

Saint Lucia General Elections

26 July 2021



The Commonwealth



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



The Commonwealth

29 July 2021

Dear Secretary-General,

I am pleased to forward to you the Final Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group which you constituted to observe the General Elections in Saint Lucia that were held on 26 July 2021. This election was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. However, the polling staff and voters diligently followed COVID-19 protocols on Election Day.

We acknowledge the patience and orderliness of the eligible voters who came out in large numbers to exercise their franchise on Election Day. This demonstrated their determination, faith and commitment to democratic processes in Saint Lucia.

We also acknowledge the diligence, hard work and professionalism of the Electoral Commission, the staff of the Electoral Office and the polling staff who dedicated considerable efforts in delivering these elections.

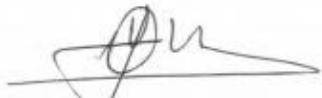
For the most part, fundamental freedoms of association, expression, assembly and movement were generally respected. Our overall conclusion is that the voting, closing and counting process at polling stations observed was peaceful, transparent, and offered eligible voters the opportunity to express their will and cast their vote.

Our Report contains our recommendations which we hope will be helpful to the people of Saint Lucia in strengthening the country's democracy.

Mr. Alvin A. Smith
Former Speaker of The Bahamas House of Assembly



Ian S Hughes



Orrette Fisher



Dr Tres-Ann Kremer



Baroness (Denise) Kingsmill

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth Observer Group for the 26 July 2021 General Elections was present in Saint Lucia from 22 to 30 July 2021.

In carrying out its Terms of Reference, the Group assessed the various aspects of the electoral process against the national, regional, Commonwealth and international standards for democratic elections that Saint Lucia has committed itself to. The Group met with a broad range of stakeholders including the Electoral Commission, the main political parties, independent candidates, representatives of civil society, including women and youth groups, media, the Police and other international observers.

The Group deployed across the country on Election Day, covering all 17 Electoral Districts.

The Group's consultations as well as its observations ahead of and on Election Day, informed its assessment of the electoral process. Saint Lucia's legal framework provides an adequate basis for the conduct of democratic elections, with guarantees of fundamental freedoms, however some gaps remain, these include the regulation of political finance and the provision to allow people in quarantine and those on remand to vote.

To inspire confidence in the electoral process, a reliable voters register is vital in providing for a transparent and credible election. The number of voters on the voters' list far exceeds the number of eligible voters rendering the list inaccurate. This has implications for the accuracy of the voter turnout as well as the actual number of voters who vote in polling stations. There is a need for the voters register to reflect more accurately the size of the total population in Saint Lucia.

This election was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. However, the polling staff and voters diligently followed COVID-19 protocols on Election Day.

The voting process was generally well-managed and transparent. Polling officials demonstrated professionalism and dedication in delivering these elections. Candidates' agents and observers were present and able to perform their duties unhindered. The voters have demonstrated patience, resilience and commitment to their country's democratic processes.

The Group's overall conclusion is that the voting, closing and counting process at polling stations observed was peaceful, transparent, and offered eligible voters the opportunity to express their will and cast their vote. However, like all electoral processes it can be further strengthened. In accordance with our mandate, this Report therefore offers a number of recommendations for consideration by the stakeholders in Saint Lucia. These recommendations are offered in a positive spirit of contributing to the deepening of democracy and strengthening of the electoral

processes. We hope they will be helpful to the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders. The specific recommendations are highlighted below:

Recommendations

Electoral Framework and Election Administration

- There is a need for a review of voter registration so that it reflects more accurately the size of the total population in Saint Lucia.
- A new Constituency delimitation exercise should be conducted as soon as possible to ensure a more even distribution of voters.

Participation and Inclusion

- Noting the important role that political parties in particular can play in addressing gender imbalance in political leadership, we urge political parties to consider adopting and implementing special measures, such as voluntary quotas, to achieve gender balance within their own decision-making structures.
- We urge the country to enable the formal registration of political parties by an Act of Parliament.
- Ensuring an accurate register would also provide the true number of young people between 18-30 years of age who are eligible to vote and provide a realistic barometer to understand youth political participation in the electoral process.
- The Group encourages the Electoral Commission to engage with CSOs during the electoral process and provide them with access to information to adequately support voter education functions. These partnerships are crucial to reaching and educating marginalised and vulnerable groups about the electoral process.
- Deepen the collaboration between the Electoral Commission and youth organisations such as the National Youth Council to enhance its voter education efforts.
- Review of the Elections Act and relevant training to provide for the prioritisation of elderly and disabled persons. The Group also strongly urges the Electoral Commission and relevant Officers to ensure reasonable access for the elderly and the disabled.

Election Campaign and the Media

Election Campaign

- Campaign financing legislation should be introduced to strengthen accountability and transparency.

Media

- An independent and adequately financed media regulatory body should be established.
- A code of conduct for the media should be put in place to improve professionalism and the media's ability to report fairly and responsibly.
- A functional public service broadcaster with the statutory duty to provide equal airtime to all political parties and independent candidates during elections should be established.

Voting, Counting and Results

- An exercise to remove the ineligible names from the voters' register needs to be undertaken urgently.
- Provisions are to be made for the list to be publicly disaggregated by gender and age.
- The boundaries of constituencies need to be revised urgently to ensure more equality in the number of electors in each.
- More consistent application of the rules by presiding officers in relation to cellular phones and ensuring the privacy of electors being assisted to vote
- Increased training of presiding officers to ensure electors are not unnecessarily disenfranchised when their intention is clear and there is not evidence that the ballot can be traced back to the elector.
- A copy of the signed statement of poll in each polling station should be given to the agent of each candidate and a copy placed on the outside of the polling station for public viewing.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the Hon Allen M Chastanet, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland, constituted an Observer Group for the 26 July 2021 Saint Lucia General Elections. The Commonwealth Observer Group was led by Mr Alvin Smith, former Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Bahamas and comprised five eminent persons. A three-person staff team from the Commonwealth Secretariat supported the Observer Group. A full list of members is at Annex I.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Observer Group were as follows:

“The Group is established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the written invitation of the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia.

The Group is to consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole. It will determine in its own judgement whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which the country has committed itself, with reference to national election-related legislation and relevant regional, Commonwealth, including its Charter, and other international commitments.

The Group is to act impartially and independently. It has no executive role; its function is not to supervise but to observe the process as a whole and to form a judgement accordingly. It would also be free to propose to the authorities concerned such action on institutional, procedural and other matters as would assist the holding of such elections.

The Group is to submit its report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will forward it to the Government, Electoral Commission and political parties taking part in the elections and to all Commonwealth Governments.”

