

Acknowledgements

We wish to record our sincere appreciation to the many people across the country who helped us in a variety of ways during our mission. Without their assistance the task would have been extremely arduous. We have been touched by the warm hospitality of the people of Guyana. Wherever we went, in the towns and in the remote regions, we were warmly welcomed and we will take with us some fond memories of this visit. We wish the people of Guyana well in their efforts to consolidate their democracy.

We wish to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his officials. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Elections Commission, his colleagues on the Commission and his staff, especially those in the Support Team for Observer Facilitation, who worked extremely long hours under pressure, especially in the run-up to the elections and shortly afterwards. Other international observer groups shared their information with us and for this we are grateful. We wish to thank the staff of the Electoral Assistance Bureau, in Georgetown and across the country, for their assistance before and during the election period.

We are highly appreciative of the political parties, religious bodies, media, NGOs and other associations who provided us with invaluable briefings on the situation on the ground.

We acknowledge the assistance given to us by the Commonwealth High Commissions in Georgetown, the Director-General of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development and the United Nations Development Programme, who ably solved some of our transport problems. Our thanks also go to the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Caribbean Centre, which was an invaluable source of information and support during this mission.

We extend our gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, for providing us with the opportunity to participate in this mission and for supporting us with his wise counsel during it.

Our final words of thanks go to Mr Carl Dundas and the Commonwealth Secretariat support staff who accompanied us to Guyana for their magnificent effort. We would not have been able to carry out our mandate without their dedication and full support.

Annexes

ANNEX I

Composition of the Commonwealth Observer Group

HE Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi (Tanzania – Chairperson)

HE Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi was President of the United Republic of Tanzania from 1985-95. After training as a teacher he worked first as a primary school teacher, then as a tutor in a teachers' training college and from 1962-63 as Principal of the Teachers' Training College, Zanzibar. Mr Mwinyi continued his career with a brief period as a civil servant and six years in business, and was then Minister of Health and Minister of State in the President's Office from 1970-72. For the next three years he served as Minister of Home Affairs, from 1977-81 he was Ambassador to Egypt and from 1981-83 he was Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism. In 1983 Mr Mwinyi became Minister of State in the Vice-President's Office (Zanzibar) and from 1984-85 he was President of Zanzibar.

Ms Jeannette France (St Vincent and the Grenadines)

Ms Jeannette France has worked as a teacher and an educational administrator in Jamaica, in Guyana and in St Vincent and the Grenadines. She has served as an Examiner on the Caribbean Examinations Council and has been Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guides Association of St Vincent and the Grenadines. At present she is the Field Executive Trainer for the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, in which capacity she is responsible for 16 Caribbean countries.

Advocate Bience Gawanas (Namibia)

Advocate Bience Gawanas is Namibia's Ombudswoman and a barrister. After independence in 1990 she worked as a lawyer at the Legal Assistance Centre (a human rights NGO). She was called as an advocate to the Namibian High Court in 1991 and from 1991-96 served as a full-time member of the Public Service Commission. From 1991 to the present she has also occupied various part-time positions: as a lecturer in Gender Law; Chairperson of the Law Reform and Development Commission; member of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Namibia; Alternate Chairperson of the Lands Tribunal; Deputy Chairperson of the Human Rights and Documentation Centre; and as Secretary-General of the Namibia National Women's Organisation. She was an observer during the first multiracial elections conducted for South African citizens in Namibia. She holds an LLB (Hons) and an Utter Barrister degree and was called to the Bar in Britain.

The Rt Reverend Solomon Tilewa Johnson (The Gambia)

The Rt Rev Solomon Tilewa Johnson has been Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission of The Gambia since April 1997 and, as Bishop of the Diocese of The Gambia, is head of the Anglican Church in The Gambia, Senegal and the Cape Verde Islands. He was previously Vice-Chairman of the Provisional Independent Electoral Commission, which was responsible for supervising and conducting all public elections and referenda in The Gambia during the period of transition from military to democratic rule. He was also a member of the Constitutional Review Commission which drafted the present Constitution. He was educated in Nigeria and Britain, where he obtained respectively a Diploma in Theology and a BA (Hons) degree in Theology. He was ordained as a priest in 1980 and consecrated as a bishop in 1990.

Mr Stanley Martin, CVO, JP (Britain)

Mr Stanley Martin is a retired diplomat. Having graduated in law from the University of Oxford, he joined the Diplomatic Service and worked as a ministerial private secretary before serving in Australia and Malaysia. After working in the personnel selection and policy planning fields, he specialised in protocol as Assistant, and later First Assistant, Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps. In retirement, he is an Extra Gentleman Usher to the Queen, Protocol Consultant to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a visiting professor at the University of Westminster and a magistrate in inner London. He is also engaged in various voluntary, charitable and commercial activities.

Ms Mary-Christine Murphy (Canada)

Ms Mary-Christine Murphy is an Election Officer with Elections Canada and a director of a number of private companies and charitable, cultural and literacy organisations. Prior to this appointment with Elections Canada she has worked as an executive assistant in the House of Commons and as executive vice-president and general manager of a four-season ski resort. In 1985 Ms Murphy was appointed a member of the Local Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Employment and Immigration. She has served as a member of observer groups which were present for elections in Cambodia and South Africa. Ms Murphy was educated at the Institut Miramonte, Switzerland, and the University of Toronto.

The Hon Dr Hetherwick Ntaba, MP (Malawi)

The Hon Dr Hetherwick Ntaba was elected to Parliament in 1990. He was appointed as Malawi's Minister of Health in the same year and as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1993. Prior to being a Member of Parliament and a Minister, Dr Ntaba had a distinguished medical career. From 1971-84 he was Chief Surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, the largest hospital in Malawi, and from 1984-90 he was Chief of Health Services for the country. Dr Ntaba served on the National Consultative Council and the National Executive Council which formulated Malawi's new constitution and turned the country into a multi-party democracy between 1993 and 1994. Dr Ntaba is now an opposition spokesman for health in the national parliament. He represented Malawi several times at World Health Organisation meetings and served as a member of its Executive Board for three years, until 1989. Dr Ntaba was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in 1985 for his contribution to health services in Malawi and became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1990.

The Hon Neil Edward William Pickard (Australia)

The Hon Neil Pickard was first elected to the New South Wales (NSW) Parliament in November 1972 as the representative for Hornsby. He retained the seat until April 1991. During this time he served as the NSW Minister for Education, Minister for Minerals and Energy and member of the Parliamentary Select Committee on High Examinations. He also held the shadow portfolios of Education, Energy and State Development. Mr Pickard entered politics after a career as a minister of the Methodist Church for 13 years and then as a High School teacher of English and History and a lecturer at Sydney University. He was admitted to Sydney University as a mature student and there he obtained a Bachelor of Arts, a Masters degree in Education and a Diploma of Education. He also has a Certificate of Theology and Ministerial Studies from the United Faculty of Sydney, which is also part of Sydney University, and a Licentiate from the University of Melbourne. He has served as Alderman, Peak Council, and in various civic and sporting associations. Mr Pickard has led many educational, business and voluntary groups on trips to Asia and the Pacific region. Following his retirement from the NSW Parliament in April 1991 Mr Pickard was appointed Agent-General for NSW to London and the Commission of Europe. He withdrew from this position in November 1992.

