

CHAPTER 5

Summary of Conclusions

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

- Notwithstanding the administrative problems on the day, the outcome of the election reflects a free expression of the will of the people of Lesotho.
- The success of the election owed a great deal to the patience, dignity and determination of the people of Lesotho.
- The work of the Chief Electoral Officer, her predecessor and their staff, and electoral officials in the field was critical to the credibility and integrity of the entire electoral process. It helped to enhance confidence in the electoral system.
- The voters' list was largely satisfactory, and acceptable to the political parties for the purpose of the election. The decision of the Chief Electoral Officer to introduce flexibility in the process of voter identification allowed a number of citizens who would not otherwise have voted to cast their ballots on the day.
- The high turnout and the small number of rejected ballots were notable indices of the success of the voter education programmes conducted by the Chief Electoral Officer and her staff, the political parties, traditional leaders and electoral officials on the day. The joint decision of the Governments of Lesotho and South Africa to open the border gates round the clock enabled returning miners and other migrant workers to participate in the poll.
- There was a free and open campaign with no undue restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly. All political parties had access to the state-owned media and were able to put their messages across to the electorate.
- The political parties, public officials, traditional leaders and the churches all played an important role in creating the peaceful environment that helped ensure a free and fair poll.
- The Chairman of the Military Council and his colleagues are to be commended for their commitment to the process of returning the country to civilian rule. From its discussions with the Chairman of the

Military Council, the Commonwealth Observer Group was confident of the determination of the Military Government to see the process through.

- The voters cast their ballots freely and their votes were counted fairly.
- There was no evidence of voter fraud, deliberate disenfranchisement or intimidation.
- Candidates and their agents displayed commendable vigilance in monitoring the voting and counting at the polling stations. A spirit of cordiality and understanding prevailed among the agents of all parties.
- Given the long history of political turbulence in Lesotho, there is a need for all leaders in Lesotho to engender public confidence in their commitment to multi-party democracy.
- The Commonwealth presence was greatly appreciated and was seen as a significant contribution to a peaceful and credible election and has enhanced the prospects for a successful transition.
- All parties wish to retain the Commonwealth association and want the Commonwealth to remain ready to assist Lesotho to develop its democratic institutions.