

Chapter 5

Summary of Conclusions

The main conclusions emerging from the body of this Report are as follows:

- These elections were a credit to the people of Namibia and demonstrate that in the short time since this country gained its independence in 1990 the culture of democracy has gathered strength and maturity. The elections compared very well indeed with those in other Commonwealth countries.
- The conditions existed for a free expression of will by the voters and the results reflected the wishes of the people of Namibia. Although there were inevitable difficulties the voters cast their ballots freely and there was no evidence of intimidation or of systematic or widespread abuse of the electoral process.
- The secrecy of the ballot was assured.
- Tribute should be paid to the voters, who often waited for long periods with patience and good humour to participate in a process which they clearly valued and believed important.
- The Electoral Commission and the Directorate of Elections should be commended for their preparations for the elections. The appointment of Regional Co-ordinators by the Directorate was a positive initiative and contributed to the effective delivery of election services. Election officers should be congratulated for their performance during the poll and the count. Their dedication and efficiency were critical to the success of the elections.
- The election procedures were widely understood and this would indicate that the voter education programmes conducted by the Directorate of Elections and the political parties themselves were effective.
- We are satisfied that problems in some areas over the distribution and adequacy of essential electoral material were not such as to affect the integrity of the process as a whole or the validity of the outcome.
- The tendered ballot system and the question of the use of voters' registers posed a considerable challenge to those charged with the administration of these elections. The experience gained in the use of this system and consideration of the efficacy of the use of registers may well feature in any review of these elections and in preparations for the next.
- The security arrangements for polling and counting were more than adequately assured. Experience at these elections should offer a useful guide to the scale of resources required in future.
- All political parties had equal access to the public broadcasting system, the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, which went to considerable lengths to ensure that its coverage of the elections was balanced and fair. Similarly, the print media were and are sufficiently diverse and free to permit the expression of a wide spectrum of political views.
- We recognise the importance of the debate concerning the funding of political parties and access to state resources and hope that this debate can be resolved in a manner acceptable to all parties.

- The political parties conducted themselves responsibly and thereby contributed to the success of the elections. Their candidates and agents displayed commendable vigilance in monitoring the voting and counting. The regular meetings of political parties with the Directorate of Elections promoted dialogue and helped to foster a constructive atmosphere. The concept is worthy of emulation elsewhere.
- The presence of international observers, including a Commonwealth Observer Group, was welcomed by all political parties as a means of affirming the credibility and integrity of the electoral process, thereby enhancing the prospect that all political parties could accept the result.