

Acknowledgements

We wish to place on record our sincere appreciation to the many organisations and individuals who assisted us during our stay in Solomon Islands. We wish to thank in particular the Electoral Commission for its co-operation and assistance. We also want to express our appreciation for the co-operation of Commonwealth High Commissioners, the European Union, the political parties, the media, Church leaders, the non-governmental organisations and others whose briefings greatly assisted us in our work.

We highly valued the co-operation and close working relationship with our colleagues in the Pacific Islands Forum Observer team, and other international observers.

We were grateful for the assistance of our interpreters and drivers, and thank all those we met for the warm welcome and support which we received. We take this opportunity to wish the people of Solomon Islands well for the future.

Finally, we thank the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Don McKinnon, for giving us the opportunity to serve the Commonwealth in this way. We also wish to place on record our appreciation for the help and support from the cheerfully dedicated and professional staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat without whom we could not have fulfilled our mandate.

ANNEX I

Composition of the Commonwealth Observer Group

Mr Bowen Wells (United Kingdom – Chairperson)

Mr Bowen Wells is at present an international development specialist and is on the UK and International Board of CARE, as well as a member of the Board of the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). He was a Member of Parliament for 22 years (1979-2001) and held ministerial office becoming Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury. During his parliamentary career he was a long-standing member of the Foreign Affairs and European Legislation Select Committee and became the founding Chairman of the International Development Committee (1997-2001). At present Mr Wells is working on projects for African agriculture, constitutional change and holding workshops in Botswana, Malawi and South Africa on strengthening Parliaments.

Ambassador Lucy Bogari (Papua New Guinea)

Ms Lucy Bogari is a senior Foreign Service Officer in the Papua New Guinea Foreign Service for over 20 years. She has served both at home and at missions in Asia, Europe and the Pacific. Until recently, Ms Bogari was Head of Economic and Development Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has led many high-level delegations on behalf of her Government in negotiations with foreign donors and economic partners of Papua New Guinea. Ms Bogari is currently Papua New Guinea's High Commissioner to New Zealand.

Hon Peter C Fonso, MP (Cameroon)

Mr Peter Fonso is a Member of Parliament in Cameroon. He is also the Electoral District Secretary for the leading Opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), and has occupied this position for the past 10 years. He is very involved in politics and the democratic process in Cameroon. He was a member of the Counting Commission during the presidential election of 1992 and the Councils Supervisory Commission of 1996. Mr Fonso did his tertiary education in the United Kingdom. From 1968 to 1983 he served as a senior education officer and as a former diplomat for Cameroon in the UK. At present he is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cameroon National Assembly.

Mr Hendrick Gappy (Seychelles)

Mr Hendrick Gappy is the Electoral Commissioner and the Registrar of Political Parties. He is responsible for the registration process and the delimitation of election boundaries. He has overseen six national elections and in 2001 organised the presidential election. Mr Gappy holds the post of Census Commissioner and was formerly the Director-General responsible for the National Statistics and National Information System. During the 1994

South African elections, Mr Gappy held the post of Commonwealth technical adviser. He has been involved in several election observer missions including to the 1999 Mozambican elections where he was a Southern African Development Community (SADC) observer. Mr Gappy is a member of the Executive Committee of the SADC Electoral Forum.

Secretariat Support Staff

Mrs Judith Pestaina

Team Leader

Mr Albert Mariner

Assistant to Observers

Ms Charlene Lee Ling

Administrative Assistant

Arrival Statement, 28 November 2001



Commonwealth Observer Group

Solomon Islands General Election, 5 December 2001

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Honiara
Solomon Islands

**ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY MR BOWEN WELLS
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

We are pleased to be here in Solomon Islands. We have come in response to a request from the Government of Solomon Islands through the Electoral Commission to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, H.E. the Rt. Honourable Don McKinnon, for the Commonwealth to observe your National Parliament Elections on 5 December 2001.

As Chairman of this Commonwealth Observer Group, I feel it is important that I explain to the people of Solomon Islands the purpose of our visit here and the way we intend to go about our work.

The Group's objective is to observe the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Solomon Islands. We will abide by your laws. And, above all, we will respect your people. We hope to meet as many of you as possible. We will consult widely and take every opportunity to see the process for ourselves.

We have no executive role and will not interfere in the process. At every stage we will act with neutrality, impartiality, objectivity and independence. Each of us participates in our individual capacities. We represent the whole Commonwealth rather than the countries from which we have come. We are independent of our governments, and most certainly independent of any political influence in this country.

Our concern is purely with the electoral process. Our mandate is to:

- consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole;
- determine in our own judgement whether the conditions exist for a free expression of will by the electors; and
- determine if the results of the elections reflect the wishes of the people.

