major physical incidents and violence) and was technically sound aside from a few potentially confrontational situations and isolated incidents of irregularities inspired by unsuspecting GECOM officials. The few potentially confrontational situations occurred outside at least two polling stations when groups of people some of whom were armed surrounded the stations. GECOM officials' irregularities included refusing accredited election observers access to polling stations and giving persons who were eligible to vote tendered ballots instead of the regular ballots. In at least one case a presiding officer was fired on the spot for giving qualified voters tendered ballots.



Courtesy *Stabroek News*

After the declaration of the election results, the relative calm remained mainly because all parties accepted the results. It must be remembered after the 1992, 1997 and 2001 Elections violent street protests followed the

declaration of results because the main opposition party refused to accept results citing irregularities.

However, in spite of the relative calm and peace, tensions were raised following a series of fires on government buildings including one of the buildings in the compound of GECOM headquarters. While the authorities were continuing their investigations as to the cause of the fires speculation was rife following reports that an eyewitness had seen someone scaling the fence which surrounded the compound of one of the buildings gutted by fire. Another potentially tension raising situation is the current constitutional crisis. This constitutional crisis is as a result of parliament not being convened on or before the constitutional mandated date of 2nd September according to Article 69 of the constitution.

Election Day Observers

Recruitment

As in past elections observation exercises, the EAB originally planned to rely mainly on Sponsor Organisations and EAB's Regional Coordinators to recruit volunteer Election Day Observers. However, due to the low response, an alternative strategy of canvassing for recruits using the public media was embarked on in the last three weeks before Election Day. The strategy

Figure 1 EAB advertisement for volunteers



centred on securing prominently placed advertisements for volunteers. Stabroek News and Kaieteur News agreed to place

front page advertisements in their publications from 16th August until Election Day. Additionally, advertisements²³ were placed on television stations with national coverage and those with regional coverage in areas where recruitment was lagging. On 22nd August, a decision was taken to send a text message appealing for volunteers to all of GT&T's mobile phone customers.

The new strategy, though costly, was immediately successful. Within the first 4 days, hundreds of Guyanese, from all walks of life, and from wide geographic spread responded.

The important benefit of the nation-wide appeal was that it provided an opportunity for a broad cross section of the Guyanese public, especially young persons, to participate directly in the electoral process. The overwhelming response demonstrated the commitment of Guyanese to preserving and strengthening democracy. It also dispelled initial concerns that persons were intimidated by the sharp upsurge in violence in the preceding weeks and months.

Unfortunately, the EAB's volunteer hotline and computer operators were not prepared for the sudden deluge of callers. In the days immediately following the commencement of the advertisements, calls were being received well into the early hours of the morning. This put tremendous pressure on EAB volunteers and limited computer resources.

²³ Refer to Figure 1

Relations between EAB and GECOM

To compound problems, GECOM retreated from its earlier commitment to provide EAB observers with individual identity cards. For the 1992, 1994 (Local Government), 1997, and 2001 Elections, GECOM had provided observers with identify cards. EAB held to its position that for GECOM to relinquish direct control over authorisation of access to polling stations might lead to serious consequences. The EAB was prepared to withdraw from observing the Elections if GECOM refused to issue cards. The issue was only resolved, after the Chairman of GECOM intervened for a third time and gave a direct instruction to the IT Department to produce GECOM Observer identify cards.

As a result of the delays and last minute pressures, cards were still being distributed to the Regions early on Election morning.

Another issue that affected the EAB's recruitment efforts was GECOM's refusal to issue Letters of Employment to observers. In past elections, GECOM would provide such letters to facilitate observation at polling stations. In the circumstances, EAB was left with no alternative but to give a commitment to place volunteers, as far as was possible, to observe at polling stations at which they were registered to vote. This meant that at the time of recruitment, and prior to submission of requests for observer ID cards to GECOM, polling division numbers for recruits had to be ascertained. This served to slow down the recruitment process significantly.

Despite the unexpected set backs, by election eve more than 1400 volunteers had been trained and equipped for deployment. However, approximately 700 volunteer applications could not be processed for reasons earlier stated.

Training

In revising the instruction manual for observers, the EAB engaged many stakeholders to get input, including GECOM and the political parties. Based on discussion held and feed back received, many important changes were made. EAB is of the view that the revised manual provided a basis upon which to prepare volunteers for the important task of monitoring the balloting process on the behalf of the Guyanese public.

A train-the-trainers session was held on 20th July. The EAB team of trainers included experienced and first-time EAB executive members (past and present), Regional Coordinators and volunteers. The first training session for volunteer observers was held in Region 8 on 29th July 2006. This was followed by over 26 Training Sessions across the Regions. Additionally, one-on-one training was conducted in Regions 1, 7 and 9 for volunteers in remote areas with polling stations.

EAB Observers were given a comprehensive package of material, including the following:

1. Instructions to Local Observers booklet
2. Your GECOM ID card (if it was available)
3. EAB Arm Band
4. Observer Pledge
5. Copy of GECOM letter of Accreditation
6. 7 a.m. Report form
7. 12 noon Report form
8. Summary of Entire Day's Observation Report form
9. Report of the Count form
10. EVER incident report.

In the training, the importance of EAB's independent, non-partisan, non-governmental, non-profit, people-driven character was stressed. Volunteers were invited to pledge²⁴ to personify these characteristics as observers. In keeping with their commitment, they were expected to arrive at the polling station to which they were assigned in enough time before the opening of the poll at 6:00 a.m. to witness the unsealing, unpacking and resealing of the ballot box and selection of the unique 6-digit number for the ballot paper stamp. Volunteers understood the importance of monitoring the entire balloting process from the opening to the closing of the poll, and until the counting of ballots was completed and the Statement of Poll (SoP) was posted. They were instructed to sign only the Statement of Poll if they were fully in agreement with the results recorded therein and to request a copy of the said Statement. During the day, observers were required to record their qualitative assessment of the conduct of the balloting process on the **7:00 a.m., 12 Noon, Summary of the Entire Day's Observation Report** forms provided.

Election Day arrangements

As in past EAB election monitoring and observation exercises, a flexible, responsive system for supporting and coordinating observers was put in place. In regions 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8, which had more experienced Regional Coordinators or relatively smaller voting populations, Coordinators were directly responsible for supporting and supervising observers.

In Regions 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 EAB Sponsor organisations recruited volunteer supervisors. Supervisors largely used their own resources to distribute GECOM identity cards and confirm arrangements with

volunteers. Supervisors fulfilled a critical function of providing logistical and communications support to the EAB Election Day command centre and in coordinating observers and giving guidance and support to them.

In the areas for which supervisors were recruited, the first objective was to achieve a 1:15 supervisor to observer ratio. The second was to appoint lead supervisors for distinct geographic areas, namely Linden, East Bank of Demerara (EBD), South Georgetown (SGT), North Georgetown (NGT), East Coast of Demerara (ECD), West Coast of Berbice (WCB) and East Berbice. The rates of success in achieving the objectives were varied. On ECD and WCD the ratio was of an unacceptably high level. While the coordinator and supervisors in WCB were able to make adequate adjustments to logistical plan, those in ECD reported capacity and resource deficiencies. ECD Observers made similar reports. This impacted supervisors' ability to field observers at the expected number of polling stations and to provide the minimum levels of support to observers. Lead supervisors were appointed for Linden, EBD, SGT, NGT, and WCB. However, there was not sufficient time for lead supervisors to be identified and briefed for ECD and East Berbice.

Observers were given a stipend to help offset transportation, meal, cell call and other expenses they would have incurred. In Regions 2, 3, 5, and 6, Coordinators, through the kind generosity and assistance of supporters at the community level, were able to make arrangements for meals to be prepared and distributed to observers in the field. In Georgetown, some donations of meals were gratefully received and distributed. On the suggestion of lead supervisors, it was decided on Election Day

²⁴ Refer to Annex 1: Observer Pledge

that, though not budgeted for, bottled water and snacks would be distributed on needs basis.

EAB Elections Results Database

Coordinators and lead supervisors were charged with the responsibility of ensuring that Statements of Poll were collected at the earliest opportunity. Supervisors and observers were advised to make advance arrangements for handover of Statements of Poll (SoPs).

The database was created in Microsoft Access™ by the EAB's Computer Consultant. The database was designed²⁵ for remote entry of results in the Regions during Election Night and transmission to the main database computer in e-files via the internet. The Access files received in the main system were to be checked for duplicates and integrated with the national database. The results were then to be posted on the EAB's website, and periodically updated as data files came in.

In order to minimise the possibility of error, a system was established for one-time entry of data in the EAB Elections Results database directly from SoPs, and immediate data validation by a supervisor prior to file transmission.

The plan for populating the election results database envisaged remote entry in Regions 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10. Data from Region 1 SoPs were to be ferried by river boat to Charity early on the morning of Tuesday, 29th August. Volunteers in Regions 7 and 8 were to be on hand to input and validate results in Microsoft Excel™. The Excel files were to be converted at the main system. On election eve a decision was taken, on the

suggestion of the lead supervisor, that SoPs from Region 5 would be ferried to Georgetown. These, along with SoPs from Region 4, were to be entered in Georgetown.

