

General & Regional

Elections

Guyana 2001



**Electoral Assistance Bureau
Guyana**

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GUYANA

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana, located on the North Eastern coast of the continent of South America, achieved independence from Britain on May 26, 1966. Within its area of 83,000 square miles live approximately 750,000 people, 90% occupies the narrow strip of fertile coastland, which borders the Atlantic Ocean. This coastal belt covers about 7.5% of the Republic's area. The remaining 10% of the population is thinly dispersed throughout the rest of the country in its mountains, savannahs, forests and riverain areas.

The country's population comprises diverse ethnic groupings: East Indians, Africans, Amerindians, Chinese and Europeans.

The Political Context

In both of its Reports following the 1992 and 1997 General and Regional Elections, the EAB gives extensive coverage of the broad historical political context leading up to these elections. We feel that since these Reports are still accessible, in this Report we shall restrict the political context for consideration to the period 31 December 1997 to 23 March 2001.

The results of the General and Regional Elections held on 15 December 1997 were declared on 31 December, giving the PPP/CIVIC a majority of the seats in the National Assembly. This was immediately followed by street protests led by the main opposition People's National Congress (PNC). These protests, which turned violent with racial attacks on innocent bystanders, focused on alleged irregularities connected with the conduct of the elections. These protests disrupted life in the city of Georgetown, and continued until CARICOM was able to broker an accord, known as the Herdmanston Accord, between the PPP/CIVIC government and the People's National Congress (PNC). The Accord contained among other elements the following commitments by the two political parties:-

- To establish a process of political dialogue.
- To set up a Constitutional Reform Commission with an agenda of reforms to be implemented.
- To schedule new General and Regional elections to be held not later than 36 months from the date of signing the Accord.
- To have an independent audit of the election results under the auspices of Caricom.

On 26 February 1998, one Esther Pereira brought an election petition challenging the legality of the General and Regional Elections of 1997 as well as the validity of the declaration of the results. This issue is elaborated in this report under the section entitled THE ELECTION PETITION.

The Caricom Audit was completed in early June 1998 and while it recognised that there was evidence of many procedural omissions, irregularities and systemic and organisational difficulties, nevertheless they found nothing to indicate any significant difference in the result of the elections. The opposition PNC rejected the findings of the Caricom Audit team and once more the city of Georgetown was thrown into chaos as demonstrations disrupted life significantly. A further initiative by Caricom, termed the Saint Lucia Agreement, committed the two main political parties to restore a peaceful environment and to renew dialogue on

constitutional reform; this led to an easing of tensions and a return to normalcy.

In keeping with the Herdmanston Accord, new elections were scheduled for 15 January 2001, 36 months from the date of the signing of the Accord. This had two significant effects: a) it shortened the mandate of the incumbent PPP/Civic government and b) it shortened the period of preparation for the holding of the elections. It was therefore not unexpected when on 13 November 2000, the Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) stated that the Commission would be unable to meet the requirements for conducting acceptable elections by 15 January 2001, and affirmed that the elections would have to be postponed. The delay basically was related to the passing of necessary legislation needed to address certain technical areas connected with the holding of the new elections. On 7 December 2000, representatives of the four parliamentary parties, the PPP/CIVIC, PNC, WPA and TUF met with President Bharrat Jagdeo and agreed that the elections should take place on 19 March 2001. The issue of governance was deferred for further discussion. As it turned out, the Judge in her ruling on the Esther Pereira petition ruled as a consequence that the incumbent government should continue in office "under virtue of the Order of the Court", until new elections were held.

With this background, the process and the actual General and Regional elections were held on 19 March 2001. It has been generally established by both local and international observers that notwithstanding some administrative problems, training issues and some bad decisions, the actual elections were transparent, fair and free. The official results were however not announced until at about 4.20am on the morning of 23 March 2001, with the PPP/CIVIC winning the election with a majority of three (3) seats.

The Electoral Context

In 1991 as a departure from the arrangement whereby elections were administered by a government ministry, a semi-autonomous Elections Commission, comprising a Chairman and 6 Commissioners, was established. Under the new disposition, the Chairman of the Elections Commission is chosen by the President from a list of persons submitted to him by the parliamentary opposition. Three Commissioners are named by the government, and the other three by the combined opposition parties.

The Commission oversees the work of the National Registration Centre (NRC), which registers voters, issues identification cards, and arranges the logistics of election-day activities. While the NRC is a permanent institution, the Elections Commission appears to be a temporary body, established whenever an election is imminent

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that, ever since the time of independence, most of Guyana's citizens have lacked confidence in the electoral process. Indeed, in almost every election, there have been flawed voters' lists. As a result, not only is the process of registration, for each new election, cumbersome and fraught with allegations of turpitude and misconduct, but public trust in the lists, which are eventually used during an election, is minimal. Thus, the very foundation for Guyana's elections has in the past been shaky. Indeed it remains precarious to this day. If this perennial problem can be overcome, the work of future Election Commissions would be much more effective, and the causes of suspicion and subsequent unrest substantially removed.

