

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF CARIBBEAN OBSERVER MISSION TO THE
PRESIDENTIAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS ELECTIONS OF
THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA HELD ON MAY 20TH,
2018

At the invitation of the National Electoral Council of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, four Caribbean Countries organized a high level Caribbean Mission to observe the Presidential and State Legislative Councils Elections on May 20th. The Mission was headed by Ambassador Ellsworth I. John, Ambassador to Cuba of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and included Ambassador Anthony Liverpool, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda; Ambassador Felix Gregoire, Ambassador of Dominica to CARICOM; and Senator Chester Humphrey, Trade Unionist and President of the Senate in Grenada.

The objective of the Mission was to evaluate the arrangements put in place for the conduct of the elections by the National Electoral Council and to observe the vote on election day by the persons registered to vote in these elections. There were 20,526,978 person registered to vote in the Presidential elections and 18,919,364 registered to vote in the State Legislative Council.

The members of the Mission arrived in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on May 17th, 2018 and attended meetings with the National Electoral Council, the President of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Board of Directors of the Court, President Maduro and representatives of the four Presidential candidates. The four Presidential candidates were Nicolas Maduro, Henri Falcon, Reinaldo Quijada and Javier Bertuchi representing 16 political parties.

The National Electoral Council, which has responsibility for “guaranteeing an efficient organization of the election and for ensuring the transparency, clarity, fairness and credibility of the processes and their results,” organized for all of the international observers to witness a demonstration of the voting process and the preparation of the voting machines.

The following was noted:-

1. The verification of the identity of the voter by electronically matching the fingerprint of the voter with his/her national identification number.
2. Once verified, the voter voted by touching the picture of the candidate of their choice.
3. The machine generated a printout with the picture and party of the candidate. The voter placed the printout into a box which can then be used manually to verify the correctness of the electronic result.
4. The voter then signed a list for voters at that voting station which resulted in a manual list of the number of persons who voted.
5. The secrecy of the vote was preserved.
6. Batteries were attached to all of the voting machines to ensure the vote can continue if there was an electricity failure
7. Assurances were also given that there were backup voting machines if there was a malfunction. This was reassuring as it was observed that one of the voting equipment was out of service for approximately 45 minutes

The voting on election day went orderly and efficiently without incident. The team observed the opening of the poll, the vote of Candidate Maduro and his wife and noted the steady flow of voters throughout the day in approximately forty polling booths visited. The National Electoral Council reported that 8,603,936 or 46.01

percent of the persons that were eligible to vote exercised their civil right to vote. This turn out of voters demonstrated that despite the decision by some of the political parties not to participate in the elections, the citizens viewed the elections as important and confirmed its legitimacy.

The result of the Presidential elections was as follow:-

Nicolas Maduro	5,823,728 votes
Henry Falcón	1,820,552
Javier Bertucci	925,042
Reinaldo Quijada	34,614

List of recommendations based on observations at the polling stations:-

1. The introduction of a distinctive dress or uniform for those officials responsible for the conduct of the poll in the polling stations to distinguish them from voters, observers and the media.
2. All campaigning should end before election day. At one polling station, persons were observed chanting.
3. The voters registered list need to be placed in locations where they are protected from the elements
4. The font on the list of registered voters need to be improved.

In conclusion, the mission was satisfied that the elections were conducted efficiently in a fair and transparent manner. All of the registered voters who wanted to exercise their right to vote participated in a peaceful and accommodating environment. Based on the process observed, the mission is satisfied that the results of the

elections reflect the will of the majority of the voters in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.