

# Conclusions

Based on our extensive pre-election discussions with a wide cross-section of Malawians as well as our observation around the country both of the campaign and of the voting and counting process, our conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- For the people of Malawi, 17 May 1994 marked an exuberant national celebration of their new-found right to make choices within a framework of multi-party democracy. The high turnout recorded and the patience and enthusiasm displayed by voters reflect a firm commitment to a multi-party system of politics which has already taken root;
- The Malawian people were able to exercise their will in an open and transparent manner;
- The results of the elections reflected the expressed wishes of the people of Malawi;
- Notwithstanding deficiencies in the civic education exercise and instances of incorrect voting procedures being followed, the electorate demonstrated a clear awareness of their democratic duties and knowledge of voting procedures;
- The Electoral Commission and all electoral officials generally displayed professionalism, dedication and commitment to their task, as well as honesty and transparency, all of which substantially enhanced the conduct of the poll;
- Voting took place in an atmosphere marked by orderliness and good humour among voters and party monitors, mirroring, by and large, the spirit of the campaign;
- There was no evidence of any organised irregularities on polling day; nor were there any complaints of voter intimidation, fraud or deliberate disenfranchisement;
- There were obvious difficulties in the process of consolidation of results following the poll. This was the result of a mix of factors, including exhaustion of counting officials after a laborious counting process and difficulties of transport between Polling Centres and District Commissioners' offices.

We were impressed by the dignity with which the incumbent President, His Excellency Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, accepted the verdict of the people and conceded to the winning candidate, Mr Bakili Muluzi.

We congratulate the people of Malawi for the admirable manner in which they have espoused pluralism in their political system. It has been a pleasure and honour for us to share with them this momentous experience. We wish them well. We hope that they will continue to look to the future with a sense of vision and a resolve for national reconciliation. We trust that the historic achievements of the past twelve months will be successfully consolidated.