Activities

The Observer Group was present in Saint Lucia from 22-30 July 2021 and the Chairperson of the Group issued an Arrival Statement on 24 July 2021 (Annex II).

Ahead of Election Day, the Group met with a broad range of stakeholders to gain a comprehensive picture of the electoral processes and political environment. These include the Electoral Commission, the main political parties, independent candidates, representatives of civil society, including women and youth groups, media, the Police and other international observers.

The Group deployed across the country on Election Day, covering all 17 Electoral Districts (Deployment Plan, Annex III).

On the basis of the Group's findings about the conduct of the General Elections, the Chairperson issued an Interim Statement on 28 July 2021 (Annex IV). The Group's Report was completed in Saint Lucia prior to departure on 30 July 2021 for transmission to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

CHAPTER 2 - POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Brief historical context

On 22 February 1979, Saint Lucia obtained independence from Britain. Saint Lucia's Parliament comprised a Senate and a House of Assembly, while the decision-making body of Government remained the Cabinet of Ministers. The first Governor General under the new status was Sir Allan Lewis, and Premier Hon. John G. Compton became the first Prime Minister of independent Saint Lucia.

Saint Lucia recognises Queen Elizabeth II as titular head of state (represented by a Governor-General) and is an active member of the Commonwealth. Saint Lucia is a Parliamentary democracy modelled on the Westminster system. Political power in Saint Lucia lies with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, usually representing the majority party in Parliament. The bicameral Parliament consists of a 17-member House of Assembly whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage for 5-year terms, and an 11-member Senate appointed by the Governor General. The Parliament may be dissolved by the Governor General at any point during its 5-year term, either at the request of the Prime Minister - in order to take the nation into early elections - or at the Governor General's own discretion, if the house passes a vote of no-confidence in the government.

Political background

The United Workers Party (UWP) once dominated the politics of Saint Lucia. Until 1997, the UWP governed the country for all but three years since independence. John Compton was premier of Saint Lucia from 1964 until independence in February 1979 and remained Prime Minister until elections later that year.

The Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) won the first post-independence elections in July 1979, taking 12 of 17 seats in Parliament. A period of turbulence ensued, in which disagreements within the party led to several changes of Prime Minister. Pressure from the private sector and unions forced the government to resign in 1982. New elections were then called and were won resoundingly by Compton's UWP, which took 14 of 17 seats.

The UWP was re-elected on April 16, 1987, but with only nine of 17 seats. Seeking to increase UWP's slim margin, Prime Minister Compton prorogued Parliament and called new elections on April 30. This unprecedented snap election, however, gave the same results as before. The UWP retained nine seats and the SLP eight. In April 1992, Prime Minister Compton's government again defeated the SLP. In this election, however, the government increased its majority in Parliament to 11 seats.

In 1996, Compton announced his resignation as Prime Minister in favour of his chosen successor Dr Vaughan Lewis, former Director-General of the Organization of Eastern

Caribbean States (OECS). Dr Lewis became Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Planning and Development on April 2, 1996. The SLP also had a change of leadership with former CARICOM official Dr Kenny Anthony succeeding businessman Dr Julian Hunt.

In elections held on 23 May 1997, the SLP won 16 out of the 17 seats in Parliament, and Dr Kenny Anthony became Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Planning and Development on May 24, 1997.

In the next elections on 3 December 2001, the SLP won 14 of the 17 seats. The leader of the UWP, Dr Morella Joseph, did not win a seat. Marcus Nicholas served as leader of the Parliamentary opposition. Former Prime Minister Sir John Compton came out of retirement to become leader of the opposition UWP in 2005.

The UWP won elections held on 11 December 2006, taking 11 seats against 6 won by the SLP. Sir John Compton once again became the Prime Minister, as well as Minister of Finance.

In May 2007, Prime Minister Compton became ill and appointed Minister for Health Stephenson King as Acting Prime Minister. King served in this capacity until Compton passed away on September 7, 2007. Two days later, King was sworn in as Prime Minister.

In the elections of November 2011, former Prime Minister Dr Kenny Anthony returned to power as the head of an SLP government. Despite there being five parties participating in this election, well over 96% of the vote went to the two main parties. In the June 2016 election, the UWP regained power, with Allen Chastanet taking on the role of Prime Minister.

Recent Political Developments

The 2021 General Elections in Saint Lucia were the 10th since independence. In the lead up to these elections, several developments took place. These include the following amongst others:

On July 8, 2021, former Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure, Stephenson King announced that he would be contesting for the Castries North seat as an independent candidate in the 26 July General Elections. Mr. King said the UWP no longer represented its founding values as a party. He issued a statement on 12 July denying rumours that he had joined the opposition SLP.

On 13 July, talk-show host Richard Frederick and former Minister under the UWP government announced his candidacy for the Castries Central constituency as an independent candidate. At the 15 July launch of its candidates, the SLP announced that the Party took the decision not to field candidates in two constituencies, Castries North and Castries Central.

Major Political Parties

The 1979 Constitution of Saint Lucia (as amended) provides for the protection of freedom of assembly and association including forming or belonging to political parties or other political associations. The following political parties contested the elections:

- United Workers Party
- Saint Lucia Labour Party
- The National Green Party

In total 45 candidates contested the elections; 17 candidates under the UWP, 15 under SLP, eight for NGP and five independent candidates. Only 11 of the 45 candidates were women.

Issues raised by stakeholders

Observers were briefed by a broad range of stakeholders that the country was strongly motivated to vote in the 26 July 2021 General Election. There were a number of socio-political and economic issues conveyed to us, which informed this context. These are outlined below:

Allegations of Corruption

Some stakeholders that the Group met with made allegations of widespread corruption. They highlighted issues around non-compliance with procurement procedures in the awarding of contracts.

Crime

Some stakeholders met by the Group expressed concerns about the link between criminal gangs and political landscape. They noted that this presented a security risk as some Electoral Districts could potentially be hotspots ahead of the 26 July elections.

The Government has been widely criticised for not addressing the high crime rate which is a long-standing issue. In 2010, the high crime levels resulted in the institution of 2010-2011 police led “Operation-Restore Order” to fight crime. During this operation, Human rights activists accused the police of human rights abuses, including summary executions. The Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) investigators were engaged to investigate the activities under the Operation-Restore Order. On 21 July, two days before advance polling including the police, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), issued a statement, that, with regards to 5 of the 12 deaths there was insufficient evidence for charges to be made against the officers concerned.

Financial management

Some stakeholders have criticised the government for not managing the economic crisis facing the country. The government's promise to eliminate Value Added Tax (VAT) was not fulfilled.

