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REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION TO SURINAME

2000

This document is being distributed to the permanent missions and will be presented to the Permanent Council of the Organization.



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July 5, 2001

Excellency:

I have the honor to address Your Excellency to forward the report on the electoral observation mission to Suriname for its 2000 general elections, and would be very grateful if you would kindly arrange for this report to be distributed to the members of the Permanent Council.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

James R. Harding
Assistant Secretary for Management
Officer in charge of the General Secretariat

His Excellency
Ambassador Hernan R. Castro Hernandez
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica
Chair of the Permanent Council of the
Organization of American States
Washington, D.C.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 4, 2000, the National Assembly of Suriname elected the New Front candidate for President, Ronald Venetiaan with 37 votes, three more than the required 34. It then elected Jules Ajodhia as Vice President when the candidate for the Millennium Combination, Jennifer Geerlings-Simons, withdrew her candidacy. These elections culminated the indirect selection process by which Suriname elects its top national leaders.

Fifty-one members of the National Assembly had been elected on May 25, 2000, as well as members of district and local councils. The members of the Assembly constituted the polling station at which the President and Vice President were elected.

As it had in 1991 and 1996, the Organization of American States (OAS) observed all phases of the electoral process from shortly before the May elections until the inauguration of the President and Vice President on August 12. The observation team consisted of 16 observers from 12 member and observer states: Barbados, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Guyana, Panama, the Netherlands, Saint Lucia, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. On Election Day in May, the OAS team observed elections in all ten of Suriname's districts.

The OAS found that, on Election Day, the proceedings were conducted in a satisfactory manner and that the proceedings were peaceful and demonstrated a spirit of tolerance. Thus, democratic consolidation was enhanced.

However, the Mission also reported that a very sizeable number of persons were unable to vote, either because their names had been stricken from the voters' list before Election Day or because the polling cards, which act as the ticket of admission to a polling station, had not reached the potential elector before Election Day. OAS observers also noted that the complicated series of steps that must all be completed efficiently prior to voting, as well as very short time periods provided for preparations, may have resulted in or aggravated these and other administrative glitches. The Mission makes suggestions about overcoming these circumstances in the concluding chapter of this report.

Suriname's respect for the will of the electorate and its commitment to the strengthening and consolidation of democratic practices and institutions made the elections particularly noteworthy.

Background

The OAS has been conducting electoral observation missions (EOM) in Suriname since 1987.¹ On January 19, 2000, the Government through its Permanent Mission to the OAS invited Secretary General César Gaviria Trujillo to send a Mission for elections to be held on May 25, 2000. The Secretary General responded favorably on March 13, 2000 on the condition that the required funds could be obtained from external sources.

¹ The May 2000 elections were the fourth to be observed in Suriname by an OAS team. The OAS deployed a small group during the elections of 1987. In 1991, 40 observers monitored the entire electoral process, and in 1996, 28 observers were deployed.

The Secretary General designated Ambassador Colin Granderson, of Trinidad and Tobago, as Chief of the Electoral Observation Mission and Bruce Rickerson, of the OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, as Deputy Chief. The Deputy Chief of Mission traveled to Suriname where, on April 29, 2000, the necessary international legal agreements, providing for the privileges and immunities of the observer term and for access to all aspects of the campaign and electoral process, were signed by the Director of the National Office of the General Secretariat of the OAS, Dr. Joseph Edsel Edmunds, and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Mission also appointed a local coordinator, Mr. Christopher Healy, and began planning for the assignment and deployment of observers. On his way back to Washington, the Deputy Chief of Mission consulted with the Chief of Mission in Trinidad on these and other matters relating to the EOM.

The Government of the United States made a financial commitment that was sufficient to begin the deployment of the EOM. However, sufficient resources were not received for the Mission plan that had been outlined in the preliminary budget. Therefore, the Mission management team adopted a budget based only on available resources. The financial realities meant that the Mission was unable to undertake a number of the activities, reduced the number of observers, and the length of their deployment.

Subsequently, the Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Trinidad and Tobago provided additional resources to the Mission. These were used to supplement the budget. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands made a verbal commitment, but no funds were forthcoming in time to be used by the Mission.

The Mission sincerely appreciates these generous contributions.

ACRONYMS AND INITIALS

The following acronyms, defined first in English and then in Dutch (or other language used in Suriname), appear throughout the text. They are listed here with acronyms in Italics. If the acronym is of an English phrase no such rendering follows in Dutch.

ABOP	General Liberation and Development Party (<i>Algemene Bevrijdings en Ontwikkelings Partij</i>)
APS	Suriname Amazon Party (<i>Amazone Partij Suriname</i>)
BVD	Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy (<i>Basis Partij voor Vernieuwing en Democratie</i>)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBB	Central Bureau of Civil Registry (<i>Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken</i>)
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics (<i>Centraal Bureau voor Statistieken</i>)
CEBUMA	Central Bureau of Mechanical Administration (<i>Centraal Bureau Mechanische Administratie</i>)
CPA	Central Polling Authority/Central Main Polling Station (<i>Centraal Hoofd Stembureau</i>)
D-21	Democrats of the 21st Century (<i>Democraten van de 21ste Eeuw</i>)
DA-91	Political coalition Democratic Alternative '91 (<i>Democratisch Alternatief '91</i>) joining Alternative Forum/AF - (<i>Alternatief Forum</i>) and Brotherhood and Unity in Politics, BEP, (<i>Broederschap en Eenheid in de Politiek</i>)
DC	District Commissioner (<i>Districts Commissaris</i>)
DOE	Democracy and Development in Unity (<i>Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid</i>)
DNP 2000	National Democratic Platform 2000 (<i>Democratisch Nationaal Platform 2000</i>)
DW	De West, evening daily newspaper
DWT	De Ware Tijd, morning daily newspaper
EOM	Electoral Observation Mission of the OAS (<i>Verkiezings Waarnemings Missie</i>)

EU-UNDP	European Union/United Nations Development Program
FAL	Federation of Farmers and Farm workers (<i>Federatie van Agrariërs en Landarbeiders</i>)
HPP	Renewed Progressive Party (<i>Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij</i>)
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
KTPI	Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level (<i>Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil</i>). See MC
MC	Political coalition Millennium Combination (<i>Millenium Combinatie</i>) composed of NDP, KTPI, and DA(Democratic Alternative, <i>Democratisch Alternatief</i>)
NA (or DNA)	National Assembly (<i>Nationale Assemblée</i> or <i>De Nationale Assemblée</i>)
NDP	National Democratic Party (<i>Nationale Democratische Partij</i>)
NF	New Front (<i>Nieuw Front</i>) political party coalition, which ran in the 1991, 1996 and 2000 elections. In 1991 and 1996 the coalition was composed of the NPS, (National Party of Suriname, <i>Nationale Partij Suriname</i>), the VHP, (Progressive Reform Party, <i>Vooruitstrevende Hervormde Partij</i>), the KTPI (Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level, <i>Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil</i>), and the SPA, (Suriname Labor Party <i>Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid</i>). In 2000 the KTPI was replaced in the NF coalition by Pertjajah Luhur (Highest Trust), which joined the coalition after the KTPI left to join the MC.
NHP	National Reform Party (<i>Nationale Hervormings Partij</i>)
NK	Naya Kadam (New Choice, <i>Nieuwe Keus</i>)
NPLO	National Party for Leadership and Development (<i>Nationale Partij voor Leiderschap en Ontwikkeling</i>)
NPS	National Party of Suriname (<i>Nationale Partij Suriname</i>). See NF, (1991, 1996 and 2000)
OAS	Organization of American States (<i>Organisatie van Amerikaanse Staten</i>)
OKB	Independent Electoral Office (<i>Onafhankelijk Kies Bureau</i>)
PALU	Progressive Laborers and Farmers Union (<i>Progressieve Arbeiders en Landbouwers Unie</i>)

Pertjajah Luhur	Highest Trust - See NF (2000)
PL	Pendawa Lima (Five Sons of King Pandu)
PNP	Progressive National Party, <i>Progressieve Nationale Partij</i>)
PNR	Party for a Nationalistic Republic, (<i>Partij Nationalistische Republiek</i>)
PSV	Progressive People's Party of Suriname (<i>Progressieve Surinaamse Volks Partij</i>)
PVS	Political Wing of the FAL (<i>Politieke Vleugel van de FAL</i>)
SPA	Suriname Labor Party (<i>Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid</i>). See FRONT (1987) and NF.
STVS	Suriname Television Foundation (<i>Surinaamse Televisie Stichting</i>)
UPD	Unit for the Promotion of Democracy
VHP	United Reformed Party, later changed to Progressive Reformed Party (<i>Verenigde Hervormde Partij</i> , later changed to <i>Vooruitstrevende Hervormde Partij</i>). See NF

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I. CONTEXT OF THE ELECTIONS

A. Description of Suriname

The Republic of Suriname has approximately 400,000 inhabitants and is on the northeastern coast of South America. The Marowijne (Maroni) River, separating Suriname from French Guiana, forms the eastern frontier. The Corantijn River forms the western frontier with Guyana. The total area of the country is 163,270 km², of which 161,470 km² is land and 1,800 km² is water.

