

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elections for members of the National Assembly and the Regional Democratic Councils normally take place every five years, unless called earlier.

There have been eight (8) elections since independence (1968; 1973; 1981; 1985; 1992; 1997; 2001 and 2006).

Constitutional Amendment Act No. 2 of 2000 paved the way for a permanent Elections Commission with a full-time Chairman and Six (6) Commissioners; three (3) representing the ruling party and three (3) the combined opposition parties in Parliament.

The Commission transacts its business by holding weekly statutory meetings, by special meetings, by circulation of papers and in cases of extreme urgency, over the telephone. The decisions so taken are, however, formally recorded thereafter so that nothing is omitted from the records of the Commission. The Commissioners have equal say in the decision making process of the Commission. The Commission, from time to time, delegates some of its executive functions to officers in the Secretariat.

The Commission is assisted in fulfilling its Constitutional mandate by an attending Secretariat consisting of about one hundred and four (104) officials in an hierarchical structure.

The Chief Election Officer and the Deputy Chief Election Officer are the two (2) most senior officers of the Secretariat. They are generally appointed from the national public service of the country and are selected and appointed by the Commission either on contract or with tenure. An Assistant Chief Election Officer, managers, supervisors and subordinate staff support the senior officers in their work. There is functional and regional distribution of the work of the Secretariat.

The Elections Commission from its very inception had been working assiduously to improve the management of elections in this country. To this end, there has come about a progressive increase of technological inputs in the management of the elections. Computerization of the electoral roll and issuance of New National Photo Identity Cards to electors were some of the important measures that have been implemented by the Secretariat in the recent past to introduce higher levels of technology and thereby improve the management and integrity of the election process.

A free and fair election is the bedrock on which a democratic society stands. Its importance cannot be overstated. Elections, therefore, have not only to be free and fair but should be viewed by all as being so.

Conscious of this fact, the Commission intensified its role as a listening body and developed the practice of holding regular meetings with all stakeholders, especially with the political parties in the country prior to the elections. At these meetings, important issues regarding conduct and management of elections are discussed at length. Through this process, the Commission becomes aware of the views that exist across the entire political spectrum on a number of issues.

This is an extremely healthy practice which emphasizes consultation, collaboration and confidence building which eventually result in the resolution of major issues.

Sometimes the position taken by the Commission may go against the view of one party or another, but it is during these all-party meetings that stakeholders are able to assess for themselves, the independence, autonomy, impartiality and integrity that the Commission seeks to maintain at all times.

The gigantic task of conducting a country-wide general election is under the direct supervision and control of the Elections Commission. It is the Commission which decides on the list of eligible voters, the location of polling stations throughout the length and breadth of the country, assignment of voters to these polling stations, arrangements to be put in place in and around polling stations and all such related matters.

In a country with demographic features and terrain such as Guyana, determining a suitable period to prepare for the holding of general elections is not a simple task. The Elections Commission which determines the schedule of activities for elections, has to take account of the availability of schools which are used as polling stations, teachers employed as election officials, activities such as international cricket, religious festivals and public holidays. In addition, there are logistical difficulties that go with the holding of an election. These include the involvement of civil and security forces, procurement of supplies, printing and distribution of thousands of ballot papers, dispatch of ballot boxes, equipment and supplies, setting up polling stations and appointing thousands of officials to conduct the poll, execute the count and oversee the elections.

The principle of universal adult suffrage is strictly adhered to and no elector is excluded from exercising his/her franchise on the grounds of operational/logistical difficulty. However, it must be remembered that Guyana is still a developing country with an annual per capita income of less than eight hundred dollars (US\$800) and naturally, constraints such as poverty and illiteracy will emerge and take their toll on the electoral process.

In all these circumstances, achieving standards for a free and fair election incurs considerable cost. The unaudited estimate of expenditure by GECOM for the conduct of General and Regional Elections of 2006 is two billion eight hundred and forty million four hundred and eight thousand dollars (G\$2,840,408,000). Of this amount, approximately twenty-five percent (25%) was provided through donor community support.

There has been a general increase in the 2006 voters' roll when compared with that of the previous election. In 2001 the voters' roll consisted of 440,185 voters while in the last elections, the roll was 492,369 a number not in conflict with projections made by the Bureau of Statistics. The voter turnout in the 2006 elections was lower (69.4%) than that of 2001 (92%), while the number of persons voting in the last elections was some fifty-four thousand less (54,000) than in 2001.

The country has been divided into ten (10) Geographical Constituencies corresponding to the ten (10) administrative regions. The electoral legislation governing elections in 2006 made provisions for twenty-five (25) members to be elected directly from these geographical constituencies in a framework of Proportional Representation that ensured that the full assembly of sixty-five (65) seats was awarded to contesting parties in accordance with voter support for each party's list of candidates.

On the basis of the votes cast for the 2006 elections, five (5) of the eight contesting parties were allocated seats in the National Assembly as follows.

	GC	NTU	TTL
1. Alliance For Change	01	04	05
2. Guyana Action Party-Rise, Organise and Rebuild	0	01	01
3. People's National Congress Reform – 1Guyana	09	13	22
4. People's Progressive Party/Civic	15	21	36
5. The United Force	<u>0</u>	<u>01</u>	<u>01</u>
	<u>25</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>65</u>

Of the sixty-five (65) members so elected, forty three (43) were sworn to office at the first sitting of the ninth Parliament on the 28th day of September, 2006 at 14:00 hrs.

On just crossing the threshold of the new millennium, we see all over the world an increasing awareness for societies to be governed on the basis of consent of the ordinary people. The democratic way of life has received fresh impetus from all directions. There are discussions, debates, views and counter views about the relative efficacy of this or that system of elections, the yardstick being which system reflects best the will of the people. Such debates are to be welcomed and we must always have an open mind to explore better and more effective measures of representation of the people's will and aspirations.

Gocool Boodoo
Chief Election Officer

2:0 ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION:

PREAMBLE

Every election requires competent, professional, efficient and impartial electoral managers. The scale of the task is often formidable, yet with experience and the awareness of the importance of their work, election officials are able to administer credible elections in a wide variety of circumstances.

There are numerous options for administrative structures for the delivery of free and fair elections. These structures range from National Electoral Commissions with direct responsibility for the entire electoral process to more decentralized systems that place responsibility with local managers. Whatever structure is used, it is important to ensure that there is at every level a clear understanding of the duties of the participants and that they all know exactly what the law and regulations require.

2:1 Structure of the Elections Commission

The present Elections Commission was established by virtue of Constitutional Amendment Act No. 2 of 2000. Article 161 of the Constitution was repealed and re-enacted on the basis of recommendations emerging from the Constitutional Reform Commission and ratified by Parliament.

The Act stipulates that:

161 (1) there shall be an Elections Commission for Guyana consisting of a Chairman, who shall be a full-time Chairman and shall not engage in any other form of employment, and such other members as may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of this article.

This bill was passed by the National Assembly on the 10th April, 2000.

2:2 Appointment of Chairman

As may be noted in the Amended Act, there is now provision for a full-time Chairman. The Chairman was appointed from a list of six (6) persons, not unacceptable to the President and submitted by the Leader of the Opposition after meaningful consultation with the non-governmental political parties represented in the National Assembly.

2:3 Appointment of Other Members of the Commission

In addition to the Chairman, the law provides for the appointment of six (6) members of the Commission in the following manner:-

(a) Three (3) members appointed by the President, acting in his own deliberate judgment. Those appointed under this provision were representatives of the ruling party or government.

- (b) Three (3) members appointed by the President acting on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition. Such advice was tendered after meaningful consultation with non-governmental political parties represented in the National Assembly.

Under existing provisions, an alien cannot be appointed as chairman or member of the Commission.

In accordance with the legislative provisions outlined above, the 2006 General and Regional Elections were conducted by the Elections Commission constituted as follows:-

Dr. Robert S. Surujbally	-	Chairman
Mr. Moen Mc Doom	-	Member
Dr. Keshav Mangal	-	Member
Mr. Mohamood Shaw	-	Member
♦ Mr. Haslyn Parris	-	Member
Mr. Lloyd Joseph	-	Member
Mr. Robert Williams	-	Member

- ♦ Commissioner Parris resigned as of July 31, 2006 and no replacement was named.

2:4 Powers and Functions of the Commission

The powers and functions of the Commission are clearly specified in Article 162 of the Constitution. These are as follows:

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|---|-----|---|
| The Commission | (a) | “shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors and administrative conduct of all elections of members of the National Assembly; and |
| | (b) | shall issue such instructions and take such action as appears necessary or expedient to ensure impartiality, fairness and compliance with the provisions of this Constitution or of any Act of Parliament on the part of persons exercising powers or performing duties connected with or relating to the matters aforesaid”. |
| “Appointment of Staff by Elections Commission; Secretariat of the Commission” | (c) | shall be responsible for the efficient functioning of the Secretariat of the Commission, which shall comprise the officers and employees of the Commission, and for the appointment of all staff to the office of the Commission inclusive of all temporary staff, recruited for the purpose of boundary demarcation, registration of persons and elections and shall have the power to remove and to exercise disciplinary control over such staff”. |

The Commission may by writing, delegate any of its powers to anyone or more Commissioners or to such officers of the Secretariat as the Commission may determine.

All of the powers which were previously exercised by, or on behalf of the Minister responsible were now vested in the Commission. The Elections Commission is now an independent, autonomous body not subjected to the direction or/and control of any external authority.

2:5 Staffing the Permanent Secretariat

Section 17 of the Elections Laws (Amendment) Act No. 15 of 2000 passed by the National Assembly on 23rd November, 2000 and assented to by President Bharrat Jagdeo on 24th March, 2001 provides for the establishment of a permanent secretariat.

The Act states that:

“There shall be a permanent secretariat to the Commission to ensure institutional memory and capacity and that the Commission shall be responsible for the effective functioning of the secretariat”.

With the appointment of a full-time Chairman, the Commission found it necessary to have in place, and fully under its direction and control, a permanent functional Secretariat to implement its policies and programmes.

(See Appendix 1 for the approved Organisational Structure of the permanent Secretariat)

The staff of the Secretariat were recruited from among persons:

- (a) holding appointment in the Public Service;
- (b) who have retired or resigned from the Public Service; and
- (c) those fit and proper but who are not Public Officers.

It was the second time that an election was conducted in this country with the Commission having control of a permanent Secretariat to operationalise its plans.

2:5.1 Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department consisted of:-

- One (1) Human Resources Manager
- One (1) Personnel Officer
- Two (2) Personnel Clerks
- One (1) Typist Clerk

The section was responsible for the recruitment of permanent and temporary electoral staff.

2:5.2 Policy of Appointment

The Guyana Elections Commission, in keeping with its policy of transparency, publicly advertised all vacancies for district and field staff. All applicants were interviewed and invited to attend a training programme where they were trained by competent Training Instructors and their performances evaluated.

Based on the results of the evaluation and their qualifications, trainees were identified for appointment as:-

- Returning Officer
- Clerk to the Returning Officer
- Deputy Returning Officer
- Clerk to the Deputy Returning Officer
- Supervisor
- Clerical Assistant
- Presiding Officer
- Assistant Presiding Officer
- Poll Clerk
- Ballot Officer
- Ballot Attendant
- Information Clerk
- Ballot Clerk/Counting Assistant

all being temporary staff for the ten (10) Electoral Districts. The positions of Ballot Officer, Ballot Clerk and Ballot Attendant were peculiar to the Disciplined Services Balloting.

2:5.3 Permanent Staff

The Permanent Staff of the Commission consisted of:-

Chief Election Officer	1
Administration Department	18
Human Resources Department	5
Utility Department	11
Transport Department	19
Accounts Department	11
Stores Department	7
Information Systems Department	5
Operations Department	<u>46</u>

123

These provided critical and technical support to ensure that the electoral offices in the ten (10) regions functioned effectively and smoothly.

The Electoral Offices in the ten (10) regions were fully staffed with trained personnel and they achieved the objectives required for the success of the national elections.

2:6 Finances

The finances of the Commission were provided by Parliament. These had been considerably augmented by resources provided by the Donor Community directly to the Elections Commission.

2:7 The Electoral System in Guyana for General & Regional Elections 2006

Prior to the conduct of the 1964 General Election in Guyana (British Guiana), the System for the conduct of Elections was First-Past-The-Post. Elections from 1964 to 1997 were conducted under the system of Proportional Representation.

The General and Regional Elections of 2001 and more recently, 2006 were conducted under the system of Proportional Representation with an element of Geographical and Gender Representation.

With this new electoral system, Guyana was divided into ten geographical constituencies where elections were held to elect members of the National Assembly directly from each geographical constituency.

The New Electoral System provided for the National Assembly to comprise of at least sixty-five (65) elected members; twenty-five (25) from geographical constituencies and forty (40) from National Top-Up Lists.

The main features of the New Electoral System were as follows:

- (a) votes were cast throughout Guyana in favour of lists of candidates;
- (b) each elector had one (1) vote which was cast in favour of any one of the lists;
- (c) each party had to satisfy requirements for geographical constituencies;
- (d) each party had to meet requirements for the National Top-Up mechanism;
- (e) each party's list had to satisfy certain criteria; and
- (f) each party had to satisfy criteria presented for gender representation.

General and Regional Elections were conducted on the basis of the new electoral system and under the direction and supervision of the Elections Commission. The August 28, 2006 Elections were held to elect:

- (1) The President (if he is the only Presidential Candidate at the election; or where there are two (2) or more Presidential Candidates, if more votes are cast in favour of the list in which he is designated as Presidential Candidate than in favour of any other list);

- (2) Members of the National Assembly on the basis of:
 - (a) Geographical Constituencies;
 - (b) National Top-Up mechanism; and
- (3) Members of the Regional Democratic Councils.

2:8 Legal Framework for the Conduct of Elections, 2006

Electoral reform in Guyana started in 1990 and continued throughout the period preceding the 2001 General and Regional Elections. Following the Herdmanston Accord, embodied in Act (1) of 1998, a comprehensive review of the Constitution was undertaken culminating in Constitution Amendment Act No. 2 of 2000, which provided for the establishment of a permanent Elections Commission. The first such Commission was charged with the responsibility for the conduct and management of Elections, 2001.

After the 2001 General and Regional Elections, the then Chairman, Major General (retired) Mr. Joseph Singh demitted office on the 30th June, 2001.

Consequently, a new chairman, Dr. Robert Stephen Surujbally was sworn to office on the 13th September, 2001. Since its appointment, the Commission worked resolutely to fulfill its constitutional mandate and to ensure that the Elections were held within the time frame determined by the relevant legislation. However, this was not to be. The life of Parliament came to an end on 2nd May, 2006 when the President by Proclamation. No. 1 of 2006 dissolved Parliament with a date for elections still to be announced.

It must be noted that while the Constitution embodied the provisions for the qualifications as electors and the like, other provisions deemed necessary for Electoral Reform were initiated by the Constitutional Reform Commission and ratified by Parliament.

The principal Act or the Representation of the People Act, Chapter 1:03 (including amendments thereto) makes provision for the election of members of the National Assembly under a system of Proportional Representation and for purposes therewith.

Other subsidiary legislation, which impacted on the conduct of the General and Regional Elections, 2006 were as follows:

- Local Democratic Organs Act No.12 of 1980;
- General Elections (Observers) Act No.17 of 1990;

- Election Audit (CARICOM Brokered) Act No. 1 of 1998;
- Constitution Amendment Act No.2 of 2000;
- Constitution Amendment (No.3) Act No.14 of 2000;
- Constitution Amendment (No.4) Act No.17 of 2000;
- Elections Laws Amendment Act No.15 of 2000;
- National Registration (Amendment) Act, No. 14 of 2005;
- National Registration (Amendment) Act, No. 18 of 2005;
- National Registration Act, No. 4 of 2006;
- National Registration Act, No. 9 of 2006;
- National Registration Act, No. 12 of 2006;
- Election Laws (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2006.

2:9 Donors Support for the Electoral Process

2:9.1 The Donor Group

The donor group, consisting of the EC, DFID, CIDA, USAID and UNDP, had agreed to pool their resources under the UNDP, which acted as facilitator to the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Government of Guyana, GECOM and the donor group.

The Donor Community had been working collectively with GECOM, at their request, on election issues and reaffirmed its commitment to upholding democratic culture and values in Guyana, and specifically to providing and supporting the instruments through which the holding of free, fair and violence-free elections, in accordance with the Constitution, can be achieved. This was an on-going process that involved various programmes that were naturally intensified in the run up to the general elections.

2:9.2 Joint Pool Funds

As at the 30th of August, 2006 funds received from donors where UNDP was the local representative were as follows:

	DONORS US \$ COMMITTED	DISBURSED	US \$ BALANCE
European Union (EU)	1,155,840	951,156	204,864
Canadian Int. Dev. Agency (CIDA)	862,000	862,069	(69)
United Kingdom (UK)	885,000	719,599	165,401
United Nations Dev. Prog. (UNDP)	230,000	<u>156,000</u>	<u>74,000</u>
		<u>2,688,824</u>	<u>444,265</u>

2:9.3 Other Donor Funds

United States Aid for International Development in conjunction with the Guyana Democratic Consolidation and Conflict Resolution Project (GDCCR) disbursed a total of US\$266,237 in the following manner:

	US \$
➤ IT Manager's Salary	135,000
➤ Production of Manuals for GECOM	46,000
➤ Electoral Assistance Bureau	25,237
➤ Printing of T-Shirts	<u>60,000</u>
	<u>266,237</u>

2:9.4 Total Donor Support

	US \$
(1) Funds received via UNDP Joint Pool	2,688,824
(2) USAID – GDCCR Project	<u>266,237</u>
	<u>2,955,061</u>
Less:	US \$
Expenditure as at 2006-08-30	1,861,761
Admin Charges to UNDP	<u>126,642</u>
	<u>1,988,403</u>
Balance as at 2006-08-30 (UNDP Pool)	<u>700,421</u>

However, out of this total, US\$657,883 is committed on contracts, hence GECOM has an uncommitted balance of \$US 42,538 or G\$ 8,592,676 at an exchange rate of G\$202 to US\$ 1.