The Hon Professor Bharati Ray, MP (India)

The Hon Professor Bharati Ray is a Member of Parliament and serves on the Parliamentary Committees on Human Resource Development and Information and Broadcasting, as well as on a Railway Users' Committee. She was a member of the Indian Delegation at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference (Delhi, 1997), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Mauritius (1997) and the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly (1997), as well as a member of the Prime Minister's team to Visva Bharati (1997). Prior to becoming an MP she was the first woman Pro-Vice Chancellor (1988-96) of the 140-year-old University of Calcutta. She is the founder-director of the Women's Studies Research Centre, University of Calcutta, has been a member of the West Bengal State Commission for Women and is actively

involved in the National Literacy Mission. She has also adjudicated in the *Lok Adalat* set up to dispose of pending litigation in the Calcutta High Court. Prof Ray is the author of several academic books and articles, and holds a PhD in History from the University of Calcutta. She has received many awards and grants, including a Shviomoni Vikas award, a Ford Foundation Research grant, a Rockefeller Foundation Residency at Bellagio Centre for Research and was a visiting professor at the Maisons des Sciences de L'Homme, Paris.

Mr Hensley Robinson (Barbados)

Mr Hensley Robinson has held senior positions in the public service of his country for the past 17 years and is currently the acting Chief Electoral Officer. He joined the public service of Barbados in 1960 and has had more than 30 years experience at all levels of the electoral process there. He worked as a Registering Officer, Poll Clerk and Presiding Officer during the period 1961-87; as Returning Officer for the 1981, 1986 and 1991 general elections; and as the Deputy Supervisor of Elections for the 1994 general election. Mr Robinson holds a Masters degree in Social Science from the University of Wales (Cardiff).

The Hon Camille Robinson-Regis, MP (Trinidad and Tobago)

The Hon Camille Robinson-Regis has been a Member of Parliament since 1992 and has held two ministerial positions in the government of her country: from 1992-95 she was Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister responsible for Information, Libraries and the Environment, and from 1993-95 Minister of Consumer Affairs. Mrs Robinson-Regis also headed the Trinidad and Tobago delegation at the 1994 UN Conference on Small Island Developing States. Before becoming an MP, Mrs Robinson-Regis was corporate secretary and legal adviser to the National Flour Mills, a state corporation, prior to which she ran her own legal practice. She is currently an opposition spokesperson for issues relating to the Office of the Attorney-General and Legal Affairs and Women. She is a member of the Joint Select Committee on Integrity in Public Life and was a member of the Joint Select Committees on Environmental Affairs, Constitutional Reform relating to the unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago, Reform of Legislation governing Financial Institutions and Companies, and Reform of Legislation governing National Days, Holidays and Festivals. She has resumed private practice.

Ms Dorianne Rowan-Campbell (Jamaica)

Ms Dorianne Rowan-Campbell is an international development consultant specialising in change management and gender equity and human rights. She began as a journalist working with the Jamaica Information Service, Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, where she initiated the Office on the Portrayal of Women. She was the first Director of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender and Development Programme and subsequently undertook the institutionalisation of the Gender and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies. A commitment to women's active participation and representation in politics led her to work closely with the 300 Group in Britain and to a founding membership of the Jamaica Women's Political Caucus. The caucus is a non-partisan organisation dedicated to improving the quality of political representation. It provides training, qualified financial support and a forum for inter-party discussion for women politicians and aspirants. Ms Rowan-Campbell is on the boards of Womankind, the Global Fund for Women, and is also an editorial adviser to Oxfam.

Sir Anthony Siaguru, KBE (Papua New Guinea)

Sir Anthony Siaguru was Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General (Political) from 1990-95, during which time he was involved in organising Commonwealth election observer missions to 12 member countries, including Bangladesh, Guyana and South Africa. Prior to that he was a Member of Parliament and served as Minister for Public Service, following a five-year term as Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Sir Anthony currently practises law in Port Moresby.

The Hon Sir Peter Tapsell (New Zealand)

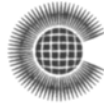
The Hon Sir Peter Tapsell retired as Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives in 1996, having served in that position for two years and as a member of the Cabinet from 1984-94. Sir Peter was elected to Parliament in 1981 after a career as a surgeon in Britain and New Zealand, specialising in orthopaedics. Following a number of senior ministerial appointments in the 1980s he was appointed Minister of Defence in 1990. He has been awarded an MBE and two honorary doctorates for his services to medicine.

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT STAFF

Mr Carl Dundas	Team Leader
Ms Judith Pestaina	Assistant to Observers
Mr Richard Nzerem	Assistant to Observers
Ms Lorna McLaren	Assistant to Observers
Mr Guy Hewitt	Assistant to Observers
Mr Mwambu Wanendeya	Media Officer
Ms Kereine Combie	Administrative Officer
Ms Charlene Lee-Ling	Secretary

ANNEX II

Commonwealth News Release of 24 November 1997



COMMONWEALTH NEWS RELEASE

ANTIGUA AND
BARBUDA
AUSTRALIA
THE BAHAMAS
BANGLADESH
BARBADOS
BELIZE
BOTSWANA
BRITAIN
BRUNEI
DARUSSALAM
CANADA
CAMEROON
CYPRUS
DOMINICA
THE GAMBIA
GHANA
GRENADA
GUYANA
INDIA
JAMAICA
KENYA
KIRIBATI
LESOTHO
MALAWI
MALAYSIA
MALDIVES
MALTA
MAURITIUS
MOZAMBIQUE
NAMIBIA
NAURU
NEW ZEALAND
NIGERIA*
PAKISTAN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
ST KITTS AND NEVIS
ST LUCIA
ST VINCENT AND
THE GRENADINES
SAMOA
SEYHELLES
SIERRA LEONE
SINGAPORE
SOLOMON ISLANDS
SOUTH AFRICA
SRI LANKA
SWAZILAND
TANZANIA
TONGA
TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO
TUVALU
UGANDA
VANUATU
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

97/60

24 November, 1997

Commonwealth to Observe General Elections in Guyana

A team of 14 Commonwealth Observers, together with a supporting team from the Commonwealth Secretariat, will be present in Guyana for the General and Regional Elections which are to be held on 15 December 1997.

In making the announcement today, Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku said that the Commonwealth was responding to a request from the Government of Guyana for a Commonwealth Observer Group to observe the General and Regional Elections. An assessment mission from the Commonwealth Secretariat which visited Guyana in October established that there was widespread support for a Commonwealth presence during the elections.

The Commonwealth team for Guyana will be led by **H E Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi**, former President of Tanzania. The other observers will be:

Ms Jeannette France
Former Public Servant, St Vincent and
the Grenadines

Rt Rev S. Tilewa Johnson
Chairman, Independent Electoral
Commission, The Gambia

Ms Bience Gawanas
Ombudswoman, Namibia

Mr Stanley Martin CVO, JP
Former Diplomat, Britain

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* Commonwealth
membership currently
suspended

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Ms Mary Murphy
Election Officer, Canada

Dr Heatherwick Ntaba MP
Member of Parliament, Malawi

The Hon Neil Pickard
Former Minister, Australia

Dr Bharati Ray MP
Member of Parliament, India

Mr Hensley Robinson
Chief Electoral Officer, Barbados

Mrs Camille Robinson-Regis MP
Member of Parliament, Trinidad and
Tobago

Ms Dorianne Rowan-Campbell
Consultant on Development Issues,
Jamaica

Sir Anthony Siaguru KBE
Former Minister and Commonwealth
Deputy Secretary-General, Papua New
Guinea

Sir Peter Tapsell MBE
Former Speaker, House of
Representatives, New Zealand

The Group will be supported by an eight-member team from the Commonwealth Secretariat, led by Mr Carl Dundas, Special Adviser, Economic and Legal Advisory Services Division.

Note to Editors:

The mission to Guyana will represent the 23rd election observed by the Commonwealth since October 1990, most recently in Pakistan, Cameroon and Papua New Guinea. These observer missions are to be seen in the context of a decision taken by Commonwealth Heads of Government to support the promotion of democracy in a number of ways, including through observation, on request, of elections in member states.

