

# **Report of the International Accompaniment Mission to the 2018 Presidential and Legislative Councils Election**

## **Introduction**

Article 25 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes that every citizen shall have the right to vote in genuine and periodic elections, which shall be conducted by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot, as a guarantee of the free expression of his/her will as an elector.

Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela echo the principles of the aforementioned Covenant.

In our capacity as international accompaniers to the Presidential and State Legislative Council elections process, we certify compliance with the voting assurances system.

### **1. Recognition of the Call**

On January 23, 2018, the National Constituent Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela decreed that the presidential elections should be held before April 30, 2018.

Once the Agreement on Voting Assurances had been signed, the Government and the Opposition proposed "*that the elections for President of the Republic and for State Legislative Councils be held simultaneously in the second half of May 2018*". May 20 was finally the date set for the elections.

### **2. Automatic Voting System Tests**

The voter's identity is verified via an electronic match of the voter's fingerprint with his/her national identification document number.

To vote, upon verification of his/her identity, the voter touches the image of the candidate of his/her choice as it appears on the ballot display. The voting machine generates a printout of the electronic vote. The voter deposits the paper ballot in a

ballot box that will be later used in the tally audit to verify the correctness of the electronic result. The voter then signs the voters list for that voting table, which is an additional physical proof of participation.

Batteries were appropriately connected to all the voting machines to ensure that voting modules could continue to operate in case of a power outage. This was certified by the accompaniers during visits to the polling stations.

Backup voting machines were also in place to guarantee that the process would not be interrupted in the event of an incident due to malfunction or breakdown. Technical experts from the National Electoral Council (CNE) were present in each and every one of the polling stations that we visited.

The secrecy of the vote was guaranteed throughout the process.

### **3. The Voting Assurances System**

During our visit to the National Production and Logistics Center of the National Electoral Council, we were briefed on the process whereby the automatic voting systems are assembled, tested, maintained, packaged and subsequently distributed by the Plan República, and we could attest to the veracity and rigor of voting assurances.

### **4. Audits to the Voting System**

Since the beginning of the electoral process, a total of 19 audits have been conducted, including: voter registration audits, voting logbook audits, machine software audits, audits of voter data in voting machines, telecommunications audits, pre-dispatch audits, audits of the system for the election of members of subordinate bodies (Electoral Boards and Polling Stations).

Our assessment of the results audit that is conducted after scrutinization, which compares 54 percent of the electronic vote cast with the paper ballots, is favorable.

### **5. Training of Polling Station Members at Polling Stations.**

Specific mention should be made of the comprehensive training of the members of the polling stations that we visited in the different voting centers, who diligently

answered requests for assistance and registered assisted voters pursuant to law. We can attest to the fact that persons with reduced mobility were accompanied to exercise their right to vote. We, the international companions, appreciate the continued efforts made to improve conditions that guarantee universal accessibility to polling stations.

The secrecy of the vote was not compromised at any time.

## **6. Voter Behavior**

Voting on Election Day was orderly and efficient and without incidents having been detected by international observers.

The calm and civility with which the voters acted, as observed throughout the day, is worth noting.

Tents set up in support of political parties, known as “Red Points”, were located within no less than 200 meters from the polling stations we visited, as stipulated in the Agreement on Voting Assurances subscribed by the Government and the Opposition.

## **7. The Work of the CNE**

The National Electoral Council, as the body governing the Electoral Power, is charged with organizing the electoral process.

In light of the foregoing remarks and observations, we the international companions consider that the technical and professional trustworthiness and independence of the National Electoral Council of Venezuela are uncontestable.