2:9.5 Some Observations

- GECOM is to be refunded US\$21,600 on the purchase of a vehicle;
- UK, UNDP and the EU fell short of their pledge by US\$444,265;
- CIDA on the other hand gave 69 US\$ more than pledged;
- GECOM still has uncommitted pledged funds of US\$ 42,538; and
- 200,000 Euros is available upon submission of an audited final report.

2:10 Observers – International and Local

INTERNATIONAL

His Excellency, President Bharrat Jagdeo extended invitations to many countries and organisations to observe all aspects of the democratic process involved in the General and Regional Elections which were held on Monday, 28th August, 2006.

The Elections Commission endorsed the President's decision and invited interested organisations to apply for accreditation and recognition either as Local/Domestic or as International Observers.

Organisations were required to submit the names of the persons who were desirous of observing the process to the Chief Election Officer. The Chief Election Officer then published those names in the Official Gazette and also issued identification cards to the various individuals/groups.

2:10.1 Summary of International Organisations

Name of Organisations	No. of Observers
1. Organisation of American States (OAS)	124
2. Commonwealth Observer Group	18
3. The Carter Centre	4
4. Caricom Electoral Observer Mission	10
5. European Union Delegation	<u>2</u>
	<u>158</u>

(See Appendix II)

In addition to the above, members of the Diplomatic Corp in Guyana observed the electoral process.

2:10.2 Duration of the Observation Process

The Elections Commission granted observer status to the Long Term Observer Group of the Organisation of American States (OAS) headed by Mr. Eugene G. Petty and Ms. Ann Fudge and also Ms. Alison Sutherland of the Commonwealth Long Term Observer Group who were based locally. **(See Appendix III)**

The local offices of the two groups were as follows:

- (1) Organisation of American States (OAS)
Local Office
153 Charlotte Street
Lacytown
Georgetown.

- (2) Commonwealth Long Term Observer Group
c/o Le Meridien Pegasus
Seawall Road
Kingston
Georgetown.

Credentials were issued to approved organisations interested in observing the process.

2:10.3 Identification Cards – International Observer

The Elections Commission issued each International Observer with an Identification Card signed by the Chairman.

2:10.4 Publication of the List of International Observers

Each organisation, along with the names of its members was published in the Official Gazette for public notification. **(See Appendix IV** for List of International Observers with contact persons and local offices)

2:10.5 Local Observer Groups

The Guyana Elections Commission received requests from Local Organisations to observe the democratic process in the conduct of the General and Regional Elections of Monday 28th August, 2006. These groups included:

1. The Guyana Public Service Union;
2. The Electoral Assistance Bureau;
3. The Guyana Bar Association; and
4. The Private Sector Commission.

The Statutory Department provided all necessary support, guidance and documentation to each organisation as requested.

2:10.6 Publication of Local Observers

In accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, No.15 of 2000, notices were published in the Official Gazette of 1st July, 2006, 14th June, 2006 and 29th June, 2006 approving the Guyana Public Service Union, the Electoral Assistance Bureau, the Guyana Bar Association and the Private Sector Commission as recognised Local Observer Groups. (See Appendix V for List of Local Observers)

2:10.7 Identification Cards – Local Observers

All executives of accredited organisations who were visiting polling stations were issued with identification cards. The Electoral Assistance Bureau was assisted with the preparation of Identification Cards for all personnel working on Election Day by the Elections Commission.

2:10.8 Local Credentials

The Electoral Assistance Bureau, the Guyana Public Service Union and the Private Sector Commission were all accredited by the Guyana Elections Commission and they were issued with their instruments of accreditation.

2:10.9 Interaction with Local Observers

The Chief Election Officer and the Statutory Officer maintained close working relationships with the local observer groups in providing guidance, information, documentation and clarity.

The rights, privileges and immunities of the observers expired ten (10) days after the General and Regional Elections which were held on Monday, 28th August, 2006.

2:11 CONCLUSION

It must be noted that for the first time in the history of elections in this country that four (4) local groups were provided the opportunity to take part in observing the conduct of the 2006 General and Regional Elections on 28th August, 2006.

3:0 PREPARATION OF THE LIST OF ELECTORS:

3:1 Purpose

The List of Electors was produced and revised in stages. At each stage a methodology or system was devised and documented. This formed the basis for an application to be developed. In all cases suitable documentation was produced.

The National Registration Act (Cap. 19:08) of 1967 dealt with the method of revision of the list of electors. The main objective of the preparation of the list of electors was to derive an acceptable Official List of Electors that contained the names of all eligible persons (i.e. persons who had attained the age of eighteen (18) years or over on or before 15th July, 2006) for the 2006 General and Regional Elections. This list had to withstand public scrutiny in terms of the details of all electors being accurately listed without duplication.

An acceptable Official List of Electors formed the basis for the staging of the elections.

3:2 The Continuous Registration Process

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) commenced Continuous Registration on 17th October, 2005. The 2001 Official List of Electors (OLE) was used as the basis for the commencement of the exercise.

Continuous Registration was conducted over the period 17th October, 2005 to 19th March, 2006 for persons who were seventeen (17) years and older on 31st March, 2006, which was the qualifying date. In addition to new registration, the division also processed other transactions, such as transfers, changes/corrections to particulars and replacement of National Identification Cards which were lost, damaged or misplaced.

Continuous Registration was office based, that is, the registration exercise was conducted at Registration Offices and Sub-Offices throughout the country. Each Registration Office was headed by a Registration Officer and the sub-office by an Assistant Registration Officer. Mobile Registration was conducted in some hinterland locations in order to facilitate persons in those areas. All persons who applied for new registration and transfers were visited at their homes to verify their identities and residencies before their applications were processed. Completed transactions were batched (in sets of 24) and submitted to the Voter Registration Registry for processing.

The main activity of the Voter Registration Registry was to process the transactions received from the Registration Offices. The process includes editing, verifying, scanning and encoding. At the end of the Continuous Registration Exercise on 19, March 2006, a final report was prepared for all transactions received and processed by the Voter Registration Registry (*See Appendix VI & VII*). Although the Department prepared a Guide for Registration Officers on the submission of completed transactions (*See Appendix VIII*), there were many deficiencies in completing Registration Forms. These were documented and forwarded to the Registration

Officers to take corrective measures (*See Appendix IX*). The Department then produced the Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) for the commencement of the Claims and Objections (C&O) Exercise. At the end of the Claims and Objections (C&O) Exercise, a final report was prepared for all transactions received and processed. The Department was also responsible for the production of National Identification Cards and issuing same to the Registration Officers who were responsible for the distribution of identification cards to registrants.

3:3 The National Identification Card Production Process

The transactions received from the Registration Offices, after being edited and verified, were logged in the Voter Registration Department and dispatched to the Data Entry Unit of the Registration and Electoral List Section. These transactions were scanned and encoded using the double entry verification system. The transactions, except those for transfers were sent to the Identification Card Production Section for national identification cards to be produced. The transfers and corrections were sent to the Electoral List Section for the necessary changes to be effected.

National Identification Cards were produced for all persons who were seventeen (17) years and older by 31st March, 2006, although some persons were not qualified to be electors.

The National Identification Cards having been printed, quality checked, laminated and die-cut were reconciled with the relevant forms and identification numbers recorded on the forms for new registration.

The identification cards along with the forms were batched and forwarded to the dispatching section to be issued to the Registration Officers. Cards were uplifted on a daily basis as per schedule and weekly reports were prepared on the cards produced and issued to Registration Officers (*See Appendix X*). The Registration Officers were responsible for the distribution of the identification cards in all districts.

3:4 Factors Affecting the Continuous Registration Process

The Guyana Elections Commission provided each Registration Office with an electronic copy as well as a hard copy of the 2001 Official of Electors List to commence Continuous Registration. However, there were several deficiencies in completing registration forms, since Registration Clerks did not check the list carefully before completing the forms. This resulted in double registration and incorrect identification numbers being used to effect transfer, changes/corrections to particulars and replacement of National Identification Cards for persons with the same first and last names. The incorrect identification numbers, also resulted in a mismatch of National Identification Cards being produced. In some areas the Registration Offices were very far and persons were reluctant to visit the offices. In some offices, Registration Clerks were taking too long to complete forms. In some instances when registrants were informed that Registration Clerks will be visiting them to verify residency the registrants were found not to be at home.

3:5 Summary

The Guyana Elections Commission implemented Continuous Registration in Guyana for the first time. This system enabled persons to register and update their registration particulars on a continuous basis rather than periodically (every five (5) years).

Although several persons benefited from the new system, some persons did not since they had completed transactions which could not have been processed because of the deficiencies in the system, that is, in the Registration Offices as well as at the Information Technology (IT) Department. It must be noted also that some persons did not see it fit to check the list for their names and did not even bother to register in order to be issued with identification cards.

It is important to record all the problems encountered during the first cycle of Continuous Registration and seek to address them so that these problems will not re-occur in the second cycle.

In view of the difficulties experienced, the following recommendations were proposed:

3:6 Recommendations

1. Intensive training programmes should be arranged for Registration Clerks – especially those completing registration forms – in order to avoid double registration and mismatch.
2. Registration Forms be reviewed to improve the utility value of the information captured.
3. Additional training for photographers since in some instances the photographs were of a very poor quality.
4. The Information Technology (IT) Department designs a system which must detect whether a transaction had already been processed for the same registrant/elector before a new transaction is undertaken.
5. Training for staff of the ID Production Section be geared to focus on the quality assurance of Identification Cards produced.
6. The Information Technology (IT) Department designs a system which will detect when a transaction is processed incorrectly against a listed registrant/elector.
7. The Voter Registration Department (Data Entry, Registration and Electoral list Section) be given the programme for printing the Disciplined Services List, and was not to be dependant on the Information Technology Department.

8. The Information Technology Department (ITD) designs a programme to correct some of the deficiencies in the system. For example;
 - (i) Persons on the OLE, and for whom no cards were produced.
 - (ii) Mismatched Identification Cards
 - (iii) Persons with Identification Cards, but not listed on the OLE.
 - (iv) Persons listed in incorrect Divisions/Sub-Divisions.

4:0 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

4:1 Software Development to support the Continuous Registration Process

This activity got off to a later start than anticipated due to problems in the acquisition of appropriate software tools for the scanning and processing of forms. These were due to the above items being incorrectly specified in the capital budget tendered for 2005 and the lengthy process required to correct this.

Hence, software development only began in earnest at the beginning of December, 2005, using a database design that had been developed over the preceding months. Since registration had begun in the field some months earlier, development proceeded in a piecemeal fashion, adding parts of functionality as time permitted and whilst the resulting system was operable and had displayed strong data integrity, there was room for improvement in the usability of the system.

4:2 Migration of Legacy Data to the New Registration Database

This process was delayed for a long time due to the reluctance of the Commission to “release” the data from the old database server for loading into the new and the subsequent discovery that the same old database server was no longer operable. Once the server had been repaired, the migration process took around two days. The envisaged participation by representatives of the political parties in this process never took place. Another oversight in this area was the failure to integrate the pre-2001 data into the new system, which was based on pressure from the external stakeholders. This had resulted in a number of legacy applications persisting in the Voter Registration Division to allow access to this data.

4:3 Processing of Continuous Registration Data

The productivity of the registration system was good, with less than an hour or so of production downtime throughout the registration period. Apart from some initial difficulties regarding the quality of images captured, the main problem with the system had arisen when a transaction had been recorded in the field against the wrong registrant and the system had been unable to detect this.

4:4 Provision of Services to the Registration Offices

Apart from a few problems in the beginning, the section provided generally good services to the registration offices in terms of having an electronic copy of the list available. This resource had proved to be much more critical to the offices than was originally envisaged.

The Registration Offices had also developed greatly in their use of Information Technology to facilitate other areas of their work and made much more sophisticated use of the resources at their disposal than the Secretariat itself.

4:5 Integration of the MIDIS ID System

The integration of the Identification Card System had proceeded smoothly, with the principal problem being the assumption that no registrant would complete more than one form that resulted in an identification card being issued, for example a 'Change of Particulars' in addition to a 'Replacement Identification Card' application. The Identification Card System was designed in such a way that it only held details of one card per registrant at a time, which resulted in some difficulties identifying which of the forms registrants had corresponded to the identification card produced.

4:6 Production of the Disciplined Services and Non-Resident Electors' Lists

This was the single weakest area of the registration system as a whole, due to the lack of defined requirements for this area of the process. This resulted in a lot of processing being done by the Information Technology Division rather than the Voter Registration Department. The process of successive alterations of the list was never modelled in the database design. The Non-Resident Electors' List had better support in the database design and of course was much smaller, meaning that this was unproblematic.

4:7 Production of the Electoral Lists and Photographic Folios

This was unproblematic once the photographic data from 2001 had been loaded into the new system. This activity was delayed by the need to spend three weeks in analysis of the results of the fingerprint matching exercise, meaning that there was a last-minute rush to capture the pre-2001 photos of those persons not issued identification cards in 2001.

4.8 Tabulation of Statements of Poll and Calculation of Seat Allocation

Whilst the system developed to do this proved to be more resilient than any previous attempt, it was beset with problems in getting corrections made to those Statements of Poll that had been filled incorrectly. In addition, whilst some of the Returning Officers were able to reconcile their own results with those produced by the system, in no case was this done before a declaration had been made at the district level, making the whole exercise somewhat pointless. In many cases, the discrepancies arose from corrections made to the Statement of Poll after the copy had been submitted to the centre.

4.9 Recommendations

The Voter Registration Division, in addition to the rest of the Operations Department, needs to continue the process of greater involvement with and ownership of the systems produced by the Information Technology Division.

The interface to the identification card system needs to be reviewed, either in house or in conjunction with the vendor.

The legacy applications used for reporting on pre-2001 data needs to be integrated into the present system.

The process for compilation of the Disciplined Services Lists needs to be reviewed in conjunction with the representatives of the various services.

The ability of the registration system to detect when a transaction had been processed against the incorrect registrant needs to be improved.

The process for announcement of the elections results needs to be reviewed. We should either wait until the Returning Officers have had the opportunity to reconcile their own results against results calculated centrally before making district declarations, or abandon the centralized tabulation altogether, since its is the district declaration that have the force of law.

5:0 ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

5:1 Electoral Boundaries

General and Regional Elections held on the 28th August, 2006 were conducted within the country as one constituency.

This one constituency was divided into 10 polling districts, 966 divisions and 1804 divisions and sub-divisions.

With the new electoral system of geographical representation, the 10 polling districts coincide with 10 geographical constituencies.

It must be noted that the electoral boundaries that were used for the 2001 General and Regional Elections remained the same for General and Regional Elections 2006.

5:2 Identification and Selection of Polling Stations

The identification of polling stations was done against the general backdrop that **no more** than 450 electors would vote at any one polling station within a division/sub-division.

Against this general principle Returning Officers were briefed and guided about the identification process, as approved by the Commission.

Proposals relative to the locations of polling stations were submitted as early as March, 2006. These proposed locations were revised on several occasions after representations by political parties and the police with the intervention of the Logistics Department, using the criteria for selection.

In outlying districts where the populations were sparse and divisions were separated by small rivers etc, single locations were utilized for several polling stations. Additionally, in instances where there were no appropriate buildings in some polling divisions, polling stations were selected outside of the divisions. On such occasions, the appropriate publications were made in accordance with the law.

It is apposite to note that Returning Officers were forced to make last minute changes to polling stations due to objections made by some of the stakeholders.

The under mentioned number of polling stations was used for E-Day.

DISTRICT	AMOUNT
1	85
2	113
3	274
4	763
5	138
6	332
7	74
8	38
9	61
10	121
	<hr/>
TOTAL	<u>1999</u>

5:3 Organisation & Management

Polling stations were organized to be supervised by a Presiding Officer. He/she was assisted by an Assistant Presiding Officer and three Clerks.

In addition, to the Commission staff present, one police rank along with agents from the respective contesting parties, was also in attendance.

A minimum of problems was experienced during E-Day. These were related to inadequate quantities of ink, stamp pads etc. These problems were quickly resolved. The overall management of polling day was generally of a very high standard up to the close of poll.

Even at the close of poll the said professional approach prevailed. Counting in some instances took a little longer than expected. Additionally, the passage of information from the Presiding Officer to the Deputy Returning Officer took an inordinately long time for locations on the coastland. These activities can be conducted within much shorter time frames.

5:4 Security Arrangements with Particular Reference to Election Day

Sensitive as well as non-sensitive materials arrived in the various districts prior to E-Day.

Sensitive materials including Ballot Boxes were checked, labelled and properly secured in the various containers. Private security was also in place to attend to the containers.

Packed ballot boxes were removed from containers by Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers who handed over same to the Presiding Officer of the respective Polling Stations. This handing over in some cases was done at various

intervals prior to E-Day depending on the various points or destination, for example, the riverain areas and the interior and remote locations. Police were present throughout the various exercises identified above. In addition, each Polling Station was guarded either by a member of the Guyana Police Force or a Special Constable who was deployed on duty before the commencement of poll and remained on duty until after the closing of poll and the completion of the counting of the votes at the place of poll.

After the counting of the votes, police escorted the Presiding Officers with the ballot boxes and the Statements of Poll to the office of the Deputy Returning Officers and finally to the office of the Returning Officers. The Returning Officers secured the ballot boxes in containers which were guarded by police officers at the various locations.

Special Police contingents were placed on duty at the Offices of the Returning Officers. Police escorts were also provided for Returning Officers with the Statement of Poll from their respective Districts to the Chief Election Officer at GECOM Headquarters.

All ballot boxes in containers were returned to GECOM under armed Police escort. Containers parked out of GECOM compound were under armed police guard on a 24-hours basis.

Ranks of the Special Constabulary provided security at GECOM Headquarters, at the Returning Officer's Office in Region No.4 and at GECOM Annexe in Duke Street, Kingston. Guards were also deployed on all of the floors of the Command centre occupied by GECOM. Additional armed security was placed at GECOM and provided coverage for key personnel of GECOM.

5:5 Recommendations

Guard services provided by the Special Constabulary were not of the quality required by GECOM. Members of the Constabulary should be properly trained to carry out guard duties.

Consideration should be given to the establishment of a GECOM Security Guard Service to provide reliable and professional service whenever required.

6:0 LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATION

6:1 The Communication Plan

The overall communication plan aimed to ensure that:

- (a) Quick and easy communication was available at all times from centre to districts and vice versa; district to sub-district and vice versa; and from sub-district to divisions as far as practicable.
- (b) Reporting of preliminary results was done in the fastest possible time.