Suriname's people represent many ethnic groups and speak many languages. The indigenous people are Amerindians, who were the only inhabitants until the mid-17th century. In 1652 the British established a colony, but in 1667 Suriname was taken over by the Netherlands. With the exception of two brief interludes of British control (1799-1802 and 1804-1816), it remained a colony of the Netherlands until independence in 1975.

It is estimated that plantation owners transported a total of about 325,000 slaves from West Africa. However, because of illness and demanding working conditions, most slaves died shortly after reaching Suriname. As a result, when slavery was abolished in 1863, there were no more than 36,000 slaves in the country. Today, their descendants consist mostly of so-called Creoles, who currently make-up about one-third of the total population and live primarily the capital, Paramaribo, and the coastal area. The Maroons are descendants of rebel African slaves who escaped from coastal plantations in the 17th and 18th centuries and succeeded in building viable and independent communities in the rain forest of Suriname. These peoples are the Saramaka, Matawai, Ndjuka, Paramaka, Boni or Aluku and Kwinti. Amerindian peoples living in the interior are the Caribs, Arawaks, Trio, and Wayana, and some smaller groups in the far south, many of them related to the Trio.

After the abolition of slavery, approximately 34,000 indentured laborers were brought to Suriname from India and another 32,000 from Indonesia. The Indian and Javanese population settled on fertile farmlands in the coastal area and Paramaribo. There were also a number of Chinese immigrants, most of whom settled in Paramaribo as merchants after they left the plantations.

The most recent official census of population was conducted in 1980. However, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) conducted a population count in 1993, finding 355,240 inhabitants. The count identified 34 percent of the population who are Creole, 33 percent Hindustani, 19 percent Indonesian, 9 percent Maroon, 3 percent Amerindian, and 2 percent other (European, Lebanese, Korean).

In 1973, political parties advocating independence won the elections. The next year they officially announced the intention to attain independence and on November 25, 1975, Suriname became an independent republic.

After a lengthy labor dispute between the National Army Command and a group of junior officers advocating a military labor union, sixteen junior officers led by Sgt. Desi Bouterse, took over the country on February 25, 1980. In August 1980, the Constitution was formally suspended and a mixed civilian-military government exercised authority until 1982 when the civilian façade was discarded. In the same month, citizens demanded a relaxation of restrictions and the calling of

elections. This culminated in a written petition to the military authorities in November. On December 8, fifteen persons were executed and two radio stations, the headquarters of the largest union, and a newspaper printing press were destroyed.

In 1986 resistance also grew against military rule in northeastern Suriname in the rural areas surrounding the bauxite-mining town of Moengo, led by Ronnie Brunswijk, a Ndjuka and ex-bodyguard of Army Commander Bouterse. The area became the scene of an internal conflict, which spread in the subsequent years to central and western Suriname. At the end of 1986 and during the first half of 1987, the national army attacked a number of Maroon villages in the interior.

By March 1987 a draft constitution was produced, which was approved by referendum in September. General elections followed on November 25, 1987. The three largest political parties (VHP, NPS and KTPI) combined forces in the Front for Development and Democracy and won a landslide victory.

As it became evident that the new Government was not achieving peace or reversing the rapid deterioration of the economy, the political situation worsened and on December 24, 1990, the acting Commander of the National Army announced that the Command had taken power. An interim government was installed and new elections were scheduled for May 25, 1991. The elections, which were monitored by the OAS, resulted in the Nieuw Front, a coalition of the VHP, the NPS, the KTPI, and the SPA, winning 30 seats. The NDP won 12 seats, the new DA'91 9 seats.

Because no party or coalition won the necessary two-thirds National Assembly majority, a United People's Assembly (VVV) was convened on September 6, 1991. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan was elected President and formed a government consisting of Ministers from the Nieuw Front, which remained in power for five years. During its term the Government concluded a peace agreement with the insurgents in the interior and halted the devaluation of the Surinamese guilder (approximately SF 400= US\$1). Mr. Arthy Gorré replaced Lt. Col. Bouterse as army commander, and the 1987 Constitution was amended to prevent interference by the military in the country's political and governmental process. New elections took place on May 23, 1996.

In the 1996 elections, the governing Nieuw Front (NF) lost ground in the interior to parties that promised to secure land rights for the local population. Two new parties won seats: the Javanese Pendawa Lima and Alliantie, a party that had ties to the NDP.²

The results of the 1996 elections were as follows:

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats</i>
New Front	24
NDP	16
DA'91	4
Pendawa Lima	4
Alliantie	<u>3</u>
Total	51

² De Historische Poort nar Suriname, www.suriname.nu.

The New Front coalition lost its majority in the National Assembly, and its influence was further diminished by a split in the VHP block: five of the nine VHP members disagreed with what they characterized as the lack of democracy in their party and with the candidate nominated for vice president. Consequently, when the Assembly made its constitutionally required two attempts to elect a president and vice president, the New Front presidential and vice presidential candidates did not receive the necessary two-thirds majority. The United People's Assembly was therefore convened and the New Front candidate lost to Jules Wijdenbosch, Chairman of the NDP, by a slim margin. On September 14, 1996, the new president was inaugurated.

A more complete description of the 1996 election can be found in the report of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission for those elections.

B. Political Developments Prior to the 2000 Elections

Increasing economic and political difficulties troubled the five-year term of President Wijdenbosch. Rampant inflation fueled by a dramatic decline in the exchange rate led to public unrest.

Despite a worsening crisis, the President left the country on a state visit to Ghana. In his absence, the "Structured Alliance," a grouping of opposition political parties, unions, and other civic organizations, under civil society leadership, initiated protest actions that had been suspended a few months earlier. It also proposed an interim government and several prominent persons were mentioned as possible candidates for president and vice president.

At the same time, the Union for the Defense of the Constitutional State, consisting of the bar association and several civic organizations, protested the planned installation of five new judges by the President of the Courts. This dispute grew from the allegedly unconstitutional installation of the Chief Judge by the President. The appointment of the five would also be unconstitutional, the organization asserted. On the day that four of the five new judges were installed, a meeting of the National Assembly was aborted when a large group of protesters entered the building.

When the President returned on May 23, 1999, several days of street protests had already taken place. The number of protesters increased significantly, and on May 26 some 150 unions joined the strike, which had virtually shut down Paramaribo for 10 days. On the following day 10 members of the National Assembly called for a meeting to discuss the situation.

On May 28, 1999, President Wijdenbosch dismissed the Council of Ministers. The leader of the President's party (the NDP), former Commander Bouterse, responded by calling for his resignation. On June 1, 1999, the National Assembly adopted a motion of no confidence against the President. While the motion was being discussed, the President sent a note indicating that he would be willing to shorten his term by one year and call elections, provided that the National Assembly would also agree to shorten its term by one year. This was agreed and the protest actions were suspended.

On July 28, 1999, President Wijdenbosch announced that the anticipated general election would be held on May 25, 2000.

II. ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

A. The Electoral System

Suriname is a constitutional democracy that elects its president and vice president indirectly. The president chooses the date of the elections, which take place every five years.

Its electoral and political system differs considerably from those of many other member states of the OAS. It is helpful to think about elections on three levels: (1) the preparations for elections, (2) the conduct of elections, and (3) monitoring and auditing activities related to the elections.

