

International Electoral Observation Briefing & Information session

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Organization of American States

Organization of American States

- ✦ Oldest Regional Organization in the world
- ✦ Representative Democracy as an “essential element to socio-economic development”
- ✦ Thirty four Member States
- ✦ Decisions taken by consensus (no security council)

What gives you the right?

Mandates to Observe Elections

- ✦ Founding Charter
- ✦ Resolution 1080
- ✦ Resolution 991
- ✦ Inter-American Democratic Charter

Election Observation Activity

- ✦ 130 elections in 22 member states
- ✦ Presidential, parliamentary, municipal, constituent assembly, referendums and internal political party elections.
- ✦ 17 of 22 elections held in 2006

Profile of Observers

- ✦ Cross section of society of the Americas
- ✦ Speak the language of the country.
- ✦ Cannot be from the country.

Types of Observers

- ✦ Chief of Mission
- ✦ Core Group
- ✦ Regional Coordinator
- ✦ Short Term Observers
- ✦ Volunteers

Activities of Observers

- ✦ Training
- ✦ Deployment
- ✦ Observation of Political Campaign
- ✦ "Meet and Greet"
- ✦ Visit deployment route
- ✦ Election Day information collection
- ✦ Monitor transmission of Results

Election Day Information

- ✦ Qualitative: Opening, Voting and Closing of the Polls
- ✦ Qualitative: Complaints/Irregularities
- ✦ Quantitative: Quick Count

What is a quick count?

- ✦ Statistical sample from which actual results are collected.
- ✦ NOT AN EXIT POLL!
- ✦ Used to determine a range of possibilities within a pre-established margin of error.
- ✦ NOT USED TO PROJECT OR PROCLAIM THE WINNER!

REPORTING

- ✦ Observer forms are consolidated by regional team
- ✦ Regional Coordinator drafts report
- ✦ Chief of Mission drafts a final report for the OAS Permanent Council

In Situ Reporting

- ✦ Pre- and post-election press releases issued by Chief of Mission
- ✦ Preliminary Reports
- ✦ "Quiet Diplomacy"

OAS Observation Methodology

- ✦ Uniformity of information collection and analysis from one election to another.
- ✦ Universal Declaration of Principles of International Observation and Observer Code of Conduct.
- ✦ Assess election process in its entirety.

Mission Criteria for Election Observation

- ✦ Inclusive

- ✦ "Clean" Elections

- ✦ Competitive

- ✦ Sustainability of Public Office

Inclusive

- ✦ Women (15 percent legislative representation)
- ✦ Afro-descendants (40 percent of population; about one percent legislative representation)
- ✦ Indigenous

“Clean” Elections

- ✦ Electoral Registry
- ✦ Logistical aspects
- ✦ Privacy of vote
- ✦ Security, but not onerous
- ✦ Vote count and transmission of results

Competitive

- ✦ “Equitable” Political Party financing.
- ✦ Access to the Media
- ✦ Use of State resources in an era of re-election.

Sustainability of Public Office

- ✦ Do the elected offices retain their authority after the elections?
- ✦ Do those elected remain in office?

The 2006 Election Cycle: Preliminary Conclusions

- ✦ Increased number of elected posts and increased number of elections.
- ✦ Elections as a an outlet for tension instead of its cause.
- ✦ Undisputed authority of electoral authorities.
- ✦ Increased use of media.