ANNEX III

Arrival Statement of 8 December 1997



Guyana General and Regional Elections, 1997

Commonwealth Observer Group*News Release***ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

We are here to observe the General and Regional Elections, in response to a request from the Government of Guyana to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, and following advice by a Commonwealth Assessment Mission in October that there would be broad support for the presence of Commonwealth Observers.

As a team of Observers, we are serving in our individual capacities and not as representatives of the countries, governments or the organisations to which we may belong. Our remit is to observe all relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Guyana and, at the end, make an independent assessment as to whether the conditions existed for the people of Guyana to freely express their will through the polls.

We have no executive role. Our function is to observe the process as a whole and form an impartial judgment on the credibility of the exercise. On completion of our task we will present a report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will in turn make it available to the Government of Guyana, the political parties which contested the elections, and thereafter to all Commonwealth governments.

In carrying out our mission, we will remain in close touch with the Elections Commission. We look forward to being briefed by them on the preparations in hand. We hope to have meetings with representatives of political parties, non-governmental organisations and other interested groups. We intend to travel throughout the country, both before and on polling day and to observe the counting of votes.

We are honoured to be here as guests in your beautiful country and greatly look forward to our mission.

Georgetown
8 December 1997

ANNEX IV

Schedule of Engagements

Monday 8 December

- 1030 Arrival Press Conference, Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel, Georgetown
- 1415 Briefing by the Guyana Elections Commission: Dr Barton Scotland (Member, Elections Commission), Mr Gocool Boodoo (Senior Manager, Elections Commission), Dr Martin J Boodhoo (Pro-Chancellor, University of Guyana), Colonel Carl Morgan and Lt-Colonel Joseph Harmon (security advisers, Elections Commission)
- 1800 Electoral Assistance Bureau: Mr Lawrence Lachmarsingh (Project Director)
- 2000 Chairperson's Dinner for Observers and guest of honour Mr Doodnauth Singh, SC, Chairman of the Elections Commission

Tuesday 9 December

- 0915 Alliance For Guyana: Ms Kathleen Rajcumar, Ms Andaiye and Mr Nigel Westmaas
- 1000 The United Force: Mr Charles Sugrim, Ms Joan Collins, Mr Lambert Johnson, Mr Hilbert Archer and Mr William Sampson
- 1100 People's Progressive Party/Civic: Mr Donald Ramotar (General Secretary, PPP), Mr Roger Luncheon, Mr Henry Jeffrey and Mr Reepu Daman Persaud
- 1330 Justice For All Party: Mr C N Sharma (Presidential candidate), Ms Savitree Singh (General Secretary) and Ms Elizabeth Bhagan
- 1400 A Good and Green Guyana: Mr Llewellyn John (Vice-Chairman)
- 1445 Guyana Democratic Party: Mr B Balkarrun, Mr Raymond Ally and Mr Ed Harris
- 1545 People's National Congress: Mr Aubrey Norton (General Secretary), Mr Hardat Singh, Ms Deborah Backer and Mr Raphael Trotman
- 1645 Non-governmental organisations: Trades Union Congress (Vice-Presidents Mr Norris Witter and Mr Richard Samuels, General Secretary Mr Joseph Pollydore and Assistant Secretaries Mr Randolph Kirton and Mr Lincoln Lewis), Human Rights Association (Co-President Mr Michael McCormack) and Guyana Bar Association (President Mr Vidyanand Persaud, Treasurer Mr Winston Moore)
- 1930 Chairperson's Reception, Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel, Georgetown, followed by briefing on voting by the Disciplined Forces the following day

Wednesday 10 December

Observers deployed to observe the voting by the Disciplined Forces; some were also present for briefings as follows:

- 1030 Other international: Organisation of American States (Mr Bruce Rickerson), National Democratic Institute (Ms Deborah Ullmer and Mr Winston Cremer)
- 1130 Religious bodies: Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches (respectively Mr Raymond Shaw and Bishop Randolph George), Guyana Central Arya Samaj (Mr Harrychand Raghbir) and Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana (President Mr Fazeel Mohamed Ferouz, Deputy President Mr Sultan H Rahaman, Shaikh Moeenul Hack and Mr Azam Ally)
- 1400 Women's organisations: Red Thread (Ms Vanda Radzik, Ms Shirley Goodman, Ms Halima Khan and Ms Vanessa Ross), Women Across Differences (Dr Janice Jackson), Women's Affairs Bureau/National Commission on Women (Ms Hazel Halley-Burnett) and Youth Challenge Guyana (Ms Ardis Sanmoogan)
- 1500 Media: Mr Robert Bazil (*Guyana Chronicle*), Ms Miranda La Rose (*Stabroek News*) and Mrs Michelle Elphage (Guyana Television)
- 1600 National Amerindian organisations: Mr Vivian Fredericks (Chairman, National Amerindian Council), Mr David James (President, Amerindian People's Association) and Mr Hubert Wong (Chief, Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous Peoples)
- 2000 Deployment Briefing: Mr Carl Dundas, Ms Lorna McLaren and Mr Guy Hewitt

Thursday 11 December

- 0830 Commonwealth High Commissions: HE Mr David Johnson (High Commissioner, Britain), HE Mr Alan Bowker (High Commissioner, Canada) and Mr S P Kanjlia (Acting High Commissioner, India)

- On Wednesday 17 December, Chairperson Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi met Foreign Minister Hon Clement Rohee. On Thursday 18 December, Mr Mwinyi had separate meetings with Chairman of the Elections Commission Mr Doodnauth Singh, Mrs Janet Jagan and Mr Desmond Hoyte. A number of meetings were also held with representatives of other observer groups

ANNEX V

**Deployment for Observation of the Disciplined Forces Poll
Wednesday 10 December 1997**

REGION	OBSERVERS	LOCATION
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi (Chairperson) Mr Carl Dundas	Police Sports Club Barrack Street Georgetown
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Rt Rev S Tilewa Johnson Dr Bharati Ray	All Ranks Sports Club Camp Ayangana Thomas Lands Georgetown
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Mr Hensley Robinson Mr Stanley Martin	Camp Stephenson Timeri East Bank Demerara
3 Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara	Ms Dorianne Rowan-Campbell Mr Richard Nzerem	La Grange Police Station Leonora Magistrates' Court
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Mr Neil Pickard Mr Guy Hewitt	Government National Service Base
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Sir Anthony Siaguru Ms Jeannette France	Cove & John Police Station Sparendam Police Station East Coast Mahaica Police Station
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Dr Hetherwick Ntaba Ms Judith Pestaina	Ruimveldt Police Station (Police Force) Ruimveldt Police Station (GDF) Garden of Eden, Timehri Prison
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Sir Peter Tapsell Advocate Bience Gawanas	Brickdam Police Station
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Ms Camille Robinson-Regis Mr Mwambu Wanendeya	Camp Seweyo, Dora Kuru Kuru Training Complex



Guyana General and Regional Elections, 1997

Commonwealth Observer Group

News Release

COMMONWEALTH OBSERVERS DEPLOYED FOR ELECTIONS

Yesterday the Commonwealth Observer Group to the General and Regional Elections observed the voting by the Disciplined Forces. The Group was split into nine teams which visited sixteen polling stations in Georgetown and its environs. More than 70% of the Disciplined Forces were registered to vote at these polling stations and the Observers are of the view that their visits enabled them to obtain a fairly accurate picture of the voting.

Following their visits to the polling stations the Observers held meetings with associations representing the Amerindians, non-governmental organisations, women's groups, the religious bodies and members of the media.

Today (Thursday 11 December) the Observers will be splitting up into teams consisting of two people each and moving out of Georgetown. They will be deployed in all ten regions of the country for the General and Regional Elections. The Observers will visit as many polling stations as possible on the election day in order to assess, as accurately as possible, the voting process.