1. Election preparations are the responsibility of the Government through the Ministry of Home Affairs. One or more “technical commissions” may be established to assist the Minister. The Central Bureau for Population Affairs plays a key role in the preparation of voter lists at the national level. Preparations at the district level are the responsibility of each District Commissioner.
2. On Election Day, each of the 10 District Commissioners’ offices becomes the Main Polling station (MPS) for the District. The Commissioners, who are appointed local government officials, then become the heads of the MPS with major responsibilities for the elections conducted in the district. After the polling stations close and votes counted in each of them are tabulated, statements of poll and ballot boxes are transferred to the district MPS, which compiles the electoral results for the district and announces them at a meeting that is open to the public. The MPS then records a statement of poll for the entire district and transmits those results to the Central Polling Authority (CPA) in Paramaribo,³ which compiles the electoral results for all of Suriname.
3. An audit of the election is performed after the election by a body called the Independent Electoral Council (IEC). It has no role in the preparations for elections as such nor in their administration⁴, but it may intervene and request remedial action at any time during the entire electoral process.

The country is divided into 10 electoral districts, each of which is sub-divided into a number of local constituencies (“*ressorts*”) whose boundaries are established by decree. An appointed District Commissioner heads each district. Within each district a number of local councils are also elected, although they are not formally nominated by parties and do not run with party affiliations on the ballot. District councils are elected indirectly, on the basis of elections for the local councils. The

³ Translations from the Dutch and common usage may result in the use of different terms for this agency. Article 31 of the Election law refers to the “Centraal Hoofdstembureau.” Translated literally this means Central (Centraal) Main (Hoofd) Polling station (Stembureau). However, the English translation of the Election law refers to this body as the Central Polling Authority. For the purposes of this report, this body is called the Central Polling Authority.

⁴ Consequently, the IEC is not the equivalent of the Elections Commission, Elections and Boundaries Commission, or Tribunal that is found in many countries of the Western Hemisphere. Among its activities is sending out a large number of observers on Election Day to visit polling stations as an additional means of gathering pertinent information on the electoral process, which is then used in the subsequent audit.

largest district council is Paramaribo, with 21 seats, the smallest are those councils of Coronie and Brokopondo (7 seats). The largest local councils have 17 seats, the smallest seven.

The highest body, the National Assembly, has 51 members who are elected every five years. The number of seats for each electoral district is specified in the Constitution. The 51 seats are divided as follows:

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Paramaribo	17
Wanica	7
Nickerie	5
Coronie	2
Saramacca	3
Commewijne	4
Marowijne	3
Para	3
Brokopondo	3
Sipaliwini	4

Members are elected on the basis of a complex system of proportional representation using the largest average formula and preferential vote.⁵ The president, vice president, and cabinet form the executive branch. The National Assembly is a legislative body and has no executive functions. In

⁵ The following description is drawn from article 131 of the Election Law: (a) Candidates for the National Assembly are elected by proportional representation on the basis of the *largest average formula with preferential votes*. Seats are allocated in accordance with the provisions of Article 8; (b) the first seat is awarded to the political organization receiving the highest number of votes in each District. The remaining seats are awarded one by one to the party with the highest number of votes *after the denominator of the fraction of the party awarded a seat has been increased by one vote*. In other words, the number of votes received by the first party to be awarded a seat (the numerator) is divided by two (the denominator) and the cycle of awarding a seat is repeated with the party retaining the highest number of votes receiving the second seat. If the party winning the first seat still has the highest number of votes, it is awarded the second seat and the denominator of the fraction becomes three, resulting in an even smaller numerator for the party. If this party still has the highest number of votes, it receives the third seat for the District. If another party has the highest number of votes after the first seat is awarded, this party is awarded the second seat and the number of votes it received is divided by two. This system of increasing the denominator of the fraction of the party that was awarded a seat by one is repeated until all of the available seats are allocated; (c) if more than one political party has the highest number of votes, each is awarded a seat; (d) This principle is also observed after each subsequent seat is awarded and two or more parties have the highest average number of votes (an identical numerator); (e) In order to apply the principles referred to in (b) and (c) the number of seats still available in the District must be sufficient, and if this is not the case, lots are cast to select the winning political organization; (f) The Central Polling Authority shall, after the total number of seats has been awarded to a political organization, divide the number of votes on that organization's list of candidates by the number of seats awarded. The candidates who have gained more votes than these numbers have been chosen by *preference*. For the rest, and insofar as candidates have gained an equal number of preferential votes, the seats shall be awarded in accordance with the sequence on the lists of candidates submitted by the political organizations; (g) If a political organization has gained only one seat, this seat is awarded to the candidate on the list of the political organization who has gained the highest number of votes.

common usage, the “Government” refers to the executive branch and parliament or national legislature, the National Assembly. This wording is used even when the National Assembly is controlled by the political organization with which the president and/or vice president may be identified.

The electoral system consists of laws, regulations and procedures that govern the organization of elections to the representative bodies. In Suriname it is based on the following: the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname; the decree concerning compulsory registration of citizens; the decree on political organizations; the election law; the electoral decree; the decree concerning the district boundaries; and the decree concerning the boundaries of constituencies.

The Constitution specifies that every Surinamese national who lives in Suriname and is at least 18 years old on the day on which the voters’ list is administratively closed is entitled to vote. The voters’ list is not separately maintained, but rather extracted from the general registry of citizens (civil registry). Article 54 of the Constitution obliges the Government to register voters, and is embodied in the decree concerning the compulsory registration of citizens. The Government is also obliged to enter the names of eligible voters in a registry. Voters are summoned for elections through the issuance of a polling card that is separate from the national identity document. The card designates the location of the elector’s polling station.

The decree on political organizations lays down the rules for the registration of political organizations wishing to take part in elections. The explanatory memorandum that accompanies it states that not all randomly assembled groups are allowed to participate in elections. A political organization must be a legal entity with an internal democratic structure, and open to all Surinamese citizens. The voters should be informed about the program and principles of the party. Political organizations wishing to take part in elections must submit a membership list of at least one- percent of the total number of voters in the country. They are required to register in two public registries: at the IIEC and the CPA. If the CPA refuses a political organization because it has not fulfilled one or more of these qualifications, it can file an appeal with the President of the Republic.

The political organizations recognized by the CPA submit a list of candidates. They may place as many candidates on their lists for the National Assembly and district councils as there are available seats in the district and may add an additional 10 candidates if they wish. In the case of local councils, the number of candidates may not exceed the number of seats on the local council. The candidates must sign a statement agreeing to accept their nomination, but may not be nominated outside of the constituency or district where they live. The MPSs decide on the compliance of the lists with these rules, but the political organizations may appeal to the President of the Republic.

The President decides whether to support the decision of the CPA or reverse it in whole or in part. After the lists of party nominees have been finalized, they are placed on a consolidated list. The order of the lists on the ballots is determined by drawing lots at a public meeting.

The electoral decree sets out the procedural rules for the elections, such as the design of the ballots, the description of the ballot box, and the form of the official acts (statements of poll, *proces verbal*) and the declarations for voting by proxy.

After Election Day, the CPA publishes the results as soon as possible and determines the number of seats for each political party in the different bodies at a public meeting. Eligible voters who are present can file complaints. The CPA forwards the official act (statement of poll or *proces verbal*) to the IEC and the President. The persons elected also receive a copy of the act and must write to the CPA to accept election. The declaration of the IEC makes the results official.

The National Assembly is installed within 30 days after the IEC certifies the results. As was mentioned previously, the National Assembly elects the president and the vice president with a two-thirds majority vote. Seven or more members of the National Assembly can propose a candidate for either office. Two rounds of voting take place. In the case that no candidate receives a two-thirds majority, the United People's Assembly (VUV) is convened for a third vote (as occurred in 1991 and 1996). That action also requires a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. The People's Assembly consists of the members of the National Assembly, district councils, and local councils. Its decisions are taken by a simple majority of the votes cast, if more than half of the functioning members are present.

President Wijdenbosch announced that the elections would be held on May 25, 2000 and an electoral calendar was established.