The achievement of the plan therefore, hinged on the establishment of a communication network utilizing HF and VHF radios and telephones.

6:2 Acquisition and Allocation of Equipment

At the beginning of 2006 the following Registration Offices had radio communication with Georgetown.

Region 1	-	Mabaruma Moruca Port Kaituma
Region 2	-	Charity Anna Regina
Region 5	-	Onverwagt
Region 7	-	Bartica Kamarang
Region 8	-	Paramakatoi Mahdia
Region 9	-	Lethem Annai
Total	-	12 Stations (HF Radios)

On hand in the GECOM Stores available for distribution were:-

- 11 VX 1700 HF Base Stations
- 2 Yaesu 600 HF Base Stations
- 5 Motorola EM 400 VHF Base Stations
- 9 Motorola EM 450 VHF Mobile

- 32 Motorola Radius SP 50 VHF Handheld

It was proposed, leading up to Elections 2006 that the following list of radios and accessories be acquired to enable the smooth and efficient flow of communication throughout Elections 2006.

- 40 HF Radios
- 40 VHF Based Stations
- 270 VHF Handheld
- 40 Power Supplies
- 60 12 V Batteries

Radios were supplied as follows:

Swansea International

- 22 Barretta 2040 HF Man-packs Radios/Accessories
- 40 Barretta 2050 HF Mobile Radios/Accessories
- 24 Yaesu 600 HF Base Station/Accessories
- 18 Motorola EM 400 BHF Base Station/Accessories
- 29 Astron Power Supply Units

Mobile Authority

270 Motorola EP 450 VHF Handheld Radios/Accessories.

An additional 100 Motorola EP 450 VHF Handheld were collected to be held as back up in case of system failure in GT & T cell field.

Caribbean Computer Systems

- 40 Motorola EM 400 VHF Base Station/Accessories
- 15 Motorola FM 450 VHF Mobile Radios/Accessories

These were then allocated as follows:

REGION	PROPOSED	FINAL ALLOCATION	REMARKS
1	5 HF (Base & Man-packs) 7 VHF Base 67 Handheld 5 Landlines	6 HF (Base & Man-pack) 1 Landline	
2	1 HF (Base)	6 HF (Base & Man-pack)	
3	7 HF (Base & Man-packs) 7 VHF Base 30 Handheld 14 Landlines 229 Cell Phones	6 HF Base 19 VHF Base 20 Handheld 4 Landlines 36 Cell Phones	
4	3 HF Base 5VHF Base 28 Handheld 56 Landlines 802 Cell Phones	5 HF (Base & Man-pack) 1 VHF Base 71 Handheld 5 Landlines 780 Cell Phones	
5	5 HF 1 VHF Base 14 Handheld 12 Landlines 802 Cell Phones	4 HF (Base & Man-pack) 2 Landlines 11 Cell Phones	
6	4 HF 1 VHF Base 29 Handheld 28 Landlines 328 Cell Phones	9 HF (Base & Man-pack) 20 Handheld 2 Landlines 28 Cell Phones	
7	4 HF 1 VHF Base 4 Handheld 3 Landlines 4 Cell Phones	8 HF (Base & Man-pack) 1 Landline	
8	7 HF	6 HF (Base & Man-pack) 1 Landline	
9	7 HF 7 VHF Base 29 Handheld 1 Landlines 15 Cell Phones	6 HF	
10	4 HF 4 VHF Base 23 Handheld 8 Landlines 82 Cell Phones	26 HF 5 Landlines 10 Cell Phones	

6:3 Training and Recruitment of Communication Staff

One training session was conducted for the Communications supervisors from each district. This session covered all aspects of setting up radios, radio use, battery checks, and antennae theory. Instructions were also given on the handling of mobile cellular telephones.

On the completion of the session, handouts and advisories were distributed to ALL participants.

6:4 Testing and Adjusting Communication Plan

The distribution of identification card exercise provided the ideal opportunity for the communication plan to be tested in a comprehensive way. However, this was only possible where cards were distributed in adequate time.

6:5 Cell Phone Distribution

District # 6 must be complimented for the detailed communications exercise conducted using telephones. Telephones were installed/issued as shown:

CELL PHONE DISTRIBUTION ELECTION 2006

DISTRICT	MOBILE	FIXED	LOCATION OF FIXED CELLS
2	70	2	Anna Regina X 2
3	160	2	Vreed-en-Hoop X 2
4	720	13	Grove 1, Paradise 1. Mahaica 1, Soesdyke 1, Duke Street 9.
5	115	4	Onverwagt 2, Ithaca 1, Fairfield 1.
6	150	5	Tarlogie 2, No. 47 Village1, Benab 1, New Amsterdam 1
7	20	1	Bartica
10	100	2	Linden
Log. Ops. Staff	20	3	K. P. Thomas Building
Secretariat & other key personnel	45		
TOTAL	1400	32	

NB: Districts 1 and 8 could not accommodate cellular transmission because of the absence of cellular stations. Districts 7 and 9 were also limited to cellular transmission in the Bartica and Lethem areas, respectively.

6:6 Use of Government Services

Considerable use was made of communication equipment owned and operated by the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Police Force, Ministry of Regional Development and Ministry of Health. Our gratitude is extended to these Ministries/Departments.

6:7 Use of Communication Facilities made available by Private Operators

Extensive use was made of private operating sets in Districts 7, 8 and 9 to relay information to and from the Returning Officers. Without the utilization of these equipment, further delays would have been experienced. Our gratitude is also extended to these businessmen.

6:8 Preliminary Results - Reporting System

The plan for reporting preliminary results was extremely simple. Returning Officer received results from Deputy Returning Officers then forwarded the results to the Logistics Operations Centre for onward passage to the Chief Election Officer. The Chief Election Officer then conveyed this information to the Information Systems Department for encoding before a print-out was made and sent to the Media Centre.

Telephones, HF and VHF radios and fax machines were installed to ensure easy transmission.

6:9 The Logistics Plan

The Logistics Operation Plan sought in the first instance to ensure that all materials and stores, both sensitive and non sensitive were delivered to Returning Officers in the correct quantities on agreed timelines and with adequate security.

Against this backdrop (40' & 20') shipping containers and containerized trucks were acquired, fitted with shelves to accommodate ballot boxes and other sensitive materials. The containerized trucks were utilized in Districts 2 & 6, since the ferry service available cannot accommodate containers.

For Districts 1, 7, 8 & 9 materials and stores were transported by aircraft. The initial movements were done at the sub-district level, checked and verified by Presiding Officers before deployment to polling stations utilizing air, land and riverain movement as the terrain dictated.

The overall deployment was successful in every aspect of the operation, since in every district, materials and stores were received at least five days prior to Election Day.

Clearly this is the bench mark we ought to maintain logistically, since it affords the Returning Officers adequate time and flexibility to efficiently manage all aspects of the preparation for E-Day.

6.10 Movement of Sensitive Materials

Movement of Sensitive Materials to the districts commenced on 2006-08-22. The table below shows the movement of sensitive materials to the various districts.

DATE	DISTRICT	LOCATIONS	TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION
2006-08-22	4	- Diamond Staff Compound - North Ruimveldt Multilateral School Compound. - Queens College Compound - Betterhope Community Centre Ground - Coldingen registration Office Compound.	Truck & Containers (2 – 40', 3 – 20' containers)
2006-08-22	7	- Bartica - Kurupung - Kamarang	Containerized Canter Truck Aircraft Aircraft
2006-08-23	2	- Charity Police Station - Anna Regina Police Station - Suddie Police Station - Aurora Police Station	Containerized Canter Trucks
2006-08-24	5	- MMA Compound- Onverwagt - Mahaicony Sec. Sch. Compound	Truck & Container (2 – 20' Containers)
2006-08-24	6	- Compound of Office of Returning Officer New Amsterdam - Wellington Park Sch. Compound - Tagore Sch. Compound	Containerized Canter Trucks
2006-08-25	10	- Constabulary Compound-McKenzie	Truck & Container (1 – 20')
2006-08-25	3	- La Grange Police Station - Office of the Returning Officer- Plantain Walk - Lenora Police Station	Truck & Container (3 – 20' Containers)
2006-08-25	1	- Mabaruma - Port Kaituma - Matthews Ridge - Moruca	Aircraft
2006-08-25	8	- Mahdia - Kopinang - Paramakatoi / Kato	Aircraft
2006-08-25	9	- Karasabai	Aircraft
2006-08-26	9	- Aishalton - Lethem	Aircraft

6:11 Preliminary Results – Statements of Poll.

The second aspect of the Logistics Operation sought to ensure that the Statements of Poll needed for the Chief Election Officer by law were delivered to the Logistics Operation Centre in the fastest possible time for collection by the Chief Election Officer and team for tabulation and delivery to the Media Centre.

To satisfy this critical election task, Logistic Clerks were deployed to all Districts in an effort to be in place on the completion of the count and the collection of Statements of Poll by the District Supervisors/Deputy Returning Officers. Ninety six per cent of the Statements of Poll were delivered to the Logistics Operation Centre by 18:00 hrs on E + 1, utilizing aircraft, boats and land movement under escort by Guyana Police Force ranks. Clearly this was a remarkable achievement taking the geography of Guyana into consideration.

6:12 Operations Centre

The third and vital aspect of Logistics Operations in the 2006 General and Regional Elections was that of the Logistics Operations Centre, which with its elaborate communications network, maintained communication contact with all districts/sub- districts throughout the period of Elections.

At the Logistics Operations Centre information relative to the state of readiness as early as at E – 5; the conduct of the poll (opening timings, incident reporting, closing of poll, commencement of count etc.); the movement of Statements of Poll and Post Electoral activities, could be easily transmitted to allow for easy tracking and managing of the operation.

This activity was successfully conducted utilizing adequate telephone (land lines fax machines, High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) radios. It was however observed that in some instances, staff members in the field were apprehensive in the use of the HF/VHF radios. This may have been the result of the lateness in the procurement of the radios to allow for extensive training.

6:13 The Process

This process was however not without hiccups as within the Logistics Operations Centre personnel found it difficult to concentrate after working 4 – 5 hours during the night taking into account that the same staff were required to work during the day and even visit other District Offices.

Another aspect was Statements of Poll were being returned to the reception area for queries. This should not have occurred since the Logistic Department's task concluded when the Statements of Poll were forwarded to the Data Entry Section.

Additionally, the smooth procedure was marred by the disappearance of Statements of Poll that had been delivered to the Information Systems Department, thus allowing room for the blame game to take effect. This resulted

in the Logistics Operations Centre having to source said documents from the respective districts.

All in all Election is always a learning experience and it should provide the opportunity for better planning in the future.

6:14 Conclusion

Logistically, the conduct of General and Regional Elections were proficiently and efficiently executed.

The only areas of concern related to:

- The late delivery of radios
- The non-rehearsal of the methodology for delivery of Statements of Poll to the Chief Election Officer (CEO) and team.

Clearly, had there been a commitment by the receiving team to conduct rehearsals prior to Election Day, all the potential links which arose would have been minimized or eradicated.

6:15 Recommendation

Even though logistically the conduct of the Regional and General Elections 2006 was excellent, it is recommended that in the future, arrangements be made to have a **Joint Operations Center** with the police in each District to ensure that the operational period E-10 to E+4 which allows for movement of materials/stores, conduct of the poll; delivery of Statements of Poll and the return of electoral materials be logistically conducted together.

This concept which embraces all the tenets of efficient delivery with a built in security component, could very well see the official declaration of results in a period of approximately forty to forty-eight hours.

7:0 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF POLLING DAY STAFF

7:1 Notification and Application

Information on the need for Polling Day Staff was made public by way of newspaper advertisement for persons to be trained for specific positions.

Application forms were made available at all offices of the Registration Officers in the districts and also at the Elections Commission. Application forms were also given to political parties for easy distribution to interested persons.

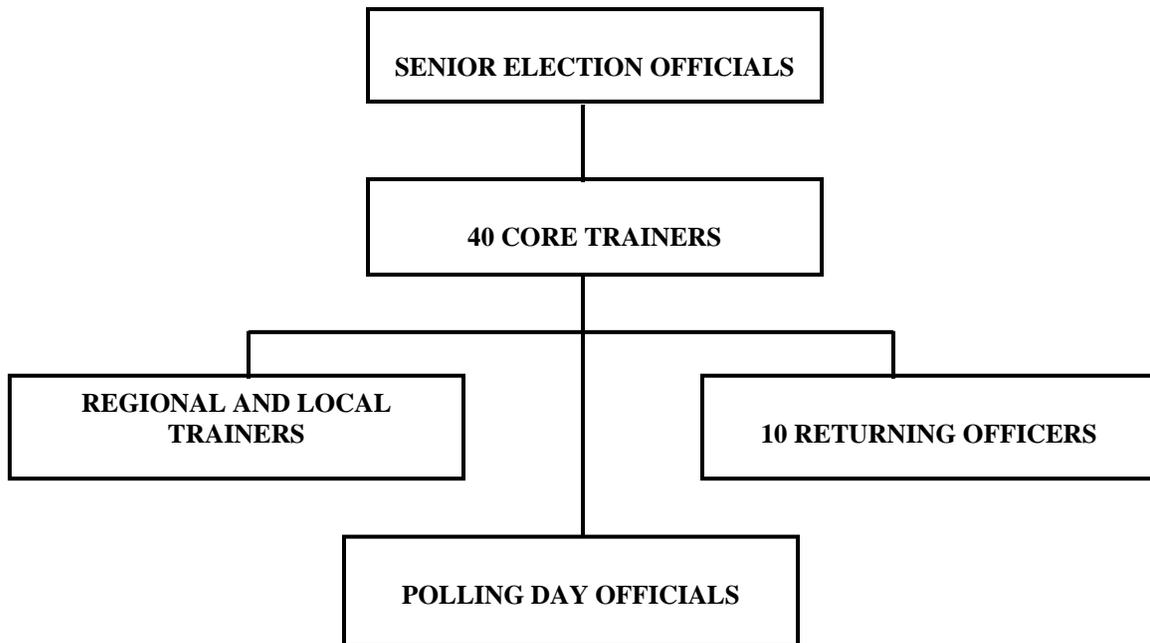
Completed forms were collected and checked to make sure that the required information was included.

Initially there was a shortfall in the required number of persons applying for the various positions. Further publicity had to be given at both the district and local levels to encourage interested persons to apply.

7:2 Training of Staff – the Cascade Model

The Methodology used was the Cascade Model as outlined hereunder:

CASCADE MODEL OF TRAINING



Trainers had to produce their own lesson plans and training aids, mostly in poster form, and they were deployed throughout all the districts.

7:3 The National Training Schedule

A Standing Committee was established to review the manuals, to plan the National Training Strategy and to monitor the quality of training activities.

The manuals were completed by the end of February, 2006 and the final draft was forwarded to the donors for printing. The manuals were of two types. These were for:

- a) Returning Officers, Deputy Returning Officers and Election Clerks; and
- b) Poll workers, (Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Counting Assistants).

Training commenced during the second weekend in May, 2006. The first to be trained was the management staff i.e. the Returning Officers, Deputy Returning Officers and Clerks, followed by Poll workers. Over eight hundred (800) management staff were trained and more than fifteen thousand (15,000) poll workers across the country.

Separate training was done for the Disciplined Forces Balloting and the Non-Resident Electors vote towards the end of the training programme. Trainers and Polling Day Staff were issued with individual training package, and materials to allow for review and follow-up work.

7:4 Criteria for the Appointment of Staff

After applications were submitted, applicants attended training sessions and completed their evaluations.

Proposals were made based on the evaluation score, qualifications and experience.

Returning Officers and staff had previous knowledge of the work capabilities of many trainees recommended as Polling Day Staff. They had knowledge of the competence, reliability, dedication and attitude to work of many trainees.

Further, many were involved in activities prior to E-Day i.e. activities relating to Claims and Objections and Photography and members of the senior staff had further knowledge of their work attitude and general commitment.

With the foregoing in mind, proposals for the various categories of Polling Day Staff were made. (See Appendix XI) for the categories of staff appointed across the country for Election, 2006.

7:5 Guidelines for the Induction of Polling Day Staff

Applicants were asked to provide, in writing, date of birth and academic qualifications to establish a fairly even playing field for training. It was found that levels of assimilation, especially in the groups of 40 – 50 persons varied

significantly and caused some discomfort at both the high achiever and slow learner levels.

- i A pre-selection was made for Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers while separate training was established for Poll Clerks and Ballot Clerks. This countered the assumption that the highest marks were automatic entitlements to the highest positions.
- ii It was recommended that young persons under the age of 25, be slotted in to the Clerical positions, while more matured persons, provided they were qualified and experienced or qualified with good leadership skills and interpersonal relations be assigned the positions of Presiding Officer and Assistant Presiding Officer.
- iii Reporting procedures were simplified as some Presiding Officers became overwhelmed towards the end of the day having to cope with irate, unruly and vociferous crowds, who in some instances wanted to hijack the ballot boxes, threatened and verbally abused the staff.
- iv More time and care was also allocated to the procurement of supplies and packing of the ballot boxes at least 48 hours before E-Day to avoid situations where absence of essential materials such as electoral ink, stamps and forms were only discovered at the opening of poll.
- v Letters of appointment for persons selected were prepared before staff took up their positions and the various amounts to be paid for their services were appropriately stated.
- vi A specific period after E-Day was set aside for the payment of staff and this was made public. Funds were available for payment at all times.
- vii Polling day staff were granted at least half-day release for the week before E-Day so that effective preparatory work was completed.

7:6 Summary

The Training Unit of the Guyana Elections Commission focused on enhancing Human Resource capacity within its institutional framework and constitutional provisions governing its operations. The primary objective of the training was to enable participants to perform more efficiently not only in the technical areas of registration and election processes, but in all aspects of management including interpersonal relationships.

The need for training and support for electoral managers and workers was probably far greater in Guyana than in more developed and better resourced

systems as the cost to the system of electoral administration by trial and error can be considerable.

With the system for the election process in place, a strategy for technical training had been developed and the relevant structures put in place. In our context, technical training cannot be treated as a one-off exercise, in fact, some aspects of technical training were continuous, especially in the training of election managers.

It must also be borne in mind, that notwithstanding every effort to attain perfection, each process was a learning experience and created the opportunity for improving the next one.