The Election Petition

In February of 1998, Ms. Esther Pereira of South Sophia filed a petition, which challenged the validity of the 1997 Elections. She claimed, *inter alia*, that the Elections were so flawed that the results did not reflect the will of the people. She named several of the contesting parties as respondents. These included Mr Desmond Hoyte, S.C., leader of the People's National Congress (PNC); the Chief Elections Officer, Mr Stanley Singh; the Chairman of the Elections Commission, Mr. Doodnauth Singh; Mrs Janet Jagan, representative of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C); and Mr. Hamilton Green, representative of the Good and Green Guyana (GGG) Party.

The hearing before Madam Justice Claudette Singh lasted for 2 ½ years, during which period 285 witnesses were called. The decision was handed down on Monday, January 15th, 2001.

The Judge held "that the 1997 Elections were not conducted in accordance with the law," because the insistence by the House of Assembly and the Elections Commission on the possession of identification cards by voters was not a requirement of the country's constitution. Based on her findings she made the following declarations:

- I. That Act 22/97 (the Act which prescribed the use of identification cards) was *ultra vires*, and not in accordance with the Constitution.
- II. That the 1997 Elections were not conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Representation of the People Act Chapter 1:03 and Articles 59 and 159 of the Constitution of Guyana.

In addition, the Judge stated that there was "no doubt that *the evidence reveals that after the count there were several flaws some of which involved breaches of the Representation of the People Act and others involving administrative arrangements which aroused suspicion.*"

She also expressed the view that "if the de facto system which operated, prohibited persons from voting without voter ID cards, then *it does appear that, on a large scale, breaches of the system in operations did occur or were allowed to occur.* Therefore, assuming that Act 22 was intended to ensure compliance... then it does appear that its success was very limited... It follows that *in Region Six alone 29,494 persons would have voted illegally...* This number reflects *an alarming 41.2 % of the 71,562 who voted.* Indeed when comparison is made to Region Four where as many as 175,136 persons voted, *only 6,511 voted without ID cards* representing a mere 3.7% of the total... the difference between numbers and percentages is therefore striking."

Justice Singh, however, found it difficult to be definitive in respect of the number of persons who actually voted. She observed that, "the question arises as to the accuracy of the totals given... Having considered the evidence in relation to the massive irregularities which have occurred *I am unable to make a positive finding whether those unlawful acts or omissions per se might have affected the results.*" As a consequence, although "In the present case while the final results might have been so affected as a mere possibility, for the Court to find this as probability would necessarily involve the Court in speculation and the Court cannot speculate."

In summary, although the Judge was of the opinion that the 1997 elections were seriously flawed, she was unable to decide whether the flaws were of such a magnitude as to affect the results materially. She was adamant, however, that the insistence on a voter identification card, as a prerequisite for voting was unconstitutional.

The New Commission

The Guyana Elections Commission was reconstituted in 2000, in order to make arrangements for, and to oversee and administer, the conduct of General and Regional elections, beginning with that scheduled to be held in 2001, in accordance with the Herdmanston Accord. Major General (retired), Joseph Singh, was appointed Chairman. The other members of the Commission were Mr. Robert Williams, Mr. Robert Corbin, who was later, replaced by Joseph Hamilton and Mr. Lloyd Joseph, representing the opposition parties, and Dr. Bud Mangal and Mr. Ralph Ramkarran S.C. and Mr. Mahamood Shaw representing the governing party. Mr. Moen McDoom subsequently replaced Mr. Ramkarran.

II

THE ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE BUREAU

The Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB), is a Guyanese, non-partisan, not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation. It was founded in June 1991, with the main objective of assisting in the establishment, maintenance and preservation of democracy in Guyana. Its focus, however, has so far been on the monitoring of the electoral process

The EAB's Council of Management originally comprised five persons - Dr. Makepeace Richmond, Chairman; Clairmont Lye, Project Director; and Eileen Cox, Nigel Hughes and Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues, Members. Dr. Ken Danns substituted for Fr. Rodrigues in June 1994, after the latter had gone on leave of absence. All directors serve on a voluntary basis.

The Bureau has on file a total of over 1200 volunteers. Some of these are paid a stipend for the execution of specific duties.

The EAB is funded in part by local donations, and by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) of Washington, D.C., USA.

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 Consumer's Advisory Bureau, the Guyana Consumers Association and the Private Sector Commission. These organisations lend the credibility of their names to the Bureau. Sponsors also support EAB's programmes through the identification of volunteers and coordinators, and the provision of other resources as required by the programmes.

In the past the EAB has monitored three elections: the 1992 National and Regional elections, the 1994 Local Authorities elections, and the 1997 National and Regional elections. Programmes undertaken included testing of voters lists (all elections), voter education (1992 & 1994), media monitoring (1997), campaign monitoring (1994 & 1997), and the fielding of local observers at polling stations. The Bureau has produced a number of reports since its formation in 1991. These describe its work, in the programmes that were undertaken, in some detail.