Table 2

ELECTORAL CALENDAR FOR MAY 2000 ELECTIONS

DATE		ACTIVITY
From	To	
INSPECTION OF VOTERS' LISTS (30 DAYS BEFORE ELECTION DAY)		
I. 15 Feb. 00	15 Mar. 00	II. Voters' lists put up for inspection (Art.16.2 Elect. Law: 30 days before closing of the lists. Closing of voters' lists on 15 Mar. 00 (Art.16.5 Elect. Law): 25 days prior to registration of nominated candidates)
REGISTRATION OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (25 DAYS)		
16 Mar. 00	III. 22 Mar. 00	Registration of political parties (Art. 31.4 of the Electoral Law: Registration for the elections at the CPA, 24 th up to and including the 19 th day before the final day of filing candidates, 10 Apr. 00)
IV. 22 Mar. 00		Final day for the registration of political organizations and/or combinations (Decree Political Organizations SB 1987, No. 61: Registration at IEC. By this date a party should have been registered with the IEC to be able to participate in the upcoming elections.)
23 Mar. 00	25 Mar. 00	Lists of political organizations for scrutiny at CPA (Art. 32 Elect. Law)
27 Mar. 00	V.	Public notice is given of the day when candidates will be registered by the CPA for election to the NA (Art. 38.2: at least 14 days before nomination of candidates)
27 Mar. 00	28 Mar. 00	CPA makes final decision on validity of the registration of a

		political organization (Art. 34 Elec. Law)
29 Mar. 00	30 Mar. 00	Opportunity to appeal decision by CPA with the President (Art. 36.1 Election Law: Political organizations have two working days to appeal the decision by the CPA with the President)

REGISTRATION OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (25 DAYS)		
31 Mar. 00	02 Apr. 00	President shall decide upon appeal, stating reasons for his decision (Art. 36.2 Elect. Law: the President shall decide within three days after appeal)
	DATE	ACTIVITY
From	To	
03 Apr. 00	05 Apr. 00	A political organization whose registration has been refused in first instance or upon appeal, or whose appeal has been found invalid, may file a second appeal with the CPA (Art. 37.1 Elect. Law: The political organization may once more make a submission; Art. 31.1: Within three working days the decision of the CPA or the President)
No date	No date	The CPA makes a final decision regarding the third appeal (Art. 37.2 No further appeal is permitted)
REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES (45 DAYS)		
VI. 10 Apr. 00		Date for registration of candidates for election of the members of the NA (Art. 38.1 / Art. 16.5 Elect. Law: see above, 14 Mar. 00 - 25 days prior to day of registration of nominated candidates). Lists of candidates may be submitted at the office of the CPA between 08.00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.
10 Apr. 00	VII.	At closing time on the day for the nomination of candidates, the CPA meets to investigate the lists (Art. 46: immediately after the time mentioned in Art. 38.1 has passed, that is, after 3:00 P.M.)
10 Apr. 00	VIII.	The CPA must immediately notify the persons and the executive board of the political organization that submitted the lists of any irregularities (Art. 47 Elect. Law)
11 Apr. 00	13 Apr. 00	Submitted lists must be open for inspection by everyone (Art. 45: for a period of three days)
3 days after receipt of notification		Opportunity to correct mistakes or omissions at the CPA (Art. 48.1 Elect. Law: Within three days after the day the notice has been sent, between 08.00 P.M. and 3.00 P.M.)

IX. 18 Apr. 00 (from 10 Apr. 00)		Final decision by CPA regarding validity of lists of candidates (Art. 50 Elect. Law: 8 days after the lists of candidates have been submitted)
X. 19 Apr. 00	XI. 21 Apr. 00	Final possible day for filing an appeal with the President regarding validity of lists of candidates (Art. 52.1 Elect. Law: Within 3 days after decision of CPA regarding validity of lists)
22 Apr. 00	XII. 29 Apr. 00	Final day for decision by President on appeals regarding validity of lists of candidates (Art. 52.2 Elect. Law: 8 days after appeal has been filed)
30 Apr. 00		Lottery for listing order of political parties on ballots (Art. 53.1 Elect. Law: Immediately after the term of filing appeals). Announcement of valid lists of candidates (Art. 53.2 Elect. Law: Without delay, by announcement in the Advertisement Gazette of the Republic of Suriname, brought to public attention)

REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES (45 DAYS)		
30 Apr. 00		Distribution of polling cards to the District Commissioners
30 Apr. 00	22 May 00	Distribution of voters' cards by the district commissioners. May 22 was final day for the distribution of the Voters' Cards in 2000.
25 May 00	Election Day (Presidential Decree No. PB 011/99)	

Table 3
POLITICAL PARTIES BY ORDER OF REGISTRATION IN 2000

POLITICAL PARTIES BY ORDER OF REGISTRATION in 2000		
ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME	CHAIRPERSON
1. NK	Naya Kadam (New Choice)	I.M. Djwalapersad
2. MC: NDP KTPI DA	Millennium Combinatie (Millennium Combination): - Nationale Democratische Partij (National Democratic Party) - Kerunkunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil (Party for National Unity and Solidarity) - Democratisch Alternatief (Democratic Alternative)	D.D. Bouterse W. Soemita S.D. Ramkhelawan
3. NHP	Nationale Hervormings Partij (National Reform Party)	K. Moenné
4. DOE	Democratie door Eenheid en Ontwikkeling (Democracy through Unity and Development)	M. Essed-Fernandes
5. DNP 2000	Democratisch Nationaal Platform 2000 (Democratic National Platform 2000)	L.A.E. Alibux
6. BVD	Basispartij voor Vernieuwing en Democratie (Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy)	T. Gobardhan
7. NF: NPS VHP SPA Pertjajah Luhur	Nieuw Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling (New Front for Democracy and Development): - Nationale Partij Suriname (National Party Suriname) - Vooruitstrevende Hervormde Partij (Progressive Reformed Party) - Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid (Surinamese Labor Party) - Partjajah Luhur (Full Confidence)	R.R. Venetiaan J. Lachmon F. Derby P.S. Somohardjo
8. PALU	Progressieve Arbeiders en Landbouwers Unie (Progressive Laborers and Farmers Union)	I. Krolis
9. PVF	Politieke Vleugel van de FAL (Political Wing of the FAL)	J. Sital
10. DA'91: AF BEP	Democratisch Alternatief '91 (Democratic Alternative '91): - Alternatief Forum (Alternative Forum) - Broederschap en Eenheid in Politiek (Brotherhood and Unity in Politics)	W. Jessurun C. Alendy

POLITICAL PARTIES BY ORDER OF REGISTRATION in 2000		
ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME	CHAIRPERSON
11. ABOP	Algemene Bevrijdings en Ontwikkelings Partij (General Liberation and Development Party)	R. Brunswijk
12. HPP	Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij (Renewed Progressive Party)	H.P. Kisoensingh
13. PSV	Progressieve Surinaamse Volks Partij (Progressive People's Party of Suriname)	R. Braaf
14. NPLO	Nationale Partij voor Leiderschap en Ontwikkeling (National Party for Leadership and Development)	O. Wangsabesari
15. APS	Amazone Partij Suriname (Suriname Amazon Party)	R. Aloeman
POLITICAL PARTIES BY ORDER OF REGISTRATION in 2000		
ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME	CHAIRPERSON
16. Pendawa Lima	Pendawa Lima (Five Sons of King Pandu)	R. Sapoen
17. D 21	Democraten van de 21ste Eeuw (Democrats of the 21 st Century)	S. Moestadja

[Note: Each party appears separately on the ballot, rather than being identified as an alliance of parties, if applicable.]

B. Polling Station Procedures on Election Day

As has been noted, Suriname has 10 electoral districts, each headed by a District Commissioner who also chairs the MPS of a district. In this respect, the Commissioner has functions that are similar to those of a Returning Officer in many countries of the hemisphere. However, the District Commissioner also has a range of governmental powers and can be appointed or moved on the order of the President of Suriname. Each district is subdivided into local constituencies and has a number of polling stations, roughly based on the population of the municipality or neighborhood. Each local constituency must have at least one polling station. In theory, there should be no more than 500 eligible voters assigned to each polling station, but some have more than 1,000.

Opening and voting

All polling stations have a president, a vice president, three members, and five alternate members. They are required to open at 7:00 A.M., with all members and a representative of the police present. Two separate sets of paper ballots are delivered to the polling stations (for the National Assembly and for the local councils) that must be stamped with the seal of the Republic before they are delivered. The president opens the package of blank ballots, counts them and signs them before the polling station opens. The ballot boxes must be closed using two padlocks after they are shown to be empty to the persons present, including workers, scrutineers, party representatives and the public. One key is retained during the day by the president and the oldest member of the polling station holds the second.

The electoral process is very open and transparent. At each stage of the process, the president of the polling station is required to make announcements about what is going on and to demonstrate to those present that the statements being made are factual by explaining every step or showing every document handled.