However, the entire system for collection of SoPs broke down due to the widespread refusal of GECOM's Assistant and Deputy Returning Officers and Presiding Officers to provide copies of SoPs to EAB observers. This behaviour appeared to have been sanctioned by senior GECOM officials. The EAB's efforts to provide timely information on the Elections to the public were further frustrated by the unduly lengthy process of sorting and counting ballots and preparing SoPs. In many instance, observers were forced to go home with SoPs because they could no longer wait on supervisors who were held up waiting on other polling stations to finish.

As a result, data entry clerks and validation personnel at eight of the nine remote data entry and transmission points were idle well into the morning of Tuesday, 29th August. At about 2:30 a.m. a decision was taken to close data entry points in Regions 6 and 2 and one in Georgetown, as by then no SoPs had been received. Data entry at the other points continued until after 5:00 a.m. Work resumed later in the morning.

Shortly after 12 noon on 29th August, the first set of results received for the Regions were posted on the EAB website. By the next morning more than 90 % of the data from the 921 SoPs that EAB observers received was entered and posted on the EAB website. The EAB had approached political parties for, and had been offered, the outstanding statements of poll.

The situation had delayed the definitive assessment of the complete set of elections results by the EAB.

²⁵ Refer to Annex 2: Screen View of Microsoft Access™ Data Entry Window

4 QUALITY OF ELECTORAL PROCESS

The purpose of elections is to facilitate the exercise of citizens' constitutional right to choose their political leaders. The Guyana constitution sets out the qualifications for persons eligible to vote. It defines the system of government, the elective offices, the electoral system, and the mechanism for managing elections.

GECOM is charged with ensuring that persons eligible to vote, and no one else, are provided with every opportunity to do so at elections. Given the constitutional requirement that for a person eligible to vote can only do so if he/she is registered as an elector (Article 159), and provision for lists of electors for polling districts and divisions, then the voters' list is a critical element of the electoral process. In a hypothetical situation, once all eligible voters are on the list, and no ineligible persons are included, then the next important objectives would be to ensure that those persons are provided with every opportunity to exercise cast their vote for the candidates of their choice and that their votes are accurately counted and recorded.

Therefore, to ensure free and fair elections and elections free from fear, the focus should be on:

1. Preparing a list of electors that is comprehensive and accurate, and that is perceived as such by the voting public.
2. Ensuring that polling day arrangements facilitate the highest possible participation and guarantee secret balloting and accurate counting.

3. Conducting the entire process to produce results that withstand public and legal scrutiny.

GECOM's Preparations for elections

In assessing the adequacy of GECOM's preparations for Elections, the EAB focussed on these three main aspects.

Production of the voters' list

The disagreement surrounding the production of the 2006 OLE was apparent from the outset. Within the Elections Commission and among the main political parties there was disagreement over using the 2001 OLE as the base for producing the 2006 list. The EAB tests of the RLE showed that 14.07%²⁶ of the records in the list warranted action, either to be updated or removed. There was no evidence that that action was taken. The question of the acceptability of the list with such a level of inaccuracy was the subject of wide spread and often acrimonious debate. The EAB was criticised for only providing statistical information about the list and not making a qualitative comment. The EAB's position was that it was for other stakeholders, especially political parties, to determine acceptability.

Preparations for polling day

GECOM was not as open with providing information to local observers as would have

²⁶ Persons:

1. Reported to have moved to a new address:	8.63
2. Reported to have died:	1.38
3. Reported that no such person was known to be resident at the given address:	<u>4.06</u>
Total	14.07%

been expected. Communication with GECOM personnel was restricted to the Chairman and CEO. Due to their busy schedule, it was not always convenient to obtain information from them. Attempts to deal directly with second line functionaries were rebuffed. It would also appear that GECOM did not fully accept the role of local observers, and did not see the need to volunteer information or to keep local observers abreast of step by step developments.

As a result, EAB did not possess sufficient knowledge about GECOM's preparations to be in a position to offer an informed assessment of some critical aspects of elections management. For this reason, EAB was unable to address adequately some of the concerns raised by political parties. In particular, EAB would have wanted to be able to monitor more closely systems of accountability for ballot papers, ballot box seals and sensitive materials and for the granting of proxies. The EAB would also have wanted to be able to monitor training of polling officials and to conduct an independent assessment of their suitability. It would have wanted to test the photographic registration folio for mismatches.

The fact that the elections were successful should not detract from the seriousness of GECOM's admitted inability to hold elections within the constitutional time frame. In addition, although there may be a reasonable explanation, up to just before Election Day GECOM had to find premises to replace polling stations that for one reason or another could no longer be used. Albeit a small number, this most likely served to frustrate the affected voters. As in previous elections, GECOM did not comply with Section 34 of the Representation of the People Act, which requires polling places to

be determined not later than the 20th day before Election Day.

On Election Day, many observers reported that voters expressed frustration with finding their polling stations, especially at polling places at which a number of polling stations were clustered. It would appear that the anticipated system for providing voter information did not satisfy its objectives.

However, an examination of EAB observer reports shows that a vast majority found that the conduct of the poll was "*Totally Acceptable*."²⁷ The general indication is the preparations for elections and training of personnel were adequate to produce free and fair elections.

Acceptance of the results

GECOM's decision to make financial resources available to ensure a high level of participation by polling agents of the ruling party and the combined opposition may have significantly contributed to the acceptance of the elections results.

However, of the nearly 1400 EAB observers at polling stations across the Regions, only approximately 900 received SoPs. The actions of GECOM officials and personnel to cause delays in processing and placing observers in the field and to prevent EAB from receiving the SoPs affected EAB's ability to provide information to the public in a timely manner and hampered it in undertaking an early assessment of the accuracy of the results.

Disciplined Services Voting

Voting by the disciplined services went ahead as scheduled on the 21st August 2006. The EAB observers did not report any

²⁷ Refer to Section: The Conduct of the Poll

irregularities, but several reports came in of concerns expressed by members of the disciplined service over ballot papers not being franked. Many were of the view that a six-digit number, chosen by authorised persons present just before the opening of the poll, would have been stamped on the rear of the ballot paper. There was widespread concern that this would have led to their votes being nullified. However, later in the day, GECOM clarified the issue. The confusion was brought about by a breakdown in communication and served to somewhat affect confidence in polling arrangements.

The Conduct of the Poll

The reports by EAB Observers confirm that GECOM polling officials carried out their duties in a dignified and efficient manner. The Electorate must also be complimented for their conduct in the exercise of their right to vote from the official opening of the poll to its closing. The EAB in its news release attested to this.²⁸

Table 3 summarises EAB observers' assessments as captured in Election Day reports received from observers.²⁹

Proxy Voting

Though there were no reports about irregularities in the use of proxy votes, complaints were received about the non-adherence to the established procedures. Specifically, it was reported that proxy lists were not available to party election agents in the Regions and the proxy lists were not on public display.

The EAB was unable to obtain the list of applications for proxies that were made and approved. Therefore, EAB was not in a position to audit the administration of proxies. However, it appears that there was not widespread use of proxies.

Table 3 Summary of Entire Day's Observation Reports

Qualitative Issue	% of Polling Stations
1. Polling opened before or after 6:00 a.m.	5.51
2. Polling closed before or after 6:00 p.m.	1.57
3. All polling officials were not present during the day	2.89
4. ID procedure NOT properly done	0.66
5. Fingering inking NOT done	0.13
6. Ballot papers NOT properly stamped	0.39
7. Voting NOT done in secrecy	0.92
8. Voters NOT generally satisfied	0.26
9. Party agents NOT generally satisfied	0.52
10. Average voting time more than 3 minutes	31.89
11. Average voting time more than 4 minutes	21.39
12. Average voting time more than 5 minutes	10.24
13. Average voting time more than 10 minutes	2.23
14. No. persons in line at 6:00 p.m. more than 10 minutes	4.46
15. No. persons in line at 6:00 p.m. more than 20 minutes	3.67
16. Last person in line did NOT vote	4.20
17. Police officer did NOT behave professionally	0.52
18. Observer was NOT allowed full privileges	0.79
19. Voting process was UNACCEPTABLE	0.39
20. Voting process was TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE	0.00

The Count

On the whole, EAB observers reported that counting of the ballots was conducted in a transparent manner and that the Statements of Poll reflected the results of the count at individual polling stations. Table 4 summarises the assessment of observer reports³⁰ received.