The Observers hope that these elections will be conducted in a peaceful atmosphere and that the people of Guyana will be able to choose their leaders in a transparent process.

11 December 1997

ANNEX VI

**Deployment for Observation of the General and Regional Elections
Monday 15 December 1997**

REGION	OBSERVERS	BASE LOCATION
1 Barima/Waini	Rt Rev S Tilewa Johnson Ms Judith Pestaina	Government Guest House Mabaruma
2 Pomeroon/ Supernaam	Sir Anthony Siaguru Mr Hensley Robinson	Arabian Atlantic Hotel Hampton Court
3 Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara	Mr Stanley Martin Ms Jeannette France	Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel Georgetown
4 Demerara/Mahaica	Mr Ali Hassan Mwinyi Mr Carl Dundas	Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel Georgetown
5 Mahaica/Berbice	Ms Mary-Christine Murphy Ms Lorna McLaren	Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel Georgetown
6 East Berbice/ Corentyne	Dr Bharati Ray Mr Richard Nzerem	Parkway Hotel Corentyne
7 Cuyuni/Mazaruni	Ms Dorienne Rowan-Campbell Sir Peter Tapsell	Esmerelda Guest House Kamarang
8 Potaro/Siparuni	Advocate Bience Gawanas Mr Guy Hewitt	Hi-Lo Guest House Madhia
9 Upper Takutu/ Upper Essequibo	Ms Camille Robinson-Regis Dr Hetherwick Ntaba	Savannah Inn Lethem
10 Upper Demerara/ Berbice	Mr Neil Pickard Mr Mwambu Wanendeya	Government Guest House Linden

ANNEX VII

Observation Notes for Poll and Count and Check List for Visits to Polling Stations

OBSERVATION NOTES FOR POLL AND COUNT

PART A

The Observers may focus particular attention on the following aspects of the conduct of the elections:

THE CAMPAIGN

1. Balance of TV/radio election coverage and extent and nature of access by the parties (e.g., allocation of time for political broadcasts and advertisements).
2. Print media: nature of coverage and extent of access by the political parties.
3. The tone and content of material put out by the political parties, access to printing facilities?
4. The conduct of political meetings/rallies (permits for public meetings?)
5. The conduct of house-to-house canvassing of voters.
6. Nature, scale and effectiveness of Elections Commission and other voter education on radio and television, in the print media and by other methods.
7. Activities/measures to encourage the participation of women.
8. Access to funds and sources of funds.

THE POLL

1. The location of polling stations.
2. Distances travelled by voters to polling stations, particularly in rural areas.
3. The procedure followed at the opening of the poll.
4. The length of time voters wait to cast their votes.
5. The adequacy or otherwise of facilities at polling stations and their state of readiness.
6. Availability of adequate supplies, e.g., ballot papers, official stamps and stamp-pads, indelible ink, etc.
7. The performance of electoral officials at the polling stations visited.
8. The procedures in place to ensure proper security of ballot papers, ballot boxes and official seals.

9. Arrangements to facilitate voting by women.
10. The steps taken to ensure that the secrecy of the ballot is assured.
11. The general atmosphere at the polling stations visited.
12. Access of party agents and observers to polling centres/booths.

THE COUNT

1. Inspection of seals.
2. The process of reconciling the number of people who voted with the number of ballots cast.
3. The determination of invalid ballots.
4. The facilities for parties to witness and verify the count and overall transparency.
5. Access by domestic and international observers.
6. The conduct of electoral officers.

PART B

Questions that may be put:

BEFORE POLLING DAY

1. Was the Voters' Register compiled in a satisfactory way? Were people missed out? Were the names of dead people or "phantom voters" included?
2. Who are the election officials? How were they chosen? Are voters confident that they will be impartial?
3. Is the person in the street satisfied with arrangements? Will he/she vote? If not, is he/she afraid to do so? Were there any attempts to discourage/encourage the participation of women and were they effective?
4. Have all parties been able to campaign freely? Has the campaign been free of intimidation, etc? Have all parties had full access to the mass media?
5. Is there freedom to advertise and distribute posters, leaflets, etc?

ON POLLING DAY

1. Before polling starts, are the ballot boxes empty? Are they properly sealed? Are all procedures being adhered to?
2. Are all parties represented at polling stations? Are they satisfied with the process?
3. Are voters apparently voting freely? Are they enthusiastic? Do they talk freely? Do they exhibit signs of fear or intimidation?

4. Do voters understand the procedures properly? If not, are the procedures being explained fully and impartially? Are attempts being made to suggest how voters should vote?
Is anyone voting without a Voter ID card? Has any registered voter been turned away because they had no Voter ID card?
5. Does the turnout indicate that women have been deterred from voting?
6. Is only one person at a time being allowed into the voting booth?
7. How long are voters waiting to vote? If a long time, are some being put off?
8. Will all parties be represented at polling centres throughout voting and count?
Are party polling agents adequately trained and vigilant?
9. Will foreign observers have free access to all stages of the process?
10. Is the security presence effective/oppressive?

THE COUNT

1. Are the boxes kept safe until opened? Are all parties present at opening?
2. Does the number of used ballot papers tally with the record of those who voted?
3. Are the papers counted properly? Are counting agents present? Are they satisfied with the procedure of the count?

CHECK LIST FOR POLLING STATION VISITS

Name of Observer(s):

Place and Region:

Polling Station:

Time of Arrival:

Time of Departure:

Voters in Queue: Rate of Processing:

-
- | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Opening of Poll: | On time?
No/Yes
Details: | Procedures followed?
No/Yes | |
| 2. | Layout and Facilities: | Good? | Adequate? | Poor? |
| 3. | Polling Staff: | Efficient? | Satisfactory? | Poor? |
| 4. | Security Presence: | Discreet? | Intrusive? | Oppressive? |
| 5. | Complaints by Party Agents: | No/Yes | Details: | |
| 6. | Complaints by Voters: | No/Yes | Details: | |
| 7. | Presence of unauthorised persons: | No/Yes | Details: | |
| 8. | Atmosphere at Station? | Orderly? | Tense? | Chaotic? |
| 9. | Secrecy of Ballot: | Assured? | Poor? | Uncertain |

10. **Voting:**
- (a) Personation attempts alleged: No/Yes
Details:
- (b) Multiple voting attempts alleged: No/Yes
Details:
- (c) Women deterred from voting: No/Yes
Details:
11. **Closing of Poll:** On time? Numbers still in queue?
Procedure followed? No/Yes
12. **The Count:** Are procedures being observed? No/Yes
13. **Apparent fairness overall:** Good? Acceptable?
Questionable?
14. **Other Comments:**

ANNEX VIII

Interim Statement of 16 December 1997



Guyana General and Regional Elections, 1997

Commonwealth Observer Group*News Release*

16 December 1997 : 1100 hrs

**INTERIM STATEMENT
BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

The Commonwealth Observer Group arrived in Guyana on 7 December 1997. An advance team of three support staff have been here since 27 November. The Group consists of 14 eminent Commonwealth citizens and eight support staff.

The mandate of the Commonwealth Observer Group was to observe relevant aspects of the elections and to determine whether or not the people of Guyana had the opportunity to express their will through the ballot.

The Group began its work with comprehensive briefings by the Elections Commission, political parties, non-governmental organisations, associations representing the Amerindians, women's groups, Guyana professional organisations, religious bodies, and the media.

On 10 December, the Group was split into nine teams which visited sixteen polling stations in Georgetown and its environs to observe the voting of the Disciplined Forces.

On 11 December, the Group deployed to the ten regions across the country for the General and Regional elections. On polling day, we visited several polling stations in each region, and were present when the polls opened and when they closed. We also observed the count.