Once the polling station opens, voters enter one at a time. They must show their polling card and national identity card to the president. The voter's name and number on the polling card must be read aloud and a member of the polling station checks to see whether the name appears on the voters' list. The voter then must show his hands to establish that there are no signs of ink. The little finger of the left hand is dipped into indelible ink. The voter then receives two ballots: a blue one for the National Assembly (with the party list for the constituency) and a white one for the local council on which only the name of the candidates appear. The voter goes to a booth and fills in a circle next to the name of one of the political parties for the National Assembly with a red pencil that is provided. A blank vote, the coloring of more than one circle or any other mark invalidates the ballot. For the local council, the voter can color as many circles red as there are members to be elected in that council. Any other mark on the ballot invalidates it. A substitute ballot can be obtained from the president of the polling station if the voter realizes that a mistake has been made or wants to change a vote. The spoiled ballot is retained and counted after the polling station closes.

The voter must fold both ballots before leaving the booth and put them in the ballot box. Both blue and white ballots are placed in the same box. Before the ballots are inserted, the president checks again to ensure that they have the stamp and the signature on the back.

Poll watchers (scrutineers)

At most polling stations, poll watchers representing the parties are present during the entire voting process. They are allowed to congregate outside of polling stations so long as they do not disturb the voting, and to display their party T-shirts and flags and other paraphernalia, and carry sample ballots. They may also approach and attempt to win over voters. In Suriname, this practice, which is illegal in some member states of the OAS, is considered to be legitimate voter education. Party representatives may assist voters in marking their ballots, if the president permits, and can assist incapacitated voters. Many poll watchers have copies of the voters' lists and mark off the names of people as they vote.

Voting by proxy

The Election Law permits two categories of people to vote by proxy: poll workers who are assigned to a station outside of their district of residence and police agents and members of the army on official duty outside their electoral district on Election Day. A voter must sign a declaration to have another person cast his or her vote and submit it to the district commissioner. The proxy must show this declaration at the polling station, and can also cast his or her own vote.

Assistance

According to the election law, the president can allow a person to be helped to vote if the elector is physically incapacitated and unable to vote without assistance. Persons who are illiterate or mentally handicapped are not allowed to receive assistance. People requiring assistance either bring someone they know to help them or ask a poll watcher of their party.

Closing and counting

Polling stations close at 7:00 p.m., but voters within the polling station (or in line) at that time may vote. After the last person has voted, polling station workers may take a break of no more than

one hour, during which those not on break count the numbers of votes cast (in effect, the number of voters plus the unused ballots) and compare that number with the number of ballots issued. After the break, the president opens the ballot box and the members of the polling station separate the white from the blue ballots. At some polling stations, one member of each political party is allowed inside; in others, all the poll watchers must stay outside in a place from which they can see the counting (for example, through windows and doors at schools).

Most polling stations begin by counting the National Assembly ballots. The names of the candidate and party are read aloud, and each ballot is shown to the poll watchers and the general public. Members of the polling stations and poll watchers count the votes. If a discrepancy occurs, the president can order a recount. Ballots for local councils are tallied the same way. The requirements of announcing names, showing each ballot, and counting two sets of ballots can take many hours.

After the count is completed, an official statement of poll (*proces verbal*) is written and signed by the members of the polling station. Any complaints during the counting procedure must be included in the act. The blue and white ballots are wrapped separately and sealed, as are the forms for those who may have voted by proxy. The president, accompanied by a police agent, takes the sealed packages and the empty ballot box to the MPS of the district.

The members of each MPS meet after all the statements of poll have been received. They determine the number of votes for each candidate and for each political party per local constituency, the number of votes cast per district, and the number of votes counted for each political organization in the district councils. The statements of poll from each of the district MPSs, and those from the polling stations, are then transmitted to the CPA in Paramaribo.

III. PREPARATIONS FOR THE ELECTIONS

A. Organizing Elections: Administrative Aspects

In view of the long OAS experience observing elections in Suriname, it is clear that some of the difficulties that were noted in 2000 can be traced to challenges faced by electoral authorities over the years. The economic challenges faced by the country have restricted the human and material resources available to the Government.

The tasks associated with the organization of the elections can be grouped into seven categories:

- Planning, budgeting and training
- Delivery of polling cards
- Updating the voters' registries
- Editing registries; producing and distributing polling cards
- Preparation of election documents
- Recruitment/training of poll workers
- Electoral institutions and infrastructure

These seven categories of tasks roughly take place in chronological order.

Planning, budgeting and training

A well-equipped and efficiently functioning secretariat is needed to plan the elections, to prepare a budget and secure financing, and to supervise the preparations for elections. If the operational and financial planning, as well as the preparations, is not properly facilitated, valuable time will be lost and the commission in charge of the implementation will not be able to meet the stringent timetable for elections.

Delivery of polling cards

After the President passes final judgment on appeals regarding the list of candidates, a little less than a month is left until Election Day. In this short period the eligible voters throughout the country must receive a polling card. This task is formidable, given the size of the country and the very brief time before elections in which the cards must reach the potential elector.

Preparation of election documents

Large numbers of documents have to be reproduced and distributed quickly in connection with the preparations for the elections. The Ministry of Home Affairs employs over 5,000 persons as members of polling stations. Instructional materials must be prepared and distributed to each of them to ensure the proper and efficient functioning of the polling stations. Many other instruction manuals and documents, including up-to-date electoral legislation and locations of the polling stations must be available to political organizations and other interested parties.

Most challenging, however, is the printing of the ballots. In less than 30 days between the final approval of the list of candidates by the President and Election Day, two ballots must be printed for each of the ten districts. Then they must be stamped, folded, prepared for distribution and distributed.

Recruitment/training of polling station workers

Ten persons must be recruited for each of the 463 polling stations, and back-up personnel must be available. Training must also be provided. Recruiting and training thousands of people is not easy.

Electoral institutions and infrastructure

The IEC is the principal agency responsible for monitoring the elections and determining whether the process was free, fair and transparent. It does not organize the elections. According to the election law, the IEC, "shall supervise the general elections and declare the results of the elections legally binding for the country."

Between elections the IEC is a permanent body. During that period it monitors the civil administration to ensure that when elections are called, an accurate voters' list is produced. It supervises the regular updating of the list.

The CPA is the main agency responsible for tabulating and announcing the results of the elections. The CPA also regulates the admission of the elected members to the National Assembly, the district and local councils, and is responsible for registering political organizations. The CPA must also take measures required to allow the IEC to declare the results binding. It relies on efficiency of the district commissioners, who head the MPS. The results are tabulated at the district level and then transmitted to the CPA.

B. Pre-election Events in 2000

Prior to the elections, many homes and businesses were festooned with colorful party flags and banners. The presence on many adjacent homes of flags or symbols of rival parties testifies to the respect of the parties for the right of their rivals to compete. In a number of cases, the same home displayed flags of different parties.

A major political event occurred on May 19, when a new two-lane bridge was opened over the Suriname River. It was President Wijdenbosch's birthday, and only six days before the election. Despite earlier controversies surrounding the construction of the bridge, the mammoth crowd was a demonstration of national pride in the bridge, which replaced ferry service between Paramaribo and Commowijne District.

Updating the voters' registry

Updating the civil registry, extracting a list of eligible electors, and putting up the list for inspection are major challenges. In Paramaribo, the largest of the districts, the 227 of the 463 polling stations account for more than half of the polling stations. Wanica is the second largest district (69 polling stations).

The districts of Sipaliwini, Brokopondo, parts of Marowijne and the southern portion of Para are often referred to as the "interior." They contain some 130 villages and several hundred smaller agricultural or work camps. Many of these people are semiliterate or illiterate, and often have difficulties in complying with population registration requirements. The maintenance of an accurate civil registry is hampered by the migration of the population in connection with the shifting cultivation and movements to and from Paramaribo.

The voters' registries in the interior degraded in quality as a result of civil conflict between 1986 and 1992, when an estimated 10,000 and 20,000 persons fled the interior. For the elections of 1987, special provisions were made for the refugees to vote outside their district of residence. A considerable number of persons who had reached voting age during the ten years before the 2000 elections had not been registered. In addition, many residents of the interior moved into the coastal area without notifying the authorities. Many eligible voters who have returned to the interior did not go to their previous hometowns. Therefore, they do not appear on voters' lists or were not appropriately classified by residence.