Observers agreed that our training this time around was much more performance-focused and served well to support the implementation of our programmes and ultimate goal achievement.

The cascade model of training was a sound idea and was more effective in the judicious selection of persons trained. The method of recruitment allowed persons who were not serious about the electoral process to exit at an early stage.

Only those who were serious and committed to the process were allowed to benefit from the scarce resources provided.

The positive effect overall was that more people were exposed to the process and its mechanics and therefore not only participated intelligently but hopefully educated others.

By and large through repeated role-play, the process itself was well understood and executed. However, as was noted before the closing procedures for counting and reporting was somewhat rushed in many areas.

The trainers developed a spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among themselves and demonstrated total commitment to the challenge.

8:0 CONTESTING PARTIES AND LISTS OF CANDIDATES

8:1 Political Parties

Twenty-eight (28) political parties had indicated their intention by way of letters to participate in the General and Regional Elections prior to nomination day. (See Appendix XII).

The Elections Commission promptly acknowledged all letters of intent to contest the elections and the Secretariat provided all the parties, on a timely basis, with the relevant documents relating to:

- the electoral process;
- timelines – statutory and administrative;
- statutory forms; and
- other information. (as requested by political parties)

8:2 Meetings and Workshops with Political Parties

To facilitate the confidence building process with the contesting political parties, the Chief Election Officer and the Secretariat maintained regular meetings with the Chief Scrutineers during the registration process.

These meetings were supported by two workshops at key stages. These workshops allowed the various contesting parties to gain hands on experience, ask questions and clarify areas of concern about the various stages, procedures and timelines as they relate to the electoral process.

Workshops were structured and conducted in strict adherence to the laws and regulations governing the electoral process. All participants, special invitees and guests were provided with packages containing the relevant documents, copies of the relevant laws and regulations and materials to work with.

The first workshop was on the “**NOMINATION PROCESS**” and was held on the 14th June, 2006.

Members from nineteen (19) interested parties were present. This workshop was highly interactive and observed by representatives from the Organisation of American States (OAS), Commonwealth Long Term Observer Group, the Joint International Technical Assessor and members of the various media houses. (See Appendix XIII for copy of programme of events, attendance and workshop report).

A second follow-up workshop for contesting parties was held on 10th July, 2006. This focused on the following key topics:

- The Revised List of Electors
- Correction of the Revised List of Electors
- The Nomination Process

- Disciplined Forces Balloting
- Non-Resident Electors Balloting
- Polling Places
- Formula for the allocation of seats in the National Assembly

Thirteen (13) Political Parties were represented at this workshop. Present also were members of the Organisation of American States and various media representatives. **(See Appendix XIV** for programme of events, attendance and workshop report).

In addition to the meetings and workshops, a comprehensive **advisory booklet** intended for use during the conduct of the elections was prepared and distributed to all the Political Parties, International and Local Observers and interested stakeholders. This advisory served as an easy guide on the various stages of the electoral process. It dealt with, in particular:

- Requirements of the List,
- Nomination Day Activities,
- Examination of Lists submitted,
- Functions of Party Agents,
- Compilation of Election Results,
- Allocation of Seats in the National assembly, and
- Observation of the Electoral Process.

8:3 Workshop for GECOM Staff

A workshop to facilitate GECOM staff to master activities for NOMINATION DAY was conducted on 20th July. The Nomination Day process and all the activities of the various staff and how to treat with the contesting political parties on Nomination Day was dealt with in detail. The specific topics focused on were:

- The Nomination Process,
- Requirements of the Lists,
- Defective Lists,
- Correction of Defective Lists, and
- Approval of Lists

This workshop was also attended by the International and Local Observer groups and members of the media.

8:4 Prorogation and Dissolution of Parliament

On notification that the Official List was ready and that elections preparation had accelerated, the Elections Commission informed the President of its state of readiness. On this advice, President Bharrat Jagdeo made the following proclamations. **(See Appendix XV)**

1. Dissolution of the Eight Parliament of Guyana on 2nd May, 2006;

2. Dissolution of each of the Regional Democratic Councils on 2nd May, 2006;
3. Appointed the 28th August, 2006 as the day on which election of members of the National Assembly shall be held; and
4. Appointed the 28th August, 2006 as the day on which election of members of the Regional Democratic Councils shall be held.

With the proclamations made by the President, Elections Day was announced as the 28th August, 2006 and consequently the Elections Commission declared 26th July, 2006 as Nomination Day in accordance with the legal provisions.

8:5 Nomination Day

The Elections Commission by notice published in the Official Gazette on Saturday, 23rd July, 2006 appointed Wednesday, 26th July, 2006 as Nomination Day. This was the day on which lists of candidates contesting the elections were submitted to the Chief Election Officer. In accordance with Section 10 of the Representation of the People Act, the Chief Election Officer was present on the said date and day at City Hall, Avenue of the Republic, Georgetown to receive between 14:00 and 18:00 hours, the Lists of the Candidates from the representatives of contesting parties.

The Chief Election Officer received from eleven (11) contesting parties, the lists for Geographical Constituencies, National Top-Up and Regional Elections during the specified time in the presence of the Chairman and members of the Elections Commission. Present also were representatives of the contesting political parties, local and international observers, media representatives, special invitees and the general public. **(See Appendix XVI** for the list of political parties which submitted their Lists of Candidates on Nomination Day to the Chief Election Officer).

8:6 Examination of Lists

The Chief Election Officer and staff made a careful examination of all the lists submitted in accordance with Section 13 of Cap. 1:03 and immediately informed the contesting parties of:

- The defects found on their lists, and
- The need for corrections to be done expeditiously.

8:7 Defective Lists

The Chief Election Officer wrote to the representatives of the various contesting parties specifying the defects of their lists.

Some of these were as follows:

- title of lists not stated;

- names of representatives and deputy representatives not stated as required;
- candidates gender on lists were not clearly indicated;
- gender representation requirements were not met in all cases;
- the need for additional signatories in some instances;
- identification number not stated for supporting signatories;
- addresses of Representatives and Deputy Representatives not stated;
- occupations of candidates not stated; and
- addresses of some candidates not stated.

Most of the contesting political parties submitted corrected lists in the time allocated in accordance with statutory provisions.

8:8 Approval of Lists

The Chief Election Officer submitted his report on the examination of the lists to the Elections Commission. **(See Appendix XVII)** The Elections Commission, after discussing the Chief Election Officer's report approved in accordance with Section 17 of Cap. 1:03 as follows:

1. Six (6) political parties to contest the Geographical Constituencies, National Top-up and election of the President
2. Ten (10) political parties to contest the Regional Elections.

8:9 Non-Approval of Lists

The Chief Election Officer recommended to the Elections Commission rejection of one contesting party's list, namely the "United Muslim Party", since the list failed to satisfy the statutory requirements.

The Elections Commission discussed and accepted the recommendations of the Chief Election Officer and did not approve the United Muslim Party's list.

8:10 Appeal Against Refusal to Approve Lists

The United Muslim Party appealed against the refusal to approve its list submitted on Nomination Day and requested for an extension to resubmit its list. This request, which was for time beyond the statutory period, was refused by the Chief Election Officer. The party was dissatisfied with the decision and moved by motion to the High Court to seek redress.

The High Court heard the motion and the Honourable Chief Justice dismissed the case, upholding the decision of the Elections Commission.

8:11 Approval of Symbols

In keeping with Section 16 of Cap. 1:03, representatives of lists of candidates submitted their applications for the allocation of symbols as well. The Elections Commission approved the applications for symbols for all the contesting parties.

8:12 Election Agents

In accordance with section 23(1) of Cap. 1:03, the representative of each list of candidates gave notice in writing to the Chief Election Officer appointing their Election Agents.

The Elections Commission provided photo identification for the Election Agents and duly appointed Candidates for the various contesting political parties. Non-photo identification cards were also provided for the Assistant Election Agents, Counting Agents and Polling agents.

8:13 Publication of List of Candidates

In accordance with section 19 of Cap. 1:03, the Elections Commission published on Wednesday, 2nd August, 2006 in the Official Gazette, the titles and symbols of the approved lists to contest the General and Regional Elections to be held on Monday 28th August, 2006.

8:14 Interaction among the Political Parties, Commission and the Secretariat

Elections 2006 saw intense interaction among the Elections Commission, its Secretariat, Political Parties, interest groups and local and international observer missions.

At the District level, parties' scrutineers and agents' interacted closely with the Registration and Returning Officers.

The Chief Election Officer, together with the Secretariat, interacted with the parties' election agents while the Chairman and Commissioners met with the various party delegations thereby bringing them up-to-date with the electoral schedule, plans and activities.

It is recommended that the relationship developed be maintained and even be strengthened after the elections.

9:0 PUBLICITY/VOTER AWARENESS AND VOTER EDUCATION

9:1 Objectives of the Voter Education Programme

The main objectives of the Civic and Voter Education Division were:

- To disseminate accurate information pertinent to the electoral process using appropriate media;
- To motivate people to vote as they wish;
- To inform people of the voting process;
- To assure voters of the secrecy of their votes.

During the Elections period, the Civic and Voter Education Division (C/VE) operated within the Operations Department and was managed by the Civic and Voter Education Officer from 17th July, 2006. This was a result of the Civic and Voter Education Manager being appointed as Returning Officer for District 3.

The C/VE Division was able to complete approximately ninety percent of its proposed programme on time for the holding of the General and Regional Elections, 2006.

Staff members identified as Civic and Voter Education Assistants from the Central office and those attached to five District offices assisted in the conduct of the activities with assistance also being provided by staff in the various Districts.

9:2 Activities

The following activities were successfully executed:

9:2.1 Provision of Materials to promote the electoral process:-

- **Billboards** – All existing Billboards which were used to advertise the Continuous Registration Process, were refaced to reflect the importance of voting and to provide encouragement to all electors to cast their ballots. Fifty Billboards were refaced and reinstalled in Regions No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.
- **Cloth Banners** – One hundred were produced and mounted around the country at appropriate locations and in convenient positions.
- **Posters** – Two thousand were produced and distributed among the Returning Officers from the various Districts.
- **Brochures and Fliers** – Seventy-five thousand brochures and two hundred thousand fliers were printed and distributed throughout the country, through the various Returning and Registration Offices. The **UNDP** was partly responsible for the realization of this large amount.

- **T- Shirts with GECOM Logo** – Four thousand were originally ordered by the C/VE Division. **UNDP** augmented this quantity.

9:2.2 Contracting the Theatrical Group

The Division contracted a theatrical group consisting of several of Guyana's main actors. This group, under the leadership of Henry Rodney, a seasoned and well known local actor and stand-up comedian, visited Districts 2, 3, 4,5,6,7 and 10, where the actors performed several skits, demonstrating the Voting Process to the general public at locations identified mainly by the Returning Officers of the Districts.

Members of the theatrical groups utilized their artistic expertise to capture the attention of their audiences. They were unable to visit Districts 1 and 9 because of the unavailable flights to these Districts. Extra venues in other Districts were eventually chosen to complete the number of performances.

Regular contacts were maintained between the C/VE Officer and field staff to ensure that plans were properly executed.

9:2.3 Video Taping of the Voting Process

The theatrical group's performances were taped at the Swansea Studios. These performances highlighted the Voting Process. The group was however, not immediately available to correct certain scenes on the tape, because of their packed Election Caravan road schedule.

When this was eventually done, it was decided not to use the tape on Television, since there was a version of the Voting process being aired regularly, and there were some differences. It was thought that the use of the tape would have confused the general public.

Two hundred copies of the tape were, however, made and given to Returning Officers for distribution to Deputy Returning Officers for the purpose of training Polling Day Staff.

9:3 Training Programme

C/VE personnel were utilized at some training venues for Election Day Staff as well as those for Returning Officers and their support staff.

The C/VE Division was mainly responsible for the encoding of scores from the various evaluations that were done at different Training Centers throughout the period leading up to the Elections.

9:4 Polling Day Activities

Two C/VE staff members from the main office were deployed to make checks at several Polling Stations throughout Polling Day in District 4 while others operated from the Command Centre assisting the support staff that was stationed there. The C/VE Assistants in the various other Districts also assisted in checking and reporting on activities at various Polling Stations.

9:5 Post-Poll Activities

Members of Staff of the C/VE Division assisted in the encoding and verification of the Statements of Poll that were delivered to the Commission from all Polling Stations throughout the Ten Polling Districts.

In some Districts, C/VE Assistants removed Fliers, Banners and Posters from Public places and other locations that were used by Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers. Other election officials completed this task in the Districts where there were no C/VE Assistants.

9:6 Summary

The plan for the C/VE programme for the 2006 General and Regional Elections was conceptualized after critically analyzing the various reports prepared and submitted by consultants and other personnel who were involved in the various elections culminating with the 2001 General and Regional Elections.

The attachment of a consultant to GECOM from IFES provided some pertinent guidelines.

A short attachment to Elections and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad and Tobago also provided appropriate guidelines.

These, together with inputs from the Chairman, Commissioners, the CEO and other senior staff of GECOM formed the basis for the structure of the plan for the Civic and Voter Education for the Elections.

The implementation of the plan was met with some difficulties and there were a few instances where the planned activities were somewhat late. They were, however, eventually conducted. It was generally felt that the programme was conducted with an appropriate level of success.

9:7 Recommendations

- ♦ A specific officer should be responsible for the C/VE activities in every District during the Election phase.
- ♦ Civic and Voter Education activities should be more intense in the remote Districts.
- ♦ There should be closer collaboration between the C/VE Division and the Public Relations Section during the Election period.
- ♦ No one agency should be allowed the monopoly to produce related advertisements for GECOM during the election phase. There should be a variety of agencies involved in production.

10:0 REPORT ON PUBLIC RELATION ACTIVITIES

10:1 Introduction

Cognisant of recommendations emerging from the 2001 General and Regional Elections, and acknowledging that public enlightenment is a necessary requirement for the creation and maintenance of mutually favourable relationships between the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and its various categories of stakeholders the Commission established a permanent Public Relations Unit since November, 2001.

Acting under the direction of the Commission, the Public Relations Unit is responsible for providing all stakeholders with fair and comprehensive account of GECOM's policies and activities with timeliness, thoroughness and accuracy.

The primary purpose of dissemination of information by the Public Relations Unit is to serve general welfare by informing people about the policies and activities of the Commission, thereby enabling them to make informed judgements on the relevant issues affecting them individually and collectively. Complying with the public's right to know of events regarding the execution of the responsibilities of the Commission is the overriding mission of its Public Relations Section.

In Guyana, where social stability rests (partially) upon the agreement of the people that elections are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner, it is essential that the Public Relations Unit, as the medium through which information is released to the public, maintains high standards of efficiency, impartiality and integrity. Accordingly, the Public Relations Unit of GECOM sought to promote confidence among the Commission's stakeholders by complying with the foregoing principles and requirements as they related to create awareness about the legislation, structure, process, mechanism and benefits of the systems that are used for conducting National Registration and for administering the 2006 General and Regional Elections in Guyana.

10:2 Objective

To professionally create, enhance and maintain a favourable public image for GECOM via the timely dissemination of accurate information about the legislation, structure, process, and benefits of the systems that are used for conducting National Registration and for administering the 2006 General and Regional Elections in Guyana through every accessible media.

10:3 Scope

- Promoting confidence among the electorate and other stakeholders that GECOM is committed to the execution of its mandate, during the

preparations for and the conduct of the 2006 General and Regional Elections in Guyana, in a commonly acceptable manner.

- Ensuring that the functional capacity of the Public Relations Unit of GECOM is fully geared to execute its functions in accordance with the policies, programmes, projects and activities of the Commission and its Secretariat.

10:4 Structure of the Public Relations Unit

The GECOM Public Relations Unit is staffed by a full-time Public Relations Officer, Mr. Vishnu Persaud, who manages the Unit under the direct supervision of the Chairman of the Commission. The Unit is outfitted with the following equipment:-

- One desk top computer
- One lap top computer
- One printer
- One scanner and one facsimile machine with independent telephone line.
- One television set
- One video cassette recorder
- Accessibility to photocopying facilities
- One audio tape recorder
- One mini-audio tape recorder
- One direct telephone line
- One internal telephone line
- Rules of Procedure for Public Relations

Additionally, the Unit was provided with copies of all three of the daily local newspapers i.e. Kaieteur News, Stabroek News and Guyana Chronicle.

10:5 Key Responsibilities and Activities

1. Enhancing/maintaining existing cordial relationships between GECOM and the news media.
2. Preparing and issuing timely/factual media advisories/releases regarding the policies, programmes and projects of GECOM.
3. Organising Press Conferences and Media Briefings.
4. Preparing Media Statements for use by GECOM's Chairman at Media Conferences/Briefings
5. Organising media coverage for GECOM's in-house and field activities.
6. Maintenance of the GECOM Website in order that all stakeholders in Guyana and the diaspora are afforded the privilege of scrutinizing the policies, programmes, projects and activities of the Commission first hand.

7. Monitoring of the daily newspapers for articles about GECOM and correcting inaccuracies by way of Letters to the Editor of the respective newspapers as necessary.
8. Attending to telephonic queries from various stakeholders including Political parties, Electors, media representatives and research students.
9. Supporting the Voter and Civic Education efforts of the Commission during Continuous Registration and preparations for elections.
10. Liaising with Advertising Agencies regarding the development, production and broadcast of infomercials pertaining to Continuous Registration and the 2006 General and Regional Elections, including the implementation of various aspect of the relevant processes.
11. Liaising with the print media regarding the publication of advertisements pertaining to Continuous Registration and the 2006 General and Regional Elections, including the implementation of various aspect of the relevant processes.
12. Production of a brochure titled "What Every Voter Must Know About Elections and Voting in Guyana". This was done in consultation with Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, Joint International Technical Assessor (JITA).
13. Creating a library of newspaper clippings, video recording and still photographs relating to matters associated with GECOM.
14. Liaising with the diplomatic Community, non-governmental and private sector organisations on matters falling within the purview of the Commission.

10:6 Specific Promotional Activities Associated with National Registration and Elections

1. One infomercial aimed at creating awareness about the commencement of Continuous Registration was produced and broadcast on radio and television.
2. Twenty infomercials aimed at creating awareness about the location of Registration Offices/Sub-Offices were produced and broadcast on radio and television.
3. Six interactive infomercials aimed at creating awareness about various aspects of the registration process were produced and broadcast on radio and television.
4. One infomercial aimed at creating awareness about the Claims and Objections processes was produced and broadcast on radio and television.