There was also concern expressed that the Public Accounts Committee had fallen into desuetude and had not met for some years with the inevitable consequence of a lack of rigour in financial management.

Some stakeholders have criticised the government's response to the pandemic, noting that Saint Lucia's poor economic performance was not just as a result of COVID-19 but also, of bad governance.

Women and Civil Society

The paucity of women in leadership positions in representative politics was noted with concern by a number of stakeholders. Additionally, and perhaps connected, there were many comments about the weakness of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in Saint Lucia.

CHAPTER 3 - THE ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTIONS

Saint Lucia is a parliamentary democracy modelled on the Westminster system. The country's democratic governance structure is made up of a bicameral Parliament. The actual power in Saint Lucia lies with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, usually representing the majority party in Parliament. The bicameral Parliament consists of a 17-member House of Assembly, whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage for 5-year terms, and an 11-member Senate appointed by the Governor General.

The legal framework governing General Elections in Saint Lucia consists of various laws - beginning with the Saint Lucia Constitution Order 1978, which was enacted on 22 February 1979. The House of Assembly (Elections) Act No 8 of 1979 (Statutory Rules and Orders No 32 of 1978) provides for the franchise and registration of electors, the administration of elections, voting procedures, and outlines election offences and election petitions.

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is appointed in accordance with section 57 (3) of the Saint Lucia Constitution Order 1978.

The Electoral Commission Consists of: -

- A chairman appointed by the Governor General, acting in his/her own deliberate judgment
- One member appointed by the Governor General, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister
- One member appointed by the Governor General, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Commission may regulate its own procedure and, with the consent of the Prime Minister, confer powers and impose duties on any public officer or on any authority of the Government for the purpose of the discharge of its functions.

Chief Election Officer

The Chief Elections Officer is also the Chief Registering Officer, responsible for the registration of voters. The Electoral Commission appoints Registration Officers for each constituency after consultation with the Chief Registering Officer, and Assistant Registration Officers and enumerators may also be appointed. The Chief Registering Officer gives directions and instructions to Registration Officers, Assistant Registration Officers, and enumerators.

The Chief Elections Officer appoints, subject to the approval of the Electoral Commission, a Presiding Officer for each polling station. The Chief Elections Officer also appoints a Poll Clerk for each polling station.

A Returning Officer is appointed by the Electoral Commission on the recommendation of the Chief Elections Officer to conduct elections in each constituency.

Returning Officers are responsible for giving instructions to other election officers. The Electoral Commission provides written guidance to support this.

Agents

Candidates nominated to stand for election may appoint agents to be present during both polling and counting, to satisfy themselves that the election officers are carrying out their duties and that the electoral procedures are carried out in accordance with the law. Agents may raise any concerns with the Presiding/Returning Officer as well as object to an elector casting a ballot in the polling station.

However, subject to the provisions of the law the Presiding/Returning Officer's decision is final. The Electoral Commission provides a booklet for agents which sets out their role.

Qualifications for Registration

Subject to the provisions of the Elections Act (7), a person shall be qualified to be registered as an elector for an electoral district only if, on the qualifying date he---

- a) is a person who is---
 - i. a citizen of Saint Lucia; or
 - ii. a Commonwealth citizen who has resided continuously in Saint Lucia for not less than seven years immediately preceding the qualifying date;
- b) has attained the age of 18 years;
- c) has resided continuously in that electoral district for a period of at least two months preceding the qualifying date

- Each of the constituencies established in accordance with the provision of Section 58 of the Constitution shall return one member to the House who shall be directly elected in such manner as may, subject to the provisions of the Constitution, be prescribed by or under any law.

- In any election of members of the House, the votes shall be given on the ballot in such manner as not to disclose how any particular person votes.

The Voters' List

Once included on the Voters' List, a person remains on the List unless and until their name is removed, the principal reasons for which are:

- She/he has died
- She/he has been away from St. Lucia for a continuous period of five years or more.
- She/he has become disqualified for registration under the Act or of any other enactment

An initial enumeration exercise was carried out in 1979; and since then, names have been added to Voters' List. The total number of electors on the Voters' List at the time of the 2021 General Election was 174,270.

Constituency Boundaries Commission

In Section 57 (2), the Constitution makes provision for a Constituency Boundaries Commission, consisting of:

- a. The Speaker, as chairman.
- b. Two members appointed by the Governor-General, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister; and
- c. Two members appointed by the Governor-General, acting in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition.

Delimitation of constituency boundaries

The Constituency Boundaries Commission shall review the number and boundaries of the constituencies into which Saint Lucia is divided and submit to the Governor-General reports either

- a. Showing the constituencies into which, it recommends that Saint Lucia should be divided in order to give effect to the rules set out in Schedule 2 to the Constitution; or
- b. Stating that, in its opinion, no alteration is required to the existing number or boundaries of constituencies in order to give effect to those rules.

House of Assembly

Sections 30 to 36 of the Constitution outlines the composition and tenure of office bearers in the House of Assembly:

Composition of the House

The House shall consist of such number of members as corresponds with the number of constituencies for the time being established in accordance with the provisions of section 58 of this Constitution, who shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of section 33 of this Constitution.

Qualifications for election

Subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Constitution, a person shall be qualified to be elected as a member of the House if, and shall not be so qualified unless, he/she) is a citizen of the age of twenty-one years or upwards,

- a. was born in Saint Lucia and is domiciled and resident there at the date of his/her nomination or, having been born elsewhere, has resided there for a period of twelve months immediately before that date; and
- b. is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the House.

The Act also makes provision for disqualification of persons to be elected as a member of the House.

Tenure of office

A member of the House shall vacate his/her seat in the House at the next dissolution of Parliament after his/her election.

ELECTION PETITIONS AND APPEALS

An election petition may be filed with the High Court by:

- a. a person who voted or had a right to vote at the election to which the petition relates;
- b. a person claiming to have had a right to be returned at such election;
- c. a person alleging himself to have been a candidate at such election.

The petition shall be presented within 21 days after the return made by the Returning Officer. At the time of the presentation of the petition or within three days afterwards, security for the payment of all costs, charges and expenses that

may become payable is made. At the conclusion of the trial, the judge shall determine if the candidate declared the winner is confirmed or it may order that a new election be held.

Recommendations

- There is a need for a review of voter registration so that it reflects more accurately the size of the total population in Saint Lucia.
- A new Constituency delimitation exercise should be conducted as soon as possible to ensure a more even distribution of voters.