In order to make such a judgement, we will aim to arrive at a broad overview of the process. We will not be able to be present at every polling station or counting centre, but we hope that we will be able to take a representative sample. We hope to work in close co-operation with the other international observers.

We met earlier this morning with the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Mr Paul Tovua and his colleagues at the Electoral Commission. We will also be meeting with political parties, non-governmental parties and others. After we have witnessed the immediate pre-election period, the campaigning and the media, we will observe the polling itself and the count. To this end, on Sunday 2 December, we will deploy around the country to observe the election on the ground. We will return here after polling to consider and write our report, before we depart.

We will subsequently submit our report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will in turn forward it to the Government of Solomon Islands, the Electoral Commission, the leadership of all the political parties taking part in the election and then to all Commonwealth governments. The report will be made publicly available, here and throughout the Commonwealth.

28 November 2001

ANNEX III

Schedule of Engagements

Tuesday, 27 November

1830 Meeting with Commonwealth High Commissioners (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, United Kingdom)

Wednesday, 28 November

0800 Briefing by Advance Observer: Ambassador Lucy Bogari
0900 Electoral Commission: Mr Paul Tovua (Chairman), Mr John Babalu (Chief Electoral Officer), Mr Ranjit Hewagama (Solicitor-General, Legal Adviser), Mr James Remobatu (Commissioner)
1100 Press Conference
1330 People's Progressive Party: Mr Michael Maina
1430 Labour Party: Mr Tony Kangovai, General Secretary
1530 Solomon Islands Alliance for Change: Mr Bartholomew Ulufa'alu (Liberal Party) and Mr Francis Billy Hilly (National Party)
1615 Independent Members of Parliament Movement: Mr Thomas Koh Chan

Thursday, 29 November

0900 People's Alliance Party: Sir George Lepping (National President), Sir David Kausimae (Vice-President), Dr John M Fugui (Political Adviser), Mr Edward Kingmele (General Secretary)
1000 Media Organisations: Mr Johnson Honimae (Director, Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation), Mr George Atkins (Publisher, *Solomon Express*), Ms Mary Louise O'Callaghan (Pacific Correspondent for *The Australian*), Ms June Mani (Paoa FM), Mr Imo Taasi (*Solomon Star*), Ms Dorothy Wickham (freelance)
1100 Peace Monitoring Council: Sir Peter Kenilorea
1330 International Peace Monitoring Team: Ms Kate Steains (Leader) and Mr Peter Noble (Deputy Leader)
1430 Co-ordinators of Logistics for International Observers: Mr Graham Elson and Ms Stephanie Chetwynd
1530 Women's Organisations: Ms Ethel Sigimanu (Head of Women's Development, Ministry of Youth), Ms Josephine Teakeni (Solomon Islands Women & Communication Network), Ms Apollonia Tabo (National Council of Women of Guadalcanal), Ms Naelyn John (Dorcas Women's Organisation, affiliated with the Seventh Day Adventist Church), Ms Ruth Liloqula (employed with the Ministry of Police and Justice and Legal Services), Solomon Islands Family Support Centre, Mothers' Union (affiliated with the Anglican Church)

Friday, 30 November

- 0900 Mr Tom Leemans, European Union
1100 Courtesy call on the Governor-General
1400 Briefing by representatives of Churches: Archbishop Adrian Smith (Catholic Church – Peace Process Committee), Archbishop Sir Ellison Pogo (Church of Melanesia, Anglican), Father Norman Arkwright (Solomon Islands Christian Association, SICA), Mr Bob Pollard (SICA), Mr Philip Funifaka (SICA)
1600 Visit to Electoral Commission

Saturday, 1 December

- 1000 Deployment Briefing
1400 Logistics Briefing and Accreditation of all international observers – Mr Graham Elson and Electoral Commissioner

Monday, 3 December

- 0630 Deployment

ANNEX IV

Deployment of Commonwealth Observers

Team	Base Location
Mr Bowen Wells Mrs Judith Pestaina	Central Honiara
Mr Peter Fonso Mr Albert Mariner	West Honiara
Mr Hendrick Gappy *Mr John Corrie, MEP	Manikaraku, Guadalcanal
Ambassador Lucy Bogari 'Mr Richard Pebble	Malu'u, Malaita
Ms Charlene Lee Ling 'Mr Ken Averde	Shortlands, Western Province

**Leader of the European Union Observation Team*

'Member of the International Group of Observers

Interim Statement, 5 December 2001



Commonwealth Observer Group

Solomon Islands General Election, 5 December 2001

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INTERIM STATEMENT BY MR BOWEN WELLS, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP

The Commonwealth Observer Group arrived in the Solomon Islands on 27 November 2001. The Group consists of 4 experienced Commonwealth persons and three support staff.

The mandate of the Commonwealth Observer Group is to observe relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the National Elections in accordance with the laws of the Solomon Islands and to determine whether the conditions existed for a free expression of will by the electors.