EAB is the largest and most experienced local observer organisation. Indeed, 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. Local observers play a unique, non-partisan role in recording the events of Election Day. Because of their intimate knowledge of the national social and political environment, they can be, with careful selection and training, the most informed and valuable source of information available in assessing the conduct of an election. Perhaps of the greatest importance, however, is the fact that local observers are not merely good deterrents and detectors of electoral fraud, but that, they tend to continue their work as concerned citizens, after elections, in other spheres of national life.

EAB recognises the critical role which international observers play in supporting Guyanese elections. The voice which such groups can bring to bear on electoral issues has a resonance which local groups find difficult to replicate. In recognition of this critical role EAB supports such groups through information sharing, and is aware that close cooperation and coordination between local and international observer groups provide synergies that redound to the benefit of the country.

III

ELECTORAL PROCESS

Powers of the Elections Commission

One of the Terms of Reference of the Constitutional Reform Commission, which was established in consequence of the Herdmanston Accord, mandates it to implement reforms relating to the conduct of elections and the structure and functions of the Elections Commission, taking into consideration its composition, the method of electing its Chairman and members, and its jurisdiction over national registration and the electoral process.

As a result, the Constitution was amended to provide for a sixty-five (65) member House of Assembly. In addition, ten geographic constituencies corresponding to the administrative regions of the country were established. From these geographic constituencies twenty-five (25) members of Parliament could be elected. The remaining forty (40) members of Parliament would be elected by the system of proportional representation.

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

The Elections Commission is 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 compilation of the voters' 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 have been the responsibility of one person. In other words, one person has always held both positions. The Chief Elections Officer is the Chief Executive in charge of the process.

The Claims and Objections process, which is designed to allow the inclusion of the names of persons who were not listed on the preliminary voters' list, and to remove the names of those who were not entitled to be listed, 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 ten regions. These Officers are assisted by deputies as well as by Election Clerks. Each polling place is attended by a Presiding Officer, an Assistant Presiding Officer where required, a Poll Clerk, and a Counting Assistant. Each contesting political party is permitted to have a representative polling agent to observe proceedings at every polling place. Accredited local and international observers are also permitted to observe the election day proceedings. Polling is required to be carried out over a period of twelve consecutive hours, traditionally from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Votes are counted at the place of poll in the presence of authorised persons, 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 their respective region before forwarding them to the Chief Elections Officer. For the 2001 elections, the Statement of Poll forms were modified to avoid confusion between the results of the General and Regional elections.

Voting Procedures

National identification cards were produced in 2000/2001, and it was expected that these would be the primary means of elector identification on Election Day. However, because of the Judge's ruling on the elections petition that was filed after the 1997 elections, which stated that the requirement of a single means of elector identification was unconstitutional, the Elections Commission permitted the use of other forms of identification for the 2001 General Elections.

Typical voting procedures required that upon entering the polling place, the elector would present his/her means of identification to the Poll Clerk who would locate the person's name and serial number on the voters' list and announce these for the benefit of the party agents. The Poll Clerk would then tick off the voters name on the list and return the identification document to the elector.

The elector thereafter would proceed to the Assistant Presiding Officer (APO), or the Presiding Officer (PO), who would again examine the identification document and satisfy himself/herself as to the elector's identity while also ascertaining that the person's name was on the voters' list. The APO or PO, would then select a ballot paper, write the voter's ID or Passport number on the counterfoil and stamp the back of the ballot paper with the official six-digit mark of the polling place. The APO or PO would next show the elector how the ballot paper should be folded after marking, direct the elector to the polling booth, and mark the voters' list to indicate that a ballot paper had been issued. The elector would then proceed to the poll booth, mark his ballot, and return to the PO or APO to have his finger stained with indelible ink. Having completed this procedure, the voter would put the ballot into the ballot box and immediately exit the polling place.

IV

THE EAB 2001 ELECTIONS PROGRAMME

Current Management

EAB's Current Council of Management comprises Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues, S.J., (Chairman), Paul Geer, (Secretary/Treasurer), David King, Mona Bynoe, and Dr. Kenneth King (Members).

A team of supporting staff implements programmes that are designed by the Council. The programme implementation staff is composed of Jennifer Bynoe, Deputy Project Director; Malaika Scott, Project Officer; and Ann Marie Hinds, Office Manager. Clairmont Lye served as Project Consultant.

The Programme

The 2001 Elections Programme as undertaken by the EAB was as follows:

1. Testing the Integrity of the Revised Voters List
2. Monitoring the Political Campaigns
3. Monitoring the Media
4. Observing the Elections
5. Monitoring the immediate post-election period

1. Voters List Test

It was decided that there were two basic requirements for this exercise. Firstly, to generate randomly the names and addresses of a statistically significant number of persons from the Revised Voters List (RVL), for physical verification; and secondly, to check the RVL for duplicate registration.