CHAPTER 4 - PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

The Constitution of Saint Lucia, the Commonwealth Charter, and other international human rights instruments to which Saint Lucia has subscribed, recognise the inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes, and in particular through free and fair elections, to shape the society in which they live. Governments, political parties and civil society are responsible for upholding and promoting democratic culture and practices and are accountable to the people in this regard.

Saint Lucia has agreed to some significant international and regional instruments and commitments relevant to the conduct of inclusive elections, including:

- Commonwealth Charter
- Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

These all provide the framework for good governance, citizen participation, gender equality and the inclusion of youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities (*inter alia*), as a means of achieving sustainable democracy.

Civil Society

Chapter 1 of the Constitution of Saint Lucia, enshrines the '*Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms*'. Saint Lucia, like many other Commonwealth Caribbean countries has grappled with serious social and economic difficulties attributed to limited resources, reliance on external aid, and structural adjustment of their economies as required by international donors. This is compounded by climate vulnerabilities and limitations related to size and geographic location. In this context, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and representatives could play an important role in trying to provide socio-economic support to vulnerable persons in Saint Lucia and to raise awareness regarding the fulfilment of civic duties and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

However, the COG noted there were very few active civil society groups in Saint Lucia. There were also no citizen election observers. Those CSO's that the Group met were strongly committed to the development of their country, had a robust understanding of the political, social and economic context, and went about their mission with very constrained resources. They rely on radio talk-shows and social media spaces such as Facebook, to undertake advocacy related to the inclusion of women and youth, promotion of human rights, and voter education.

Women's political participation

The socialisation of women and men, across various cultural backgrounds, has established societal stereotypes of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. These are translated to various spheres of life, affecting the unequal status by which women and men relate to each other and the low number of women in representational politics and other aspects of public life.

Nevertheless, Observers noted and commend the strong representation of women in the leadership structure of the Saint Lucia Electoral Commission. We were pleased to see that the Chair of the Electoral Commission and the members for the Government and the Opposition are all women. Further, the Group noted that the overwhelming majority of the electoral officials were women and acknowledged their invaluable contribution to successful Election Day operations.

Stakeholders with which the Commonwealth Observers met reported that while women were highly active serving as key mobilisers in grassroots electoral campaigns for the main political parties, and as key electoral workers and runners, this did not translate into the selection of equal numbers of women and men as candidates for representational politics. There were only 11 women among the 45 candidates selected to stand in the 2021 election. Women gained only two parliamentary seats of the 17 up for contention.

Observers were impressed by the work of the recently formed Saint Lucia Chapter of the *Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CiWIL)*, an organisation whose original formation was supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, as is its current work in the region. The Saint Lucia CiWIL informed the COG of the deeply embedded societal prejudices that challenge women's equal political participation and representation. CiWIL is to be commended for its efforts to provide bi-partisan capacity building workshops to aspiring women candidates. The Observers were briefed on the role of the political parties in the selection of candidates and in this regard, we urge all political parties to increase engagement with organisations such as CiWiL, to increase women's political representation in Saint Lucia.

Observers were also briefed by the CSO '*Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia*' and commend its efforts to provide a social safety net for vulnerable persons in Saint Lucia, including the provision of childcare services on Election Day which enabled single vulnerable mothers to vote.

CSO's play a critical role in ensuring credible, peaceful and inclusive elections. The Group recognises the socio-economic challenges of Saint Lucia, particularly as a small state. The role of CSO's in this resource constrained context to ensure just, accountable and honest governance cannot be overstated. The Group encourages the Government and people of Saint Lucia to enhance meaningful dialogue and engagement with CSO's as the country continues to consolidate its democracy.

Youth political participation

Observers noted the high numbers of young people working as election officials during the 2021 General Elections. The staff composition of most polling stations included at least one young person, who, as noted above, was likely to be a woman.

The political campaign had representation from two male youth candidates who won parliamentary seats.

At the political party meetings attended by Commonwealth Observers, there was a significant participation of young people who were involved in political campaign operations. Political parties also made attempts to capture the youth vote by using social media platforms. They crafted messages targeting the key concerns of young people, such as unemployment, on WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. For example, political party candidates had personalised campaign songs.

Observers commend the leadership roles that many youth representatives played in promoting political awareness amongst young people. The National Youth Council informed Observers of its collaboration with the Electoral Commission to promote voter education among young people which commenced in September 2020. Nevertheless, the Youth Council was of the view that a more focused campaign with increased resources, and enhanced civic education in schools would be of benefit to greater awareness of civic duties, including voting.

Pregnant Women, the Elderly and the Disabled

The Electoral Commission has a responsibility to ensure the dignity of all voters, including the elderly, disabled and the pregnant. The Group observed that vulnerable voters such as the elderly and disabled were not always given priority at polling stations and their access was often difficult. The Group noted that the prioritisation of these groups of voters was not specifically required in the Elections Act and Election Day manuals, thus leaving it to the discretion of the poll workers and the police to recognise the need and bring these individuals forward to vote.

The Group was concerned that many of the polling stations were located on upper floors making access difficult for the elderly and the disabled. The Group witnessed disabled people being carried up flights of stairs to access upper floor polling stations.

The Group recommends a review of the Elections Act and relevant training to provide for the prioritisation of elderly, disabled and pregnant people. The Group also strongly urges the Electoral Commission and relevant Officers to ensure reasonable access for the elderly and the disabled.

Recommendations

- Noting the important role that political parties in particular can play in addressing gender imbalance in political leadership, we urge political

parties to consider adopting and implementing special measures, such as voluntary quotas, to achieve gender balance within their own decision-making structures.

- We urge the country to enable the formal registration of political parties by an Act of Parliament.
- Ensuring an accurate register would also provide the true number of young people between 18-30 years of age who are eligible to vote and provide a realistic barometer to understand youth political participation in the electoral process.
- The Group encourages the Electoral Commission to engage with CSOs during the electoral process and provide them with access to information to adequately support voter education functions. These partnerships are crucial to reaching and educating marginalised and vulnerable groups about the electoral process.
- Deepen the collaboration between the Electoral Commission and youth organisations such as the National Youth Council to enhance its voter education efforts.
- Review of the Elections Act and relevant training to provide for the prioritisation of elderly and disabled persons. The Group also strongly urges the Electoral Commission and relevant Officers to ensure reasonable access for the elderly and the disabled.

CHAPTER 5 - ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Campaign environment

The electoral system in Saint Lucia does not provide for an official campaign period prior to Election Day. The usual practice has been for campaigning to begin close to the end date of the five-year parliamentary term. Campaigning formally ends at midnight on the eve of elections.