The picture that emerges as the polls closed is of a peaceful election day. The Elections Commission and their polling station officials, the parties, the security forces and the voters are to be commended for helping to ensure a successful election. The Chairman and members of the Elections Commission showed flexibility in accommodating parties' and individual's complaints, as evidenced by the extension of the deadline for the uplifting of Voter Identification Cards. On the whole, elections officers acted in a professional, open and transparent manner. We were struck by the level of co-operation between polling staff and party agents and by the presence in most polling stations of local monitors.

We were also struck by the absence of complaints concerning the voter registration process. But there were some shortcomings. The late issue of a number of Voter Identification Cards caused some anxiety among voters. Up to the day before polling the Elections Commission was producing Voter Identification Cards and on polling day itself Voter Identification Cards were being distributed in some regions. A few polling stations opened late, and in a small number of cases there were shortages of materials. The names of some voters who had Voter Identification Cards were absent from the voters' list.

However, none of these shortcomings was, in our judgment, of a scale or character as to have been likely to influence the outcome. In fact, in virtually all of the stations visited by us, political party agents expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the voting process.

ANNEX IX

Departure Statement of 19 December 1997



Guyana General and Regional Elections, 1997

Commonwealth Observer Group*News Release*

19 December 1997

DEPARTURE STATEMENT

The Commonwealth Observer Group to the Guyana General and Regional Elections departs tomorrow. We have been in the country for two weeks and some members of our Group have been here for even longer.

We were in Guyana at the request of the Government and with the support of all the major political parties. Our mandate was to observe all relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the General and Regional Elections in accordance of the law of Guyana. We were to consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole and to determine, in our own judgement, whether the conditions existed for a free expression of will by the electors and if the result of the General and Regional elections reflected the wishes of the people.

We issued a statement on 16 December 1997, after the polls had closed but before the final results were declared, in which we expressed our satisfaction with the conduct of the voting process on polling day. As a result of our observations on polling day we concluded that the voters were freely able to express their will.

Events since polling day have led us to the conclusion that the prescribed procedures at the end of the count were not followed which contributed to the delay in declaring the results and the confusion which resulted. We have noted that there are reports of dissatisfaction with the results. We know that there are provisions within the law of Guyana for these issues to be resolved.

Our mission is now ended. We have concluded our report which will be sent to the Commonwealth Secretary-General who will, in turn, send it to the Government of Guyana, the political parties and the Elections Commission. The report will then be sent to the governments of other Commonwealth countries and thereafter will be in the public domain.

We travelled to many parts of the country and made many friends. We thank the people of Guyana for their hospitality and will take back with us some fond memories of our stay here.

ANNEX X

Procedure for Removal of Chairman and Members of the Elections Commission

The procedure for the removal of the Chairman and members of the Elections Commission is set out in the Constitution, in Article 225 paragraphs 4 and 6. These paragraphs read as follows.

Paragraph 4

If the prescribed authority advises the President that the question of removing the officer from office under this article ought to be investigated then –

- (a) the President shall appoint a tribunal which shall consist of a Chairman and not less than two other members, selected by the President after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission from among persons who hold or have held office as a judge of a court having unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters in some part of the Commonwealth or a court having jurisdiction in appeals from any such court or who are qualified to be admitted to practice in Guyana as attorneys-at-law and have been so qualified for such period as is prescribed by Parliament for the purposes of sub-paragraph (b) of article 129(1) in relation to the office of Puisne Judge; and
- (b) that tribunal shall enquire into the matter and report on the facts thereof to the President and recommend to him whether the officer ought to be removed under this article.

Paragraph 6

If the question of removing the officer from office has been referred to a tribunal under this article, the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the prescribed authority, may suspend the officer from performing the functions of his office, and any such suspension may at any time be revoked by the President, acting in accordance with such advice as aforesaid, and shall in any case cease to have effect if the tribunal recommends to the President that the officer should not be removed from office.

ANNEX XI

Text of Code of Conduct for Political Parties

“We the signatories hereunder on behalf of political parties contesting the 1997 National and Regional Elections and which are engaged in public political campaigns, rallies, meetings and other forms of peaceful activities in connection with the forthcoming general elections declare that we agree to the following:

1. To embrace the laws relating to freedom of speech and association and all other laws connected thereto.
2. To acknowledge the right of citizens of Guyana either individually or as a group or through their political parties to engage in lawful political activities which include the freedom to make house to house visits, to sell or distribute political literature, to hold private meetings, to hold public meetings, to hold rallies, to picket, to march, to demonstrate, to make representations, to advertise, to represent their political parties in the electoral process in accordance with the laws of Guyana.
3. To uphold the principle of peaceful political struggle as provided by the Constitution and other laws of Guyana.
4. To ensure that no political party, organisation, action group or individual shall be permitted to direct, plan, provoke or promote violence or threat of violence against any other party, organisation or action group or against any section of the public, individual or their property in pursuance of its campaign.
5. To condemn violence as a means of electoral campaigning and to undertake not to encourage, incite directly or indirectly violence or harm against any person in the course of the electoral campaign.
6. To uphold the principle of free speech and to discourage members and supporters from disrupting meetings and gatherings of other political parties.
7. To work in full co-operation with all relevant administrative and law enforcement authorities to maintain peace and law and order throughout the election campaign so that elections will be held with due regularity in an atmosphere of peace, order and goodwill and that racial harmony may be preserved.
8. To ensure that speeches, slogans, posters, handbills and other advertisements do not contain material offending public morality, decorum, decency or taunts, ridicule, innuendoes or defamatory matter.
9. To inform the public of the importance of ethnic harmony and cultural respect.
10. To refrain from using or permitting, as a political strategy or otherwise, an appeal to racial hostility or racial loyalty or to generate fears or insecurity based on the above.
11. To ensure that no advantage should be had by any party through free use of public property for electioneering purposes.

12. To respect private property and the right of all citizens, groups and political parties lawfully to use their properties in furtherance of their political objectives and philosophy in accordance with the law.
13. To publicly and privately inform party supporters and activists and other individuals of the absolute need for continued peaceful conduct after transparent elections, regardless of the results.

Further, that such results should not be perceived or represented as an ethnic victory but should be viewed only as one exercise of the will of the people by virtue of free and fair elections under the democratic process in the plural society of Guyana.

14. To adhere to this Electoral Accord, to issue instructions and orders to members and to appeal publicly to supporters to observe the electoral laws and to take decisive steps to restrain leaders, officials, candidates and members who violate this Electoral Accord.
15. To recognise the duty of the Elections Commission to discuss and resolve any matters relating to this Accord and hereby authorise the Elections Commission to receive complaints and investigate them and to take steps as may be appropriate.
16. To fully publicise this Electoral Accord and to promote the attainment of its objectives by all means of public communication and information.

This Electoral Accord is open to any political party that may wish to subscribe to its terms and conditions and to become a party thereto thereby agreeing to and embracing the conditions herein by the authorised representative affixing his/her signature hereunder.”

When released to the press and public on 19 November 1997 this text, signed by party representatives in the presence of the Chairman of the Elections Commission, was accompanied by the following additional statement:

“We, representatives of the political parties, contesting the upcoming elections condemn all actions which are designed to frustrate the free expression of ideas and programmes at political campaign meetings. More specifically we deplore the disruptions of political meetings by excessive heckling, throwing of missiles and other forms of aggressive and threatening behaviour.

We call on our political activists and supporters to desist from such conduct which can only demean our electoral process and lead to the undermining of our democracy. We wish to remind our supporters that we have collectively signed the Code of Conduct and have done so in good faith. Any violation of the Code of Conduct brings our parties into disrepute and constitutes a grave violation of this accord.”


