

INTRODUCTION

Invitation

Following an invitation from the Electoral Commissioner of Seychelles dated 22 February 2011 to send observers to Seychelles for the Presidential Election, the Commonwealth Secretary-General constituted a Commonwealth Expert Team comprising five experts. The Team was supported by three officials from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The members of the Expert Team were as follows:

Dr. the Hon. Julian R Hunte SLC OBE - Chair
Former Foreign Minister and former President of the UN General Assembly
St Lucia

Ms Priscilla Achakpa
Vice Chairperson
Transition Monitoring Group (Domestic Election Observer Body)
Nigeria

Mr Lorne Gibson,
Former Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta
Canada

Mr Idrisa Jecha,
Acting Director of Elections
Zanzibar Electoral Commission
Tanzania

Ms Josephine Teakeni
Gender and Media Expert
Solomon Islands

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Expert Team were as follows:

"The Commonwealth Expert Team for the Seychelles Presidential Election shall observe the preparations for the election; the polling, counting and results process; and the overall electoral environment."

We were invited to serve on the Expert Team in our individual capacities, and the views we express regarding the elections are our own and not those of either our respective governments or of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Activities of the Team

The Commonwealth Secretariat support team arrived in Seychelles on 12 May 2011, while the Team arrived and commenced work on 14 May 2011. Following arrival in Seychelles, the Team received briefings from the Electoral Commissioner, members of the Elections Advisory Board, political parties and presidential candidates, the Liaison Unit for Non-Governmental Organisations (LUNGOS), Commonwealth High Commissioners, the Media Commission, the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation and other private media, religious leaders, other observer teams and the Seychellois public on the background issues relevant to the Presidential Election. In addition to meetings with different stakeholders and interested parties, the Team studied documentation from various sources.

The Expert Team witnessed the final rally of the candidate of the ruling Parti Lepep. The opposition Seychelles National Party (SNP), New Democratic Party (NDP) and the independent candidate, Mr Phillipe Boullé, did not hold any public rallies.

The Team observed closely preparations for, and actual arrangements on, the three polling days of 19-21 May 2011.

The Team completed their Report and departed Seychelles on 26 May 2011.