Following the announcement of the election date on 5 July 2021, the campaigns by political parties and aspiring candidates intensified. The Group observed some party rallies which were largely peaceful, however, people did not obey COVID-19 protocols. The Group also noted that significant amount of campaigning was done through social media, billboards and posters. The increased use of social media platforms was due to the campaign restrictions under COVID-19 protocols.

The Department of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the Electoral Commission introduced COVID-19 protocols for election campaigning in Saint Lucia with effect from 29 June 2021. Under these protocols, the political parties and aspiring candidates were required to put in place the following measures amongst others:

- Design a Covid-19 Action plan to submit to the Environmental Health Division for review and appraisal prior to the campaign period;
- Candidates and teams were to ensure that all applicable sections of the COVID- 19 prevention and Control Act 2020 were observed. These include wearing of masks and ensuring social distancing;
- All authorised activities were to end at least 1 hour before the 11:00 p.m curfew. However, the Group was informed that the police were not consistent in enforcing the curfew. It was alleged that some political meetings were allowed to go beyond curfew.
- Permits for meetings, marches, processions and motorcades were to be issued in line with Public Order Act.
- The protocols provided guidance on convening small constituency office meetings, door-to-door campaigning, outdoor/open air meetings and large public meetings and the use of motorcades.

Even though the above measures were in place, the campaigns have been vibrant and stakeholders met by the Group reported that large gatherings were observed across the island. It was reported in the media that Health authorities raised concerns regarding the large number of people gathering without adhering to the COVID-19 protocols.

During campaigns the political parties' supporters were clad in party colours. Campaign paraphernalia of the two main parties including billboards and posters were highly visible in various Electoral Districts across Saint Lucia.

Campaign finance

There is no legal framework regulating campaign finance. In the absence of regulatory framework, campaign funding is sourced from voluntary contributions from various sources, including foreign sources and businesses.

The Group noted the allegations of improper awarding of contracts and the abuse of public funds for campaigning purposes.

Financial inducements

Section 79 of the Revised Elections Act (2006) makes it an offence to engage in treating. There were unsubstantiated allegations of vote-buying.

Main Campaign issues

The main issues around which political parties and independent candidates campaigned were: stabilising the economy, VAT reduction, public debt, unemployment, crime, anti-corruption, good governance, youth development, and health care.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression. However, some journalists reported incidents of intimidation when they reported on or pursued certain stories.

The Group was informed that there is no functional public service broadcasting, media is mostly run by private operators. It was alleged that the National Television Network (NTN) which is State run primarily covers Government activities.

It was brought to the Group's attention that media is under-funded, not sufficiently regulated and potentially subject to manipulation. For example, the Prime Minister gave an address to the nation on National Television Network on the eve of Election while the Opposition was not given an equal opportunity to do so.

Most political parties and independent candidates used various social media platforms to publicise their campaigns. The live streaming also provided opportunity for journalists to create and share content widely.

Stakeholders met by the Group noted the following concerns:

- The media's non-adherence to broadcast standards
- No media code of conduct
- No media association
- Media was paid and controlled by some politicians.

Recommendations

Election Campaign

- Campaign financing legislation should be introduced to strengthen accountability and transparency.

Media

- An independent and adequately financed media regulatory body should be established.
- A code of conduct for the media should be put in place to improve professionalism and the media's ability to report fairly and responsibly.
- A functional public service broadcaster with the statutory duty to provide equal airtime to all political parties and independent candidates during elections should be established.

CHAPTER 6 - VOTING, COUNTING AND RESULTS

Background

The July 26, 2021 general elections were conducted using the voters' list published on 13 July 2021; the list contained 174,270 eligible voters. The COG was advised by the Elections Department that under the process of continuous registration, electors have been added over the years to the list that was first prepared in 1979. The process of removing deceased voters or voters who are ineligible to be on the register based on residency violation has not been carried out with any consistency. The number of voters on the list, therefore far exceeds the number of eligible voters rendering the list inaccurate. This has implications for the accuracy of the voter turnout as well as the actual number of voters who vote in polling stations. The list for each division is usually split alphabetically into as many as nine stations. As a result of the inaccuracy of the list, some stations would end up being overcrowded while others would have few actual electors.

The current Legislation does not require the published voters' list to be disaggregated by gender or age.

There were 17 electoral districts with a total of 463 polling stations. However, the sizes of constituencies varied widely from a low of 5,266 to a high of 23,431 voters. This means that there is disproportionate representation with some Members of Parliament having responsibility for significantly more constituents than others. Polling stations were primarily located in schools and community halls and 12 tents which were added a few days ahead of the election.

Members of the COG visited polling stations in their assigned areas of deployment on the day of election and observed the opening and closing of the polls in selected stations as well as the voting process in the majority of polling stations across the 17 electoral districts.

Opening of the Poll

The polls were scheduled to open at 6:30 am and close at 6:00 pm. Members of the COG were on hand to observe the process. The opening process requires that each polling station is staffed with a presiding officer and a poll clerk. The law, however, allows for the presiding officers to be provided with other assistants. This allowed for the addition of an assistant poll clerk to sanitize the hands of electors at the entrance to each polling station, another to electronically record and verify the identity of voters applying for a ballot inside the station and a third, who after the exit of each voter is required to sanitize the pencils, voting booths and other surfaces touched by voters.

The presiding officers, who were sworn in earlier by returning officers administered the Oath of Office to poll clerks, assistant poll clerks and the agents of candidates. Each candidate was allowed two representatives. The agents were allowed to verify the quantity of ballots issued to the presiding officer to be used in the station as well as the serial numbers of the ballots which were stapled in booklets of 100.

In addition, presiding officers were required to display to the authorised persons present in the station, the empty ballot box before sealing the lid and placing it in full view.

The following were observed:

- All officials were present including the presiding officer and poll clerk, assistant poll clerks and at least four agents representing the two major parties. There was also a police officer present at the station with others posted on the outside.
- All election supplies including ballot papers were available in sufficient quantities.
- The polling procedures were generally observed and the polling stations opened promptly at 6:30 am.

Voting

The voting procedures require that electors are admitted to the polling station one at a time. Each elector is required to present his or her voter's card or an alternative form of government issued identification as a means of verifying their identity. Once identified to the satisfaction of the presiding officer, the elector's name and other particulars are to be entered into the poll book, fingers examined for signs of electoral ink to ensure the elector has not voted in another station earlier. If the voter satisfies the conditions, he or she is required to immerse the right index finger into the electoral ink and instructed on how to properly mark and fold the ballot issued to ensure the secrecy of the vote is not compromised. The presiding officer is required to initial the back of each ballot and the voter must display the initials before depositing the ballot into the ballot box.

