



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

GENERAL ELECTIONS, 6 DECEMBER 2019

At the invitation of the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), His Excellency Irwin LaRocque mounted a CARICOM Election Observation Mission (CEOM) to observe the conduct of the General Elections which was held in the Commonwealth of Dominica on 6 December 2019.

The Advance Team comprising the Chief of Mission and the CARICOM Secretariat's support staff arrived in Dominica on 2 December 2019, while the remaining members of the CEOM arrived on 4 December 2019. Due to challenges experienced with flights, the initial 11-member Mission was reduced to nine persons.

Meetings were held with the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Dominica and Members of the Cabinet; the Honourable Lennox Linton, Parliamentary Opposition Leader; Mr. Kent Vital, Leader of the Dominica Freedom Party (DFP); Mr. Levi Peter, Attorney-General; Honourable Alix Boyd-Knights; Speaker of the House of Assembly; Mr. Daniel Carbon, Commissioner of Police; Mr. Oswald Walsh, Registrar General; Mr. Ian Anthony, Chief Elections Officer and Commissioners of the Election Commission; Ms. Valda Powell, Head of Immigration; Mr. Loftus Durand, President of the Concerned Citizens Movement; Mr. Anthony LeBlanc, President of the Electoral Reform Effort; and representatives of the Dominica Public Service Union; the Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce; the Waterfront and Allied Workers Union; the Bureau of Gender Affairs; the Dominica Employers Federation; the National Youth Council and the Dominica Christian Council.

On polling day, the nine-member CEOM visited a total of 215 polling stations across 20 of the 21 constituencies. The Mission did not monitor one constituency - the Westly constituency.

The CEOM monitored the polling activities in all other constituencies, which included the opening of the poll, the voting process, the closing of the poll and the preliminary count of ballots.

From observations, the polls were opened in a timely manner in the majority of the polling districts. All the stations were fully staffed and most had at least two Agents present, representing the two political parties that contested the general election. Most polling stations were conveniently located and easily accessible to the voters which included the disabled. The

Mission observed that there was an adequate supply of the required voting material which arrived promptly to facilitate the opening of the polls.

It is, however, the Pre-Election Day activities which caused some amount of concern to the election process. The level of disruption and violence as acknowledged by the general populace, escalated just days prior to the general election. Roads were blocked which limited access to movement of persons. However, by Election Day, the blockage to areas was discontinued and persons were able to move freely to conduct business and to access the polling stations to cast their vote.

Adequate security was in place at all locations visited, with officials conducting their duties in a professional and efficient manner. This contributed to the level of calm which accompanied the day's activities. The poll workers were focused as they steadily carried out the required procedures, thereby ensuring that all eligible electors who turned out to vote were able to do so.

The initial assessment of Election Day activities by the CEOM is that the voters were able to cast their ballots without intimidation or fear, and that the results of the 6 December 2019 General Elections reflect the will of the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

The Mission extends its appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its assistance and congratulates the staff of the Electoral Commission; poll workers; the political parties and their candidates; the security forces and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica on the level of maturity displayed in the peaceful execution of the election day activities.

A full Independent Report will be prepared by the Chief of the CEOM for submission to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), His Excellency Irwin LaRocque.

The CARICOM Election Observation Mission wishes to thank all stakeholders, including the Leaders of the Political Parties, Civil Society, the Media and the People of the Commonwealth of Dominica for their warm welcome and cooperation which contributed to the success of the Mission.

JOSEPHINE TAMAI

CHIEF OF MISSION

CARICOM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

ROSEAU, DOMINICA

7 DECEMBER 2019