

ANNEX VI

Observation Notes and Check Lists

COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP
Solomon Islands General Election
5 April 2006

**OBSERVATION NOTES FOR POLL, COUNT
AND RESULTS PROCESS**

PART A

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

THE CAMPAIGN

1. Balance of TV/radio election coverage and extent and nature of access by party and other candidates.
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 candidates, 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 Electoral 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, breakdown of candidates by gender.
8. Access to funds and sources of funds
9. Evidence of the abuse of the advantages of incumbency (use of public resources, civil servants etc for party purposes)
10. Election violence/malpractices (corruption etc): potential and actual
11. What are candidates saying about gender/womens' issues?

THE POLL

1. The location of polling stations
2. Distances travelled by voters to polling booths, particularly in rural areas.
3. The procedure followed at the opening of the poll, including voter identification.
4. The length of time voters wait to cast their votes: especially the old, and pregnant and breast-feeding women.
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, stamp pads etc and, in rural areas especially, lighting facilities
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 domestic observers to polling stations
13. Whether illiterate voters are assured of a vote in secret
14. Whether voters with disabilities are assured of a vote in secret
15. Whether the ballot boxes are properly sealed at the start and end of the voting, and their security ensured.

THE COUNT

1. Inspection of seals
2. The process of reconciling the number of people who voted with the number of ballots in the boxes
3. The determination of invalid ballots

4. The facilities for party agents and their representatives to witness and verify the count and overall transparency: do they sign the results, are they given a copy?
5. Access by domestic and international observers: are they given a copy?
6. The conduct of election officers: do they follow procedures, do they display the results at the station?
7. Transport arrangements for the boxes, documentation and other material?

PART B

Questions that may be put and which you may ask yourself:

1. Was the Voters' Register compiled in a satisfactory way? Were people missed out? Were the names of dead people or "phantom voters" included? Did these "phantom voters vote"?
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? Is there potential for violence/manipulation/intimidation?

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 the parties/candidates represented at polling stations? Are they satisfied with the process?
3. Are the 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?
5. Does the turnout indicate that women have been deterred from attending to vote?
6. How long are voters waiting to vote? If a long time, are some being put off?
7. Will all parties be represented at the polling stations throughout voting and the count? Are agents adequately trained and vigilant?
8. Will domestic and international observers have free access to all stages of the process?
9. Is the security effective/oppressive?
10. Were the proper procedures followed at the end of the day?

THE COUNT

1. Are the boxes kept safe until opened? Are all parties present when they are opened?
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 procedures of the count?
4. Are the proper procedures followed for declaring votes as invalid?
5. Are the sealing, transport and security arrangements in order?
6. Is the result of the count posted on the wall of the polling station?
7. Is the result transmitted to the Returning Officer accurately?

THE COLLATION OF THE POLLING STATION RESULTS AT DISTRICT LEVEL

1. Do the Statements of Result (and the boxes?) arrive at the District level in good order?
2. Are party agents and observers present and are they able to do their job?
3. Are the procedures followed as set out in the law and regulations and are they appropriate? In particular, do the figures as shown in the Statements of Result as taken to the next level tally with those given at the polling station?
4. What determinations does the official in charge make and do they have a bearing on the overall constituency result? How long does the process take?

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SOLOMON ISLANDS GENERAL ELECTION 2006**

Checklist For Polling Station Visits

Team Member(s):

Constituency:

Polling Station:

Time of Arrival:

Time of Departure:

Voters in Queue: Rate of Processing:

-
- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--|----------------|
| 1. | Opening of Poll | On time? Procedures followed? materials? No/Yes No/Yes Details: | All No/Yes? |
| 2. | Those Present | Candidates' agents? Domestic observers? Others? | |
| 3. | Register | State of the register? Are voters on it? Are parties complaining? Details: | |
| 4. | Layout and Facilities | Good? Adequate? Poor? | |
| 5. | Polling Staff | Efficient? Satisfactory? Poor? | |
| 6. | Security Presence | Discreet? Intrusive? Oppressive? | |

7. **Complaints by Agents** Which are they?
Any complaints? No/Yes Details:
8. **Complaints by Voters** No/Yes Details:
9. **Presence of unauthorised persons** No/Yes Details:
10. **Atmosphere at Station?** Orderly? Tense? Chaotic?
11. **Secrecy of Ballot** Assured? Poor? Uncertain
12. **Voting**
- (a) Personation attempts alleged: No/Yes
Details:
- (b) Multiple voting attempts alleged: No/Yes
Details:
- (c) Women deterred from voting: No/Yes
Details:
- (d) Is the voting procedure being followed? No/Yes
- (e) What procedures are being followed re illiterate and incapacitated voters?
13. **Limit – is there one, is it being observed** No/Yes
14. **Closing of Poll** On time? Numbers still in queue?
Seals applied?
Procedure followed? No/Yes
15. **Agents/Observers – are the agents/domestic observers satisfied with closure and sealing arrangements** No/Yes

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THE COUNTING OF VOTES

Please refer as necessary to the legislation and instructions issued by the Electoral Commission and check against the procedures used.

1. **The Count**
- | | |
|--|--------|
| Time count started? | |
| Opening of ballot boxes/ breaking of seals/ counting of votes: are procedures observed? | Yes/No |
| Detail: | |
| Are police present? | Yes/No |
| Who else is present? | |
| Invalid votes: how dealt with? | |
| Indicate any inappropriate behaviour: | |
2. **Party Agents**
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Are party agents present? | Yes /No |
| Which parties? | |
- Others: please state
- Are there any major challenges to the Presiding Officer's rulings?

Do the party agents have any complaints or comments?

Name of agent:

Party:

Substance of complaint

3. Statement of Result

Is a copy of this given to all Party Agents?

Have the relevant certificates/forms been completed?

Do they all sign?

Any fabrication alleged at this point?

Do any of the agents object? If so why?

4. Transport Arrangements

What happens to the ballot papers at the end of the count?

Was any transportation process observed?

5. Transmission of results centre?

(a) are the results displayed at the counting

6. Fairness overall

Good? Acceptable? Questionable?

7. Adherence to the rules, speed, accuracy and transparency

Is the procedure in line with that stipulated by Electoral Commission? If not please explain:

Are the officials efficient and well-trained?

How long does the count take?

Does it seem to be accurate?

Is it transparent?

Other Comments