5. Twenty infomercials aimed at creating awareness about the location of Registration Offices/Sub-Offices where Claims and Objections could be made were produced and broadcast on radio and television.
6. Two infomercials aimed at creating awareness about the Claims process and the Objections process were produced and broadcast on radio and television.
7. Two infomercials aimed at creating awareness about the extension of the Claims and Objections processes were produced and broadcast on radio and television.
8. One infomercial aimed at creating awareness about the distribution of National Identification Cards was produced and broadcast on radio and television.
9. Eight interactive infomercials aimed at creating awareness about various aspects of the elections process were produced and broadcast on radio and television.
10. 75,000 copies of a brochure titled "What Every Voter Must Know About Elections and Voting in Guyana" was produced and distributed countrywide.
11. 100,000 copies of a flyer titled "Safeguards Aimed at Preventing Multiple Voting and Other Forms of Skulduggery on Election Day" was produced and distributed countrywide.
12. 100,000 copies of a flyer publicizing information on the procedure for "Close of the Poll" and the need for electors to know their respective Polling Stations before Elections Day was produced and distributed countrywide.

10:7 GECOM Website

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) launched its Website in December 2005 as a means of making relevant information available to Stakeholders on a permanent basis. The website consists of two main components. One part covers basic information about Guyana, the Guyana Elections Commission, Guyana Elections and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). The other part covers Media Centre, Handbooks/Manuals, Past Elections Results and Feedback. The material content is based mainly on statutory provisions and information extracted from printed materials, which include almost all of the publications of GECOM and such other textual material relevant to the operations of the Commission.

The composition of the website was done internally at GECOM with emphasis being placed on its being user friendly. A standard method of interfacing from summary topics to different levels of details is adopted. Horizontal and vertical navigation at various levels are provided for instantaneous movement amongst the variety of data views available on this website. Additionally, one could return

to the home page by simply clicking on the HOME icon provided on every page of the site. Our website's address is <http://www.gecom.org.gy>

The design and construction of the GECOM website was made possible with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is being hosted and maintained by DevNet, a non-governmental non-profit organisation created by the Sustainable Development Network Programme project in Guyana to work in the field of ICT for development.

Since its establishment, all media releases are uploaded to the Media Releases page where they could be accessed by stakeholders locally and in the Diaspora. In addition, a large number of stakeholders have sought and received information, through the feedback facility of the website, about various matters associated with National Registration and elections in Guyana.

10:8 GECOM Media Centre

GECOM established a Media Centre at the Savannah Suite of the Le Meridien Pegasus where the Chairman and Chief Election Officer gave scheduled and unscheduled public updates on the conduct of the 2006 General and Regional Elections, and of the accumulating totals of votes cast for each of the ten political parties contesting the elections.

The Media Centre was outfitted with the necessary human resources and electronic equipment to facilitate broadcast of the accumulating results, via television, on a 24 hour-basis until the declaration of the final results of the elections by the Chief Election Officer.

10:9 Observations

- The operations of the Public Relations Unit have been instrumental in contributing to creating general public awareness about the registration and elections processes in addition to placing specific and continuous focusing on enhancing the image of GECOM. These efforts formed a strategic part of the cohesive drive by GECOM and its Secretariat towards delivering the 2006 General and Regional Elections in which could withstand local and international scrutiny. However, the successful conduct of the elections and the high degree to which the reputation of the Commission/Secretariat climbed was marred significantly by two specific internal post election transgressions associated with payment of Polling Day staff i.e. (i) Ballot Clerks/Poll Clerks who were appointed at the rate of G\$25,000. for working on Polling Day were paid G\$20,000. instead, and (ii) a large number of Polling Day staff remained unpaid more than three weeks after Election Day. Both of these misdemeanors hold great potential to tarnish the recently improved image of GECOM.

- In several instances the Public Relations Unit was not made aware of certain managerial decision and was therefore unable to respond adequately to relevant external queries, especially from the media. Some examples of these are (i) the decision to keep some registration Sub-Offices beyond the date when they were to have been closed; and (ii) the review and change of the opening hours of the Registration Offices/Sub-Offices; (iii) the error resulting in the short payment of Ballot Clerks/Poll Clerks and the relevant solution; and (v) the problems(s) associated with the non-payment of Polling Day staff and the relevant corrective action(s).

10:10 Recommendation

- In general the Commission and Management Staff of the Secretariat must ensure that pivotal tasks associated with National Registration and more particularly the General and Regional Elections are planned and implemented with due efficiency. Every effort should be made so that the responsibility for the various tasks are placed in staff whose competence are beyond doubt.
- The Public Relations Unit is the “Ears, Nose and Tongue” of the Commission and its Secretariat. This means that it is the Unit’s responsibility to scan the external and internal environment to identify possible problematic areas which could be hazardous to the image of the Commission and to take relevant corrective action. It follows therefore that it is essential that the Public Relations Unit be made aware, on a timely basis, of all of the strategic organizational policies/activities/changes as well as problematics and solutions that emerge during the operations of the organisation. This will ensure that the Unit is in a sustained state of preparedness to uphold the good image of GECOM and its Secretariat.

11:0 REPORT ON DISCIPLINED FORCES BALLOTING AND NON-RESIDENT BALLOTING

The Representation of the People Act Chapter 103, Sections 65 H and K made provisions for members of the Disciplined Forces to exercise their right to vote not more than ten days earlier than Elections Day or not later than five days before Elections Day. In keeping with the above, Monday, August 21, 2006 was appointed for the conduct of the Disciplined Forces Balloting by the Guyana Elections Commission. In an effort to ensure the effective conduct of this exercise, a number of activities were put in place.

These included:-

- (1) Appointment of Ballot Officers.
- (2) Extraction of the List of Members of the Disciplined Forces from the Official List of Electors.
- (3) Training and Briefing of Ballot Attendants and Clerks.
- (4) Sensitization of ranks of the Disciplined Forces.
- (5) Packing of Ballot Boxes and Ballot Envelopes.
- (6) Conduct of Disciplined Forces Balloting.
- (7) Return of Ballot Boxes and Supplies.
- (8) Sorting of Ballots as per District.

11:1 Appointment Of Ballot Officers

The Chief Election Officer appointed for each Disciplined Force, Ballot Officers as follows:

- (a) Gurdat Persaud - Guyana Prison Service
- (b) Joseph Gilgeous - Guyana Defence Force
- (c) Roxanne Lewi - Guyana Police Force

11:2 Extraction of List/Identification of Ballot Places

Each Disciplined Force appointed a representative to liaise with the respective Ballot Officers. The Prisons Service was represented by Senior Superintendent, Mr. Colin Howard, the Guyana Defence Force by Major Daniels and the Guyana Police Force by Senior Superintendent, Mr. Fraser. The various representatives presented lists of persons employed within the particular service to the Ballot

Officers. The Ballot Officers then with the help of the Information Technology Department extracted the names from the Official List of Electors. In some cases, names of persons could not be found and after proper checks were made, a list for each Disciplined Force was extracted and certified. Each representative also identified Ballot Places for the respective Disciplined Forces. In most cases Police, Prison and Military locations were identified. In some cases members of the Disciplined Forces chose to vote on election day and as such these names were not extracted.

A copy of each list was issued to the representative who endorsed same after careful scrutiny using the List of Electors for each location. The Ballot Officers prepared Lists of Electors as per Ballot Places for each District. These lists were posted outside the Ballot Stations so identified, for the members of the Disciplined Forces benefit.

11:3 Training and Briefing of Prospective Ballot Attendants and Clerks

Training of prospective Ballot Attendants and Clerks was held on Thursday, August 10, 2006 at St Joseph High School at 08:30 hours. At the end of the session, a written evaluation was done by all participants. This was marked by the Ballot Officers and persons were identified to serve as Ballot Attendants and Clerks based on their performance and proximity to the Ballot places identified.

A final briefing session was held on Friday, August 18, 2006 at 08:30 hours at St Joseph High School for all persons identified.

11:4 Sensitization of Disciplined Forces

A number of sensitization activities, conducted by the three ballot officers were held with members of the Disciplined Forces at various locations. These activities were to sensitize them of the procedures relating to the conduct of the Disciplined Forces Balloting. At these sessions advisories pertaining to the voting procedure for Disciplined Forces Balloting, were issued to officers in charge for distribution to all Ranks. However, because of time constraints, the sessions scheduled for Bartica Police Station and Anna Regina Police Station could not be held as scheduled.

(See Appendix XVIII)

11:5 Packing of Ballot Envelopes and Ballot Boxes

Packing of ballot envelopes for the members of the Disciplined Forces was conducted and completed by 22:00 hours on 15th August 2006. Ballot Officers, Core Trainers and members of the Elections Commission staff carried out this activity in the presence of party representatives. Adequate electoral materials were packed by staff of the stores. On Friday August 18, 2006 after their briefing session at St Joseph High School, Ballot Attendants travelled to the Secretariat

where they checked all materials as well as ballots in envelopes to verify that their supplies were accurate and that everything was in order before sealing the ballot boxes for their ballot stations. Each Ballot Attendant was required to check the ballot envelopes and ballot papers against the list for their ballot stations.

Arrangements were also put in place for the transportation of ballot boxes and staff to their respective locations. Flight arrangements were also made for the interior locations.

11:6 Conduct of Disciplined Forces Balloting

With the exception of the ballot stations located at Timehri Prisons Administrative Building, Camp Stephenson and the Coast Guard, which were opened after 06:00 hours all other Ballot Stations were opened promptly at 06:00 hours. Cell phones were supplied to the Ballot Attendants and the Ballot Officers who maintained contact with Ballot Stations at regular intervals throughout the day via this medium. In addition, the Ballot Officer made several visits to monitor and supervise the conduct of the process at several Ballot Stations as follows:

- Georgetown Prison Officer's Sports Club
- Brickdam Police Station
- La Grange Police Station
- Ruimveldt Police Station
- Leonara Police Station
- Agriculture Corps, Garden of Eden
- Camp Seweyo
- Camp Stephenson
- Timehri Police Station
- Timehri Prisons
- Wismar Police Station
- Linden Police Station
- Coast Guard Ruimveldt
- Camp Ayangana
- Eve Leary
- Cove & John Police Station
- Lusignan Prison

There were four (4) mobile ballot stations that were used for interior locations. At all the Ballot Stations for members of the Disciplined Forces, the voting process was conducted very smoothly. However, there was a reluctance by some ranks to accept their ballot because they felt that the ballot paper should have been first stamped with the official mark before being issued to them. Nevertheless, they completed the process when the procedure was carefully explained to them.

11:7 Return of Ballot Boxes and Supplies

All ballot boxes and supplies were returned to the Commission under police escort by the Ballot Attendants. These boxes, after being examined by the Ballot Officers and GECOM Security Officer and were found to be properly sealed and all else intact, were handed to the supervisor of GECOM Stores section for security and safe storage in a container reserved for that purpose. **(See Appendix XIX** for date and time of return of Ballot Boxes)

11:8 Sorting of Ballots as per Districts

On Friday, 25th August, 2006, all the Disciplined Forces ballot boxes were taken out and placed in the Conference Hall of Elections Commission for sorting. This was done in the presence of political parties. Each ballot box was opened and the envelopes for each district were placed separately into a ballot box assigned for each district. Some districts had more than one Ballot Box. When this was completed each ballot box was sealed for transportation to the returning Officers. The boxes were then transported to the polling stations so identified for the official mark to be stamped on the ballots and placed in the Ballot Box of that polling station for the ballots to be counted there. **(See Appendix XX** for summary of Voting By Disciplined Services)

11:9 Non-Resident Balloting

The Guyana Elections Commission commenced the process of Continuous Registration on October 17, 2005. This process provided easier access to registration of persons seventeen (17) years and older on March 31, 2006.

In order to facilitate the Non Resident registration (i.e persons who would have been seventeen (17) years and over by March 31, 2006) the Guyana Elections Commission through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed all Heads of Mission to provide the names of all eligible persons for their respective Missions.

These missions/embassies included:

- Brazil, Belgium, Toronto, Ottawa, Nickerie, China, Cuba,
- India, Paramaribo, Venezuela,
- Permanent Mission to the United Nations,
- Washington DC, Consulate General, New York,
- London.

On January 30, 2006 the Guyana Elections Commission through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supplied to each mission/embassy packages with registration documents for approved persons who qualified to be registered and their names would not have appeared on the 2001 List of Electors. These included:

1. Specimen forms providing instructions on how to complete the various forms.
2. Transaction forms for:
 - ◆ New Registrants (NR 1);
 - ◆ Change/Correction to particulars (NR 2);
 - ◆ Replacement of loss Identification Card (NR 3);
 - ◆ Transfers (NR 4);
 - ◆ Oath of Office for Registration Officials;
 - ◆ Manual for Continuous Registration;
 - ◆ Guidelines for the completion of Non Resident Registration Forms;
 - ◆ Officials List of Electors – 2001;
 - ◆ Statutory Declaration Forms
 - ◆ Finger Print Pad
 - ◆ Memorandum for the registration of qualified registrants.

The Commission appointed Ms. Venice Douglas as the Ballot Officer for voting by Non Resident Electors. Packages were returned with completed forms which were checked and processed. Nine (9) new National Identification Cards were produced and one (1) replacement. The Commission then compiled the Preliminary List of Non Resident Electors for each mission/embassy. The Commission began its Claims and Objections on May 2, 2006. Packages were prepared and dispatched to each mission/embassy with copies of Preliminary Lists of Non Resident Electors for posting along with a memorandum and manual for the Claims and Objections exercise.

Registration packages were returned on May 29, 2006 and the Commission embarked on preparing a Revised List of Non Resident Electors. There was a total of sixty-eight (68) Non Resident Electors. Mr. Ronald Gajraj and Ms. Bonita Insanally requested to have their ballots cast at home.

The Commission then checked the Revised List of Non Resident Electors to ascertain the geographic ballot papers to be issued to the various embassies/missions. The number of Non Resident Electors on the list now became sixty-six (66) and the geographic ballot papers to be issued were as follows:

District # 4	-	58
District # 5	-	4
District # 6	-	1
District # 10	-	2

in the presence of the representatives of the political parties listed below:

Ms. C. Smith	-	Alliance For Change (AFC)
Ms. N. Mohamed	-	Justice For All Party (JFAP)
Ms. S. Thomas	-	Liberal Democrats (LD)
Mr. J. Hamilton	-	People's National Congress Reform – 1Guyana (PNCR-1G)
Mr. V. Hussain	-	People Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)
Mr. V. Lowe	-	The United Force (TUF)

Packages with electoral materials included:

1. Official List of Electors
2. Form 1 Oath of Election Officer
3. Form 13 Poll Book
4. Form 14 Declaration of Identity
5. Form 15 Directions of Voting
6. Form 16 Receipt of Ballot Envelopes
7. Form 17 Ballot Paper Account
8. Form 17 A Ballot Envelope Account
9. Ballot Paper and Envelope in Envelope

10. Letter, supporting documents and timeframes for package to reach the Chief Election Officer was dispatched to Missions through DHL Shipping.

A total of thirteen (13) packages were sent to the missions/embassies. Eleven (11) packages were received from Missions for the period 21-08-2006 to 27-08-2006.

Below are the dates and missions from which packages were received.

MISSION	PACKAGE RECEIVED	DATE	TIME
Canada Ottawa	1	21/08/2006	08:45 hrs
Canada Ottawa	1	22/08/2006	10:40 hrs
Consulate General USA	1	23/08/2006	08:35 hrs
Nickeri Paramaribo	1	23/08/2006	08:50 hrs
Canada Toronto	1	24/08/2006	10:05 hrs
Brussels	1	25/08/2006	09:20 hrs
Permanent Mission to UN	1	25/08/2006	10:15 hrs
Washington DC	1	25/08/2006	10:15 hrs
London	1	25/08/2006	10:15 hrs
Venezuela	1	27/08/2006	15:35 hrs
China	1	27/08/2006	15:35 hrs
Brazil	1	04/09/2006	
Cuba	1	04/09/2006	

Ms. V. Douglas was authorized to open each packet in the presence of the following stakeholders.

Stakeholders representatives were as follows:

- R. Kirton - Guyana Bar Association/EAB
- W. Patterson - PNCR-1G
- A. Collymore - TUF
- D. Wiltshire - GAP/ROAR

A total of fifty-nine (59) envelopes were received from the missions/embassies with fifty-eight (58) being sealed and one (1) unsealed stating that the elector is not at the mission at present.

Envelopes for the respective districts were sorted and placed in large envelopes and dispatch to districts for intermixing.

- District # 4 - 52
- District # 5 - 04
- District # 10 - 02

TOTAL 58

Two packages were received from Brazil and Cuba on the 4th September, 2006. Packages and unsealed envelopes are with the Chief Election Officer.

NB: The package from Ballot Officer of India is still outstanding.

12:0 MANAGEMENT OF POLLING DAY ACTIVITIES AND DECLARATION OF RESULTS

12:1 Preparation for Polling Day Activities

The focus of all planning, all preparation, all recruitment and training, materials production and equipment acquisition, system testing and other preparatory activities engaged in by the Secretariat was to ensure that operations on voting day run smoothly.

The main activities in the final stages of preparation were:

- (a) Distributing polling station materials in a timely manner for election day;
- (b) Checking by Presiding Officers and Polling Day Staff to ensure that all materials and equipment required for the conduct of the Poll have been delivered in adequate quantities and in good condition;
- (c) Ensuring that all Polling Officials had arranged transport to and from their polling stations; and
- (d) Reviewing contingency plans for polling day and establishing back-up systems for problems arising from deficiencies in materials, polling station availability, and access in relation to staffing.

In order to manage the activities effectively on polling day, staff had to implement the following procedures:

- (a) Control voter entry in order to ensure a smooth flow of voters through the polling station;
- (b) Check each intending voter to identify and to determine eligibility to vote at that polling station;
- (c) Record all pertinent information of persons who had voted
- (d) Ensure the efficient use of ballot papers issued to voters and maintain vigilance over secrecy of the vote as well as security of voting materials;
- (e) Provide relevant information in a proactive manner, and, where required, assistance to voters; and
- (f) Provide advice and guidance to persons who are apparently not registered, or not listed to vote at that polling station.