²⁸ Refer to Annex 6: EAB New Release

²⁹ Refer to Annex 3: Summary of Entire Day's Observation Report form

³⁰ Refer to Annex 3: Summary of Entire Day's Observation Report form

Table 4 Summary of the Count Reports

Qualitative Issue	% of Polling Stations
Party agents had proper view of proceedings?	100%
Only authorised persons were present?	100%
Decision on ballots accepted by everyone?	100%
Everyone agreed with Statement of Poll figures?	100%
TOTALLY ACCEPTABLE	72.83
ACCEPTABLE	26.73
UNACCEPTABLE	0.00
TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE	0.43
Qualitative Issue	No. of Polling Stations
How many ballots which appear to be valid but were rejected?	602
<i>Rejected Ballots:</i>	
No official mark	1272
Uncertain or not marked	1021
Marked for more than one party	689
Marked with voter's name or no.	235
TOTAL REJECTED BALLOTS	3217

Declaration of Results

The results of the General and Regional Elections were publicly declared by the Chief Election Officer on the evening of Thursday, 31st August 2006. On the 30th August 2006, the Leader of the PNCR made a public statement acknowledging that the PPP/C was in the lead. He also indicated that the results being released by GECOM via television broadcast were being monitored by the PNCR. The PPP/C initially made public statements indicating that they had won the General Election, but later cautioned that GECOM was the only authorised body to declare the Official results.

The AFC, GAP-ROAR, and TUF accepted the results; however, the JFAP expressed some level of concern with the final

declaration by GECOM of votes it received. The JFAP questioned the apparent reduction in its votes as reported in the Stabroek News on Thursday 31st August, compared with the final results declared later that day by GECOM.³¹ The EAB's analysis of the SOPs showed discrepancies in GECOM's Declaration of the General and Regional results for Regions 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10.

The final results declared by GECOM are shown in Annex 16: Declared Results.

On September 1st, the AFC wrote the Chief Election Officer regarding the award of one of the Geographic Seats for District Ten, Upper Demerara/Berbice, to the PPP/C. They indicated that their preliminary investigations suggest that they won the seat. On the 1st of September the EAB received an enquiry from a member of the public regarding this issue and it submitted the enquiry to the CEO for his explanation. Up to the writing of this report a response from the CEO has not been received.

However, the EAB's analysis of the SOPs for District 10 substantiates the claim made by the AFC in its letter of 18th September 2006 to the CEO.

EAB Volunteers

All reports received indicate that coordinators, supervisors and observers performed excellently in the face of very trying circumstances brought on by GECOM's officials. As is well acknowledged, the job of static observers in the polling station calls for endurance, patience, balanced judgement and, most of all, good character.

³¹ Stabroek reported that JFAP received 2,872 votes and GECOM declared 2,571 General Votes and 3,436 Regional Votes for the JFAP.

Notwithstanding the problems brought on by the last minute hiccups with processing volunteer applications, assigning observers and obtaining and distributing ID cards from a reluctant GECOM, the role of supervisors in coordinating Election Day observers proved indispensable, especially since observers were committed to 17 hours, and

in some cases 20 hours, in a polling station. The logistical support and communications they provided for the command centre ensured a fairly smooth operation.

5 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Comparative General Election Results by Region

- For Regions One, Three, Six and Nine the EAB's analysis verified GECOM's Declaration of the results of the General Election.
- EAB's analysis found discrepancies in GECOM's Declaration of Results in respect of Regions Two, Four, Five, Seven, Eight and Ten.
- The discrepancies in the Declarations for Two and Seven are so negligible that they are unlikely to affect the award of Geographic Constituency or Top-Up National Assembly seats.
- The discrepancies found in the General Election Results for Region 10 substantiate AFC's claims with respect to the award of Geographic Constituency seats.
- The variance in the numbers of registered voters is due to incompleteness of the schedule of polling stations that was made available by GECOM. This prevented further analysis based on voter turn-out.

GENERAL VOTES									
Region/ District		NO. OF REGISTERED VOTERS	AFC	GAP/R	JFAP	PNC/R1G	PPP/C	TUF	TOTAL VALID VOTES
ONE	EAB's Findings	12273	1006	217	29	1041	4473	233	6999
	GECOM	12273	1006	217	29	1041	4473	233	6999
	VARIANCE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TWO	EAB's Findings	28770	1723	291	60	3661	14542	135	20412
	GECOM	28669	1722	291	61	3662	14543	135	20414
	VARIANCE	-101	-1	0	1	1	1	0	2
THREE	EAB's Findings	69460	2805	186	679	10890	34671	78	49309
	GECOM	69459	2805	186	679	10890	34671	78	49309
	VARIANCE	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FOUR	EAB's Findings	219097	13789	328	1577	68244	62430	309	146678
	GECOM	217168	13876	335	1582	68112	62386	339	146630
	VARIANCE	-1929	87	7	5	-132	-44	30	-48
FIVE	EAB's Findings	34071	876		63	9164	15501	62	25666
	GECOM	34071	877		64	8770	15904	61	25676
	VARIANCE	0	1	0	1	-394	403	-1	10
SIX	EAB's Findings	80439	3091	222	53	11632	42248	154	57400
	GECOM	80434	3091	222	53	11632	42248	154	57400
	VARIANCE	-5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEVEN	EAB's Findings	10686	918	845	43	1832	2434	133	6205
	GECOM	10686	918	845	43	1846	2420	133	6205
	VARIANCE	0	0	0	0	14	-14	0	0
EIGHT	EAB's Findings	4799	430	529	0	553	935	456	2903
	GECOM	4788	426	481	0	540	877	433	2757
	VARIANCE	-11	-4	-48	0	-13	-58	-23	-146
NINE	EAB's Findings	9923	479	1589	29	903	3176	1054	7230
	GECOM	9910	479	1589	29	903	3176	1054	7230
	VARIANCE	-13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEN	EAB's Findings	24928	3314	88	33	7504	3282	74	14295
	GECOM	24911	3166	83	31	7212	3189	74	13755
	VARIANCE	-17	-148	-5	-2	-292	-93	0	-540
TOP-UP	EAB's TOTAL	494446	28431	4295	2566	115424	183692	2688	337097
	GECOM	492369	28366	4249	2571	114608	183887	2694	336375
	VARIANCE	-2077	-65	-46	5	-816	195	6	-722

NB. Negative Variance indicates GECOM declaration is less than EAB's finding and vice-versa

Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Ten.

**Comparative Regional Elections
Results by Region**

- For Regions One and Nine the EAB’s analysis verified GECOM’s Declaration of the results of the Regional Elections.
- EAB’s analysis found discrepancies in GECOM’s Declaration of Results in respect of Regions Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Ten.
- The discrepancies in the Declarations for Two, Three and Seven are so negligible that they are unlikely to affect the award of Regional Democratic Council seats.
- The discrepancies found in the Regional Election Results for Region 5 are likely to affect GECOM’s award of Regional Democratic Council seats.

REGIONAL VOTES													
Region/ District		NO. OF REGIS- TERED VOTERS	AFC	GAP/R	GNC	JFAP	LD	NDF	PNCR/1G	PPP/C	P.R.P	TUF	TOTAL VALID VOTES
ONE	EAB	12273	931	198		33			1046	4468		273	6949
	GECOM	12273	931	198		33			1046	4468		273	6949
	VARIANCE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TWO	EAB	28770	1724	322		61			3650	14419		146	20322
	GECOM	28669	1724	322		60			3650	14415		146	20317
	VARIANCE	-101	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	-4	0	0	-5
THREE	EAB	69460	2710	183		957			10782	34407		123	49162
	GECOM	69459	2710	183		957			10782	34307		123	49062
	VARIANCE	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100	0	0	-100
FOUR	EAB	219097	13630	335	124	2217	85	0	67722	61948		355	146416
	GECOM	217168	13566	459	123	2170	172		67726	61896		340	146452
	VARIANCE	-1929	-64	124	-1	-47	87	0	4	-52	0	-15	36
FIVE	EAB	34071	849		31	76		107	10665	13727	81	56	25592
	GECOM	34071	850		31	77			8710	15769	105	57	25599
	VARIANCE	0	1	0	0	1	0	-107	-1955	2042	24	1	7
SIX	EAB	80439	3035	230		44			11631	42081		203	57224
	GECOM	80434	3033	230		44			11628	41713		202	56850
	VARIANCE	-5	-2	0	0	0	0	0	-3	-368	0	-1	-374
SEVEN	EAB	10686	766	868		50			1951	2349	27	143	6154
	GECOM	10686	746	868		50			1958	2449	27	143	6241
	VARIANCE	0	-20	0	0	0	0	0	7	100	0	0	87
EIGHT	EAB	4799	410	526					555	926		473	2890
	GECOM	4788	407	480					543	865		449	2744
	VARIANCE	-11	-3	-46	0	0	0	0	-12	-61	0	-24	-146
NINE	EAB	9923	414	1734		21			871	3073		1090	7203
	GECOM	9910	414	1734		21			871	3073		1090	7203
	VARIANCE	-13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEN	EAB	24928	3130	119		26		25	7632	3283		92	14307
	GECOM	24911	3016	114		24		25	7369	3201		92	13841
	VARIANCE	-17	-114	-5	0	-2	0	0	-263	-82	0	0	-466
TOP- UP	TOTAL	494446	27599	4515	155	3485	85	132	116505	180681	108	2954	336219
	GECOM	492369	27397	4588	154	3436	172	25	114283	182156	132	2915	335258
	VARIANCE	-2077	-202	73	-1	-49	87	-107	-2222	1475	24	-39	-961

Voter turn out

- Notwithstanding the 14.3 % either unaccounted or reported to be migrated or dead in the EAB Sample Test of the RLE³², the voter turn-out appears to have been lower than in previous elections.
- The EAB was unable to further analyse the voter turn-out by region or compare rural/urban turn-out due to the unavailability of an accurate Schedule of Polling Stations with number of registered voters per ballot box.