The Group began its work with a briefing by the Electoral Commission, political parties, women's groups, church groups, the media and other groups.

In spite of the transport difficulties in the Solomon Islands, we were able to go to 5 provinces during the final stages of the campaign. On polling day, we visited 52 polling stations in Honiara as well as polling stations in Western Province, Malaita, North West and South East Guadalcanal where we were able to witness the opening and close of polls. We will also be present at the count in the areas to which we were deployed.

Up to the close of poll and in the areas where we observed the count, we were impressed with the open, transparent and professional manner in which the election officers conducted the poll. The polling stations opened and closed at the appointed times and we were struck by the orderliness and patience of electors and the role played by the security forces which contributed to the smooth conduct of the polls.

The picture that emerged as the polls closed was of an election day, which was peaceful. The Electoral Commission and their polling station officials should be commended for helping to ensure the success of polling day. In all the stations visited by us, representatives of candidates expressed their satisfaction with the conduct of the poll.

Whilst we received no complaints from voters about the voting process, we were however concerned that in a number of places voters were unable to vote due to inaccuracies in the compilation of the electoral register. The turnout of voters in Honiara was disappointingly small but this may be accounted for by the large number who have left Honiara to vote in Malaita and other islands. We will be issuing a

Departure Statement before leaving the Solomon Islands and make a more thorough assessment of what we have observed after the count when we will have consulted our colleagues in Malaita, Western Province and South Guadalcanal. We will send our final report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

**Honiara
5 December 2001**

Departure Statement, 9 December 2001



Commonwealth Observer Group

Solomon Islands General Election, 5 December 2001

News Release

**DEPARTURE STATEMENT BY MR BOWEN WELLS
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

We have now completed our observation of the 2001 National Parliamentary Election in Solomon Islands.

We would like to express our gratitude for the warm welcome and support extended to us by the people of Solomon Islands, the political parties, members of the Press and the Electoral Commission and many other people involved in Solomon Islands life.

In our Interim Statement, I commented positively on the conduct of the elections. In some constituencies, it is clear that the results are unreliable but overall the outcome of the elections has succeeded in expressing the will of the people. In our report, we have made recommendations and suggestions as to how the electoral process could be improved. These are made with the hope of ensuring that the Electoral Commission is able to continue its work with the continued help of the Commonwealth and donors, thus enabling it to strengthen the democratic process in Solomon Islands.

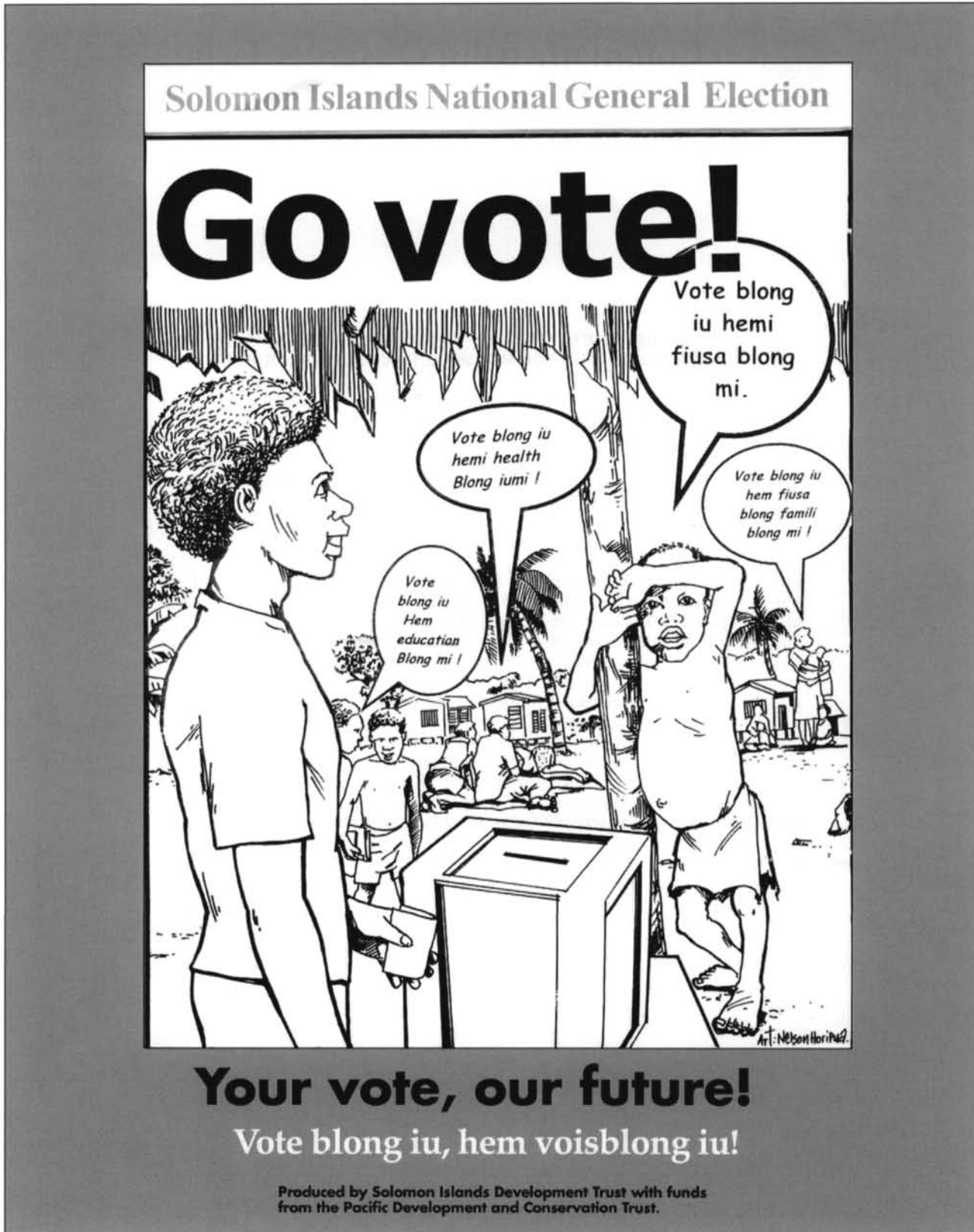
For the Solomon Islands to make progress following this election, it is essential that all aspects of governance are improved starting with the enforcement of law and order without which it is impossible for development to take place. Once the Solomon Islanders begin to believe in themselves, investment in the economy will follow from foreign investors.