12:2 Opening of the Poll

In all cases, preparations for the opening of the Poll were supervised by Presiding Officers in the presence of polling day staff, Polling Agents and security personnel. In some cases members of the local and international observers groups were also present. At 06.00 hrs the procedures as outlined in the statutes were adhered to and the Poll was declared open by the Presiding Officer. This activity was witnessed by all present.

Immediately following the opening of the poll, reports were received at the Secretariat of personnel gaps at some polling stations and of shortage of materials at others. Back-up systems were activated and most if not all were streamlined by 08.00 hrs. By this time also, many people had already cast their ballots at the one thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine (1,999) polling stations

across the country. These electors included many who had to work and those who wanted to vote early.

12:3 Monitoring and Reporting

Polling Day was declared a national holiday and alcohol sales was prohibited. Voters were encouraged to return home early after voting and await the results. The weather was good with mainly sunshine and some light scattered showers.

Polling hours were from 06:00 hrs to 18:00 hrs. Voters however had queued up at many polling stations by 5:00 hrs so as to vote early. During the morning hours most polling stations had queues and by lunchtime many voters had cast their votes. Voting was orderly and peaceful.

The Secretariat staff visited polling stations in several areas providing support to ensure that voters were provided with an efficient, courteous service of high integrity. Of significance was:

- the designation of staff to visit every polling station in District Four(4) during polling day. Most polling stations received multiple visits by the close of poll.
- Each Presiding Officer and all roving Secretariat Staff were provided with cellular phones or radio sets to communicate with the Secretariat as needed. This communication network was effectively used by staff to inform the Secretariat of the day's proceedings as they happened which facilitated timely reporting of any shortages or problems and the rapid resolution as they arose.

Contesting Parties' candidates or representatives, and local and international observers were also involved in the monitoring exercise. Such involvement was intended to enhance the transparency of the voting process and served as a safeguard against errors on the part of the officials as well as partisan practices on the part of the other participants in the election.

On the basis of this monitoring exercise, periodic reports were provided at both the District and Secretariat levels. Such reports provided the necessary feedback for forward planning as the poll advanced, as well as for security purpose.

12:4 Casting of Disciplined Forces and Non-Resident Ballots

Each Disciplined Force and Non-Resident elector was supplied with an envelope which stated his name, polling division and polling district. The elector's envelope contained his ballot paper and another unsealed envelope. The elector then proceeded to the voting compartment to make his mark for a party of his choice. After doing so, he immediately placed the marked ballot in the unsealed envelope which had only the words "Polling District No." on it. He sealed the envelope and placed same in the ballot box.

The Ballot Attendant transmitted the ballot boxes to the Ballot Officer who in turn transmitted same to the Chief Election Officer for safe custody.

Two days before Election Day, the envelopes with the ballots cast therein were sorted in the presence of the parties agents and representatives. Each envelope was placed in a packet for the relevant geographical constituency.

In accordance with Representation of the People Act (Amendment No. 2) Act 2 of 2001, the Elections Commission published the names of polling stations in each polling district where the sealed envelopes with the cast ballots were sent by the Returning Officers for the votes to be cast before the close of poll.

On Election Day, the Chief Election Officer dispatched all ballot boxes which contained the **sealed** envelopes with the ballots for the respective geographical constituencies.

The Returning Officer's representative then delivered to the respective Presiding Officer, the boxes with the sealed envelopes for each area.

In the presence of the Polling Agents, the Presiding Officer verified and recorded the number of envelopes with the ballots before casting the ballots contained therein at each polling station.

The Presiding Officer at a convenient time during the hours of poll, then removed one envelope at a time and opened same in such a way as to guarantee the secrecy of the vote. The Presiding Officer ensured that the official mark "the six digit stamp" was stamped on all ballot papers. He then placed the ballot papers in the ballot box to be mixed with other residents' ballots for that polling station until the time of counting.

12:5 Casting of Votes by Proxy.

The law provides for no more than one person to be appointed to vote as proxy on behalf of not more than two persons. The person who is appointed to vote as a proxy must be entitled to vote at the same polling station at which the elector on whose behalf his appointment is sought is entitled to vote and shall do so at the same time as he votes on his own behalf.

The voter who presents him/herself at the polling station will indicate to the Poll Clerk that s/he will be voting for him/herself and will also be casting a proxy vote(s). It is the responsibility of the voter to present all documents, including the identification card of the person for whom he/she is voting, to the Presiding Officer.

When the Presiding Officer is satisfied that all documents are in order, he will grant permission for the voting process to be completed.

Officials as well as agents of parties present will tick on the voter's list, the names of the voters and the person(s) for whom they have voted at the polling station.

12:6 Closing of the Poll

The Poll was closed at 18.00 hrs or 6.00 p.m. at all locations throughout the country. Only persons in the queue at 6.00pm were allowed to vote. Extra care was taken to ensure that equitable treatment of voters already queued to vote at closing time was in place.

After the final voter had cast his/her ballot the polling stations were cleared of everyone except the Presiding Officer and staff, election and polling agents the on-duty police officer and the local and international observers. The doors were closed and the ballot boxes were sealed in the presence of those authorized to be there.

After the close of Poll, staff commenced the paper work accounting for ballot papers. Form 23 was completed by each Presiding Officer who had to:

- Count spoiled, ordinary and tendered ballot papers;
- Count used, ordinary and tendered ballot papers;
- Count unused, ordinary and tendered ballot papers;
- Account for all ballot papers supplied;

Form 23 was kept by the Presiding Officer until the “Count” was completed. After the count the Presiding Officer then recorded on Form 23 the number of ballot papers in the ballot box. This account was then signed by the Presiding Officer, polling day staff and the party agents and then placed in a special envelope for transmission to the returning Officer.

Staff then focused on the collection and security of all accountable voting materials.

Staff had been advised that for an efficient count, and to guarantee election integrity, it is vital that these reconciliations are accurately completed, and any discrepancies investigated and corrected.

Supplies were sorted, verified and packed for later transmission to the Returning Officer’s office. After an intense working day staff were allowed a short break before proceeding to undertake the “Count”.

12:7 Counting of the Votes and Declaration at the Place of Poll

12.7.1 Counting of the Votes

The count commenced from as early as half an hour from the close of Poll in some areas to as long as one and a half hours in others.

The room was laid out to facilitate the efficient sorting and counting of ballot papers and to allow Counting Agents appointed by the political parties and

individual Candidates to scrutinize the process. Also present to observe the count at most polling stations were local and international observers.

Once arranged, the Presiding Officer invited all present to check the ballot box to ensure that the seals were intact as they were at the close of Poll. The ballot box was then opened in the presence of everyone and the contents laid out on the counting table. The ballot papers were then opened, flattened and turned face downwards so that the two (2) six- digit marks at the back were visible to all present.

After all the ballots were unfolded, the Presiding Officer or duly authorized representative counted and recorded the number of ballot papers that were in the ballot box.

Ballot papers were then torn along the perforated edge in-order to separate the general from the regional vote. Ballots for the general elections were then awarded to lists on the basis of the mark which was shown to all present in the interest of accuracy and transparency. While this was being done, the staff, agents and observers were recording the information on individual tally sheets. Counted ballots were placed in marked piles clearly visible to all present. Rejected ballots were placed in a separate pile so marked.

Once all the ballots were shown, the Presiding Officer or his agent recounted each pile and verified same with tally sheets of all present. Ballots counted for each list of candidates were placed in separate envelopes clearly marked so that the name of the list was known to all and the number of votes cast for that list of candidates recorded also. Rejected ballots papers were also counted and placed in another envelope clearly marked so. The Presiding Officer affixed his seal to the envelopes and invited duly appointed candidates and agents to do likewise. These envelopes were then placed in the official envelope marked PE 7, which was sealed and placed in the ballot box.

At the completion of the count Presiding Officer prepared Form23A - Statement of Poll for General and Regional Elections. This was the official polling station document reflecting the number of valid votes cast for each list of candidates, the number of rejected ballots papers and the reasons for the rejection of ballot papers. Once completed the Presiding Officer certified a sufficient number of copies for distribution to representatives and agents who observed the count. Presiding Officers invited duly authorized persons who witnessed the count to endorse the document before copies were distributed to those present.

12:7.2 Declaration at the Place of Poll

Once certified an original copy of the Statement of Poll for the General Election and an original copy of the Statement of Poll for the Regional Election were posted on the outer wall of each polling station as an official declaration of the results for that polling station.

12:8 Transmission of Results

Each Returning Officer in conjunction with his/her field staff had put arrangements in place for the transmission of the results either through radio (hand held), telephone (cell or landline) or fax to the Chief Election Officer.

The Logistics Department had carefully assigned transmission guidelines to the various officers for relaying results to the Command Centre. In addition, several telephone lines and fax machines were installed in the Command Centre to facilitate the transmission of results.

Transmission equipment were activated around 20:30 hrs on the evening of the 28th August, 2006 as preliminary results from some locations were received. This continued until the evening of Tuesday, 29th August, 2006.

12:9 Compilation and Preliminary Declaration of Results

Once results were received at the Command Centre, they were channeled through a process of verification involving senior members of the Secretariat Staff. They were then passed on to the computer section for encoding. Upon the compilation of the information periodic reports were printed.

Preliminary results came through slowly at first on the morning of Tuesday, 29th August, 2006 but by late afternoon the results arrived in significant numbers. The Commission then held a press conference at 20:00 hrs that evening to keep the media and the public informed of the state affairs.

12:10 Declaration of the Official Results

Returning Officers with support staff were brought in from all the Districts to be involved in the manual verification. The manual reconciliation process continued all night from Monday and all day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 31st August, 2006. While the official announcement of the results was expected that day, it was not until about 21:30 hours on the evening, of Thursday, 31st August, 2006 that the final declaration was made.

This resulted from the fact that the Returning Officers were required to double check their entries from the Statements of Poll and to certify and submit on Form 24 the votes cast per list of candidates for each ballot box. When these checks were completed, the results were certified by the Chief Election Officer and presented to a properly constituted meeting of the Elections Commission. It was after this ratification by the Commission that the official declaration was made.

The Chief Election Officer in accordance with Section 96 of the Principal Act (Representation of the People Act Cap. 1:03) acted as follows:

“After calculating the total number of valid votes which have been cast for each list of candidates, and the information furnished by Returning Officers under Section 84 (11) (Votes cast in each electoral district) ascertained the results of the election in accordance with Section 97 (Allocation of Seats) and 98 (Membership of the National Assembly)”.

12:11 Compliance with Section 98 and 99 of Cap. 1:03

With the allocation of seats in accordance with Section 97 of Cap. 1:03, the Chief Election Officer informed the representatives of the Lists of Candidates for the following parties to extract from their lists, the names of candidates selected by them to be members of the National Assembly and Regional Democratic Councils.

1. Alliance For Change	General and Regional
2. Guyana Action Party-Rise, Organise and Rebuild	General and Regional
3. Justice For All Party	Regional
4. People's National Congress Reform – 1 Guyana	General and Regional
5. People's Progressive Party/Civic	General and Regional
6. The United Force	General and Regional

The Chief Election Officer declared the names of members of the National Assembly respectively in accordance with Section 98 of Cap. 1:03.

The Elections Commission, in accordance with Section 99 of Cap. 1:03, publicly declared the results of the election and published in the Official Gazette on 20th October, 2006, the following:-

- (a) the number of votes cast for each list of candidates;
- (b) the number of rejected ballot papers;
- (c) the number of seats allocated to each list of candidates; and
- (d) the names of the persons who, as a result of the election, have become members of the National Assembly.

12:12 Summary of Official Results and Allocation of Seats

The Elections were held on the 28th August, 2006. The Chief Election Officer, after calculating the total number of valid votes of electors which had been cast for each list of candidates had to ascertain the results of the elections in accordance with Section 97 and 98 of Cap. 1:03.

List of candidates contesting the elections designated six (6) of the candidates as presidential candidates. The presidential candidate for the People's Progressive Party/Civic received more than those in favour of any other list.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 177 (2) of the Constitution, the Chairman of the Elections Commission declared Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, the Presidential Candidate of the People's Progressive Party/Civic, as the elected President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on the 31st August, 2006.

The results of the elections had to be declared in pursuance to Section 99 of the Representation of the People Act, Cap. 1:03.

(See Appendix XXI for results of General Elections, 2006)

(See Appendix XXII for results of Regional Elections, 2006)

GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES DECLARATION OF RESULTS

Name of Contesting Political Parties	Number of Seats Allocated as per Geographical Constituency										Total Seats
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Alliance For Change				1							1
People's National Congress Reform-1 Guyana	1		1	3	1	1	1			1	9
People's Progressive Party/Civic	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	15
Total	2	2	3	7	2	3	2	1	1	2	25

NATIONAL TOP-UP DECLARATION OF RESULTS

Name of Contesting Political Parties	Seats Allocated
Alliance For Change	4
Guyana Action Party – Rise, Organise and Rebuild	1
People's National Congress Reform – 1 Guyana	13
People's Progressive Party/Civic	21
The United Force	1
Total	40

REGIONAL ELECTIONS
DECLARATION OF RESULTS

NAME OF CONTESTING POLITICAL PARTIES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS ALLOCATED TO EACH REGIONAL DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL										TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Alliance For Change	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	1	4	20
Guyana Action Party-Rise, Organise and Rebuild							2	3	4		9
Justice For All Party			1	1							2
People's National Congress Reform – 1 Guyana	2	3	6	16	6	6	5	3	2	10	59
People's Progressive Party/Civic	10	12	19	15	11	22	6	5	6	4	110
The United Force	1							2	2		5
Total	15	17	27	35	18	30	15	15	15	18	205

The official declaration of the General and Regional Elections, held on the 28th August, 2006 was made public on the 31st August, 2006 by the Chief Election Officer.

In accordance with section 99 of the Representation of the People Act, Cap. 1:03, the Elections Commission caused to be published in the Official Gazette on 20th October, 2006, the results of the elections.

The publication of the results declared was made in three parts, namely Geographical Constituencies, National Top-Up and Regional Elections.

13:0 POST-POLL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

13:1 Return of Materials and Supplies to the Secretariat

Distribution of materials and supplies to each district was based on perceived needs coming from the Returning Officers. Each district made requests on "Shipping Forms" while the various departments at the centre made requests on an "Internal Stores Requisition (ISR)".

After the Elections, the return of materials and supplies was executed in a very systematic manner as planned for by the Logistics Section. Nevertheless some concerns relating to the return of materials and supplies were identified. These were as follows:

1. Items from Donor Agencies which were required and used in the field had no stores requisition procedure being properly adhered to. It was not easy to determine whether all that was distributed was promptly returned.
2. Assets were moved from one location to the next without the knowledge of the Stores. This again created the uncertainty as to what should be returned from where.
3. Items bought in the various Districts were not normally brought to the attention of the Stores Department. Consequently dated records were not always kept and returns of those items were not normally traced as required.

13:2 Reconciliation of Accounts

With the introduction of the Integrated Financial Management and Accountability System (IFMAS), special arrangements had to be put in place with the Ministry of Finance for adequate funds to be made available at all times to allow for Returning Officers to undertake various activities in a timely manner.

In some areas efforts were made to manage the resources provided carefully. However, in some districts Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 it was discovered that transportations costs were highly prohibitive. In addition, the procedures for the award of contracts were not always adhered to since the provision of the required services was virtually non-existent or reduced to a single source.

The Internal Auditor and the Accounts Section had to spend long hours providing guidance and technical help to Returning Officers and support staff on the requirements to be met in the purchase of goods and services for the election.

In the weeks following the elections several submissions of bills and vouchers had been made by Returning Officers. These were thoroughly examined by staff before they were forwarded for final scrutiny.

At the request of the Accounting Officer, a Special Imprest of one hundred and eighty million dollars (\$180,000,000) was approved by the Ministry of Finance for the election mode.

For the conduct of the elections funds were advanced to the respective Returning Officers as follows:

ADVANCES ISSUED TO RETURNING OFFICERS

DISTRICT #	RETURNING OFFICER	DATE	AMOUNT \$	REMARKS
1	Ian Hernandez	21/07/2006	330,000	
		02/08/2006	5,700,000	
		10/08/2006	10,300,000	
	Total		\$16,330,000	Vouchers Submitted
2	B. Ramnarine	20/07/2006	250,000	
		02/08/2006	12,000,000	
		10/08/2006	5,325,000	
	Total		\$17,575,000	Vouchers Submitted
3	D. Ramlall	09/08/2006	946,000	
		20/08/2006	5,178,000	
		07/09/2006	5,000,000	
		25/09/2006	2,922,480	
	Total		\$14,046,480	Vouchers Submitted
4	A. Edwards	25/07/2006	700,000	
		10/08/2006	22,075,000	
		25/08/2006	20,000,000	
		07/09/2006	5,000,000	
	Total		\$47,775,000	Vouchers Submitted
5	R. Mitchell	24/07/2006	260,000	
		17/08/2006	12,000,162	
	Total		\$12,260,162	Vouchers Submitted
6	S Sukhdeo	20/07/2006	685,000	
		10/08/2006	14,610,000	
		25/08/2006	1,000,000	
		23/08/2006	1,500,000	
	Total		\$17,795,000	Vouchers Submitted
7	H. Persaud	18/07/2006	194,000	
		10/08/2006	21,969,404	
	Total		\$22,163,404	Vouchers Submitted
8	L. Stephens	20/07/2006	560,000	
		10/08/2006	7,633,000	
		25/08/2006	3,879,300	
	Total		\$12,072,300	Vouchers Submitted
9	L. Zammet	18/07/2006	640,000	
		02/08/2006	4,000,000	
		10/08/2006	4,000,000	
		14/09/2006	4,000,000	
		25/09/2006	1,000,000	
		22/09/2006	2,000,000	
		05/10/2006	2,000,000	
	Total		\$17,640,000	Vouchers Submitted
10	M. Lewis	20/07/2006	375,000	
		10/08/2006	9,842,460	
		18/08/2006	5,980,000	
	Total		\$16,197,460	Vouchers Submitted

Grand Total: - \$193,854,806

13:3 Production and Distribution of Remaining Identification Cards.