In addition to the legislative requirements, the electoral officials, jointly with the Ministry of Health issued guidelines requiring that all voters and poll workers wear masks, sanitize their hands at different stages of the process and as far as practicable remain at least three feet apart to minimize the possible spread of the COVID-19 virus.

At the start of polling there were electors in line at the various polling stations. The queues outside some polling stations were very long and this was exacerbated by the need to stand at least three feet apart in observance of the established COVID-19 protocols. It was noted, however, that the stipulated distance was not always maintained. The long lines persisted throughout the morning and in some instances

were moving quite slowly. Electors, however, remained generally calm and peaceful while waiting in line.

The polling officials, for the most part, adhered to the established procedures in the execution of their duties including the sanitizing of the hands of the electors, pencils and surfaces with which electors came into contact.

The elderly, physically disabled and pregnant women were not always given priority at polling stations and their access was often difficult. The polling stations, however, were not always easily accessible to these electors with special needs. Several stations were located on the second floor of buildings with access only by stairs. Those on the ground floor required electors with special needs to ascend at least one step, which also made it challenging for persons in wheelchairs.

In addition to the challenges posed by the absence of ramps to facilitate entry by the disabled, rain in several areas of the country resulted in both electors and poll workers facing other challenges in accessing and using the polling stations housed in tents. The ground became saturated resulting in muddy and unstable underfoot conditions.

Identification of Electors - The identification of electors was carried out in keeping with the existing statute. The presence of a data entry clerk in each station with an electronic device on which the photograph and demographic data for electors assigned to the specific polling station were loaded, facilitated the identification of electors who did not have their voter's card and had to use other forms of identification.

There were variations in how stations were laid out and how polling officials carried out the procedures but this did not compromise the process. There were very few objections raised by party agents in relation to the identity of electors.

Use of cellular phones - The application of the rule of no cellular phone use in the polling stations was generally observed as electors were asked to surrender their cellular phones before being allowed to vote. However, there were instances of violations by party agents.

Assisted Voting - In some polling stations it was noted that a significant number of electors needed assistance to poll their votes. Some were as a result of age or blindness, while others suffered from physical impairment or handicap, not obvious to an onlooker. Some electors needing assistance were helped by a family member or friend while others were assisted by the presiding officer. Inconsistencies were observed in the process applied when electors requiring assistance attempted to mark their ballots within the privacy of the voting booth. Contrary to the law, agents were allowed, in instances, to observe the process even while the assistance was being provided by a friend or relative.

Security

The number of police officers deployed at polling stations appeared to be adequate and their presence was reassuring and generally non-intrusive. On the whole the police are to be commended for the professional manner in which they carried out their duties.

Closing and Counting

Closing of the Poll - Polls are scheduled to close at 6:00pm. The law, however, is clear that any elector in line at the close of poll must be allowed to vote.

As a part of the closing and counting procedures, the ballots must be reconciled to ensure all are accounted for. This involves checking the number of ballot papers supplied by the returning officer against the number of spoiled ballot papers (if any), the number of unused ballot papers and the number of electors whose names appear in the poll book as having voted.

The agents of the candidates must be allowed to witness the entire process including the removal of the seal placed on the boxes at the opening of the polls. During the count, each ballot must be shown to the agents so they can be satisfied for whom it was cast. They have the right to object to any ballot deemed rejected by the presiding officer. If there is an objection, same is to be noted.

Most polling stations observed, closed promptly at 6:00pm as there were no electors in line. At polling stations where they were, the police stood at the end of the queue and those in line were allowed to vote.

The Closing of the Poll procedures was generally adhered to in polling stations observed by the COG. The preliminary count was undertaken in the presence of the polling officials and the party agents.

The seals were removed from the ballot boxes and the contents were deposited on a table in some instances and in others removed one at a time. Each ballot was examined by the presiding officer and the name of candidate for whom the ballot was cast called audibly and the tally independently done by agents and polling officials. There was a high level of rejected ballots in some polling stations. This was of some concern as the law was not uniformly applied. In some cases, X's were deemed too small. Ticks and asterix were rejected while in others they were accepted. In the majority of cases, the intention of the elector was very clear.

A few presiding officers failed to display the ballots to the agents whose duty was to verify for whom the ballot was cast, and the validity of the marking.

In some stations, at the end of the preliminary count, the tally by the polling officials sometimes differed from that of the agents and amongst themselves, resulting in the presiding officer having to recount all the ballots.

Once agreed, the result in each polling station is then used in completing the statement of poll which is then signed by the presiding officer and the candidates' agents. Only three copies are prepared. One is left in the poll book, one kept by the presiding officer and the other placed in the designated envelope for delivery to the Returning Officer. None is given to the agents of the candidates nor is any placed in a public space outside the polling station.

At the conclusion of the count the ballots and the other sensitive supplies were placed in designated envelopes and placed inside the ballot box which was then sealed and along with the envelope containing the statement of the poll escorted by the police to the returning officer who secured them at a predetermined venue. The location was placed under police guard to ensure no unauthorized persons could have access to them ahead of the final count the following day.

Final count - At 8:30 am the morning after the election, the returning officer is mandated by law to carry out a recount in the presence of the candidates or their agents if the difference in votes is less than 3% of the total votes cast. If it is 3% or more a recount is carried out if requested by a candidate.

The losing candidates in the election accepted the results of the election and except for the request for the verification of the count of one box in the Micoud South constituency, no recounts were requested (The results of the General Elections are at annex V).

Summary

The voting and counting processes were carried out without any major incidents; all electors who came to the polling stations during the designated voting period, were able to cast their vote for the candidate of choice and the counting of the ballots was done in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

Recommendations

- An exercise to remove the ineligible names from the voters' register needs to be undertaken urgently.
- Provisions are to be made for the list to be publicly disaggregated by gender and age.
- The boundaries of constituencies need to be revised urgently to ensure more equality in the number of electors in each.

- More consistent application of the rules by presiding officers in relation to cellular phones and ensuring the privacy of electors being assisted to vote
- Increased training of presiding officers to ensure electors are not unnecessarily disenfranchised when their intention is clear and there is not evidence that the ballot can be traced back to the elector.
- A copy of the signed statement of poll in each polling station should be given to the agent of each candidate and a copy placed on the outside of the polling station for public viewing.

Chapter 7 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This election was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. However, the polling staff and voters diligently followed COVID-19 protocols on Election Day.

The Group acknowledges the patience and orderliness of the eligible voters who came out in large numbers to exercise their franchise on Election Day. This demonstrated their determination, faith and commitment to democratic processes in Saint Lucia.