Shortly before the elections of May 25, 2000, officials of the CBB estimated that the backlog in issuing national IDs lay somewhere between 40,000 and 50,000 cards. Much of it involved persons who would turn 18 before the elections, but who had not yet had the opportunity to receive an ID card when they turned 15, as is required by law (Government Gazette 1974, No. 35). This group represented about 27,000 of the backlog cases; the rest involved ID cards that would have to be replaced.

Updating registries; production and distribution of Voter ID cards

The challenge of updating voters' registries is complicated by the lack of modern computer equipment. The CBB relies on the government computer center's (CEBUMA) mainframe computer to extract the lists of potential electors from the civil registry. It also reports, maintains and corrects the voters' lists. CEBUMA also prepares the list for the distribution of polling cards and assigns each voter to a polling station.

IV. PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES OF THE OAS MISSION

A. Activities of the OAS Chief of Mission

The substantive work of the Mission began on May 16, 2000, when its headquarters opened in Paramaribo. The observers who arrived first prepared information packages on Suriname's election laws, procedures and descriptive information on the regions under the supervision of the Resident Coordinator.

After the Chief of Mission arrived, he met with Government officials and electoral authorities, the leaders and representatives of political parties, and the diplomatic corps to inform himself of the prevailing situation. He also described the OAS EOM and explained its work.

An official briefing on the preparations for elections organized by the Minister of Home Affairs for diplomatic and international organization representatives on May 16, 2000, facilitated these initial contacts. The senior government officials responsible for organizing and supervising the elections conducted the meeting. The briefing sought to allay concerns regarding the printing of the ballots, the distribution of polling cards, and the recent and unexpected rotation of all 10 District Commissioners by the President. The major concerns raised by the diplomatic representatives reflected those raised by political parties and candidates, including preventing tampering with votes counted at polling station, while enroute to each MPS and whether the possession of a polling card was mandatory to exercise the franchise.

Subsequently, the Chief of Mission met separately with the Chairman of the IEC, the vice president of the State Commission for the 2000 Election, which played a key role in the organization of the elections on behalf of the Government, the Chairman of the CPA; and the head of the CBB. During these meetings views were exchanged on the progress of preparations and raised concerns brought to the Mission's attention by political parties and citizens. The most common concerns related to the voter registration process. It was pointed out that the distribution of polling cards had been improperly carried out in the 1996 elections and that the OAS Election Observation Mission had recommended ways at that time to strengthen crucial aspects of the electoral process.

Days before the election, the Chairman of the IEC requested that the OAS Mission undertake a quick count, as it had in 1996. However, consultations with experts who frequently work on quick counts for the OAS indicated that it was too late, that the funds available to the Mission were too limited and the necessary technical and human resources to carry it out effectively was also not available, by reason of the budget shortage.

Owing to the late deployment of the Mission, because sufficient funds were not previously available, and the increasingly busy schedules of party leaders as the election date drew close, the Chief of Mission was unable to meet with the leaders and representatives of all of the political parties. He did, however, meet with leading representatives of the main coalitions (NF, MC, and DNP 2000), and most of the smaller and more recent parties.

In general, the party leaders and representatives expressed satisfaction with the conduct of their campaigns, which had taken place in a lively but peaceful atmosphere. Many of them commented on the “modern” dimension of the campaigning, in which the emphasis had been placed on programs and issues. Reference was also made to the greater media access afforded political parties by the existence of private radio and television stations. This new development was viewed as facilitating the dissemination of party programs and consequently, making for a better-informed electorate. Furthermore, some of the smaller parties were of the view that access to the media was very helpful in that it offset their limited manpower and organizational resources for campaigning.

The concerns raised by the parties related for the most part to the registration process. The problems mentioned were as follows:

- In the final voter lists, the President had removed a large number of names (some 10,000) that had appeared on the provisional list, without giving reasons.
- Persons making late changes of address were not being included on the voters’ lists.
- A small number of persons in various *ressorts* (constituencies) had been assigned to uncustomary polling stations some distance from their homes.
- The distribution of polling cards had been poorly organized, with the result that a number of persons complained that they had not received them. Since the law requires the possession of both an identity card and a polling card, there was great concern that they would be unable to vote.
- The procedures for obtaining polling cards were described as inconvenient and the response to inquiries unsatisfactory.

It appeared to the OAS team that these administrative and logistical problems were not viewed by most political parties and candidates as deliberate attempts to exclude voters.

The Mission raised these concerns with electoral and civil-registry officials, who said that citizens are responsible for verifying their names on the provisional voters’ list and for informing the civil registry of changes of address lists. However, the officials asserted that only some 10% had done so. If they were not found at the registered addresses, their names were removed from the registries. The processing bottlenecks led to large crowds of potential voters milling around even on Election Day in search of identity or polling cards.

Another logistical complaint related to the late delivery of the sample ballots. Besides verifying that the ballots had been correctly printed, they are used by political parties to demonstrate the proper procedures for voting.

Some party leaders questioned the integrity of the transmission of results from the polling station to the MPS. Though party representatives can be present as members of the public when the votes are being counted and may register complaints, the law does not provide for giving them copies of the statements of poll, as party scrutineers have no official status. The Mission was assured that

specific instructions had been given to polling station officials to ensure proper and full reporting of any such complaints. Suggestions that the results could be posted at the polling stations were not entertained, as the law does not require it.

All the members of the OAS observer team, except those assigned to very remote areas, were able to make familiarization visits to their districts before returning to Paramaribo for training on May 20, 2000. These sessions emphasized Surinamese electoral procedures, observation methodology, and the general and political context of the country. Reference was also made to the code of conduct expected of OAS election observers. Presentations were made by Mission and Surinamese experts including the Chairman of the IEC and a well-known Surinamese academic, Hugh Sedney. The Mission benefited from the fact that virtually all the observers had prior electoral observation experience and that some had served with the OAS during its 1991 and 1996 observations in Suriname. In a welcome gesture of cooperation, the Chairman of the IEC invited the OAS observers to meet with his teams of election monitors who had been assigned by that institution to visit and report on activities at the polling stations.

The OAS observer teams were then deployed to the districts. In addition to monitoring the political situation and the pre-electoral operations, they carried out reconnaissance trips and contacted local election officials, party representatives and candidates, and community leaders.

Meetings with the District Commissioners and other local election officials produced useful information on: the delivery of polling cards, plans for pre-Election Day and Election Day operations, the proposed operation of the MPS in each district, approved political rallies, specimen ballots, and detailed maps of the electoral district with the location of polling stations.

The observers were therefore in a position to witness crucial pre-electoral activities such as electors obtaining their polling cards, persons applying to vote by proxy or making inquiries concerning the voters' lists, and the preparation of the polling stations, most of which were in schools. In Lelydorp, District of Wanica, it was discovered from the specimen ballot for local elections that one party had been omitted. New ballots were reprinted in time for the elections.

In some districts the observers attended the mandatory training seminars for polling station officials. They were also able to observe the final spate of rallies that capped off the campaign and which were in general well attended, lively and peaceful. There was wide consensus among party representatives that the campaign had taken place in a climate of tolerance and mutual respect.

The observers were generally well received and enjoyed the cooperation and assistance of the officials with whom they came into contact. In the District of Para, for example, they were allowed to use the police telephone since other means of communication were not readily available.

The Mission received no formal complaints from the political parties.

*Table 4***POLITICAL RALLIES AND MEETINGS OBSERVED BY THE OAS MISSION**

District	PVF	MC	DA'91	Pendawa Lima	DNP 2000	BVD	NF	PALU	D21	Total
XIII. Paramaribo					2	2	2			6
XIV. Wanica					1	1	1			3
XV. Nickerie										0
Coronie		1					2	1		4
Saramacca	1		1			1				3
Commewijne					1	1	2		1	5
Marowijne										0
Para			1	1			1			3
Brokopondo										0
Sipaliwini										0
Total	1	1	2	1	4	5	8	1	1	24

B. Collaboration with EU/UNDP and CARICOM EOMs

The vast experience of the OAS in fielding EOMs in the hemisphere and its considerable experience in Suriname made it important for the Organization to share its knowledge and expertise with other electoral missions and collaborate as closely as was practical.