The Preliminary Voters List was not subjected to any form of verification as the EAB office was not yet set up for operation when this list was published. This meant that the Revised Voters List (RVL) was the only list, which was available for checking both in the field as well as in-house.

Various considerations were taken into account in selecting the samples from specific districts. Among these were geographical representation, (urban and rural) and ethnic representation, (African, Indian, Mixed and Amerindian). These considerations are reflected in the table below which indicates the breakdown of the statistical sample in terms of racial, rural/urban, and regional distribution.

Table I

FIELD TEST – RVL 2001
SAMPLE 1205

African

444 Persons	(U) Guyhoc Gardens (13)	(U) West Ruimveldt (180)
	(U) North East La Penitence (90)	(R) Golden Grove (60)
	(R) Mocha Acadia (51)	(U) Linden (50)

Indian

562 Persons	(R) Port Maurant (158)	(R) Leonora (156)
	(R) Hampton Court (72)	(R) Cotton Tree (81)
	(R) Hampshire (34)	(U) Cummings Lodge (61)

Mixed

142 Persons	(R) Charity (57)	(U) Bartica (24)	(U) Kitty (61)
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Amerindian

	(R) Lethem (21)	(R) Mabaruma/Hosoro (36)	57 Persons
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The Table below shows how the actual numerical sample was arrived at for each Region. This was based on the percentage of the votes cast in the General Elections of 1997. Thus for example, in Region 4, the total votes cast were 175,604, which represented 43% of all the votes cast in all the Regions in the elections. Therefore of the sample of 1200, 43% would be taken from Region 4, and would be taken so as to fulfil the geographical and ethnic considerations mentioned before.

After some basic training, 56 University students were sent out in pairs with names and addresses of persons on the RVL and attempted to locate these persons. This exercise was conducted from Friday 16 February to Monday 19 February. The students reported that the exercise was a straightforward and interesting task. There was no report of any hostile reception on the part of the persons contacted. However many reported that they were unable to locate quite a number of persons, even though they had both name and address. This subsequently turned out to be due to the fact that many persons were not known by the name with which they were registered, but known more by their "call name". Also in some areas, particularly in South Georgetown and in the squatting areas in Regions 5 and 6, the lay-out of the houses did not follow any specific plan, and so the numbering of the houses was quite haphazard.

TABLE II
Sample per Region

REGION	<u>TOTAL VOTES CAST IN 1997</u>	<u>%</u>	SAMPLE PER REGION	LOCATION
1. Barima/Waini	10,226	2.5	36	Hosororo/Mabaruma
2. Pomeroon/Supernaam	24,789	6.07	129	Charity/Hampton Court
3. Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara	56,917	13.95	156	Leonora
4. Demerara/Mahaica	175,604	43.03	516	6 Localities
5. Mahaica/Berbice	29,598	7.25	81	Cotton Tree
6. East Berbice/Corentyne	71,805	17.59	192	Port Mourant/Hampshire
7. Cuyuni/Mazaruni	8,253	2.02	24	Bartica
8. Potaro/Siparuni	3,588	0.87	10	Pakaraimas
9. Upper Takutu/ Upper Essequibo	7,596	1.86	21	Lethem/Nappi/Moco Moco
10. Upper Demerara/Berbice	19,627	4.81	50	Linden
Total	408,003	100%	1215	

Region 8 was omitted from the field test due to the logistics of getting there and also given the small sample to be tested.

TABLE III

FIELD TEST RESULTS

Sample: 1200

REGION	# OF PERSONS LOCATED	# OF PERSONS NOT LOCATED	TOTAL
1	29	2	31
2	118	8	126
3	159	1	160
4	475	40	515
5	72	10	82
6	173	15	188
7	19	4	23
9	24	1	25
10	48	2	50

93.1% of the persons were found to exist; 6.9% of them could not be located in the places of abode recorded in the Revised Voters List.

This result of the testing of the RVL compares favourably with that carried out independently by GECOM, where results showed that 97% of the persons were located of their sample of 1750. The results of the Testing of the RVL by EAB was shared with GECOM before it was made public as was agreed early on between EAB and GECOM.

The high number of persons not located in Regions 4, 5 and 6, were due basically to two factors:-

- a) The fact that many persons use a "call name" rather than the name by which they are registered; this difficulty was also encountered in Region 3, but was tackled earlier on with the help of the postman, paper man, and a police inspector from the community, and so the number of these persons not located was greatly reduced.
- b) The lack of proper residential layout in both the rural and urban communities. This was particularly marked in the West Ruimveldt and East La Penitence areas of Region 4, and also in the squatting areas in Regions 5 and 6.

Time did not permit intensive work to try to locate these persons in Region 4, 5 and 6, since during the period under consideration the Final Voters List was published.

Search for Duplicates

This phase of the exercise was conducted at the Guyana Elections Commission's (GECOM) Information Services Department in the presence of a few GECOM staff. A search for

duplicates of Surname, First name, Last name, Lot number, Street number, Community name and Date of Birth was undertaken. The inclusion of the 'Date of Birth' factor was intended to determine whether any duplication found in, for example, Surname and First name referred to the same person.