ANNEX XII

Elections Commission Voter Education Material

GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION

VOTE '97

Enhancing The Electoral System



*A message from the Chairman,
Guyana Elections Commission*


The 1997 Elections will be one of the most important in the history of independent Guyana. The selection of the President and of the National Assembly will not only be for the remainder of the 20th Century. Who we elect will also bring in the 21st Century. The Elections is about the leadership and direction of 21st Century Guyana.

This Supplement is but a small contribution of the Voter Education & Information Unit, at the Commission to help you participate effectively in the process. I sincerely hope that it answers questions you may have about how, where and why you need to vote.

John M. B. S.C.
Chairman

On Elections Day/Polling Day

1. Take your Voter ID Card




















Guyana Elections Commission
VOTER IDENTIFICATION CARD

SURNAME: SMITH
GIVEN NAMES: MARY ANN
DATE OF BIRTH: 1/2/65 GENDER: F
MUNICI: DISTRICT: BRIDGETOWN DIV: 0029481 9 22879 DIV: D

Mary Smith

SPECIMEN ONLY

- ◆ The Voter ID Card is the property of the Elections Commission
- ◆ Keep Your Voter ID Card in a safe place until Polling Day
- ◆ On Elections Day you will have to return your Voter ID Card

GENERAL ELECTIONS		
1	A.F.G. ALLIANCE FOR GUYANA WPA/GLP/CITIZENS	
2	A.G.G.G. A GOOD AND GREEN GUYANA	
3	G.B.G. GOD BLESS GUYANA	
4	G.D.P. GUYANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY	
5	J.F.A.P. JUSTICE FOR ALL PARTY	
6	N.D.F. NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT	
7	N.I.P. NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PARTY	
8	P.N.C. PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS	
9	P.P.P.C. PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY/CIVIC	
10	T.U.F. THE UNITED FORCE	
REGIONAL ELECTIONS FOR REGION NO. 4		
1	A.F.G. ALLIANCE FOR GUYANA WPA/GLP/CITIZENS	
2	A.G.G.G. A GOOD AND GREEN GUYANA	
3	G.D.P. GUYANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY	
4	J.F.A.P. JUSTICE FOR ALL PARTY	
5	P.N.C. PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS	
6	P.P.P.C. PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY/CIVIC	
7	T.U.F. THE UNITED FORCE	

SPECIMEN ONLY

*2. Go To The Polling Place
marked on your Pink Slip*

*3. First mark an X
next to the Party of
your Choice for
General Election*

AND THEN

*Mark another X
next to the Party
of your Choice
for
Regional Election*

Guyana Elections
Commission

Voter Identification Card Info Sheet

YOUR POLLING DIVISION IS

YOUR POLLING PLACE IS

Voting will be from 6:00 a.m.
to 6:00 p.m. on Election Day

BE EARLY

- ◆ All eligible voters should receive this pink slip along with their Voter ID Card, stating Polling Division & Polling Place
- ◆ If You have not received a Pink Slip, Check with the Registrar or Deputy Registrar,

OR

- ◆ Ask a Political Party activist where is your Polling Place

ELECTIONS/POLLING DAY IS DECEMBER 15, 1997

ANNEX XIII

Elections Commission Guidelines for International Observers

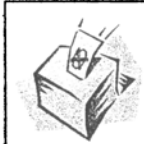
1. Following consultation with the Chairman of the Elections Commission, in conformity with Section 3(1) of the General Elections (Observers) Act 1990 (No. 17 of 1990), the President of the Republic invited a number of international organisations and institutions to officially observe all aspects of the democratic process involved in the forthcoming General and Regional Elections to be held on 15 December 1997.
2. The Elections Commission hereby wishes to inform those organisations and institutions that responded positively to the invitation that they may apply for accreditation and identification as international observers by 7 December 1997.
3. Each organisation referred to in paragraph 2 shall designate in writing to the Elections Commission its representatives, disclosing their particulars and credentials.
4. The particulars and credentials of the representatives so designated shall include the following:
 - a) full name;
 - b) date and place of birth;
 - c) address;
 - d) educational and/or professional background;
 - e) knowledge of the country and/or previous experience in the field of electoral observation.
5. The name of any representative accredited as an international observer shall be published in the Gazette and he or she shall be issued with an identity card by the Chairman of the Elections Commission or his authorized appointees.
6. All observers, while exercising their functions, shall clearly display the identity cards issued to them by the Elections Commission.
7. International observers shall have the right:
 - a) to request from the relevant authorities an appropriate visa to enter Guyana for the duration of the period of election observation as specified in Section 13;
 - b) to enjoy freedom of movement throughout Guyana;
 - c) to communicate freely with any political party and with any organisation or person;
 - d) to open offices within Guyana for the performance of their functions; and
 - e) to communicate with the local and election media.
8. (1) Any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, an observer may scrutinise the official list of electors, enter polling places and places appointed for the counting of votes, and seek information from the Chairman of the Elections Commission, the Chief Election Officer and other election officers.

(2) An organisation accredited to observe shall have the right to obtain from the Chairman of the Elections Commission a copy of the official list of electors for one or more polling divisions and of any written law governing or regulating any election.

- (3) The Chairman of the Elections Commission, the Chief Election Officer and other election officers shall facilitate the work of the observers and shall comply with any reasonable request made by said observers in the performance of their functions.
9. Observers shall be free to observe the course of the campaigning for elections, as well as to observe access to and use of the public media.
10.
 - (1) International observers shall have the following obligations:
 - a) to inform the Elections Commission, at the time of their application for accreditation, of the objectives of their observation;
 - b) to obtain proper accreditation, and supply information as required for that purpose;
 - c) to exercise their role with impartiality, independence and objectivity;
 - d) to respect the Constitution and the laws of Guyana;
 - e) to respect the role, status and authority of election officials;
 - f) to refrain from interfering in, or impeding the normal course of the electoral process, and from providing guidance or information to personnel involved therein;
 - g) to ensure that their activities do not affect the secrecy of the ballot;
 - h) to report to the Elections Commission in a timely manner all criminal activities relevant to the election and violations of the electoral legislation;
 - i) to provide to the Elections Commission prior to their release, copies of written information and statements which they have produced;
 - j) to refrain from announcing election results prior to their announcement by the Elections Commission;
 - k) to limit themselves to observing and reporting on the electoral process. Accreditation shall not entitle any observer to certify the accuracy of the elections nor to make any pronouncement on the results thereof; and
 - l) to return the identity cards issued to them by the Elections Commission at the end of their mission as observers.
 - (2) The Elections Commission may revoke the accreditation of any international observer who violates the obligations laid down in sub-paragraph (1) and thereupon his status as an international observer shall cease.
11. International observers may operate separately or jointly with other observers.
12. Diplomats accredited to Guyana who are designated and recognised as international observers shall exercise their functions as such observers in accordance with these Guidelines.
13. Election observation shall begin on the day of accreditation and shall end on the day determined by the Elections Commission, as reflected on the observer's identity card.

ANNEX XIV

Elections Commission Guidelines for the Media



GUIDELINES FOR THE MEDIA AND CONTESTING POLITICAL PARTIES AT THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS.

Background

The question of the role of the media during election campaign has traditionally been a controversial one over the years. However it is a question that has surfaced regularly, but compromises and reasonableness on the part of contesting parties have in times past allowed for solution, albeit far from perfect, to solve such problems.

Doubtless, as Guyana moves to further cement its democratic culture, first inherited from the British, the question of the role of the media will surface as election time draws closer, and heated debates could not be ruled out.

However, the Guyana Elections Commission is making some recommendations that could help diffuse unhealthy situations, and that could allow for a level playing field in the electoral battles that are ahead.

Indeed, the argument has long since been advanced that freedom of expression by the media, radio, television and print is symbolic of democracy. The manner adopted by the media in their use of their freedom carries an obligation to serve the society and public as a whole.