The Group also commends the diligence and professionalism of the Electoral Commission, the staff of the Electoral Office and the polling staff who dedicated considerable efforts in delivering these elections.

Eligible voters in quarantine and those on remand in custody were unlawfully prevented from voting in violation of the Constitution.

Overall, fundamental freedoms of association, expression, assembly and movement were generally respected. The Group's overall conclusion is that the voting, closing and counting process at polling stations observed was peaceful, transparent, and offered eligible voters the opportunity to express their will and cast their vote.

The Group offers the following recommendations for consideration, and hopes they will be helpful to the people of Saint Lucia in strengthening the country's democracy:

Recommendations

The Commonwealth Observer Group recommends:

However, a consideration has to be made to consistently remove deceased and ineligible persons from the voters' register. This will further enhance confidence in the electoral process.

ANNEX I: Composition and Biographies of the Group

Mr Alvin Alfred Smith (Bahamas) - (Chair) is former Speaker, Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly. He was also Vice-President of the Senate, Leader of the official Opposition and Parliamentary Secretary.

Before entering politics, he was a School Principal and a Trustee and Executive Member of the Bahamas Teachers' Union.

He served on the Executive Committee and General Council of the official Opposition Party, Free National Movement (FNM) and is a member of its General Council. He was also a Financial Services Representative/Salesperson with Colina Insurance LTD until 2017. Thereafter he was appointed High Commissioner for The Commonwealth of The Bahamas to Canada, from 1st October, 2017 to 30th October, 2020.

He is currently retired.

Baroness Denise Patricia Kingsmill (United Kingdom) was born in Roturua New Zealand. She later moved with her family to the UK. After graduating from the University of Cambridge, with a degree in Economics and Anthropology she spent the early years of her career in the fashion industry in Paris and New York. She then qualified as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court, and, after a 20 year legal career, was appointed Deputy Chair of the Competition Commission, the UK's anti-trust regulator. In 2000 Baroness Kingsmill was awarded a CBE and in June 2006 she was appointed to the House of Lords as a Life Peer.

Baroness Kingsmill has had an extensive business career. She is a member of the Board of Inditex SA. (Zara) and until recently she was also a member of the Boards of E.ON SE, IAG S.A, and Telecom Italia. She was the founding Chair of Monzo Bank, a mobile-only internet bank.

Mr Orrette Fisher (Jamaica) is an accomplished elections management specialist with more than 23 years of experience in the planning and execution of national elections. Up until 2018, Mr. Fisher served the Electoral Commission of Jamaica for 23 years - the latter ten years of his tenure as Director of Elections which required the management of national elections, multi-million dollar budgets, political party and campaign financing, voter registration and education, elections information systems management and other aspects of electoral operations.

Now an independent consultant in Elections Management and Training, he has been contracted to provide consultancy, administrative and technical support by several organizations including the Commonwealth Secretariat, the CARICOM Secretariat, the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) and the International Republican Institute (IRI).

Mr. Fisher holds a master's degree in Public Sector Management and a bachelor's degree in Management Studies, both from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. He also has several professional certifications including a certificate in Management of Electoral Processes from the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) in London.

Mr. Ian Hughes (Antigua and Barbuda) has held the post of Assistant Chief Elections Officer of Antigua and Barbuda since March 23, 2004. He is an elections practitioner and is currently responsible for Human Resources and Training at the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission. His functions include assisting with the management of the Electoral and Voter registration systems and the conduct of elections. He has assisted the Supervisor of Elections in the management of the 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2018 General Elections and the 2019 Referendum (CCJ). His experience also includes Local Council Government elections held every two years in Barbuda. He has served as a member of election observer groups in the Caribbean and Central America which were mounted by the Commonwealth, CARICOM and CAPEL. Mr. Hughes holds a BBA degree in Management (summa cumme laude) and continues to advance his knowledge and professional development in the field of election management through workshops, conferences, study programmes and training by organizations. These include the Commonwealth Secretarial (JEP) the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Public Administration International (London), Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections (Bridge) - Guyana.

Dr Tres-Ann Kremer (Jamaica) is the Director of the University of the West Indies, Institute for Criminal Justice and Security. A senior democratic governance and political specialist, Dr. Kremer possesses over two decades of expertise in multilateral relations, mediation and negotiation. She previously served as Head of the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Good Offices for Peace and was also lead Political Adviser for the Caribbean region. She has significant experience in electoral observation and electoral capacity building.

Commonwealth Secretariat Support Staff

Dr Roger Koranteng - Adviser and Head, Public Sector Governance Unit
(Staff Team Leader and Acting Head of Electoral Support Section)

Ms Lindiwe Maleleka - Political Officer, Governance and Peace Directorate

Ms Hilary McEwan - Archivist Records Officer, Communications Division

ANNEX II: Arrival Statement



The Commonwealth

Saint Lucia General Elections 2021

Arrival statement by the

Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group

Mr Alvin Smith

Saturday, 24 July 2021

It is a great honour to have been asked by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, to lead the Commonwealth Observer Group for Saint Lucia's General Elections, scheduled for the 24th July 2021.

The Commonwealth has a long history of observing elections in member countries, in support of efforts to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in accordance with the values and principles of the Commonwealth Charter.

Our Group was constituted following an invitation from the Government of Saint Lucia, drawing together five eminent persons from the Commonwealth. We bring a wide range of expertise in the areas of election administration and political development amongst others.

The Group will consider the pre-election environment and election preparations. It will observe the organisation and conduct of the election process as a whole, including deploying to various regions of the country on Election Day. It will observe the voting, vote-counting and results procedures. The Group's mandate is to assess whether the elections have been conducted according to the national, regional, Commonwealth and international standards to which Saint Lucia has committed itself. Where appropriate, the Group can also make recommendations for the future strengthening of the electoral framework.

These elections are taking place in a challenging environment when the world is confronted with a global pandemic.

We hope that the Group's presence will affirm the Commonwealth's solidarity with the People of Saint Lucia as they exercise their democratic right.

We encourage all citizens to play their part in ensuring a peaceful and credible process.

We arrived on 22 - 23 July and we will issue an interim statement on our preliminary findings on 28 July. A final report will be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, and thereafter shared with the Government of Saint Lucia, Electoral Commission, political parties, Commonwealth governments and then made public. The Group will depart on 30 July 2021.

