



# **CARICOM ELECTORAL OBSERVER MISSION (CEOM) TO THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN DOMINICA ON 8 DECEMBER 2014**

## **PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

A five member CARICOM Election Observation Mission (CEOM) comprising Observers drawn from Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago was stationed in Dominica on the invitation of the Government of Dominica to observe that country's General Elections held on Monday, 8 December 2014. The objective of the Mission was to monitor the electoral process, including the opening of the poll; the voting process; the closing of the poll; and the counting of the ballots.

Members of the public exercised their right to vote in 250 polling stations across the 21 constituencies of the Island. The CEOM visited each constituency, observing the voting process in several polling stations and gathering as much information as possible on the process.

From observations and information, most polling stations opened at the prescribed time of 7:00 am. The process started with complete transparency, where the ballot box could be viewed as empty, all supplies and materials were present at the polling station, the ballot was secured while voting was in progress and a full complement of trained staff were at their stations, ensuring that the process was conducted efficiently and effectively. There were a few polling stations that were a bit late in opening, but this did not affect the exercise of the franchise in a free and fair manner.

At the polling stations, political parties were well represented by their agents. They were trained and upheld the efficiency of the electoral process. Members of the public enjoyed the convenience of locating their polling stations with ease. The polling day staff made themselves available to assist the electorate, explaining the process patiently and ensuring that the voter understood what was required. The voters themselves followed the instructions to the letter of the law, and this contributed to a peaceful polling day.

Security was well maintained at the polling stations. Police Officers exhibited professionalism in carrying out their duties and they must be commended for it. They ensured that there was management of the crowd at the stations with heavy voter turnout, and never left their stations unattended. Generally, the security forces kept the cycle flowing and the crowd under control which resulted in a speedy voting process at the polling stations.

Generally, the results of the day's activity on polling day gleaned by the CEOM proved that the process was free and fair as designed to be. Electors cast their vote without fear, intimidation or

harassment. There was no additional campaigning by political parties nor deviation from the law.

The CEOM wishes to express its appreciation to the staff of the Electoral Commission, the poll day staff, the political parties, their Candidates and their Agents, the members of civil society groups, the security forces and the people of Dominica for their contributions to a free and fair electoral process. The Mission salutes you as it is you who have made this task very easy and pleasurable with your warmth and co-operation.

The Mission will submit to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), H.E. Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, a full report on the Election Observation Mission in Dominica. This report will include, apart from reporting on the activities, some recommendations with the objective of enhancing the electoral process.

LENA SAHADEO  
CHIEF OF MISSION  
CARICOM ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION  
DOMINICA  
9 DECEMBER 2014