The Commission agreed and instructed that the identification cards remaining after the elections be distributed continuously as the main registration offices were still open.

13:4 Return of Election Expenses

The Accounts Department of the Guyana Elections Commission had been tasked to provide Financial Accounting services for the operations of the Commission and the Secretariat. This Sub-Accounting Unit provided the financial guidelines, procedures and framework for all income and expenditure for the pre and post General and Regional Elections 2006.

13:4:1 Provision for Operations at the District Level

The Registrars/Returning Officers and Election Clerks were responsible for managing the expenditure in their districts. Advances were provided for them to finance the day-to-day operations in each district. They were required to adhere to standard financial regulations and policies and practices in force from time to time, and were briefed and trained in the completion of the relevant forms and records.

However, many difficulties arose when bills were submitted to clear advances. There were poor documentation and inadequate explanations relating to expenses incurred. Late submission of accounts (claims) and delays in the return of advances and pay sheets also added to some of the problems experienced.

Other difficulties were experienced in remote areas where at times it was practically impossible to obtain quotations to meet the three (3) quote system requirements and decisions had to be made about utilizing the only available service.

Payments of honoraria to Field Staff and Scrutineers posed additional difficulties in remote areas primarily because of transportation, communications and magnitude of the workload with minimal staff. In the first instance the accounts staff paid honoraria in various districts but payments were later channelled through Returning Officers. In spite of many set backs encountered from time to time, especially staff shortage, Financial Report deadlines for the Ministry of Finance and other agencies were met promptly.

14:0 GENERAL REVIEW WITH RECOMMENDATIONS:

14:1 REVIEW OF THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS 2006

The following is a consolidated report distilled from the contributions of Returning Officers, Heads of Departments, Observer Groups, Party Agents and Commissioners.

14:1:2 Identification/Selection/Establishment of Offices for Field Managers

(A) Strengths

- (a) The locations of offices, especially those for the Returning Officers (ROs) and Supervisors were in all cases suitable and functional.
 - (N.B. (1) A Check List had been prepared relative to the prerequisites and requirements needed for the establishment of offices for Field Managers.
 - (2) Region 4 Returning Officer was confirmed at the last moment (difficulty in getting Officers and Offices).
- (b) Buildings were easily accessible.
- (c) Necessary minor repairs to buildings were expeditiously done – GECOM's expense.
- (d) Security arrangements were satisfactory.
- (e) Offices were adequately equipped with furniture and equipment.
 - (N.B. Furniture and equipment which had been acquired for the Continuous Registration exercise were utilized).
- (f) Those offices which were in relatively poor condition were rehabilitated in a timely manner (more major works when compared with "c" above).
- (g) Communications network was installed in all offices. The sets we had for the 2001 elections were already in place in the far flung areas.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) On occasion, more than one Field Manager (RO/DRO/Supervisor) had to be housed in one building. (This could result in chaos on E-Day, if there is a flurry of activity).

- (b) In few cases, the communication network (Radio Sets) were installed a bit late.
- (c) Processing of Tenders often took an extraordinarily long time. Money was not released until Tender Board gave the green light. As a result some equipment arrived late in the country.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) We should try to ensure that each Field Manager should have his/her own office.
- (b) In future, adequate time should be provided for the installation of the communications network.
- (c) Wherever practicable, land line telephones should be installed. GT&T should be approached well in advance to install landlines.

[N.B.] (i) Notwithstanding this recommendation, the cost associated with the installation of a land line must be factored into the equation. For example, in Moruca (District 1) and Wellington Park (District 6), the cost was given as over \$2 million each; (ii) Furthermore, many of the offices were in fact in schools and NDC buildings. The principals and NDC executives naturally expect that these land lines would remain after we would have departed.

- (d) Region 4 should have a permanent office.

14:1:3 Appointment, Training and Placement of Field Staff

(A) Strengths

- (a) Many of the persons selected had experience with the system and had tested and proven track records, many having worked with GECOM before.
- (b) Most staff were recruited from and placed in areas where they lived; consequently, they were familiar with many aspects (topography, culture, general public, etc) of their respective areas.

[N.B.] Nevertheless, on occasion, especially where there were deficiencies in staff numbers/quality, officers were placed out of their residence areas (e.g. Officers from Bartica, Mahdia and Paramakatoi were placed in the upper Cuyuni, Konawaruk and Eteringbang respectively).

- (c) All managers were mature and qualified.
- (d) Most managers were committed to the process and were prepared to go the extra mile.
- (e) Staff was well trained to manage the process.
- (f) All vacancies were filled.
- (g) We did not go to Political Parties and ask them for help in recruiting staff.
- (h) The training was carried out efficiently and many interactive sessions were conducted.
- (i) All offices had the full complement of staff.
- (j) Extensive production, distribution and usage of training materials.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) Some DROs lacked the ability to communicate effectively with the ROs especially during the post-poll period. Some DROs could not function under a stressful environment.
- (b) The criteria for selection and the weightings associated with these parameters leave much to be desired.
- (c) There were issues pertaining to List of Duties and payments to Field Managers. Conditions and emoluments must be clearly stated in the Letters of Appointments.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) For established positions, the emoluments and Scope of Work/List of Duties/Terms of Reference must be clearly stated.
- (b) A wider cross-section of persons needed to be trained. Also, the methodology used to recruit Field Managers must be able to target and encompass broader socio-economic groups, including Managers from the Private Sector.
- (c) We must always ensure that we do not fall prey to the temptation of requesting assistance from political parties relative to the recruitment of important staff. In fact, we must screen thoroughly, for these important positions, those applicants who might have political party partisanship and affiliation.

- (d) Advertisements for Field Managers should, to a large degree, be area specific.
- (e) Penalties (as described in the law) should be meted out to persons who deviate from set rules.
- (f) The concept of utilizing Headquarter-based CORE Trainers must be expanded to include Regional Trainers.
- (g) In addition to the established Field Managers, the CEO should have his private group of trained Roving Field Managers/Presiding Officers who are his eyes and ears out in the field on E-Day. They could be called "System Inspectors".
- (h) Emphasis is placed on the passing of the GECOM-set exams and on the scores attained. More consideration must be given to the other attributes such as
 - experience (especially if the candidate has worked well, in a similar capacity, at GECOM before)
 - managerial background
 - tested and proven track record as a manager
 - age (we should not employ, for these important positions, very young and inexperienced/untried persons who have not hitherto been stressed by an irate public on E-Day)
 - qualifications
 - outstanding character references
 - physical abilities (one should be wary of placing physically disadvantaged and "otherwise able" persons in such stressful positions)
- (i) The telephone numbers and addresses of all E-Day staff, especially the Field Managers (ROs, DROs, Supervisors and POs) must be made available to Commissioners.
- (j) Field Managers should be identified and selected long in advance.

14:1:4 Identification and Selection of Polling Places

(A) Strengths

- (a) Polling places were identified at an early stage.
- (b) Polling places were situated in each Polling Division.

- (c) Most of the polling places were Government buildings.
- (d) The idea of having Logistics Officers in the Districts aided the selection of Polling Places.
- (e) Polling Places were accessible to the electors.
- (f) Most of the places were used in previous elections and were familiar to the electors.
- (g) Several visits were made to the Polling Places identified.
- (h) Speed with which deficiencies (e.g. inadequate lightning and furniture) were corrected.

- N.B.**
- (i) We started out by using the 2001 list of Polling Places as the base.
 - (ii) We established and used the check list pertaining to the requirements that each Polling Station should have.
 - (iii) Since the law dictates that accessible and an adequate amount of Polling Stations must be placed in Polling Divisions, GECOM found itself in the dilemma of establishing Polling Stations with 1 – 5 potential voters – **a situation which compromises the confidentiality of the ballot.**

(B) Weaknesses:

- (a) Some owners of private buildings withdrew their approval at short notice.
- (b) Some selected buildings had poor lighting and inadequate furniture.
- (c) Too many Polling Stations had to operate at one Polling Place.
- (d) Some private buildings identified were owned by political activists so that alternative buildings had to be sought at short notice.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) All Polling Places should, as far as practically possible, be owned by the Government.

- (b) The Logistics Officer should constantly liaise with the respective Returning Officers on the selection of Polling Places.
- (c) The number of Polling Stations per Polling Place must be manageable. The Commission and the Secretariat senior staff must decide on the most manageable number of Polling Stations in a Polling Place.
- (d) As far as possible, whenever a Government building is used, the Regional authorities should ensure that the buildings (especially schools) are equipped with adequate facilities.
- (e) The Commission and Secretariat Senior Staff must discuss and decide whether Polling Stations can be merged, so as to avoid the ludicrous situation of a Polling Station having only one potential voter. Laws may have to be changed. GECOM can itself change the Regulations (see 14:1:4 A h iii above).
- (f) Churches, Mandirs and Masjids or compounds of the religious places, or any other known place of religious worship must never be used as a Polling Station.
- (g) Serious consideration should be given relative to the use of sturdy tents as Polling Stations.

14:1:5 Issuing of Election Materials

(A) Strengths

- (a) Materials were issued in a timely manner.
- (b) Returning Officers and Deputies checked materials at the Secretariat efficiently.
- (c) Deputy Returning Officers issued materials to respective Presiding Officers.
- (d) Presiding Officers verified materials issued to them in an efficient manner.
- (e) Adequate materials were issued.
- (f) Whenever it was discovered that an item was missing, replacements reached the deficient Polling Station in short order.
- (g) All materials were checked by Secretariat Staff *et al* and double checked by Returning Officers and their teams.

(B) Weaknesses:

- (a) A few Returning Officers/Deputy Returning Officers/Presiding Officers did not notice items that were missing from their packages.
- (b) Some Returning Officers took out materials from the boxes (in order to put in ballot papers, etc), but forgot to put them back in.
- (c) Religious books, on which voters swear, and some other official Forms were not available in some isolated cases.

(C) Recommendation

- (i) Returning Officers/Deputy Returning Officers and especially Presiding Officers must be more vigilant relative to obtaining the full complement of materials before Polling commences. If the Presiding Officers have been found wanting in this regard, they should be punished according to a specific set of Rules of Procedure which will have to be developed to deal with such situations.
- (ii) Place all sensitive and non-sensitive materials long before.

14:1:6 Recruiting, Training and Selection of Polling Day Staff

(A) Strengths

- (a) Training sessions (conduct and delivery) were well executed.
- (b) Relative to Training, this exercise was always on track and even ahead of schedule.
- (c) Adequate numbers of persons were trained. In those Districts (Districts 3, 4, and 6) where adequate numbers were not initially available, further recruitment took place and supplementary/additional training was carried out.
- (d) Follow-up training was carried out by Returning Officers/Supervisors/Deputy Returning Officers.
- (e) Deputy Returning Officers were also involved in the selection of Polling Day staff.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) The actual registration of the candidates immediately prior to the training sessions was a bit disorganized at the outset. This deficiency was corrected after the first two exercises.

- (b) A few Deputy Returning Officers (especially-but not only-in the Interior locations) showed some level of favouritism (family and friends) in the selection of staff. This was corrected as soon as it was discovered.
 - (c) Some persons selected became unavailable later.
 - (d) Some groups for training were too large, thus affecting optimal interaction between trainer and candidates/participants.
- N.B.** We were forced (not lastly because of inadequate number of applicants in some areas) to develop the policy of not turning away persons who showed up and were willing to join the team. This could result in Political Parties sending party cadre to infiltrate GECOM (see “e” below).
- (e) In some instances not enough screening was done (see (d) immediately above); for example, we never asked to see academic qualifications of those turning up to sessions to be trained.
 - (f) Due to shortages in some specific areas, persons with relatively low scores were kept for further training.
 - (g) Reports have been made (but never proven) that information concerning applications and applicants was withheld.
 - (h) Letters of appointment must be sent out in a timely manner.
 - (i) Many candidates for GECOM jobs become fearful and do not arrive for training (see “c” above).

(C) Recommendations

- (a) See (14:1:3) **(C)** (h)
- (b) During Training, emphasis should be placed on
 - Close of Poll activities
 - Preparation of Ballot Paper Accounts
 - Statements of Poll
- (c) Manageable groups (1 Trainer: 40 candidates/participants) should be maintained.
- (d) There should be a special Headquarters (HQ) team (or one working out of Registration Offices) that would take Application Forms to each

Division so as to ensure that the Forms reach a greater number of people (who could be pre-screened by this roving HQ team).

N.B. Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 and riverain areas, the inhabitants of which are less likely to come in contact with newspapers (advertisements), would benefit most from this recommendation.

- (e) It would help if the List of Political Candidates were to be known to GECOM much earlier than 32 days, so that we would have more time to weed out applicants that are cadre for political parties.

N.B. (i) This would entail a change in the law.

(ii) Persons tell neither GECOM nor their Political Party of their intentions.

- (f) GECOM should demand and receive Letters of Acceptance from persons identified for appointment prior to their appointments.
- (g) GECOM must make it clear (in writing) to appointees that they will not be paid until 2 weeks later.
- (h) The Presiding Officer must prepare a list of all those who worked in his/her Polling Station on E-Day. This list must be counter-signed by the Assistant Presiding Officer.
- (i) We should specifically train persons to be Regional Trainers.
- (j) In order to dispel fear and reinforce the commitment of potential candidates to be trained, a serious PR exercise has to be initiated to build confidence into those who wish to work for GECOM.
- (k) It would help immensely if E-Day were to be fixed e.g August 5th, every 5 years.

14:1:7 Rehearsals/Mock Polls

(A) Strengths

- (a) Training cassettes were used extensively.
- (b) The necessary skills were reinforced and weaknesses identified.
- (c) Many sessions were held.
- (d) Polling Day staff participated fully.
- (e) Each Polling Station team was able to interface and interact with each other before E-Day.

- (f) Team spirit was developed.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) Some persons, even at the end of the exercise, seemed not confident.
- (b) Last minute changes of polling day staff caused some problems.
- (c) Persons who were employed at a later date did not have enough time for rehearsals.
- (d) Some persons did not attend all the sessions.

(C) Recommendation

- (a) A firm decision should be made (by the Commission/Secretariat) on the age of applicants to undergo training.
- (b) Regional trainers should be employed to assist with continuous training/rehearsals.
- (c) Establish pool of week-end trainers.
- (d) More emphasis should be placed on training for the post-poll period.
- (e) Engage polling day staff on contractual basis to serve for at least one month.
- (f) Review period which we use to engage candidates wishing to work for GECOM.
- (g) Devise methods to deter late applicants (e.g. pay them less and let it be known).
- (h) More emphasis should be placed on simulation activities and rehearsals.

14:1:8 Appointment and Placement of Polling Day Staff

(A) Strengths

- (a) In most cases there were enough persons to choose from.
- (b) Those selected were satisfied and comfortable with the prospects ahead of them.
- (c) Most persons were placed in areas where they lived.

- (d) Deputy Returning Officers were involved in the placement of E-Day staff.
- (e) All appointed Polling Day staff knew where they had to go before E-Day.
- (f) Conditions and emoluments were clearly stated on the Letters of Appointments which were sent very early (mid July).

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) People received Letters of Appointment, but did not turn up to work.
- (b) The lateness at which the appointment letters were issued to **substitute** Polling Day officials.
- (c) Not enough persons applied to work in some areas (Districts 1, 7, 8 and 9).
- (d) Some people appointed were on list of candidates and therefore had to be removed – even though GECOM would have expended energy and time in training them.
- (e) Because of drop-outs, some officials had to be placed at far distances away from their own homes to fill the gaps.
- (f) Some persons (see 14:1:8, A, c, above) did not know their areas.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) Maintaining a record at GECOM Secretariat of appointed Polling Day staff for future reference.
- (b) Selection and appointment should be done in consultation with returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers.
- (c) Appointment Letters should be issued long in advance of E-Day. Define a day.
- (d) Special allowances should be given to persons who work in the interior areas, because of the specific grueling circumstances that obtain in the outlying areas.
- (e) Personnel Department should be given additional *assistance so as to be more effective.
 - *Writing up of Letters of Appointments
 - Analysis of applicants and examination results
 - Registration of applicants

- (f) Correct emoluments should be reflected on pay sheets.
- (g) Consideration should be given to pay persons (from those areas where not enough people apply) more. See 14:1:8, B, c above.

14:1:9 Disbursement of Funds for Preparation and Conduct of Election

(A) Strengths

- (a) Funds were disbursed in adequate amounts.
- (b) Returning Officers uplifted funds requested, and distributed the necessary funds to Deputies.
- (c) Deputy Returning Officers made estimates and received funding accordingly.
- (d) Advances were obtained in adequate time.
- (e) Initiative was shown by some Returning Officers/Deputy Returning Officers which reflected flexibility under field circumstances (see “(C)” under “**Weaknesses**”).

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) Some Deputy Returning Officers were slow in clearing advances with Returning Officers.
- (b) Some Deputy Returning Officers did not keep their Supervisors informed of funds received from Returning Officer.
- (c) Some expenses were incurred for activities not budgeted for (see “(e)” under “strengths”).

(C) Recommendations

- (a) Armed security should be provided whenever large amounts of cash are being transported.
- (b) Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers should be properly trained in accountability for funds spent. Written Manuals should be prepared.
- (c) Instruction should be given from GECOM Secretariat for funds to be disbursed directly to the Deputy Returning Officers to manage their respective sub-districts.
- (d) A financial clerk should be appointed for District 4 Office of the Returning Officer.

- (e) Funds (in the Districts) must be lodged, in locked and sealed canisters, with the Police wherever necessary.