The media managers and owners must recognize their inheritance of a public trust developed over a period of time, and equally, they should be constantly aware of the public's expectations that the media would behave in a professional manner exercising a critical and discerning judgment which respects and advances the rights and dignity of all people, while at the same time maintaining standards of good taste as reflected by the society and the public being served.

News

The media should ensure that they adhere to the cardinal principles of fair, balanced and as far as is possible objective whether privately or publicly owned depart from the cardinal principles then, this could detract from, if not undermine the spirit of tolerance that the Elections Commission had been working to build, and could help to sour what ought to be an interesting campaign producing high level debates. In this way, the media could contribute significantly to a healthy campaign. Should the local media, Editorials, analyses and commentaries should be distinguished from the reportage of straight news.

Controversy and Balance

Matters of controversial nature must surface from time to time. The media in Guyana now have a glorious opportunity to display maturity that could be considered second to none. Issues of public interests are bound to have varying views and as far as is practicable, media houses should seek to allow for views of all parties to receive equal exposure. Requests by individuals, groups or organizations to present their views on controversial public issues should be considered on the basis of their individual merits and in the light of their contributions to the public interest.

Right of Recall

Parties or individuals involved in the campaign process should benefit from the right of recall if by one means or the other. In clearer words, media editors and managers should consider it obligatory to retract previously published other, inaccurate and or damaging information is published against the individual or party statements that are subsequently found to be untrue. They should consider it equally obligatory to replace inaccuracies with the truth.

Climate of Awareness and Tranquility




The media must recognise their roles to foster an ideal atmosphere during these elections period. Media operatives by contributing meaningfully to a state of developing awareness among their consumers could help to cement Guyana's democratic culture. The more Guyanese participate in the electoral process whether it be through debates, comments or by actually casting their votes on Election Day, the stronger will our democratic system become. The above supports the view that during the Official Campaign Period, the media have a special responsibility to the

public to encourage participation by the electorate in the democratic process and to ensure they have the opportunity to be informed on the candidates and issues. In keeping with the system that obtained during elections in previous years, particularly during the early nineteen sixties, the Guyana Elections Commission is requesting both the print and electronic media to provide contesting political parties with some publicity free of charge

Radio

It recommended that radio time should be allocated to political parties in Parliament proportionately, and contesting political parties without Parliamentary representation should also be given broadcast time as indicated below. Each broadcast should be for about five minutes on the Voice of Guyana and rebroadcast on Radio Roraima at a fixed time, or at a time that that would enjoy the same assumed listenership.

PPP/Civic	Nine Broadcasts.
	Eight Broadcasts.
	Three Broadcasts.
	Two Broadcasts.

	<p>Radio</p> <p>Non Parliamentary parties entering the electoral race should be given one broadcast each of five(5) minutes with a repeat on the sister station.</p>
	<p>Television Telecasts</p> <p>Each television station that operates in Guyana should provide each political party with thirty (30) minutes broadcast time.</p>
	<p>Newspaper</p> <p>Commercial newspapers are requested to allocate twelve column inches of space for each political party to state its policies for the forthcoming elections.</p>

Paid Political Messages

Political parties, contesting groups or candidates who wish additional time and space should pay for all messages or advertisements at current established rates; however media should allow all parties, contesting groups or candidates to pay at the lowest published rate of the current schedule for the particular type of message. For example, media frequently give discounts based on size or length and frequency of advertisements; the rates charged for all political messages should be the lowest discounted rate for that type of advertisement even if the party, contesting group or candidate does not otherwise qualify for the frequency discount. Further, the media should ensure all parties, contesting groups or candidates have equal access to the broadcast times and schedule for broadcast media, and similar equitable access, space and location for print media. One political party, contesting group or candidate should not be allowed to block access by other parties, contesting groups or candidates by purchasing all availabilities of time and space. Equitable and fair treatment of all parties, contesting groups and candidates should be the standard adhered to by all media. While the above addresses equitable treatment concerning broadcast or publication of the messages, the same standard should be applied to any production in preparation for broadcast or publication. All paid political messages or advertisements must be identified clearly that they are a "paid political advertisement."

Responsibility and Correction of Media Errors

The political parties, contesting groups and candidates must accept full responsibility for the content of the materials produced or used. Broadcast or publication errors beyond the control of the medium, i.e., mechanical failure or act of God, should be corrected in accordance with standard broadcast or publication policies or procedures for correction of mistakes. The media may not censor, change or alter in any of the materials presented by the eligible parties, contesting groups or candidates for broadcast or publication.

Questionable Materials

In the event of the media believe a political message not to be in good taste, or contrary to the public interest, security, peace or morality, the political message may be rejected for broadcast or publication. The political party, contesting group or candidate should be notified immediately of the specific reasons for the rejection and be given the opportunity to modify the material to meet broadcast or publication standards. The media representative(s) shall have the final authority to accept or reject any material considered questionable under these Guidelines. The media shall not use this authority to further individual political preferences.

Disclaimers

The media should insert or broadcast a disclaimer daily when any free or paid political messages will be carried or published by their medium. For example: "The political messages or advertisements published in today's newspaper are prepared by the political party, contesting group or candidate without editing or change and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper." One insert anywhere in the newspaper should be sufficient. A similar statement should be made by the broadcast media at least once during the broadcast day and not necessarily immediately preceding or following broadcast of political material. The Role of the Elections Commission in media control: The Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission has had cause to intervene in disputes between one political party and the local radio station management after which an amicable solution was found for the problem. The Chairman, assisted by a three-man expert group will monitor the operation of the media during the pre-nomination and election campaign periods. The media both privately-owned and state-owned are expected to co-operate with the group of experts as part of the effort to ensure that the election campaign is consistent with the movement to strengthen the country's democratic culture.

ELECTIONS PERIOD:

This period is considered to be between the announcement of the date for Elections and Polling Day.

BROADCAST MEDIA

both radio and television This refers to radio and television both facilities which utilise the country's airspace and thus automatically benefit from the country's resources. Therefore whether privately or publicly owned must adhere to the code of conduct in relation to the stipulations governing their operations on the question of political broadcasts.

AIRTIME

Conditionalities set out in this Code of Conduct are dependent on availability of airtime.

FREQUENCY AND DURATION; No political party shall be entitled to more than two political broadcast each day on radio [this does not apply to the repeats of broadcast on Radio Roraima, that were broadcast earlier on the Voice of Guyana.]

THIRD PARTY

A third party might sponsor a political broadcast on behalf of a political party, provided that the benefitting party through an authorised concedes that the said broadcast must be deducted from the ones allocated to that political party. a broadcast based on its allocation to purchase broadcast time.

PAYMENTS AND CREDITS

On the question of payments or credits, this will be dependent on the established policies of the radio station.

COMMERCIAL POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Commercial advertisements should also be allotted on a basis similar to other broadcast time. Payments for commercial political advertisements should be based on a system, allowing for the lowest frequency rate that is usually given to advertisers with large quantity of advertisements. In clearer words the lowest rates should be charged for these advertisements.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations should be placed on political advertisements to each political parties.

SPOT ADVERTISEMENTS; Spot advertisements should be limited to fifteen minutes for each political

political parties daily. In the case of documentaries, there should not be more than six half hour documentaries for each political parties during the elections period.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS; The content of all political broadcasts shall not infringe any of the laws of Guyana, or the regulations of the Broadcasting Company.

All scripts must be submitted to the radio station 48 hours in advance to facilitate broadcast, and these are to be scrutinised by the Company, and the Company has the right to request substantiation of allegations made in the scripts if these allegations appear to infringe any criminal or civil laws.

Should the political party refuse to adhere to advice to have the script changed in doubtful cases, then the management has the right to reject the script.

However, in such cases, an appeal could be made to the Chairman of the Elections Commission via the three-man group of experts.