Results

Nine (9) duplicate registrations were found. Further clarification using the *ESHA* programme (an in-house programme created by the ISD) showed that the persons registered were registered twice with different Master Registration Code (MRC) numbers. This number is a copy of the National Identity Card Number.

2. Monitoring of Political Campaigns

This was undertaken by members of the Council of Management, basically through their attendance at political meetings, and/or through the monitoring of the extensive coverage of these meetings that was provided on television. In general, the 2001 political campaigns were peaceful. However, in at least one instance stones were thrown at members of the ruling political party who were electioneering in a district reported to comprise mainly supporters of the main opposition party.

In addition, although the performance in Government of both the main contending political parties (the PPP/C and PNC/R) were routinely referred to during the election campaign, major emphasis was placed by both parties on the personalities and reputed characteristics of leading members of the opposing political groups. As a result, much of the political campaigning in the Guyana 2001 elections avoided economic and social issues, and tended to be *ad hominem* and defamatory.

3. Media Monitoring

The EAB contracted out this exercise to the Department of Economics of the University of Guyana, to determine the quantity and quality of coverage of the elections by the Media during and after the 2001 General Elections. The quantity of coverage was assessed by measuring the space/time devoted to three prescribed references, Government, the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), and Political Parties. The assessment of quality was based on the degree of accuracy, objectivity and fairness of coverage, in respect of the issues covered by the media. An attempt was then made to determine the impact each monitored programme had on potential voters.

The study monitored all news items, commentaries, editorials, panel discussions and interviews, that were carried by the State media, and by five of the major private media houses, between February 15 and March 25, 2001. Data for this period were collected and analysed using the criteria presented above.

The study disclosed that during and after the campaign period, the state media favoured the incumbent government and the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C). On the other hand, three of the other five media houses that were monitored showed a distinct bias in favour of the People's National Congress/Reform (PNC/R), the only other major contending party.

The fourth privately owned media house distinctly supported the PPP/C, while the fifth adopted a more unbiased approach in its presentations.

The data showed that the state media was less critical of the PNC/R, than the private media which supported the PNC/R were of the PPP/C. Indeed, the media which championed the cause of the PNC/R were quite harsh in their attack and criticism of the PPP/C and the incumbent Government.

The PPP/C and the PNC/R were allotted more than 90 percent of the total space/time devoted to the eleven political parties. Indeed, most of the media appeared to take a conscious decision to emphasize the view that the national elections were basically between only two parties: the PPP/C and the PNC/R. As a result, the nine other political parties were given minimal or inadequate coverage. On top of all this, as election day approached, the media increased their coverage of the two major political parties at the expense of the other contesting parties.

The full Media Monitoring Report is available from the EAB on request.

4. Observing the Elections

Pre Election Activities

A considerable amount of work was undertaken by EAB prior to the holding of the actual elections, in order to ensure that adequate arrangements were in place for the monitoring and observation of the entire election process. These tasks included identifying, vetting and recruiting various categories of field workers, training them in Georgetown and in the several regions and districts of Guyana, and ensuring their deployment to the multitude of polling stations throughout the country. In order to prepare themselves for these duties, EAB senior staff held lengthy discussions with the senior management of GECOM. During these meetings it soon became apparent that GECOM also might benefit from the experience built-up by EAB over the years. Accordingly, EAB officials not only tendered advice, which was accepted, by GECOM, but also participated in a number of GECOM's training programmes.

Observer Reports

The EAB deployed more than 1000 persons as observers on election day. Through these observers the EAB was able to monitor and report on 995 or 52.7% of all polling stations. This number also accounted for 230,555 or 58.6% of the total valid votes cast.

From the data collected by EAB's observers, the indications were that the PPP/C received 52.6% of the votes, with the PNC/R gaining 42.4%. GECOM's more comprehensive count resulted in a final declaration, which showed that the PPP/C received 53.1% and the PNC/R 41.7%.

The results obtained by the EAB are provided below in Tables IV and V.

TABLE IV
GENERAL 2001

Region	Boxes	# of EAB Reports	GAP/WPA	GDP	GNC	JFA	NDF	NFA	PNC/R	PPP/C	PRP	ROAR	TUF
1	77	24	825	0	0	0	0	0	1,538	2,406	0	0	145
2	105	84	351	100	0	41	0	0	5,474	12,286	0	474	67
3	244	148	236	280	0	352	0	12	8,553	27,654	0	475	43
4	739	367	749	237	195	1,114	0	59	52,363	36,748	1	450	217
5	132	85	62	62	0	58	0	19	7,773	12,641	0	354	21
6	316	180	121	139	329	54	1	29	11,252	24,604	0	562	42
7	72	30	52	8	0	0	0	4	1,862	1,600	0	5	17
8	44	15	584	0	0	0	0	0	466	648	0	0	388
9	58	36	1,396	0	0	0	0	0	1,005	1,707	0	0	1,101
10	102	46	183	14	0	12	0	156	7,650	2,023	0	0	39
	1889	1015	4,559	840	524	1,631	1	279	97,936	122,317	1	2,320	2,080