VOTER TURN OUT as a % of registered voters				
Region	2006	2001	1997	1992
One	60.156	Information by Region not Available		
Two	72.13			
Three	72.005			
Four	68.31			
Five	76.41			
Six	72.43			
Seven	59.29			
Eight	59.52			
Nine	75.14			
Ten	56.485			
National Average	68.81	91.72	88.47	80.25

³² Drawn from EAB Sample Test of RLE

Category	%
1 Person reported to have migrated	6.82
2 Person reported to have died	1.38
3 No such address found	1.72
4 No reply at given address	0.35
5 Reported that no such person was known to be resident at the given address	4.06
	14.33

Tendered Ballots

- Regions One, Eight and Ten had a relatively high percentage of tendered ballots.
- The comparative data for the period 1992-2006 shows evidence shows that there has not been an increase in the number of rejected ballots.

Region	Tendered General Ballots	Tendered Regional Ballots	Total Votes Cast	Average No. of Tendered Ballots as a % of Votes Cast
One	184	216	7383	2.71
Two	134	112	20679	0.59
Three	453	487	50014	0.94
Four	2115	2295	148382	1.49
Five	279	214	26031	0.95
Six	469	444	58262	0.78
Seven	61	65	6336	0.99
Eight	125	121	3006	4.09
Nine	95	96	7445	1.28
Ten	269	269	14632	1.84
TOTAL	4184	4319	342170	1.24

Spoilt and Destroyed Ballots

Region	Spoilt General Ballots	Spoilt Regional Ballots	Average Spoilt Ballots as a % of Votes Cast
One	60	0	0.41
Two	39	38	0.19
Three	135	145	0.28
Four	697	659	0.46
Five	116	101	0.42
Six	150	144	0.25
Seven	20	19	0.30
Eight	23	21	0.73
Nine	39	30	0.46
Ten	69	58	0.43
TOTAL	1348	1215	0.37

Region	Destroyed General Ballots	Destroyed Regional Ballots	Average Destroyed Ballots as a % of Votes Cast
One	3	2	0.034
Two	9	9	0.044
Three	14	14	0.028
Four	101	95	0.066
Five	13	12	0.048
Six	11	9	0.017
Seven	1	1	0.016
Eight	24	7	0.520
Nine	5	5	0.067
Ten	5	5	0.034
TOTAL	186	159	0.050

Rejected Ballots

- There is a significantly higher level of rejected ballots in the Regional Elections than in the General Elections.
- Of the total rejected ballots, 67 % were rejected for being “UNMARKED.”
- A substantial amount of ballots (20.76 %) were rejected because they were “MARKED FOR MORE

THAN ONE PARTY.”

- Regions One, Seven, Eight and Nine had a relatively high percentage of rejected ballots.
- The comparative data for the period 1992-2006 shows that there has not been an increase in the number of rejected ballots.

REJECTED GENERAL VOTES								
Region	Registered Voter	Want of Official Mark	Unmarked	Marked More than one party	Elector can be Identified	Total	Total Votes Cast	Rejected Ballots as a % of Votes Cast
One	12273	61	202	117	4	384	7383	5.20
Two	28770	14	150	96	7	268	20679	1.30
Three	69460	34	424	234	13	705	50014	1.41
Four	219097	243	898	522	42	1724	148382	1.16
Five	34071	17	213	135	0	361	26031	1.39
Six	80439	74	499	280	9	862	58262	1.48
Seven	10686	5	83	42	1	131	6336	2.07
Eight	4799	1	72	30	0	103	3006	3.43
Nine	9923	9	121	82	3	215	7445	2.89
Ten	24928	96	148	76	17	337	14632	2.30
TOTAL	494446	554	2810	1614	96	5090	342170	1.49
% of Total Rejected Ballots		10.88	55.21	31.71	1.89	100.00		0.12
REJECTED REGIONAL VOTES								
Region	Registered Voter	Want of Official Mark	Unmarked	Marked for More than one party	Elector can be Identified	Total	Total Votes Cast	Rejected Ballots as a % of Votes Cast
One	12273	45	296	84	9	434	7383	5.88
Two	28770	15	273	66	3	356	20679	1.72
Three	69460	33	616	186	18	852	50015	1.70
Four	219097	214	1321	421	29	2008	148401	1.35
Five	34071	32	286	118	3	437	26031	1.68
Six	80439	77	742	211	8	1138	58197	1.96
Seven	10686	8	135	39	0	178	6336	2.81
Eight	4799	5	85	24	1	115	3005	3.83
Nine	9923	4	175	61	2	242	7445	3.25
Ten	24928	60	208	53	4	325	14632	2.22
TOTAL	494446	493	4137	1263	77	6085	342124	1.78
% of Total Rejected Ballots		8.10	67.99	20.76	1.27	100.00		

Balance of Ballot Papers

It is not possible to reconcile the figures for used and destroyed ballot papers for the Region as the total number of ballot papers issued to each station is not recorded or reconciled on the Statements of Poll. In addition, GECOM has not yet disclosed the total number of ballot papers printed for the region or country as a whole and has not

- AFC Agents were present at slightly more than half of the Polling Stations.
- There were largely no Agents for the other contesting parties at Polling Stations across the country.

<i>Witnesses of the Count</i>												
Region	No of Polling Stations	AFC	GAP/R	JFAP	PNCR/1G	PPP/C	TUF	Other Citizen Observer	EAB	% non-presence of main opposition	% average non-presence of other opposition	% average non-presence of independent observer
One	86	37	8	1	73	83	20	1	41	15	81	51
Two	113	82	4	0	107	108	2	3	120	5	81	-9
Three	274	137	0	9	283	262	4	7	311	-3	86	-16
Four	764	433	3	22	725	701	12	48	406	5	85	41
Five	138	62	2	1	214	141	12	6	97	-55	86	25
Six	333	200	2	0	313	318	5	14	332	6	84	-4
Seven	74	21	7	0	50	57	7	6	31	32	88	50
Eight	39	5	0	0	24	36	8	1	16	38	92	56
Nine	60	31	15	0	44	57	22	1	33	27	72	98
Ten	121	72	11	0	110	113	10	13	95	9	81	11
TOTAL	2002	1080	52	33	1943	1876	102	100	1482	848	3	84

disclosed results of any internal audit it might have conducted.

Party Polling/COUNTING Agents and independent observers

- Mostly PNCR-1G and PPP/C Party Polling/Counting Agents were present in Polling Stations.

Independent Observers

- The EAB had 1482 observers at polling stations across the ten Regions.
- Other observers, including local and foreign observers, witnessed counts at 100 polling stations.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND APPRECIATION

The Elections results

There are several factors that may be taken into account in assessing the fairness of an election. In order to arrive at a well-informed opinion, preferably the entire process should be evaluated, rather than just the process on Election Day itself.

However in addition to being able to assess the electoral process according to international observing standards, EAB's position as local observers provided the Bureau with insight and information over and above the normal requirements of visiting observers.

The comparison of the analysis of the 4000 Statements of Poll with the results put out by the Chief Election Officer was yet another factor in the Bureau's deductions. This was an extremely important element in the Bureau's evaluation, an element which is seldom available to international observers.

By virtue of these facts, the EAB is in a position to pronounce on the validity of the elections.

In arriving at its own conclusions on the process of August 28th, the following main elements were taken into consideration by the EAB.

Freedom to Campaign

Although there were some minor isolated disruptions of political meetings, no report was received of restrictions on the holding of political meetings in any part of the country.

Freedom of the Media

There were no restrictions placed on the media in their reporting of both pre- and post-election events. All parties had unrestricted access to the media during the "official campaign period," that is from nomination day. The state media was considered to have been positively biased in favour of the ruling party while offering balanced coverage of the opposition parties.

Opportunity to Register

While there were concerns with the "not founds" on the list, it is felt that the registration process would provide a satisfactory level of opportunity for voter registration.

Disenfranchisement

There were cases where persons claimed that they registered but could not find their names on the list or that they had checked the PLE during the Claims & Objections period and provided all the necessary information, but were still not placed on the list. In other cases, persons complained that they made several attempts to have their names placed on the list or their information corrected but were frustrated. There were also cases of persons who were out of their registration districts on Election Day, and were unable to cast their ballots. These cases notwithstanding, there were no reports of anyone having been deliberately disenfranchised.

Between 4184 to 4319 tendered ballots were issued in the General and Regional elections (an average of 0.86% of the total number of registered voters), which is one indicator of

the level of electors missed in registration exercise. While the number of tendered ballots is lower than for the 2001 elections, education and voter awareness are areas that need more emphasis.

Freedom to Vote

All reports indicated that electors were able to cast their votes freely. No report of voter intimidation was observed. No report was received of the secrecy of the vote having been violated.

Multiple Voting

No report was received of any case of multiple voting.