SCRIPTS; Scripts mean three exact transcripts of the intended broadcast. All copies of scripts must be signed by the party's Secretary, or other authorised officer.

DRAMA; Political parties could submit their scripts that could be dramatised or contain sound effects including music. The Broadcast Company may however reserve the right to ensure that music inputs used do

are not being used at the risk of breaching any copyright laws. The Broadcast Company may demand confirmation that permission was obtained from the companies holding the copyrights.

EFFECTS; All effects used in political broadcasts shall be generated by the Political Party. The radio station shall not provide any such material or effects. Material recorded from the Company's newscasts or other programmes cannot be used in political broadcasts.

Pre-recorded; All political broadcasts shall be pre-recorded and shall be of acceptable broadcast quality.

DURATION; Each fifteen minute broadcast shall not exceed 13 minutes material, allowing the extra time to be allocated for opening and closing announcements and/or credits. The Company has the right to adhere to such timing.

RE-BROADCASTS; In the event of poor quality broadcast because of some technical fault not due to the customer, or in the event of wide-ranging blackouts in significant areas of the listenership, then the radio station shall re-broadcast the paid political advertisement or programme. However, no political broadcasts must be repeated on polling day.

POLLING DAY: THERE SHOULD BE NO POLITICAL BROADCASTS ON POLLING DAY.

PARTY BROADCASTS; The management of the Broadcasting Company shall notify the General Secretary or some other authorised persons of each political party seeking broadcast time of the dates and times of such broadcasts.

LIMITATIONS; The radio station shall not allow more than four political broadcasts daily. This does not apply to the one or two minutes commercial advertisements.

STIPULATIONS/RE-POLITICAL COMMERCIALS; The radio station will not allow any political party more than six political commercials on any of its three radio stations for political party. The broadcast must not be for more than 120 seconds. While the first come first serve basis is applicable in this case, the radio station must not discriminate in its

allocation of peak time advertising to political party, or to act in any way that would appear to cause an imbalance in the distribution of time, thus bringing into illrepute, the question of fairness in broadcast time. Further, the radio station must ensure that it does not appear to discriminate to a point where the question of a free and fair election becomes questionable.

TELEVISION:

Similar conditionalities that apply to the conduct of the radio station during the elections period, would apply to the television stations excepting where it is otherwise specified. **GENERAL RULES;** The entire media must conduct their publications so that the election atmosphere would be geared towards enthusiastic debates without sacrificing the tranquil and cordial spirit in keeping with the way of life of the Guyanese people.

RACISM; Editors are obligated to ensure that their letters to the editor columns avoid the publication of letters that could promote racial disharmony.

INFLAMATORY REMARKS; Editors of radio, television on the print media, must avoid publishing inflammatory remarks which are intended or could cause feelings of ethnic insecurity.

ELECTIONS COMMISSION;The commission sees itself as duty bound to resolutely guard constitutional provisions to help protect the Guyanese people from becoming embroiled over publication of bias and irresponsible material, albeit innocently.

ANNEX XV

Procedure for Verification of Statements of Poll – Statement by Guyana Elections Commission

GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION 1997 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS

Verification of Statements of Poll

(Votes Count)

1: AGREEMENT:

- 1:1 As a result of certain procedural problems which appeared to have emerged after the close of polls on Election Day, December 15, 1997; and more specifically after the counting of ballots in the places of poll, the Chairman of the Elections Commission discussed the matter and reached agreement with representatives of the political parties which contested the 1997 General and Regional Elections, for a verification of the voting results to be undertaken by the Elections Commission and the political parties.
- 1:2 The exercise will commence with verification of the results for Electoral District No. 4 (Demerara/Mahaica), and then proceed to the results of the other nine (9) electoral districts.

2: OBJECTIVE:

- 2:1 To reconcile and verify the votes counted and recorded in the Statements of Poll prepared and submitted by Presiding Officers after the counting of ballots on December 15, 1997; with the votes recorded on the Tally Sheets by the Polling/Counting Agents of the political parties which were contestants in the 1997 General and Regional Elections.

3: PROCEDURE:

- 3:1 The Chief Election Officer will submit Statements of Poll received from the Returning Officers to the Command Centre of the Elections Commission, where the Statements will be checked and sorted sequentially.
- 3:2 Statements of Poll checked and sorted will be submitted to the Chairman of the Elections Commission, or other designated official or member of the Commission who will inform (by voice) the assembled representatives of the political parties, the number and the identity of each of the checked and sorted Statements of Poll submitted to and received by him at each meeting of the verification exercise.
- 3:3 The Chairman or other designated official or member of the Commission will announce (by voice) the number of votes secured by each contesting political party in each polling place where the votes cast by electors for these parties were counted and recorded in the relevant Statements of Poll.

- 3:4 The assembled representatives of the political parties will compare and verify the information on their Tally Sheets.
- 3:5 In cases where there are no discrepancies in the information on the Statements of Poll, the statements will be certified by an appropriate mark placed by the Chairman or other designated official or member of the Commission and sent to the computer unit for the verified information to be entered into the program in which the voting results for each contesting political party are stored for retrieval, as required.
- 3:6 Statements of the verified results will be retrieved from the Computer system and distributed to the representatives of the political parties and other approved sources.
- 3:7 In cases where there are discrepancies in the information on the Statements of Poll and the Tally Sheets, the Statements will be identified by an appropriate mark, placed by the Chairman or other designated official or member of the Commission and set aside for further investigation: if necessary, the relevant Ballot Boxes will be opened by the Chief Election Officer and the Ballots in the Boxes will be counted and recorded by election officials in the presence of representatives of the political parties.
- 3:8 The conclusive count of the Ballots under the preceding section 3:7 will be entered into the voting results program of the Computer system in order to update the results that were stored in the system for retrieval, as necessary.
- 3:9 Representatives of the media (Press, Radio and Television), and the Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB), and members of the International Observer Groups will be invited to attend each verification session.
- 3:10 The tallied information as recorded by the EAB on the voting results will be used as much as possible to reconcile any disputed discrepancy that may arise in the verification exercise.

4: DECLARATION OF ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT:

- 4:1 These procedures were carefully implemented until December 19, 1997, when the Chairman declared that the Presidential candidate of the PPP/C (People's Progressive Party/Civic) list of candidates should be deemed to have been elected as President under the powers vested in him by Article 177 of the Guyana Constitution (1980). The Chairman based his declaration on the number of valid votes received by the PPP/C list of candidates. The Chairman took into account the remaining smaller number of unverified votes.

5: WITHDRAWAL OF THE PNC – PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS – AND DISRUPTION OF THE VERIFICATION PROCESS:

- 5:1 The representatives of the People's National Congress (PNC) withdrew from the verification exercise when the Chairman declared as he did in the preceding section 4. As a result, the verification exercise was disrupted since representatives of the other political parties also withdrew from the exercise in the confusion, which emerged as a consequence of the withdrawal of the representatives of the PNC.

6: RESUMPTION OF THE VERIFICATION EXERCISE:

- 6:1 The PNC returned on December 22, 1997, and the verification process continued as previously planned with the remaining unverified Statements of Poll for Region 4.
- 6:2 On December 23, the Statements of Poll of 310 or approximately forty per cent (40%) of the polling divisions of Region 4 were verified in the process of which certain minor deficiencies were apparent in a very small number of the Statements: these deficiencies were not unacceptable to the PNC and the other participating parties.
- 6:3 However, as the exercise continued on December 23, the main representative of the PNC [Mr Robert Corbin] raised certain contentious issues and in spite of the efforts of the Chairman to address the matter in the interest of all the participating parties, the representatives of the PNC withdrew from the exercise for the second time – the first time being on December 19.

GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION

January 27, 1998