

CDWS Observer Mission's -Preliminary statement

Preliminary Statement of the CDWS Electoral Observation Mission to the 8th and 10th August 2012, Parliamentary By - Election.

1. Introduction:

In response to the invitation of The Electoral Commission of Seychelles , the. CDWS dispatched an Electoral Observer Mission to observe the Parliamentary by-Elections for the Anse-Aux-Pins district, conducted respectively on Wednesday 8th 2012 on the outlying Islands and at Anse-Aux-Pins , Friday 10th August 2012.

- 2. The CDWS Electoral Observer Mission led by Michael Padayachy , composed of 11 members proposed by the CDWS Executive Committee and accredited by the Electoral commission.**
- 3. The purpose of the mission was to undertake an objective , independent and impartial observation guided by good democratic practices . By doing so and achieving its objectives, CDWS is contributing to the promotion and strengthening of democracy and the rule of law in our country.**

II- Pre –electoral process

Pre-electoral period

The CDWS mission observed the significant preparations made by the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders. On the whole, this produced a clean and inclusive process. The mission would particularly like to emphasize efforts to provide voters with timely information through its website, and various media and this was updated in the days before the election.

The CDWS mission was pleased to observe the presence of an independent candidate, in the political process: Nonetheless, we noted with concern the interpretation of the Electoral Act: Chapter 68(A) which denied the same amount of airtime on SBC as the opposing candidates standing on

political party platforms –through our observations and judgment this was unfair.

During the pre-electoral period, the mission heard concerns with regards to the voters list, with alleged irregularities in the registration process. The campaign period was also characterized by a perception of limited differentiation between the state and the governing party in terms of resources. The issue of campaign finance and other concerns surrounding the campaign process will be addressed in our final report.

We also noted that during the cooling off period some malpractices concerning financial transactions were reported, but evidence of such anti – democratic practices is not easy to collect.

III- Election days

The CDWS observer mission teams visited a total of 7 polling stations on the islands and were deployed at the Anse –Aux Pins Poling station . The preliminary assessment of the conduct of the voting is summarized as follows:

- a- All polling stations opened precisely at times specified by the Electoral Commission**
- b- the electoral environment of the voting was generally peaceful**
- c- the electorate exercised their rights in a very peaceful atmosphere**
- d- no acts of violence or tension were reported in the polling stations and their immediate vicinity**
- e- attempts of campaign by political party activists were observed or reported on the main election day**
- f- the voting process proceeded in accordance with the laid down procedures which included the verification of the voters name in the register , the issuance of ballot papers , the marking with indelible ink etc.**
- g- the presence of agents of the political parties and candidates in all polling stations**

h- there were concerns about the layout of the polling station and the polling booth guaranteeing the secrecy of votes

i- the counting and tallying of the vote was open and transparent

j- the presence of security personnel , mainly police forces at all polling stations and their vicinity

General Observations

1) The pre- election and election processes were generally peaceful and held in accordance with the Constitution and the electoral laws.

2) The campaign was on the whole conducted peacefully , in spite of some minor incidences.

3) Civic and voters education was carried out quite satisfactorily.

4) We have no information of the funding of the whole process.

At this point in time no incident has been reported related to post election

Recommendations

Based on the observations and findings made by various teams of the electoral observation mission during the election period, CDWS would like to make the following recommendations:

- Maintain and improve the training of electoral officials in order to enhance their performance;**
- Maintain the civic and electoral education aiming at increasing the voters education and to promote greater participation of the electorate;**
- Efforts should be made by the Election Management Body and all electoral stakeholders to promote and provide equal opportunities for all candidates contesting elections.**
- All election stakeholders should be discouraged from engaging in voter buying as this is contrary to democratic principles.**

Conclusion

In view of the aforementioned and notwithstanding the shortcomings inherent to any electoral process –the CDWS Observer Mission notes that the Anse Aux Pins Parliamentary By election was conducted in accordance with the legal and constitutional framework of the country.

CDWS also wishes to commend the Electoral Commission, the security forces, media and all stakeholders involved in the electoral process for the peaceful election conduct.

To conclude , CDWS is of the view that the Anse Aux Pins parliamentary by election was free , credible and peaceful .

Democracy is a process not a product. CDWS strongly believes that the current electoral reform conducted by the electoral forum once approved will constitute a fundamental milestone in the advancement of our young democracy.

THE FINAL REPORT MORE COMPREHENSIVE CAPTURING ALL THE PERTINENT DETAILS OF THE WHOLE PROCESS IS TO BE PRODUCED IN TWO WEEKS –

It will be submitted to the Electoral Commission for dissemination to the different stakeholders and will also be made available on the CDWS website .

We thank you for your attention .