Polling Validity

72.83% of EAB observers rated the validity of the poll as *totally acceptable*. 26.73% rated it as *acceptable*. Only one incident of fraud or attempted fraud was reported during the poll, but it was quickly dealt with by GECOM.

Addition Checks on Returning Officers' and Chief Election Officers' Statements

According to EAB's analysis of Statements of Poll, the addition of the total votes cast was incorrect on two SoPs, but this only accounted for a difference of 66 votes.³³ However, the overall analysis shows a discrepancy of 722 votes in the General and 961 votes in the Regional Elections. Based on the EAB's analysis of Region Ten SoPs, which substantiated the claim by the AFC, it would appear that a few votes can make the difference in the award of seats.

³³ SOP 413441B, Wray's Residence, Aubrey Barker Rd., Ballot Box No. 4167: Sum of total General votes cast for parties incorrect; and SOP 641211J, Crabwood Creek Primary School, Ballot Box # 6283: Sum of total votes cast incorrect

In light of the above considerations, and barring any unforetold, adverse parameter, the Electoral Assistance Bureau considers that the August 28th, 2006 elections were free and fair. In EAB's opinion, the Final Declaration of Results by the Chief Election Officer on August 31st, 2006 is largely representative of the collective will of the Guyanese people who cast their ballots at the August 28th General and Regional Elections.

However, given that the discrepancies detected in the Regions Five and Ten results, small though they are, can have a material impact on the award of National Assembly and Regional Democratic Council seats, the EAB cannot conclude that the award of seats fully reflects the will of the Guyanese people. Therefore, the EAB calls on GECOM to review the tabulation of the results and its award of seats at the national and regional levels. GECOM may wish to consider inviting the political parties which contested the elections to discuss the way forward.

Appreciation and Overall Conclusions

It goes without saying that in any undertaking (particularly an undertaking which had to proceed at a national level) we are forced to measure our relative success or failure by means of an examination of how well our goals have been realised.

The nation-wide appeal and the overwhelming response from persons of all ethnic backgrounds and from all walks of life (especially the youths), was of significant importance to the successful implementation of many of the objectives of EAB 2006. We were able to mobilise, successfully, persons to monitor and observe the electoral process. This was the part we at EAB played in free and fair elections.

It is indeed gratifying to record the deep sense of commitment to Guyana demonstrated by the over 2000 trained volunteers who manned the hotlines. We record our most sincere gratitude to the sponsor organisations, the EAB Council and, most important, the project staff without which many of the goals would not have come to fruition.

Although an extremely close monitoring of media behaviour and performance did not fall within the EAB ambit/purview, our Electoral Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) Report did not fail to reflect, from time to time, on the importance we attributed to media behaviour during this period which was causing, at least some persons, a certain degree of apprehension. We realised the importance of media behaviour specifically in so far as the possible effects of inflammatory and incitatory language that persons have a tendency to bandy about come election time. Ill-judged comments in the press, over the electronic media (particularly here) and at public meetings could escalate ethnic fears.

GECOM is to be warmly congratulated for the onerous and meticulous task undertaken by its Media Monitoring Unit. Examining media behaviour from quantitative and qualitative aspects and from the perspectives of fairness, accuracy and balance was no easy task, particularly when one took into account the fluidity of the situation. For example, the medium may very well obey all the strictures of the media code of conduct on one instance and then, a few minutes later, may find itself showing a distinct bias to one particularly entity and give a particular party an advantage. GECOM's Media Monitoring Unit threaded its way cautiously through a lot of mine-fields.

Sadly, there was a particular mine-field with which GECOM experienced difficulty: the sharing of some information with EAB.

It is troubling to report that, on far too many occasions, the lines of communication between certain officials at GECOM and the EAB became hopelessly entangled. This caused repercussions on the successful achievement of some of the EAB goals.

It was indeed unfortunate that we at EAB were unable to facilitate many who volunteered to work at the EAB. GECOM's dilatory behaviour in handling the question of the issuing of Local Observers Identification Cards was the crux of this embarrassing failure of ours. Guyanese who worked in foreign embassies and other international organisations and who were encouraged to volunteer to work on election day got themselves trained, but, frustratingly, were unable to participate as Local Observers. The ID Cards arrived late from GECOM. Quantum-wise, our staffing and our work were affected.

The failure to reach a consensus approach on the production of the OLE has impacted negatively on the entire process. The acceptable level of accuracy of the voters' list would, of course vary from country to country, depending on the range of other social and political conditions. In Guyana it would seem that a significant enough proportion of the Guyanese public demanded a higher level of accuracy than obtained, to have moved GECOM to consider corrective measures. At EAB we were deeply worried that the efficiency of our performance could be compromised given the GECOM attitude.

Some brief added comments: There was GECOM's lack of support for independent

monitoring (our own concern) on SOP's which could have reduced public confidence in the work of EAB.

The fact remains, every so often, a puzzling (and seeming unnecessary) lack of information surfaced in EAB's dealings with GECOM. EAB had no intention of stepping on GECOM toes. And it is certainly not EAB's intention to imply that the relative paucity of sharing important information by GECOM was deliberate. But, given the nature of both entities (EAB and GECOM),

given their many common goals and aspirations, the lack of sharing of information caused worry. For example, we at EAB were certainly not indulging in nefarious activities, so why could EAB not be permitted to conduct an open and comprehensive assessment of GECOM's preparation e.g. training? GECOM appointed a Liaison with Local Observers only in the last weeks before Election Day.

Once again, our deepest gratitude to all those laboured at EAB for the entire period.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

ELECTORAL STRUCTURE

Constitutional & Legal Framework

Fixed Election Dates

The majority decision of the Commission to trigger the electoral cycle by informing the President that it was in a position to produce the OLE was questioned by at least one opposition nominated Commissioner and by a senior Official in GECOM's secretariat, since there were concerns that crucial requirements and arrangements would not be completed in time to hold elections within the projected schedule.

Flexible election dates as opposed to fixed dates remain a cause of concern, if only that they introduce a level of uncertainty into an electoral process that would benefit most from fixed dates. There appears to be an unfortunate tendency in Guyana's electoral machinery to begin working at a later rather than an earlier stage, especially when it comes to dealing with contentious issues such as the question of a residency requirement.

Would a fixed date not assist in garnering the required political and institutional will for preparations to be concluded well within time? The fixing of election dates will assist in the institutionalisation of the electoral process and move Guyana one step closer towards genuine democracy. Arguably, flexible election dates work to the advantage of the incumbent party, with little benefit to opposition parties or the country as a whole.

Therefore, the EAB is of the view that there is a strong argument, for fixed dates for the Elections at the General, Regional and the

Local Government levels, especially the potential for a more stable and conducive pre-election political environment. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Legislate simultaneous General and Regional Elections

A related issue is tradition of holding General and Regional elections simultaneously, which has not been made into law. Therefore, the EAB recommends that legislation be passed to stipulate that General and Regional elections be held simultaneously. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Consolidation of Election and Election-related Legislation

The various pieces of legislation governing the elections process should be updated and consolidated into a single piece of legislation.

Administrative Structure

Improved Policy-Making and Administrative Systems and Structure

The EAB recommends that an independent, non-partisan, professional multi-stakeholder Task Force (hereinafter referred to as the Task Force) be established to review the operations of GECOM and the Secretariat for the purpose of recommending the organisational structure, management systems, human resource strategy and policies and principles that will ensure efficient, transparent, and professionally run elections that conform to national, regional and international standards.

Financial Independence

So as to further guarantee its independence GECOM should submit its budget for the requisite financial resources to satisfactorily carry out its constitutional mandate directly to the parliament and such funds should be appropriated by parliament and given directly to GECOM, whose financial decision-making and management systems will continue to be audited by the Auditor General. In this regard, GECOM should be accountable to Parliament directly.

Formation of the Elections Commission

De-Politicise the Commission

The Commission's purpose for existence is to administer the electoral process. While it is recognised that the Commission has to be sensitive to and relate to political realities, its independence and impartiality must be protected. The EAB therefore recommends that the Commission be comprised of technocrats and non-political persons, who should be chosen by an appropriate mechanism that involves all national stakeholders so as to ensure broad support for and confidence in the appointees. In this regard, it recommends that this also be referred to the Task Force for consideration. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Accreditation of Local and International Observers

Establish Common Status for Local and International Observers

The EAB recommends that the laws governing local and international elections observers be reviewed by an independent body, with relevant international input, to ensure that a common status applies to local and international observers and to assure that all observers will have the maximum positive impact upon the electoral process.

Elections observers' law should guarantee the rights necessary to preserve the independence of observers, while ensuring that observers' responsibilities are upheld.

Voting Procedures

The established voting procedures appear to prevent systematic voter fraud. However, a more transparent system for monitoring and auditing the distribution and use of ballot papers and other material used in the balloting process, especially the "sensitive" materials should be considered.

While it has been generally accepted that, by and large, Polling officials performed creditably, it would be worthwhile to place more emphasis on the need for polling (and other GECOM) officials to understand their critical role as facilitators' of the peoples' elections process. Therefore, the EAB recommends that training focus specifically on the importance of going all out to ensure that everyone who is eligible to vote is able to exercise his or her franchise on Election Day, notwithstanding any apparent delinquency on the voters' part. In this regard, EAB also recommends that a register be kept for Tendered Ballots at each Polling Station and a record made of the reasons for issue of Tendered Ballots.