TABLE V
REGIONAL 2001

Region	Boxes	# of EAB Reports	GAP/WPA	GDP	GNC	JFA	NDF	NFA	PNC/R	PPP/C	PRP	ROAR	TUF
1	77	24	105	0	0	2	0	1	1,358	1,413	0	0	29
2	105	84	323	96	0	44	0	0	5,437	12,214	0	518	95
3	244	148	188	314	0	380	0	22	8,421	27,162	23	452	88
4	739	367	701	240	270	1,760	2	72	51,208	35,568	14	435	311
5	132	85	39	43	1	55	1	11	7,052	12,126	68	387	26
6	316	180	56	136	376	62	5	36	11,031	24,250	6	633	80
7	72	30	38	0	0	0	0	5	1,860	1,479	0	0	23
8	44	15	568	0	0	0	0	0	453	639	0	0	404
9	58	36	1,451	0	0	0	0	0	1,139	1,612	19	0	1,123
10	102	46	165	11	1	26	14	157	7,617	2,026	0	0	49
	1889	1015	3,634	840	648	2,329	22	304	95,576	118,489	130	2,425	2,228

On Election Day, EAB operated a hotline to assist voters who did not know if their names were on the voters list, or where they were registered to vote. The EAB received over 1,000 calls between 7:00 and 19:00 hours, and was able to direct a number of persons to their correct places of poll, and to inform others that their names were not on EAB's computer list.

In addition, the EAB observers reported on the status of voting in all the regions throughout the day. The reports indicated that the process of polling was generally conducted in an efficient manner that was free from any major hassles or problems. From its analysis of these Reports, the EAB is satisfied that the voting process followed the legal procedures established by Parliament and GECOM.

Nevertheless, the observers expressed concern over the following:

- (i) All polling stations did not begin their operations at the same time;
- (ii) At many polling places there were reports of shortages of ink, official stamps, ballot papers, and envelopes;
- (iii) There was much confusion at polling places which were in close proximity to each other;
- (iv) Extreme frustration was experienced by voters who had either a valid ID card or stub, but whose names did not appear on the Final Voters List, or on the addendum;
- (v) At some polling stations, a few citizens physically threatened GECOM and EAB volunteers; and
- (vi) Perhaps of the greatest importance, the decision to extend the closing of polling stations beyond the prescribed time created great unrest and suspicion and, because of a failure of communication, was inequitably applied.

Vote Counting and Transmission

All EAB observers reported that the procedures which were laid down for the closing of the polls, the counting of the ballot papers that had been cast, and the preparation and signing of the Statements of Poll were followed as prescribed. Indeed although there were delays in some cases because of the shortage of envelopes and some relevant forms, in every instance these supplies were eventually obtained, and the process was undertaken in a transparent manner, in the presence of a number of party agents.

After the counts had been completed, and the statements signed, copies of the Statements of Poll were posted on the polling station. Thereafter, all the elections materials were packed and were transported to safe locations, under police protection, and were often accompanied by party agents.

In many cases it was decided by consensus to recount the ballot papers in order to ensure the correctness of the count.

The election officials appeared, however, to encounter problems in sending the results, first, to the Elections Commissions' district offices, and thence to the Elections Commissions Headquarters in Georgetown. There seemed to be a number of reasons for the observed inefficiency in transmitting the results of the various polls; failure of the telephonic systems in several districts; the delays and confusion occasioned by the sudden decision to extend polling hours; and the inefficiency of some polling officers. The effects of these delays were compounded by the failure of the officials in the Special Operations Room at GECOM Headquarters to publish expeditiously even those results, which they had obtained on time.

These delays in the announcement of results bred suspicions among the electorate that the final count was being manipulated.

It will be recalled that the elections took place on 19 March 2001. After many promises by officials of GECOM, from time to time, that the final results would be forthcoming, and after it had been decided to count the returns manually, and not by computers, because one political party had declared that it had lost faith in such a system, the Elections Commission announced at 4:20 a.m. on 23rd March that the count had been completed. 393,709 valid votes had been cast, the majority of which had been gained by the PPP/C.