14:1:10 Conduct of Elections

(A) Strengths

- (a) All polling day staff were in place.
- (b) Delivery of boxes was done in a timely manner.
- (c) Security arrangements were in place.
- (d) Polling Stations were opened on time.
- (e) Agents were accommodated and allowed to function in a relaxed atmosphere.
- (f) No evidence of disturbance.
- (g) Plan to transport officers by air, land and water were executed efficiently.
- (h) Adequate supplies of materials were available.
- (i) Staff at Polling Stations was appropriately dressed.
- (j) There were Roving (Mobile) Teams with equipment, supplies and documents for any Polling Station in need.
- (k) Presiding Officer had in his/her possession a folio with the electors' photographs.
- (l) Extremely few cases of dislocation.
- (m) Movement of Statements of Poll good.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) Some field managers lacked commitment (e.g. late arrival to pickup materials).
- (b) Some field managers made poor decisions (e.g. non-payment of rental even though they were in possession of money).
- (c) Some Deputy Returning Officers did not follow plan for uplifting Statements of Poll (SOP)

- (d) Many Statements of Poll were filled out incorrectly.
- (e) Some electors had difficulties in locating their Polling Stations (Information Clerks were not always helpful).
 - N.B.** (i) GECOM did constantly advertise that voters should educate themselves on where their Polling Stations were located;
 - (ii) Political Parties could have helped in this regard; it is in their interest.
- (f) Some of the ballot pencils supplied were of poor quality. Those were replaced immediately.
- (g) Only the Presiding Officer had a folio with the electors' photographs.
 - N.B.** It has been argued that all Polling Day staff and Party Agents should have a copy of the folio with electors' photographs and that the photographs should be on the Official List of Electors (OLE) which is hung out for the public to be scrutinized. (This option might necessitate legal and parliamentary involvement).

It has been counter-argued that such a widespread use of the folio is not done in any other country, and that such a distribution would go counter to the unwritten agreement which GECOM has with a registrant relative to confidentiality and possible misuse of the photograph on the folio.
- (h) In District 4, some Polling Agents were not provided with Polling Station - specific Official List of Electors (OLE).
- (i) Some Presiding Officers in District 4 refused Polling Agents entry to Polling Stations giving the most idiotic explanations. This situation was corrected, but could have evolved into a great mess.
- (j) Some Presiding Officers and Deputy Returning Officers in District 4 refused to allow Polling Agents to vote using Certificates of Employment.
- (k) In two known instances on the lower East Coast, List of Proxies arrived late.
- (l) The Returning Officer of District 4 was incommunicado for the most of E-Day.
- (m) In District 4, Party Candidates were disallowed entry into Polling Stations during the count.
- (n) Some Presiding Officers rejected ballots because the latter did not have the six digit number, which the very Presiding Officer placed incorrectly on the Ballot Paper.

- (o) The names of Disciplined Services (DS) electors were not in all cases struck off of the Official List of Electors (OLE) which was in the possession of the Presiding Officer. However, there was no known case of a Disciplined Services (DS) elector voting again.
- (p) Party Propaganda stickers masquerading as sealing tape were placed on some Ballot Boxes during E-Day.
- (q) On one occasion a Presiding Officer allowed persons to vote who were not registered at his Polling Station. He was removed immediately.
- (r) Some incidents that occurred during the course of E-Day were not recorded in the Poll Book.
- (s) An unexpectedly large number of Rejected Ballots – although this might have nothing to do with GECOM and everything to do with the electors' disgust with Political Parties.
- (t) In some rare and isolated cases, Polling Stations did not open (e.g. Nursery at Smyth Street and Eve Leary during Disciplined Services voting) because of our inability, even at the last minute, to acquire the building. In all those cases, new buildings were found nearby and voters were directed to the new venue, without having endured any perceivable and long-lasting discomfort.
- (u) On very few occasions, electors' names were on the Polling Station's Voters' List, but ID numbers were not listed next to their names. (These voters were however allowed to cast their ballots).
- (v) There were a few instances of the photo in the folio not matching the voter's visage. Investigations proved that in each case the person presenting himself/herself was a valid voter and allowed to vote.
- (w) Some voters complained that they had to wait in line too long because there was only one polling booth. Immediate investigation revealed that the culpable Presiding Officers placed the two cardboard Polling Booths one on top the other, instead of erecting them as two separate Polling Booths. An immediate correction was effected.
- (x) Observers and Party Agents who were not following the procedure outlined in the relevant Manual (which had been distributed to them) were given a hard time - instead understanding and accommodation by some Presiding Officers relative to the Observers'/Agents' entry into the Polling Station.
- (y) Groups of citizens, including one armed group, gathered ominously and intimidatingly outside some Polling Places (e.g. Sophia, West La Penitence). Police intervention stymied any development into chaos.
- (z) Some Political Parties were seen carrying out Party business (e.g. outside the Rama Krishna School in Kitty, Georgetown) within the

immediate environment of a Polling Place /Station. This was corrected as soon as it was discovered.

- (aa) Some agents from unknown agencies/parties were conducting Exit Polls (e.g. St. Ambrose School, 3rd Street, Alberttown, Georgetown). They were removed as soon as this practice was discovered.
- (bb) Some Presiding Officers seemed unaware of the role of Observers. For example, the Electoral Assistance Bureau had been promised a copy of the Statement of Poll. This information seemed not to have reached the Presiding Officers. Some Presiding Officers did not allow bonafide and identifiable Observers e.g. EAB) into the Polling Stations during the voting process and during the count. (Breakdown in communication between GECOM Headquarters and the field staff).
- (cc) Issuing of GECOM authorized ID cards for Observers did not go smoothly – not lastly because of the haphazard way in which Observer Groups submitted the names of their members.
- (dd) Noise and (simulated?) mayhem/disruptions outside of Polling Station precluded Deputy Returning Officers from optionally carrying out their duties (e.g. Christ Church and Campbellville Secondary Schools).

(C) Recommendations

- (a) Training must be never-ending, not lastly in areas of self-confidence building.
- (b) GECOM must remind Political Parties that they have a responsibility towards their potential voters, especially where the location of the Polling Station is concerned.
- (c) More training in the use of the radio-sets seems necessary.
- (d) We must radically overhaul our concept as regards the Information Clerks (“Ushers”). They are the ones that meet the public first. Especially in those areas where there are many Polling Stations in a Polling Place, the Information Clerks must be computer literate and outfitted with lap-tops to guide enquiring voters about their respective Polling Stations. The Information Clerks must be recognized and recruited on the basis of compatibility, patience, self-confidence and intelligence. He/she should be en par with the Presiding Officer.
- (e) Commissioners must be involved at Log-Ops Command Centre on Polling Day as the results come in.
- (f) We may need to re-design the Statements of Poll (see 14:1:10 B, d)
- (g) The establishment of the District 4 Office must be done very early.

14:1:11 Loading of Election Day Supplies

(A) Strengths

- (a) Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers were present to ensure that Election Day supplies were loaded.
- (b) Loading was done in an organized manner.
- (c) Supplies were transported to the Districts in a timely manner.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) Party Agents impeded the process (e.g. Party Agents did not arrive on time).
- (b) There was no police escort, in some instances, on the aircraft transporting the boxes.
- (c) More protective (plastic wraps, tarpaulins, etc) supplies for materials being transported should have been made available.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) If some Party Agents are late in arriving, GECOM should go ahead once there are agents from two parties present. Parties should be made to sign a document committing to their presence and punctuality.
- (b) All of the “weaknesses” are easily correctible and therefore should be corrected.

N.B. Weaknesses were corrected wherever possible when they were under our control.
- (c) We should establish a specific Sub-Command Centre which will involve the needed Disciplined Services.

14:1:12 Uplifting Election Day Supplies by Polling Day Officials

(A) Strengths

- (a) This was done as per schedule and within the time frame agreed upon.
- (b) Polling day officials leaving for interior locations uplifted supplies six (6) days before elections day.
- (c) All Presiding Officers and their teams had opportunity to check boxes with supplies.

(d) Materials were adequate.

(B) Weaknesses

In some isolated instances, Presiding Officers and their teams did not check their Ballot Boxes for supplies/materials adequately enough.

(C) Recommendations

Presiding Officers and their teams must exercise more care in this very important aspect of the process.

14:1:13 Return of Election Day Supplies to Storage Areas (in Districts) and to GECOM

(A) Strengths

(a) Boxes were returned to the containers for storage and other materials were returned to the Returning Officer for checking.

(b) In the riverain districts all boxes and supplies were returned to the office of the Returning Officer.

(c) The timeframe for return of supplies was adhered to.

(B) Weaknesses

(a) Some items were returned short.

N.B. Some Presiding Officers made the excuse that they had inadvertently sealed in say the flashlights or the lamps in the Ballot Boxes – forgetting that the Ballot Boxes were transparent and that we could question their credibility. They were made to replace the items which were available in the local stores.

(C) Recommendations

(a) Out of abundant caution (for the future) and because of the need to maintain bureaucratic tidiness, specified time-lines relative to the return of supplies should be drawn up for each District.

(b) Storage space must be available for returning materials and an audit must take place.

14:1:14 Uplifting of the Statements of Poll (SOP)

(A) Strengths

- (a) Statements of Poll were delivered to Deputy Returning Officers as per programme.
- (b) Chief Election Officer's copies of Statements of Poll delivered at Logistics – Operations Centre as programmed.
- (c) Plan "B" (sending officers to collect Statements of Poll if transport difficulties emerged) was ready and waiting.

(B) Weaknesses

In every District the mathematics associated with the Statements of Poll left much to be desired.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) More rehearsals/simulations should be carried out.
- (b) Presiding Officers/Returning Officers/Deputy Returning Officers should be drilled in electoral mathematics and logic (should they be given authority to effect change?).
- (c) We might start thinking of electronic voting machines for the 2011 Elections.
- (d) Method for reconciling reports (SOPs) – Chief Election Officer/Returning Officers must be reviewed. (Review of Forms design?).

14:1:15 Transport of Statement of Poll

(A) Strengths

- (a) The arrangements (aircraft, road transport, riverain transport) were documented well in advance of E-Day.
- (b) Police provided escort for all Statements of Poll right across Guyana.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) In one instance (Region 6, Berbice ferry) we arrived late for our appointment (meeting time with the ferry). The Statements of Poll continued their journey with the first ferry on E-Day + 1.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) We should establish a Joint Discipline Operations Centre (together with army and police), so that all the players would be knowledgeable of developments every step of the way.

14:1:16 Public Relations

(A) Strengths

- (a) Meetings with the media (Conferences/Briefings) took place in a timely manner.
- (b) Media advisories/releases were issued continuously and in a timely manner.
- (c) Establishment and maintenance of a Website which gave public and Stakeholders helpful information.
- (d) Efficient Monitoring of the Media and issuing of timely responses when needed.
- (e) Issuing 75,000 brochures entitled "What Every Voter Must Know" which gave voters information surrounding polling on E-Day.
- (f) 100,000 copies of a "flyer" aimed at preventing Multiple Voting and other forms of skulduggery on E-Day were distributed.
- (g) 100,000 copies of a "flyer" publicizing information on the procedures associated with the "Close of Poll" and the need for electors to know their respective Polling Stations were distributed countrywide.

(B) Weaknesses

- None -

(C) Recommendations

- (a) The Public Relations Unit must be made aware, in a timely manner, of all of the strategic organizational policies/activities/changes as well as problems and proposed (and implemented) solutions that emerge before, during and after elections.
- (b) Public Relations Unit can be expended at election time by recruiting support personnel with relevant skills.

14:1:17 Information Technology Division

(A) Strengths

- (a) The registration system developed has exhibited good data integrity, and has remained available throughout the registration and elections period with less than an hour total downtime.
- (b) The support provided to the registration offices has been good, and these staff have been able to make good use of the IT facilities at their disposal.
- (c) The integration of the third party systems procured from De La Rue and the Electoral Office of Jamaica has been generally unproblematic.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) The need to incorporate data from registration exercises prior to 2001 into the present system for purposes of reference was never addressed, leading to the survival of a number of legacy applications for accessing this data. These proved to be difficult to maintain and support.
- (b) It proved difficult to detect in the Data Entry area where a transaction had been processed against an incorrect registrant, leading to a number of people having an incorrect photograph against their record. This problem became rather time-consuming to resolve, but was resolved in time.
- (c) The process for acquisition of spare parts was over-complicated, which led to delays in the repair of some items. However, the needed items were repaired.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) All the appropriate legacy data held by GECOM needs to be integrated into a single reporting platform.

- (b) The ability of the system to detect when a transaction is being processed against the wrong registrant needs to be improved.
- (c) Central provision should be made so that spare parts are always available to perform routine repairs and maintenance.

14:1:18 Voter Education

(A) Strengths

- (a) GECOM established a permanent Voter Education Section which was adequately staffed.
- (b) Decentralisation of voter education activities resulted in Voter Education Officials being attached to all of the ten District Registration Offices.
- (c) The Voter Education Section developed and documented the voter education needs in a strategic comprehensive plan of activities which were implemented accordingly at a national level.
- (d) Funds for the publication of relevant information via the print and electronic media were adequate.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) Delays in the delivery of printed promotional materials occasionally resulted in some activities not being implemented as originally planned.
- (b) Compliance with the required three quotation system regarding the production of promotional materials have led to delays in implementation of some tasks.
- (c) Faulty Public Address Systems resulted, in some cases, in inefficient delivery of voter education messages at grass roots levels.
- (d) Some problems regarding unbudgeted payment for the hiring of transportation to make public announcements were encountered.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) Greater advance planning and implementation of voter education activities should be done.
- (b) Flexibility should be given regarding the procurement of goods and services with a view to ensuring timely implementation of voter education activities of an urgent nature.
- (c) Public Address equipment should be procured and checked for efficiency way in advance of its immediate usage (and centrally controlled).
- (d) The transportation costs associated with voter education activities should be determined long in advance of the implementation of the related activities.
- (e) Because of “Continuous Registration” we will know where people are located and where they must vote. Therefore, it would be well in our capability to distribute “slips” indicating where persons must vote. Of course, the Polling Stations must be known before hand.

14:1:19 Media Monitoring Unit

(A) Strengths

- (a) The Media Monitoring Unit was headed by an experienced media consultant of international repute.
- (b) The Media Code of Conduct was established prior to the establishment of the Media Monitoring Unit.
- (c) The Media Monitoring Unit was adequately outfitted with competent staff and equipment.
- (d) An excellent relationship was established and maintained with the Media and other stakeholders.
- (e) The Media Monitoring Unit was instrumental in getting media houses/operatives to consistently conduct themselves in compliance with the Media Code of Conduct.

(B) Weaknesses

- (a) In the initial stages of the project the Unit had severe reception problems with television stations. This was a direct result of the bad location of the premises.
- (b) The Unit was not able to do a full scale out of town monitoring.
- (c) The Media Code of Conduct was and still is not a legally binding document.

(C) Recommendations

- (a) Efforts should be made to relocate the Media Monitoring Unit to a more suitable location.
- (b) Out of town monitoring should be embarked upon as a means of getting first hand impressions of general public pronouncements at a national scale.
- (c) Lobby for the inclusion of the Media Code of Conduct proposed broadcast legislation in Guyana.

**14:1:20 Comments and Recommendations for Conduct of Elections in the future
(See also the recommendations associated with each of the previous
Sections, 14:1 - 14:1:19)**

- (a) The contesting parties should ensure that proper documentation is made available for their agents. They must insist that our guidelines/manuals are studied in detail by their agents.
- (b) Supporting agencies including the media and government departments should understand their role in the whole scheme of things and so try as far as possible to facilitate the process. GECOM should interact and “train” them more. This would be the task of a strengthened Public Relations/Voter Education Divisions.
- (c) Systems must be put in place to allow persons from the public and education sectors to seek employment with GECOM without fear of threats from their immediate supervisors.
- (d) Voter Education (also at schools) must be an ongoing exercise (e.g. via weekly columns). This pre supposes that the methodologies/manuals/guidelines/other training materials have already been worked out.

- (e) In future, the Returning Officers should be authorized to proceed with the packing of their respective Ballot Boxes providing that more than one Party Agent is on site to observe the packing.
- (f) The Secretariat should get signed undertakings from the contesting Political Parties that their designated Party Agents would be present at prearranged dates/time to observe the packing of ballot boxes in the future.
- (g) A senior staff of the Secretariat should be assigned the specific responsibilities of reconciling ballot paper accounts as per the established provisions. In other words, there must be an auditing exercise relative to the usage and returns of all materials (especially ballot papers).
- (h) The steel containers stored at Coldingen should be placed in a manner in which they do not rest directly on the ground. They should also be stored closely together with the doors facing each other for security reasons.
- (i) Temporary Secretariat staff were being designated on the spot and sent out in the fields to collect Statements of Poll (SOPs). This was being done in breach of the established procedures. It was explained that this became necessary based on the realization that the established procedures were not delivering the expected results. This exercise must be improved, refined and made workable. There should be a pre-election simulation exercise.
- (j) The Secretariat should develop a recommendation for the correction of Statement of Poll at the level of the Secretariat. The recommendation should include how the correction would be reflected simultaneously on the Chief Election Officer's copy and that of the respective Returning Officer.
- (k) Future training exercise on the preparation of Statements of Poll should see focus being placed on basic arithmetic.
- (l) Expansion of the Public Relations Unit in an election mode should be considered. (Unfortunately efforts made to hire a Public Relations Consultant during the immediate pre-elections period did not yield a suitable candidate.
- (m) A "Joint Discipline Operations Unit" should be established, so that all players would be knowledgeable of continuous developments
- (n) All the appropriate legacy data held by GECOM need to be integrated into a single reporting platform.
- (o) The Secretariat should consider sending, to each registered voter, slips with relevant information including the location of the Polling Station where he/she was listed to vote. The location of Polling Stations would have to be determined way in advance for this to be facilitated.
- (p) Vehicles suitable for the terrain in which they operate should be provided.
- (q) Mobilize, identify and train persons who live in interior areas to serve in those areas, long before elections are scheduled to take place.

- (r) Serious consideration must be given to the possibility of sub-dividing District #4 into independent Districts.
- (s) Serious consideration must be given to the possibility of introducing, at the University of Guyana's Faculty of Social Sciences, a course (with the relevant credits) on Elections Management. In so doing, we will be securing competent and trained staff for the future. Professional officers in the Secretariat can do the training. The pool from which to recruit competent Field Managers is getting more and more shallow as the years go by.
- (t) Serious consideration must be given to the possibility of introducing electronic voting. Both Brazil and India have implemented this methodology with meaningful success. This method would eliminate a host of problems – to say nothing of the paperwork that Elections produce.
- (u) Appraisal of Field Managers and Support & Polling Day Staff in order to create a database of workers who functioned well and who didn't.
- (v) See page 75, (iii).
- (w) Specific date for elections.
- (x) There is need for financing accounting during **Elections** (Returning Officers must have finance office).
- (y) It is essential that the Public Relations Unit be made aware, on a timely basis, of all of the strategic organizational policies/activities/changes as well as problems and solutions that emerge during GECOM's operations.