ELECTORAL PREPARATIONS

Voters' list

Implement National Register System

The production of a voter's list that ensures that the highest possible standards are met with respect to guaranteeing the right of all eligible voters to cast their ballots on Election Day is of paramount importance in the holding of democratic elections. As was

recommended after the 1997 elections, the EAB once again urges that immediate steps be taken to create a single, national database of all citizens. This recommendation envisages the linking of information from the Births and Deaths Registry, a registration exercise, and perhaps even immigration and tax records, so that every citizen will be listed in the National Register. Thus, the National Register would become a permanent, regularly updated list of citizens. (*First recommended in 1997*)

The Register could be used for the extraction of Voters' Lists, the production of National ID cards, as well as use by the National Insurance Scheme, the Inland Revenue Department, the Guyana Police Force, other state agencies, the business community and civil society.

Establish clear, unambiguous regulations for the timely production of the Voters' Lists

The general procedures for the production of the national register and the voters' lists are set out in several pieces of legislation which vest the responsibility for some functions related thereto in public officials who are not under the control of GECOM. As previously discussed, in the EAB's view, the existing arrangements do not provide for the most effective and timely means of undertaking this very critical aspect of free and fair elections. It, therefore, recommends that the Task Force review the existing systems with a view to making proposals to bring the full responsibility for and control over the entire elections process under GECOM and for ensuring that clear procedures, in keeping with widely accepted standards, are regulated by law. Specifically, the EAB recommends that the regulations set out procedures that address the concerns raised with regard to the claims and objections process, independent testing

of the lists, the period cycle for production of a new list, residency requirements for the purposes of registration.

Need for New Voters' List for Local Government Elections

Now that continuous registration has been legislated, consideration ought to be given to producing a fresh voters' list based on a national registration exercise. As recommended before, the voters' list database should be linked to an integrated digital system for the registration of births and deaths. The issue of residency should be determined and, if necessary, the national database would be kept up-to-date through the GRA database. A person's call name (also known as) should also be recorded in the new registration exercise, as this can be an important piece of data in locating that person. (*First recommended in 2001*).

The EAB further recommends that the system for maintaining the new voters list should provide for internal and independent external testing, checking and auditing.

List of Disciplined Services Voters

The procedures for extracting the list of disciplined services voters have led to some amount of confusion. Enough members of the disciplined services made claims of not being on the list to warrant a review of these procedures. Additionally, it was unclear if the names of disciplined services members which were extracted also appeared on the OLE on Election Day. If they were on the OLE, it was unclear what procedures were in place to prevent multiple voting.

EAB recommends that clear regulations should be set out for the production of the list of disciplined services members to guard against disenfranchisement and multiple voting.

Media Coverage

Code of Conduct for the Media

For the most part, the media acted responsibly in the 2006 election period. In order to build upon this healthy development, the EAB recommends that urgent steps be taken to get broad national consensus on the draft Broadcast Legislation and to enact it without much further delay. This will also address the concern raised about the advantageous position of the governing party with respect to the state owned media. The EAB is also of the view that the laws and regulations governing the conduct of the media should be modernized, and a code of conduct for media practitioners established and enforced. (*First recommended in 2001*).

Promotion of Debates among Candidates

To encourage more issue-related campaigning, GECOM, the Media and civil society should consider sponsoring debates among election candidates at the national and regional levels, and for facilitating citizen participation in the debates. A methodology will have to be worked out to fairly decide on the issues/subjects that should be debated.

Campaign period and Election Related Incidents

Legislate Code of Conduct

In the 2006 elections the IRO sponsored Code of Conduct and Peace Pact appeared to have a positive effect on the conduct of persons campaigning and spokespersons and agents of political parties. Therefore, the EAB recommends that Parliament legislate a Code of Conduct to cover campaigning and assign an appropriate agency to supervise its implementation. This Code must necessarily demonstrate its paramountcy over the parties by effecting sanctions and penalties that

serve as deterrents, and all candidates and political parties should be required, by law, to abide by the tenets of a code of conduct. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Enforce RPA Part XIII, Elections Expenses

The Representation of the People Act, Part XIII, Elections Expenses, mandates the maximum sum which can be legally expended on campaigning. The non-enforcement of this law ensures that smaller parties are at a disadvantage in the electoral contest. While the maximum sum and the penalties stipulated may be in need of updating, the law clearly seeks to establish a level playing field for contesting parties. Therefore, the EAB recommends that the existing legislation be brought in line with reality and the enforcement mechanisms be reviewed. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Abuse of State resources

There have been justifiable claims by opposition parties of abuse of state resources. To avoid any perception of advantage there is need for the legislation of campaign regulations governing the use of state resources by candidates and political parties during an election period. An earlier recommendation to set a fixed election calendar also speaks to this issue.

Violence-free Elections

The EAB/IFES Election Violence Education and Resolution Project offers worthwhile recommendations to key national stakeholders for violence-free elections. The recommendations are the result of field work and stakeholder involvement.

QUALITY OF ELECTORAL PROCESS

GECOM's Preparations for elections

Systems Review

Every aspect of the elections process, especially those which allow for independent external checking and verification should be adhered to and further promoted.

The EAB recommends that a broad-based review of the current systems should be conducted with the objective of identifying mechanisms that can be implemented to facilitate independent checks, verification and audit.

Staff Selection and Training

As recommended above, a strategic human resource development and management plan should be put in place to ensure the availability of requisite personnel. The EAB is of the view that this would necessarily involve a thorough analysis of the key success factors associated with the various staff positions and a review of the performance of GECOM Returning Officers and other polling day officials at the 2006 elections. It is also of the view that the retention of competent staff will assist in the institutionalisation of high-quality elections. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Permanent Elections Commission staff should be continuously trained, and their skills updated. In addition, training courses should be mounted at regular intervals for those members of civil society who express an interest in assisting in the elections process. The ultimate objective should be the building-up of a critical mass of trained personnel to perform the tasks demanded by an election. (*First recommended in 2001*).

Elections Manual

A great amount of experience in running elections should by now have been accumulated in Guyana. This experience should be carefully analysed, and a manual produced which would not only serve as a management tool for future elections, but would also provide the basis for a series of continuous training courses. If this were done, Guyana would be providing itself with the electoral institutional memory, which it now seems to lack. (*First recommend in 2001*).

System of Accountability for Packed Ballot Boxes, Ballot Paper and Sensitive Material

The EAB was not provided with information about the system of accounting for ballot boxes and ballot paper. However, the EAB views accountability for materials, especially sensitive items such as ballot paper, as critical to ensuring free and fair elections. Therefore, a transparent system, which can withstand public scrutiny, should be put in place to account for all election material from the placing of orders, through acquisition and up to after the announcement of results and storage of unused material.

Broaden Voter Education Programme Input

The Commission must involve agencies outside of itself to participate in the development of a widespread, community based Voter Education Programme. This will better ensure that the voters, especially those registered for the first time and the young voters, are aware of their civic responsibility, the purpose of elections and the electoral process.

The infrastructure by which the programme is supported must include full-time, qualified staff who are not distracted by other responsibilities.

Communication strategy

GECOM should develop and implement an ongoing communication strategy geared to address the information needs of each and every stakeholder in the elections process, especially the key stakeholders such as the political parties. The strategy should also provide for regular interaction and exchange of information with the key stakeholders.

The Conduct of the Poll

Revise Voter Load

EAB recommends that the voter load per polling place be increased, based on time-and-motion studies, in order to maximise efficiencies while minimising queuing. EAB is also of the opinion that with greater attention being paid to the training of staff, considerably more voters could be processed comfortably. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Early Publication of Schedule of Polling Stations

While the need to ensure accessibility by voters to polling stations and the difficulties associated with using privately owned properties for polling stations is understood, GECOM's inability to publish the final Schedule of Polling Stations well in advance of the elections is unacceptable. This can serve to disenfranchise voters who cannot vote because they do not know their polling station. This also does not give enough time for stakeholders to scrutinise the list properly and make objections if necessary.

EAB recommends that this matter be addressed urgently with a view to developing a plan to ensure that the public and all stakeholders will have early and full knowledge of the whereabouts of polling stations and adequate arrangements are in place to facilitate voting by all voters, including the physically challenged. Also,

the Polling Station Schedule should state the number of registered voters for each ballot box for the purposes of audit and validation by independent observers.

Administration of Proxies

It appears that a low level of importance was applied to the administration of proxy voting. Proxy voting has been the source of bitter dispute at one stage of Guyana's post-independence political history. While the use of proxy voting has not been widespread in recent elections, it can be easily misused if not properly and transparently managed. On the other hand, as a facility to promote and encourage the widest possible participation in elections, it is an important aspect of national democratic processes.

The EAB recommends that established procedures for the administration of proxy votes should be scrupulously adhered to.