Post-election Incidents and Occurrences

- On the afternoon of the 23rd March, on the same day as the official announcement of the election results, a parliamentary candidate of the PNC/R applied to the High Court for an injunction to prevent the swearing-in of Bharrat Jagdeo as President. As a result, the swearing-in ceremony which was scheduled for 3 p.m. on that day was postponed.
- On 26th March it was announced that the PNC/R was seeking dialogue with the ruling PPP/C on what the PNC/R described as "fundamental issues". These included governance, the rule of law, and the continuation of the constitutional reform process.
- On 26th March, an angry crowd clashed with the police in the vicinity of the Supreme Court, where the PNC/R's application for an injunction to prevent the swearing-in of the PPP/C's presidential candidate as President was being heard. Several citizens were reportedly injured.
- On 31st March, the Chief Justice dismissed the injunction applied for by the PNC/R's political activist. On that same day Bharrat Jagdeo was sworn-in as President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. The Chief Justice, in her ruling on the validity of the elections, ordered that the Elections Commission should comply with the provisions of Section 84(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1:03. This section provides for the Returning Officer to ascertain that the total votes cast in favour of each list were in accordance with the statement of poll.
- On 3rd April, the PNC/R objected to the appointment of Dr. Roger Luncheon, a PPP/C candidate in the General Elections, as Head of the Presidential Secretariat, on the

grounds that such an appointment politicised the Public Service.

- On 7th April, President Jagdeo invited Desmond Hoyte, the leader of the PNC/R to hold one-on-one talks with him.
- On the 8th April, Hoyte told a gathering of supporters that "logic demands that we talk with the PPP/C".
- On the 9th April, eight buildings were destroyed by fire on Robb and Regent Streets, a commercial area in Georgetown. This resulted in serious injury and the loss of life. Arson was suspected, but whether the fires were caused by persons who were rioting at the time of the conflagration in that area of the city which is in close proximity to the Headquarters of the PPP/C party has not been ascertained.
- On 11th April, Desmond Hoyte accepted President Jagdeo's invitation for dialogue. Between then and the end of May the two leaders met half-a-dozen times. They have agreed on a plan of action for a modified form of inclusive governance. Joint parliamentary and extra-parliamentary committees have been established to make recommendations for the solution of a number of outstanding problems.
- There have also been disturbances on the East Coast of Demerara. Road blocks were established, roads were dug-up to prevent vehicles from passing, and there were reports of racial attacks in several areas, resulting in serious injury and loss of lives.
- It is evident that in a country which displays so high a degree of racial tension and volatility at election time, every effort should be made to ensure that nothing occurs at any stage of the election process which might arouse suspicions of wrong-doing. It is therefore essential that the media be especially careful to act professionally, and to ascertain the facts, before expressing views that are not supported by adequate evidence. And, as important, politicians should eschew the uttering of statements, which might upset the delicate balance between peace and chaos, which exists in Guyana immediately after elections have taken place.

V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- .. The General and Regional Elections 2001 were generally conducted in a free, fair, and transparent manner. As a result, the will of the people who voted, was reflected in the official results.
- .. Confidence and trust in the entire voting system was, to some extent, undermined by errors of omission and commission in the Voters' List.
- .. An unspecified number of voters were either inaccurately registered or were not registered in the Final Voters List (FVL).
- .. Changes in respect of the times of poll closure that were announced during the actual process of the elections, and the inordinate delays in announcing the results of poll once the elections were concluded also caused concern in relation to the result.
- .. On polling day elections were generally peaceful, and were conducted without fear or favour. Party agents were present in almost all of the polling stations, and were permitted to observe the elections without hindrance.
- .. There was evidence that there were lapses of security in some polling stations which remained open after the closure of poll.
- .. In all but a few cases, polling materials were in adequate supply. The situation was speedily corrected when there were shortages.
- .. For the most part, polling officials were well trained, particularly in respect of the procedures that were meant to be followed during the actual process of voting. However, the system came under some strain when the procedures established for the transmission of the results of the polls to district headquarters, and to GECOM in Georgetown, had to be implemented.

Recommendations

- .. 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.
- .. The Guyana Elections Commission should be established as a permanent, independent authority. The *ad hoc* arrangements which are now made each time there is to be an election are most unsatisfactory, as they do not lead to continuity, and do not inspire the electorate with confidence, particularly because of the scepticism normally associated

with the choice of chairperson.

- “ The placement of citizens on the Voters’ List should be part of a continuous exercise. Registration should be based on a survey agreed upon by Parliament. Guyana is long due for a census of its population. This should be conducted as soon as possible and should provide the initial material for the Voters’ List. Incidentally, it would also eliminate the guessing exercises which are now associated with estimates of the country’s population, and its racial configuration. In this regard, the census should note a person’s “call name” (also known as) as this can be an important piece of data in locating that person.
- “ The procedures and structure of the Elections Commission should be re-organised to make certain that the Commission is able to communicate with the public promptly and clearly. Many of the problems that were associated with the entire elections process in 2001, from registration to publication of results, were due to poor communication.
- “ 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.
- “ The staff of the Elections Commission should become computer literate. This would expedite the processes of counting and collating, and would enable the Commission to release results more quickly.
- “ Special problems, particularly in the transmission of the final poll results, seemed to have been experienced in Region 4, both in 1997 and 2001. Region 4 is, of course, the largest and most ethnically diverse Region in Guyana, which probably account for the problems so frequently encountered. Special attention should be paid to this region with a view to facilitating the conduct of its electoral processes.
- “ The media should be held more accountable. The laws and regulations governing the conduct of the media should be modernized, and a code of conduct for media practitioners established and enforced.
- “ All candidates and political parties should also be required, by law, to abide by the tenets of a code of conduct.
- “ Extension of polls must not be done unless adequate notice of the extension time is given.
- “ The Election Regulation which provides for persons not to be within a defined area from the polling station should be stringently enforced.