Officials of the Office of the General Secretariat in Suriname and of the Special Mission to Suriname provided frequent and helpful collegial assistance to the joint electoral mission of the European Union (EU) and the UNDP; which was able to deploy in Suriname before the OAS.

Upon the arrival of the OAS team, consultations took place between the Chiefs of Missions and a cooperative working relationship developed. Having had a presence on the ground since early in the year, the EU Mission had a good feel for the pre-electoral situation. The OAS Chief of Mission accepted an invitation to attend the briefing for the EU observers. The Deputy Chief of the EU Mission attended the debriefing session for the OAS observers and reciprocated the invitation.

This cooperation and sharing of information limited duplication of effort. For example, the observers from the two teams were deployed in such a way as to complement each other's presence on Election Day and thereby monitor a greater number of polling stations. The deployment of the OAS observers also paid greater attention to isolated polling stations upriver and in the interior.

A few days before the election, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) fielded its own team of observers. The OAS invited the members of the CARICOM team who had arrived in Suriname by that time to participate in the training sessions for the OAS team.

Media

A persistent challenge faced by the Mission was keeping up with events in the print and electronic media, since the two newspapers in Paramaribo are published in Dutch and the radio and television stations also broadcast in that language. Many political rallies that recorded and rebroadcast were either in Dutch or in other languages of Suriname. The Mission was assisted in following the media by its Dutch-speaking local staff and the staff of the National Office and the Special Mission to Suriname. One observer from the OAS staff, fluent in Dutch, and several helpful Surinamese staff members, especially the drivers, were often able to act as unofficial interpreters.

V. ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

Election Day Activities

On Election Day, the Mission deployed 16 observers in all 10 districts. Some traveled by boat and light aircraft to visit isolated polling stations that would otherwise have been inaccessible.

Each observer arrived before the scheduled time for the opening of the polling station at 7:00 A.M. to observe the opening, the closing at 7:00 P.M., and the vote count after the polls closed. During the day, the number of polling stations visited by observer teams depended on variables such as road conditions (the elections were being held during the rainy season), the weather, the distances to be covered, and the mode of transportation that had to be used. The observer who visited the vast District of Sipalawini in the interior by airplane was able to monitor only a small number of polling stations, as it took an hour to fly from one village to another. Travel by boat was also very time-consuming.

Opening procedures

OAS observers noted that the opening procedures generally went smoothly. The observers reported that procedures were carefully observed in most cases, in particular the requirement to permit public scrutiny of the process. The blank ballots were shown to all present and counted before being signed and stamped by the president of the polling station, ballot boxes were opened and shown to be empty to the citizens present before being locked and the two keys were given to the presiding officer and another polling station official. The officials signed the Act of Opening, and voting commenced. In most cases the polling stations opened punctually.

Voting

The voting took place in an atmosphere of peace, order and transparency. Party activists were present, playing a dual role: some served as poll-watchers and others sought to persuade voters to support their candidates, even up to the last minute. Numerous activists were strategically placed to follow the voting operations closely and were equipped with voter registration lists on which the names of voters were struck off and running tallies of names were kept. Observers from the IEC were

also present in a substantial number of polling stations. The colorful and active presence of the representatives and supporters of the various parties with their festooned tents, flags and other party symbols at times lent a festive atmosphere to many polling stations. The OAS observers noted the friendly interaction and fraternizing among political competitors and reported that this appeared to demonstrate mutual tolerance and respect.

The early flow of voters was reported to be quite slow, but the pace picked up noticeably in mid-afternoon because a number of offices and businesses closed early. In many places the lines lengthened towards closing time.

OAS observers noted a number of irregularities. Most of the major problems stemmed from what appeared to be serious shortcomings of the voter registration system and the difficulties with the distribution of polling cards. The inaccuracies of the voters' lists and the faulty and late distribution of polling cards meant that many potential voters either did not receive cards or were not listed at the polling stations indicated on their cards. Matters were further complicated by the fact that supplementary voters' lists for the most populous districts, Paramaribo and Wanica, were not completed until late in the morning on Election Day and were received at the polling stations much later. These and other difficulties may have resulted in turning away a sizeable number of potential voters.

In an attempt to meet the concerns that became evident after the polls had opened, following a meeting of the President with electoral authorities, the Minister of Home Affairs circulated a document late in the morning that declared:

- All voters who possessed a polling card and a national identity card and whose name was not on the voters' list of the polling station on the polling card could vote at that polling station;
- All voters who possessed an identification card and whose names were on the voters' list of the polling station where they would normally vote, but who lacked a polling card, would be also allowed to vote.

The President made a public announcement of these changes. Although well intentioned, the announcement increased confusion while not necessarily resolving the problems. Some presiding officers refused to follow the directives because instructions were not in writing or because written documents were photocopies and did not bear an official stamp. Others failed to comply because adding names to the voters' list by hand was contrary to the law. Still others objected to having received their copy of the instructions by fax. Other officials did not receive the notice of change of procedure in time. A number of polling stations complied, although in many cases these efforts did not seem to have the intended result of permitting significant numbers of potential voters to cast their ballots.

The problems affected most acutely the more populous districts, in or near Paramaribo.

It was apparent that late deletions from voters' list by order of the President, including many names that had been on the preliminary list, were a further cause of confusion.

Other irregularities observed or reported by OAS team members appeared to be relatively insignificant and some were quickly resolved. For example:

- In the Flora constituency of Paramaribo, voters whose polling card numbers commenced with 28 or 29 were initially prevented from voting, because the particular voters' list was missing. The presiding officer was instructed by the MPS to allow such people to vote and to make note of the names and addresses so that they could be struck off when the missing list arrived;
- Some of the ballot boxes had one rather than two padlocks;
- In Moengo, Marowijne district, a voter caught placing an extra ballot in the box was removed from the polling station but not arrested;
- In Ressort Oost in Para district, one polling station received fewer local ballots than were needed. In another station, the special stamp for the ballots was received in a damaged condition. As a result, the presiding officer could only sign the ballots;
- In Ressort Noord, Para, the first few ballots distributed (at least nine) did not bear the special stamp and were considered invalid. However, this polling station had a lower incidence of invalid votes than several others did, and
- Assistance to physically or mentally challenged persons was not uniformly provided.

Closing procedures

Especially in the more populated areas, the slowness of the complex, time-consuming voting process added to the length of waiting lines at the polling stations, many of which remained at the official closing time. Voters stood in the darkness in many areas, and in a number of cases more than 100 voters were still waiting to be processed at the end of the day. All this increased the frustration of voters. Both private citizens and political party representatives made OAS observers aware of the situation. However, the people waiting to vote remained quite calm.

Counting the Ballots

The fact that two kinds of ballots were commingled in the same ballot box, and a precise series of steps were required to be followed by poll workers, made the counting of the ballots an arduous and often extremely lengthy process. This situation was exacerbated by the sheer exhaustion of the polling station officials, who had been at work since before 7 A.M. They faced a complicated and exacting process that, in many cases, took many hours and sometimes until the following morning. The counting procedures were slow, especially at the local council level, where the votes could be split between political parties.

Polling stations Visited

During Election Day, the OAS observers visited nearly half of the polling stations in Suriname.

Table 5
POLLING STATIONS VISITED BY OAS OBSERVERS ON ELECTION DAY
[Total Polling Stations, 463]

Electoral District	XVI. No. of Observers	Polling Stations Visited
Paramaribo	4	86

Wanica	2	42
Nickerie	2	13
Coronie	*2	4
Saramacca	2	21
Commewijne	1	24
Marowijne	1	13
Para	1	16
Brokopondo	1	7
Sipaliwini	1	3
Total	15	229

*The same team of observers visited the Districts of Coronie and Saramacca.

Accompanying the Ballot Boxes

In most cases, the OAS observers accompanied the ballot boxes to the MPS. Particularly in the most densely populated areas, it was clear that insufficient planning had been undertaken to receive the ballot boxes in the early hours of the morning after Election Day, or, in some cases after the sun had come up. The long day for polling station workers ended with the delivery of the boxes. In the case of the MPS in Paramaribo, boxes were arriving by 4 A.M. on the day following the election. Cars containing the boxes, guarded by police agents, circled the offices of the MPS as a torrential rain began. The boxes containing the sealed packages of counted ballots and the statement of poll (*proces verbal*) were then taken into the MPS so that the counts from each polling station could be compared with the information on the statements of poll.