Payment of Party Polling Agents

In the 2006 Elections, the introduction of the payment of party polling agents for the ruling party and the main opposition party exclusively has caused concern. Therefore, while the EAB firmly supports payments to party polling agents, it recommends that the method for determining whose agents will be paid be reviewed with input from all stakeholders.

Public Holiday for Election Day

The declaration of Election Day as a public holiday appears to have facilitated early voting. Evidence suggests that the majority of votes cast was done by 2:00 p.m., thus reducing the possibility for congestion at the closing time and preventing a build-up of frustration among voters waiting to vote at the normal closing time, as in past elections. However, the concern was raised about the limited availability of public transport on Election Day.

EAB recommends that in future Election Day should be a public holiday, but that a plan is put in place to ensure adequate access to public transport for voters getting to and from their polling stations.

The Count

Modify Statement of Poll

Major redesigning of the Statement of Poll is required in order to streamline data collection upon the completion of the count and allow for more comprehensive audit of ballot papers issued to each polling station. A revised Statement should consist of a single form to be used for recording the results of both the General and Regional Elections. Recommendations are made elsewhere to legislate that the General and Regional Elections be held simultaneously, since at present their simultaneity has been based on tradition and not on legislation. (*First recommended in 1997*).

Use of Electronic Systems

The use of modern electronic systems to manage information and communication can vastly improve the quality and efficiency of the entire elections management system, provide for independent monitoring and better assure the tabulation and dissemination of accurate and timely elections results. Therefore, the EAB recommends that GECOM urgently consider introducing an integrated Management Information System connecting all of its departments and stakeholders.

In similar vein, the EAB recommends that a study be undertaken to determine the

feasibility of the introducing electronic voting machines. The study should not be restricted to the technical aspects, but also examine the political and social considerations.

Declaration of Results

Need for Speedy Communication of Results

In these elections, the period between the close of poll and the declaration of results was relatively calm. However, potential for the building-up of tension and frustration due to the delay in the declaration of results, as in past elections, should not be discounted.

EAB recommends that method for tabulating and declaring results be reviewed. With the availability of modern electronic computing and communication technology, systems can be designed to ensure speedy, accurate and reliable publication of results, polling station by polling station, region by region.

Independent and Timely Dissemination of Election Results

EAB also recommends that facilities be put in place to foster and encourage the timely dissemination of the information on Statements of Poll by the media, civil society organisations, and citizens' groups.

For ease of reference and to facilitate follow-up action and monitoring, these recommendations have been compiled in a matrix at and appear in Annex 11.

ANNEX 1 *Observer's Pledge*

General and Regional Elections 2006

I, the undersigned, hereby pledge as follows:

1. That I agree to serve on behalf of the **Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB)** as a polling place observer at the general and Regional Elections of 28th August 2006;
2. That I am neither an activist nor a candidate for any party contesting these elections;
3. That I have attended a training session and that I fully understand my duties as an observer;
4. That I shall execute my duties impartially and objectively to the best of my ability, and in keeping with the directions for observing provided by the **EAB**;
5. That I shall not interfere with the electoral process and the functioning of the GECOM officials;
6. That the reports I shall give both orally and in writing shall represent an accurate account of the proceedings witnessed by me and that those reports shall be conveyed to the **EAB** as quickly as possible;
7. That I shall refer all queries from the News Media to the **EAB** Office, 157 Waterloo Street, North Cummingsburg, Georgetown.

ANNEX 2 Screen View of Microsoft Access™ Data Entry Window

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Access data entry window titled "Election Day Polling Results" from a database named "E-Day DB - [E-Day Results1]". The window contains a form with the following fields and controls:

- POLLING DISTRICT**: Text box with a dropdown arrow.
- POLLING DIVISION NO**: Text box.
- POLLING STATION NAME**: Text box.
- SIX DIGIT POLLING STATION NO**: Text box.
- BALLOT BOX NO#**: Text box.
- ENTER DATA FROM GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLL**: Section containing:
 - AFC GENERAL:
 - NDF GENERAL:
 - GAP-ROAR GENERAL:
 - PNCR-16 GENERAL:
 - GNC GENERAL:
 - PPP/C GENERAL:
 - JFAP GENERAL:
 - PRP GENERAL:
 - LD GENERAL:
 - TUF GENERAL:
 - TOTAL GENERAL VALID VOTES FOR ALL PARTIES:
 - NO# OF GENERAL SPOILT BALLOT PAPERS:
 - NO# OF GENERAL DESTROYED BALLOT PAPERS:
 - NO# OF GENERAL TENDERED BALLOT PAPERS:
 - TOTAL GENERAL REJECTED BALLOT PAPERS:
 - TOTAL GENERAL VOTES CAST AT POLLING STATION:
- ENTER DATA FROM REGIONAL STATEMENT OF POLL**: Section containing:
 - AFC REGIONAL:
 - NDF REGIONAL:
 - GAP-ROAR REGIONAL:
 - PNCR-16 REGIONAL:
 - GNC REGIONAL:
 - PPP/C REGIONAL:
 - JFAP REGIONAL:
 - PRP REGIONAL:
 - LD REGIONAL:
 - TUF REGIONAL:
 - TOTAL REGIONAL VALID VOTES FOR ALL PARTIES:
 - NO# OF REGIONAL SPOILT BALLOT PAPERS:
 - NO# OF REGIONAL DESTROYED BALLOT PAPERS:
 - NO# OF REGIONAL TENDERED BALLOT PAPERS:
 - TOTAL REGIONAL REJECTED BALLOT PAPERS:
 - TOTAL REGIONAL VOTES CAST AT POLLING STATION:
- Navigation Buttons**:
 - Previous Record
 - Find Record
 - Save Record
 - Delete Record
 - Print Data
 - Next Record

At the bottom of the window, it displays "Record: 1 of 1" and "Form View". The status bar at the very bottom shows "NUM".

ANNEX 3 Summary of Entire Day's Observation Report form

Electoral Assistance Bureau

SUMMARY OF ENTIRE DAY'S OBSERVATIONS (TO BE COMPLETED AT 6 PM)

2006 General & Regional Elections

Division Number: _____ Division Name: _____
 Building Name: _____ Observer's Name: _____
 Ballot Box No: _____ Time Poll Opened: _____ a.m. Time Poll Closed: _____ p.m.
 All Polling Officials present during the day? YES.....1 NO.....2

(please CIRCLE YES or NO. If answer is NO, explain in space at right, or on reverse side)

THE VOTING PROCESS

ID procedures properly done? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Finger inking done? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Ballot papers properly stamped? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Voting done in secrecy? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Voters generally satisfied? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Party agents generally satisfied? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Average voting time _____ minutes
 No. Of voters in line by 6 pm _____
 Last person in line voted? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Police Officer behaved professionally? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____
 Were you allowed full privileges? YES.....1 NO.....2 _____

VALIDITY OF THE VOTING PROCESS

(Tick ✓ in appropriate box below. If the voting process was UNACCEPTABLE, or TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE, explain on reverse side)

TOTALLY ACCEPTABLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No irregularities that prevented a listed person from voting, or allowed an unlisted person to vote.</i>	Total No. of voters who presented themselves but were not allowed to vote because: 1. They were not on List: _____ 2. Form of identification not accepted: _____ 3. Voter on list already voted: _____ 4. Of other reason _____ TOTAL _____
ACCEPTABLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Some irregularities, but no vote was affected.</i>	
UNACCEPTABLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Irregularities existed that prevented a listed person from voting, or allowed unlisted persons to vote.</i>	
TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Widespread irregularities which would significantly alter the results.</i>	

Comments: _____

 Observer's signature: _____

ANNEX 4 Letter of Accreditation from GECOM

GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

April 25, 2006

Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues
 Chairman – Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB)
 The Private Sector Commission Building
 157 Waterloo Street
 North Cummingsburg
 Georgetown

Dear Fr. Rodrigues,

In accordance with the Election Laws (Amendment) Act No. 15 of 2000, Section 20, and subsequent to your written acquiescence with the conditions stipulated by the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), I am pleased to inform you that the Electoral Assistance Bureau is hereby being **officially accredited as a Domestic Observer**.

By a copy of this letter, the Chief Election Officer, Mr. Gocool Boodoo, is being informed of his duty to present to your Bureau the **Certificate of Accreditation**, as well as any other Domestic Observer associated matériel. GECOM's election workers and other officials, in addition to security personnel will be informed of the EAB's accreditation. He will also be GECOM's contact person relative to any queries you might have in the future.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN
 ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Dr. R. S. Surujbally, A.A.