ANNEX III: Deployment Plan

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4
Mr Alvin Smith(Chair) Dr Roger Koranteng	Baroness Denise Kingsmill Mr Ian Hughes	Mr Orrette Fisher Ms Hilary McEwan	Dr Tres-Ann Kremer Ms Lindiwe Maleleka
Gros Islet	Castries South	Castries East	Castries Central
Babonneau	Anse La Raye/ Canaries Laborie	Vieux Fort South	Castries North
Castries South-East	Soufriere	Vieux-Fort North	Dennery South
Dennery North	Choiseul	Laborie-Saltibus	Micoud North
			Micoud South

ANNEX IV: Interim Statement



The Commonwealth

Interim Statement of the Commonwealth Observer Group
Saint Lucia General Elections
26 July 2021

Statement by Mr Alvin Smith, Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) was constituted by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, following an invitation from the Government of Saint Lucia.

This is the Interim Statement of our observations. The final report will set out the full findings on the process and our recommendations in greater detail. This will be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, and thereafter shared with the Government of Saint Lucia, the Electoral Commission, political parties, Commonwealth governments and then made public.

On 26 July, eligible voters came out in large numbers to cast their votes, demonstrating their determination, faith and commitment to democratic processes in Saint Lucia. The COG noted that this election was conducted in the midst of a pandemic and commends the polling staff and voters for following COVID-19 protocols on Election Day. The COG noted the patience, orderliness and peace, which characterised the voting process and hopes that this will continue to prevail.

Ahead of Election Day, we met with a broad range of stakeholders to gain a comprehensive picture of the electoral processes and political environment. We met with the Electoral Commission, the main political parties, independent candidates, representatives of civil society, including women and youth groups, media, the Police and other international observers.

The Group deployed across the country on Election Day, covering all 17 Electoral Districts.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

- The 26 July General Elections were peaceful and inclusive. We commend the Electoral Commission, the staff of the Electoral Office and in particular, the polling staff for their dedication, professionalism and diligence in delivering a credible process.
- The COG reported positively on the voting and counting processes in the polling stations visited and in particular the management of the occasional long queues. The COG also noted that the process would have benefitted from a more consistent application of the procedures.
- The COG noted the overwhelming preponderance of women as electoral officials and acknowledge their invaluable contribution.
- The Voters' Register is inaccurate. Deceased and ineligible persons have not been consistently removed since 1979.
- The COG noted that contrary to the provisions of the laws of Saint Lucia, no provisions to vote were made for people in quarantine and those on remand.
- The decision to use tents as polling stations proved to be a challenge for both polling staff and voters, as they were not sufficiently protected from the adverse effects of the weather and made adherence to COVID-19 protocols more difficult. On the whole however, the COG was impressed by efforts made to adhere to COVID-19 protocols by both voters and polling staff.
- Elderly and disabled voters were not always given priority at polling stations and their access was often difficult.
- The COG noted the active participation of young people in the electoral process.

CONCLUSIONS

The COG commends the people of Saint Lucia for the enthusiastic, peaceful and transparent manner in which the elections were conducted and notes that the results conclusively reflect the will of the people.

The COG hopes that the final report and its recommendations will be helpful to the people of Saint Lucia in strengthening the country's democracy.

Issued on 28 July 2021

Annex V - General Election Results

Constituency	Name of Candidate	Party	Votes received
Gros Islet			
	Kenson Joel Casimir	SLP	7077 (58.1%)
	Lenard Spider Montoute	UWP	5024 (41.3%)
	Andre De Caires	NGP	70 (0.6%)
Babonneau			
	Virginia Albert - Poyotte	SLP	3245 (50.9%)
	Ezekiel Joseph	UWP	3135 (49.1%)
Castries North			
	Stephenson King	Independent	3643 (69.5%)
	Jeannine Giraudy-Mc Intyre	UWP	1530 (29.2%)
	Daisy Anna St. Rose	NGP	37 (0.7%)
	Nathalbert Earl George	Independent	31 (0.6%)
Castries East			
	Philip J. Pierre	SLP	3700 (66.5%)
	Fortuna C. Belrose	UWP	1823 (32.8%)
	Ubaidullah Muhammad	NGP	40 (0.7%)
Castries Central			
	Richard Frederick	Independent	2099 (57.5%)
	Sarah Flood - Beaubrun	UWP	1494 (41.0%)
	Aaron Alexander	NGP	55 (1.5%)
Castries South			
	Earnest Hilaire	SLP	3064 (64.8%)
	Bertrand Birch Johannes	UWP	1635 (34.6%)
	Raffaele Cantoni	NGP	33 (0.7%)
Anse-La-Raye/ Canaries			
	Wayne Girard	SLP	2468 (51.6%)
	Francis Dominique Fedee	UWP	2303 (48.1%)
	Avalan Joseph	NGP	16 (0.3%)
Soufriere			
	Emma Hippolyte	SLP	2499 (50.7%)
	Herod Adrien Stanislas	UWP	2434 (49.3%)
Choiseul			
	John Bradly Felix	UWP	2846 (53.5%)
	Pauline Antoine - Prospere	SLP	2461 (46.3%)
	Mary Gilberta St. Rose	NGP	10 (0.2%)
Constituency	Name of Candidate	Party	Votes received
Laborie			
	Alva Romanus Baptiste	SLP	2298 (64.3%)
	Fransico Jean Pierre	UWP	1275 (35.7%)

Vieux-Fort South			
	Kenny Davis Anthony	SLP	3020 (67.5%)
	Hermangild Francis	UWP	1457 (32.5%)
Vieux-Fort North			
	Moses Jn Baptiste	SLP	2087 (59.0%)
	Vincent London	UWP	1453 (41.0%)
Micoud South			
	Allen Michael Chastanet	UWP	2303 (58.1%)
	Guibion Ferdinand	SLP	1657 (41.8%)
	Melanie Fraites	Independent	6 (0.2%)
Micoud North			
	Jeremiah Norbert	SLP	2283 (56.5%)
	Gale T.C Rigobert	UWP	1731 (42.8%)
	Michael Philip St.Catherine	Independent	28 (0.7%)
Dennery South			
	Paul Prospere	SLP	1548 (53.2%)
	Edmund Estephane	UWP	1364 (46.8%)
Dennery North			
	Shawn A. Edward	SLP	2414 (53.0%)
	Angelina Phera Polius	UWP	2133 (46.8%)
	Wendel George	NGP	10 (0.2%)
Castries South East			
	Joachim Andre Henry	SLP	3978 (52.9%)
	Guy Eardley Joseph	UWP	3541 (47.1%)

Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation

The Commonwealth Secretariat is a signatory to both the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the associated Code of Conduct for International Election Observation Missions, which were commemorated on 27 October 2005 at the United Nations in New York.

Commonwealth Observer Groups are organised and conducted in accordance with the Declaration and Commonwealth Observers undertake their duties in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

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The Commonwealth