As we leave, we hope that the success of the elections will not be jeopardised by any delay in the election of the Prime Minister and the Government which commands the support of the vast majority of the people of the Solomon islands.

It has been a pleasure to observe the elections.

9 December 2001

Voter Awareness Campaign Poster



Observation Notes and Checklist for Polling Station Visits

8.	Domestic Observers present	No/Yes	Details:
9.	Atmosphere at Station	Orderly?	Tense? Chaotic?
10.	Secrecy of the Ballot	Assured?	Poor? Uncertain?
11.	Voting		
	(a) Personation attempts alleged:		No/Yes
	(b) Multiple voting attempts alleged:		No/Yes
	(c) Women deterred from voting Details:		No/Yes
12.	Closing of Poll	On time? Procedures followed?	Numbers still in queue? No/Yes
13.	The Count	Are procedures being observed?	No/Yes
14.	Post Count	Procedures followed?	Boxes secure? No/Yes
15.	Apparent fairness overall?	Good?	Acceptable? Questionable?
16.	Other Comments		

COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP
SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL PARLIAMENT ELECTION
5 December 2001

CHECKLIST FOR POLLING STATION VISITS

Team Members:

Constituency:

Island:

Polling Station:

Time of Arrival:

Time of Departure:

Voters in Queue:

1.	Opening of Poll	On time? No/Yes	Procedures followed? No/Yes
2.	Register Process	State of Register Is there a Supplementary Register? Are there many objections?	Are voters on it? Poor?
3.	Layout and Facilities	Good?	Adequate? Poor?
4.	Polling Staff	Efficient?	Satisfactory? Poor?
5.	Security Presence	Discreet?	Intrusive? Oppressive?
6.	Complaints by Party Agents	No/Yes	Details:
7.	Complaints by Voters	No/Yes	Details:

**COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP
SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
5 December 2001**

OBSERVATION NOTES FOR POLL AND COUNT

PART A

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

THE CAMPAIGN

1. Balance of 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, in the print media and by other methods.
7. Activities/measures to encourage the participation of women.
8. Access to funds and sources of funds.

Note: because the campaign will have effectively ended by the time you are deployed much of the evidence of the above is likely to be anecdotal and/or second hand information.

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.
4. The length of time voters wait to cast their votes.
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 and stamp pads etc.
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 the security of ballot boxes overnight is assured.
15. Security of boxes in transit.

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.
5. Access by domestic and international observers.
6. The conduct of election officers.

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?
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?

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?
4. Do they exhibit signs of fear or intimidation?
5. 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?
6. Does the turnout indicate that women have been deterred from attending to vote?
7. Is only one person at a time being allowed into the voting compartment?
8. How long are voters waiting to vote? If a long time, are some being put off?
9. Will all parties be represented at the polling centres throughout voting and the count?
10. Are agents adequately trained and vigilant?
11. Will domestic and foreign observers have free access to all stages of the process?
12. Is the security presence effective/oppressive?

THE COUNT

1. Are the boxes kept safe until opened? Are all parties present at the Opening?
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. Is the result of the count posted on the wall of the polling station?