APPENDIX 1

GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2001

STATEMENT BY CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

OFFICIAL RESULTS – GENERAL ELECTIONS

DISTRICT	REG.	TOTAL	REJECTED	TOTAL VALID	GAP-WPA	GDP	JFAP	NFA	PNC/R	PPP/C	ROAR	TUF
1	11,473	9,376	542	8,834	1,390	-	-	-	2,277	4,953	-	214
2	26,234	24,018	461	23,557	467	143	70	-	6,667	15,605	523	82
3	61,020	57,059	846	56,213	273	400	536	24	14,689	39,597	623	71
4	193,582	178,257	2,423	175,834	1,430	409	2,021	267	95,894	74,501	961	351
5	30,699	29,039	460	28,579	117	65	69	33	10,174	17,673	421	27
6	72,649	67,725	1,489	66,236	530	274	86	44	16,370	47,701	1,155	76
7	9,497	7,930	151	7,779	1,531	23	-	23	3,241	2,838	12	111
8	4,371	3,565	150	3,415	869	-	-	-	1,194	943	-	409
9	8,757	7,879	271	7,608	2,546	-	-	-	1,354	2,217	-	1,491
10	21,903	18,886	425	18,461	298	31	43	26	14,006	3,985	-	72
	440,185	403,734	7,218	396,516	9,451	1,345	2,825	417	165,866	210,013	3,695	2,904

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G. BOODOO
Chief Election Officer (ag)
2001-04-05

APPENDIX 11
GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2001
STATEMENT BY CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER
OFFICIAL RESULTS – GENERAL ELECTIONS

DISTRICT NO.	REG. VOTERS	TOTAL VOTES CAST	REJECTED VOTES	TOTAL VALID VOTES	GAP. WPA	GDP	GNC	JFAP	NDF	NFA	PNC/R	PPP/C	PRP	ROAR	TUF
1	11,473	9,376	594	8,782	1,324	-	-	-	-	-	2,272	4,881	-	-	305
2	26,234	24,017	495	23,522	429	142	-	76	-	-	6,656	15,525	-	572	122
3	61,020	57,052	977	56,075	218	397	-	651	-	34	14,591	39,403	-	639	142
4	193,582	178,496	2,934	175,562	1,378	422	329	3,129	-	546	94,606	73,759	-	813	580
5	30,699	29,036	501	28,535	69	57	-	77	-	19	10,139	17,541	120	466	47
6	72,649	67,728	1,455	66,273	414	261	-	96	-	54	16,334	47,697	-	1,268	149
7	9,497	7,884	145	7,739	1,457	18	-	-	-	36	3,244	2,823	-	-	161
8	4,371	3,564	148	3,416	844	-	-	-	-	-	1,174	932	-	-	466
9	8,757	7,880	335	7,545	2,456	-	-	-	-	-	1,280	2,054	164	-	1,591
10	21,903	18,886	480	18,406	264	24	-	66	18	30	13,925	3,982	-	-	97
	440,185	403,919	8,064	395,855	8,853	1,321	329	4,095	18	719	164,221	208,597	284	3,758	3,660

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G. BOODOO
 Chief Election Officer (ag)
 2001-04-05

APPENDIX 111
GECOM Release 1
DECLARATION OF RESULTS

Name of Contesting Political Parties	Number of Seats Allocated as per Geographical Constituency										Total Seats
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Guyana Action Party-Working People's Alliance									1		1
People's National Congress/Reform	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1		2	13
People's Progressive Party/Civic	1	1	2	3	1	2	1				11
Total	2	2	3	7	2	3	2	1	1	2	25

APPENDIX 1V
NATIONAL TOP-UP
DECLARATION OF RESULTS

Name of Contesting Political Party	Seat Allocated
Guyana Action Party - Working People's Alliance	1
People's National Congress/Reform	14
People's Progress Party/Civic	23
Rise, Organise And Rebuild	1
The United Force	1
Total	40

APPENDIX V **REGIONAL ELECTIONS** **DECLARATION OF RESULTS**

Name of Contesting Political Parties	Number of Members Allocated to each Regional Democratic Council										Total Number of
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Guyana Action Party-Working People's	2						3	4	5		14
Justice For All Party			1	1							2
People's National Congress/Reform	4	5	7	19	7	7	6	5	3	14	77
People's Progressive Party/Civic	8	11	19	15	1	2	6	4	4	4	104
Rise, Organise And Rebuild		1				1					
The United Force	1							2	3		6
Total	15	17	27	35	18	30	15	15	15	18	205