Chairman
GECOM

Copy: Mr. Gocool Boodoo, Chief Election Officer, GECOM

SS/uc

ANNEX 5 *General Findings: Field Test of Revised List of Electors
(compared with Field Test of Preliminary List of Electors)*

	2006 RLE TEST		<i>2006 PLE TEST</i>	
	Finding	% of sample	<i>Finding</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
A. <u>VOTERS ACCOUNTED FOR</u>	(1159)		(1167)	
1. Voter found ³⁴ - at RLE address	683	58.93	606	51.92
- not at RLE address ³⁵	28	2.41	--	--
2. Person reported to be not at home	13	1.12	22	1.89
3. Person reported to have moved to a new address	100	8.63	174	14.91
4. Person reported to be temporarily out of village/district	83	7.16	115	9.85
5. Person reported to be temporarily out of country	73	6.30	48	4.11
6. Person reported to have migrated	79	6.82	97	8.31
7. Person reported to have died	16	1.38	27	2.31
8. Person refused to cooperate	13	1.12	8	0.69
	1088	93.87	1097	93.99
B. <u>VOTERS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR</u>				
1. No such address found	20	1.72	29	2.49
1. No reply at given address	4	0.35	8	0.69
2. Reported that no such person was known to be resident at the given address	47	4.06	33	2.83
	71	6.13	70	6.01
C. <u>VOTERS NOT VISITED/INACCESSIBLE</u>³⁶	39		32	
<u>TOTAL</u>	1198		1199	

³⁴ **VOTERS FOUND**

1. Particulars correct	683	96.06	587	96.86
2. Particulars incorrect	<u>28</u>	<u>3.94</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>3.14</u>
	<u>711</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>606</u>	<u>100.00</u>

³⁵ These persons were directly contacted by the EAB and they reported that they have moved to a new address (different from their RLE address)

³⁶ These persons reside in remote parts of Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10 where travel was difficult. These names were published in the national press but no information was received. Hence the original sample of 1198 was reduced by 39 to 1159, and the new maximum margin of error went up to 2.94%. This translates into the sample result of voters accounted for lying between 90.93% and 96.81%. The field work was closed off on Wednesday, 26th July since GECOM's prescribed public display of the RLE period ended on Thursday, 20th July 2006.

ANNEX 6 *EAB News Release, 29th August 2006*

NEWS RELEASE

The Electoral Assistance Bureau fielded approximately 1400 Volunteer Election Day Observers in the 2006 National & Regional Elections, 28th August 2006. Overall, polling was conducted in a calm and peaceful manner.

The initial feed back which we have received from our Observers is that the GECOM polling officials carried out their duties in a dignified and efficient manner.

The Electorate must also be complimented for their conduct in the exercise of their right to vote from the official opening of the poll to its closing.

We are now in a position to provide on our web-site unofficial results obtained from the Statements of Poll received by our observers and other results obtained by EAB observers from posted statements of poll and tally-sheets at the respective polling stations. This web-site is being up-dated as information is received and can be viewed at www.eab.org.gy.

The official results are being prepared by GECOM and we appeal to the public to continue to show patience while this exercise is being completed.

The EAB is heartened by the overwhelming response to its call for volunteers and would like to publicly thank them all for their civic mindedness which was demonstrated by their generosity in giving of their time. We wish to apologise to all those who volunteered and could not be accommodated.

Council of Management
Electoral Assistance Bureau

29th August 2006

ANNEX 7 *EAB News Release, 19th December 2006*

NEWS RELEASE

The Council of Management of the Electoral Assistance Bureau wishes to state that the EAB is in the process of analysing 1999 digitised copies of the Statements of Poll (SOPs) for the 2006 General and Regional Elections.

It further wishes to state that the delay in the analysis is as a result of not receiving the Statements of Poll from GECOM officials, some of whom claimed that they were under instructions from either the Chairman or the Chief Elections Officer. The copies of the Statements of Poll that are being analysed were made available by the Carter Centre. We have been informed that they were scanned from hard copies by GECOM.

The EAB has today published the first report of its analysis of the SOPs. This report looks at the General and Regional Elections results for Region 10. In view of the initial concerns with the Region 10 results, the EAB decided to start its analysis here.

On completion of the analysis exercise, the EAB will release its Final Report on the 2006 General and Regional Elections.

Council of Management
Electoral Assistance Bureau

19th December 2006

ANNEX 8 *Declared Results: General Election*³⁷

GENERAL VOTES														
Dist. No.	Number of Electors	Total Votes Cast	Total Rejected Ballots	Total Valid Votes	AFC	GAP/R	GNC	JFAP	LD	NDF	PNC/R1G	PPP/C	PRP	TUF
1	12273	7383	384	6999	1006	217	0	29	0	0	1041	4473	0	233
2	28669	20679	265	20414	1722	291	0	61	0	0	3662	14543	0	135
3	69459	50014	705	49309	2805	186	0	679	0	0	10890	34671	0	78
4	217168	148349	1719	146630	13876	335	0	1582	0	0	68112	62386	0	339
5	34071	26035	359	25676	877		0	64	0	0	8770	15904	0	61
6	80434	58262	862	57400	3091	222	0	53	0	0	11632	42248	0	154
7	10686	6336	131	6205	918	845	0	43	0	0	1846	2420	0	133
8	4788	2850	93	2757	426	481	0		0	0	540	877	0	433
9	9910	7447	217	7230	479	1589	0	29	0	0	903	3176	0	1054
10	24911	14071	316	13755	3166	83	0	31	0	0	7212	3189	0	74
	492369	338839	5051	336375	28366	4249	0	2571	0	0	114608	183887	0	2694

³⁷ Extracted from the signed Statement of the Chief Election Officer, dated 1st September 2006.

ANNEX 9 *Declared Results: Regional Election*³⁸

REGIONAL VOTES														
Dist. No.	Number of Electors	Total Votes Cast	Total Rejected Ballots	Total Valid Votes	AFC	GAP/R	GNC	JFAP	LD	NDF	PNCR/1G	PPP/C	P.R.P	TUF
1	12273	7381	432	6949	931	198	0	33	0	0	1046	4468	0	273
2	28669	20679	362	20317	1724	322	0	60	0	0	3650	14415	0	146
3	69459	49898	836	49062	2710	183	0	957	0	0	10782	34307	0	123
4	217168	148373	1921	146452	13566	459	123	2170	172	0	67726	61896	0	340
5	34071	26034	435	25599	850	0	31	77	0	0	8710	15769	105	57
6	80434	57876	1026	56850	3033	230	0	44	0	0	11628	41713	0	202
7	10686	6420	179	6241	746	868	0	50	0	0	1958	2449	27	143
8	4788	2844	100	2744	407	480	0	0	0	0	543	865	0	449
9	9910	7445	242	7203	414	1734	0	21	0	0	871	3073	0	1090
10	24911	14207	366	13841	3016	114	0	24	0	25	7369	3201	0	92
	492369	341157	5899	335258	27397	4588	154	3436	172	25	114283	182156	132	2915

³⁸ Extracted from the signed Statement of the Chief Election Officer, dated 1st September 2006.

ANNEX 10 *Award of Seats in the National Assembly and Regional Democratic Councils*³⁹

SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY										
TOP-UP										
AFC	GAP/R	GNC	JFAP	LD	NDF	PNCR/1G	PPP/C	P.R.P	TUF	TOTAL
4	1					13	21		1	40

SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY											
GEOGRAPHIC CONSTITUENCY											
REGION	AFC	GAP/R	GNC	JFAP	LD	NDF	PNCR/1G	PPP/C	P.R.P	TUF	TOTAL
ONE							1	1			2
TWO								2			2
THREE							1	2			3
FOUR	1						3	3			7
FIVE							1	1			2
SIX							1	2			3
SEVEN							1	1			2
EIGHT								1			1
NINE								1			1
TEN							1	1			2
TOTAL	1	0	0	0	0	0	9	15	0	0	25

SEATS IN THE REGIONAL DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL											
REGION	AFC	GAP/R	GNC	JFAP	LD	NDF	PNCR/1G	PPP/C	P.R.P	TUF	TOTAL
ONE	2						2	10		1	15
TWO	2						3	12			17
THREE	1			1			6	19			27
FOUR	3			1			16	15			35
FIVE	1						6	11			18
SIX	2						6	22			30
SEVEN	2	2					5	6			15
EIGHT	2	3					3	5		2	15
NINE	1	4					2	6		2	15
TEN	4						10	4			18
TOTAL	20	9	0	2	0	0	59	110	0	5	205

³⁹ Extracted from the signed Statement of the Chief Election Officer, dated 1st September 2006

ANNEX 11 *Matrix of EAB 2006 Recommendations*

Attached by e-mail or in separate MS Word file.

The Electoral Assistance Bureau of Guyana (EAB) was established in 1991 to assist in the establishment, maintenance and preservation of democracy in Guyana, and particularly in the establishment and maintenance of democratic elections. The EAB an independent, non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation of ordinary citizens committed to promoting democracy in Guyana. The EAB is comprised of citizen volunteers from all ethnic, economic and adult age groups within Guyana. Since our establishment in 1991 we have focused on the monitoring of elections. In this regard, EAB has an extensive national observer network. We have fielded several hundred observers in all regions for all national and regional elections since 1992. The organisation is governed by a Council of Management, which is comprised of individuals with a range of skills needed to guide our work. The EAB is sponsored by civil society organisations with constituencies across all major faiths and in other interest areas. Sponsors are consulted on major governance decisions. The EAB has been supported by a number of donors over the years. We are grateful for their support and the continued support of our Sponsors and fellow Guyanese.

For more information visit or website at www.eab.org.gy

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