VI. POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

A. The Post-Election Stages

Suriname's multi-tiered electoral system does not end with the voting on Election Day. The period between Election Day and the inauguration of the President can be divided into six phases:

1. The results from each polling station are transferred to the MPS of each electoral district, where the final district-wide tabulations are made and registered in an official act (statement of poll). These documents are presented in public and sent to the CPA in Paramaribo.
2. The CPA tallies and verifies the results from the ten electoral districts. The candidates elected to the National Assembly are identified after the official results are received from all the districts. Those elected by preferential votes are also identified. The final countrywide results are recorded in an official act (statement of poll), presented in a public meeting and passed on to the IEC, the electoral auditing body.
3. The IEC audits the results, taking into consideration the field reports and findings of its election monitors. If it finds no major infringements of the electoral law or serious mistakes that could alter the outcome, it certifies the results as legally binding.

4. The National Assembly prepares to admit the new members after receiving statements of acceptance of election (the acts of consent). The eldest member is sworn in first, and that person convenes a meeting to swear in the other 50 members. The new members must be sworn in within 30 days after the IEC declares the election results binding.
5. When the new members of the National Assembly are installed, they prepare for the election of the president and vice president. If, after two attempts, none of the candidates for either office receives a two-thirds majority (34 of the 51 seats), a simple majority of the members of the Assembly convenes the United Peoples Assembly to elect the president. That body consists of all members of the National Assembly, the local council and the district councils. Once the indirect election has been completed (whether in the National Assembly or the United Peoples Assembly), preparations are made to inaugurate the president and vice president.

B. Post-Election Problems in Paramaribo

OAS observers noted that on May 27 the Chairman of the CPA had not yet received all results from Paramaribo. The MPS for Paramaribo has to tabulate the results for more than half of the polling stations in the country. It was only on June 10 that the electoral district of Paramaribo convened a public meeting to present its official results.

As early as May 27 the media commented on possible causes for the delays on Election Day. It cited the recruitment of inexperienced polling station heads. It also noted the traffic jams and delays in picking up and dropping off the election material at the Ons Erf Concert Hall and Exhibition Center, the only processing center for Paramaribo. Many of these events had been confirmed by the reports from OAS observers. The chairman of the CPA reported to members of the OAS team that the delays at Paramaribo were caused by, among other things, the lengthy re-calculations, which were required to achieve a final tally of the results from Paramaribo.

C. Nickerie Vote Dispute

A second major problem involved the tallying of votes occurred in Nickerie District. According to HPP poll watchers, as reported to OAS observers, the results at several polling stations did not match their own tally sheets -- this led to a discrepancy of over 100 votes. The HPP received 1,748 votes in Nickerie and the PVF 1,757 votes, a difference of 9. If its claim could be substantiated, the seat won by the PVF would go to the HPP.

The HPP filed a complaint with the IEC on June 2 and asked for a recount. However, the chairman of the IEC ruled a recount was the responsibility of the MPS in Nickerie. A newspaper reported that the HPP accused the MPS of Nickerie of only recounting the results from two of the 31 polling stations. Nickerie had only had 31 polling stations, but the list contained 32, giving 114 additional votes to the HPP. When the non-existent polling station was removed the original count of 1,748 would stand; giving the PVF 9 votes more than the HPP.

On June 28, 2000, press reports announced that the adjudication of a summary procedure (*kort geding* in Dutch, a civil procedure that is filed when an urgent decision is required) filed by the HPP would begin. The case continued for almost two months, until July 24, when Judge John von

Niesewand dismissed the claim as not falling within his jurisdiction. In the interim, the IEC had declared the elections binding, asserting that it had jurisdiction.

D. Activities of the Central Polling Authority

The CPA assisted the electoral district of Paramaribo in tracing and correcting errors. When the results for Paramaribo were finally verified and presented on June 10, the CPA completed its task: it convened a public meeting on June 14 to present the official results. According to Mr. Boksteen, its chairman, the complaint regarding Nickerie should have been filed on Election Day and not

afterwards. He noted that the HPP had filed two complaints at the polling station level (313 and 326) and that a recount of these stations had taken place. In his view there were no grounds for further recounts, and he referred the case to the IEC.

E. The Independent Electoral Council

On June 27, the IEC convened a public meeting to present its observations and audits of the May 25 elections. The official statement of poll presented by the Chairman noted that law broadly defines the Council's mandate and sets no criteria indicating how it should declare the results of elections legally binding.

In addition, according to articles 52, 53, and 54 of the Constitution, the government is responsible for creating those conditions that allow citizens to participate in the general elections through membership in political organizations and by voting. This responsibility calls for, among other things, the creation and the maintenance of an accurate voter's list. Being on the final voters' list and having a polling card are two fundamental requirements for participation in the elections. According to the findings of the IEC, a number of eligible voters were erroneously removed from, or did not appear on, the definitive electoral registry, or, that for unjustifiable reasons, they had not received a polling card. These findings confirm what the OAS observed.

The nature of the complaint had been serious enough to warrant an independent investigation by the IEC. However, the date of the public presentation of the official statement of poll this investigation into the events that transpired in Nickerie on Election Day had not yet been completed. The IEC had therefore postponed its assessment of the elections in Nickerie until the completion of its investigation.

In a public meeting on July 4, the IEC declared that it had conducted a thorough investigation of the HPP complaints. It declared that there were no grounds to call for a complete recount of Nickerie district and that it had no choice but to declare the results legally binding.

VII. FINAL STAGES OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

A. The National Assembly

The election law provides that the new members of the National Assembly must be sworn in 30 days after the IEC declares the election results binding. At that point, the CPA must send the official results to the District Commissioner of each of the ten districts. The District Commissioner's office contacts the elected persons, who have two weeks to submit a notice of acceptance. The acceptance notices are returned to the CPA and only then can the National Assembly begin to admit the new members. The eldest elected member presides over the admittance procedure after he or she has been admitted first.

On June 27, the IEC declared the May 25 elections binding for nine of the ten electoral districts. Consequently, the new members had to be admitted by July 27. On July 11, Jagernath Lachmon, the eldest elected member, was sworn in. On Monday July 24, the National Assembly

convened to swear in its members. Even though he had been re-elected, the outgoing President, Jules A. Wijdenbosch, announced that he would not take his seat but would be replaced by DP candidate, Frank Playfair, who had been second on the DPP ballot in Paramaribo.

Three commissions were appointed to verify the credentials of the elected members of the National Assembly. The spokesperson of the first commission reported that the National Assembly had received a letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs confirming that all 51 elected members were Surinamese (a New Front parliamentarian in the outgoing Assembly had been a Dutch national). The spokesperson said that all candidates should be admitted, but noted that a discussion had taken place on the issues of ethics and morality in connection with the admittance of new members. It was recommended that new laws be made to deal with these matters, because the current laws made no provision for barring a person on the basis of ethical or moral considerations. The second commission reported essentially the same results.

The report from the third commission found that all the candidates reviewed should be admitted. Mr. Rogers of the NPS announced that his party, as members of the New Front coalition, would abide by the law but that its members had an uneasy feeling that could be traced back to the past actions of one of the candidates. He stated that, during the military regime of Mr. Bouterse, the government had disbanded the parliament, and yet, he was now asking to be admitted to the very body he had deactivated. Mr. Rogers said that a person who takes the law into his own hands is not an ideal candidate to participate in deliberations. The New Front also expressed its dissatisfaction by having several members leave the room so that Mr. Bouterse would be admitted with only the minimum number of members required (26).

B. The Election of the President and Vice President

The National Assembly met on Thursday July 27 to make procedural preparations for the election of the president and vice president, which would take place on August 4, 2000.

On August 2, the newspaper *De Ware Tijd* predicted that the New Front candidates Ronald Venetiaan and Jules Ajodhia were almost certain to be elected if the members of the National Assembly kept their word and the 33 members of the New Front supported their candidacy. It was suggested, moreover, that parties such as DA '91 would support the New Front candidates. The Millennium Combination proposed its own candidates, Rashied Doekhie for president and Jennifer Geerlings-Simons for vice president.

On August 3, 2000, one day before the first round of the presidential elections, the media reported an attempt to persuade dissatisfied VHP members to leave the New Front coalition and support Kries Nannan Panday as president and Sonny Kertoidjodjo as vice president. The attempt to undermine the New Front failed because the candidates did not receive the necessary support from at least seven members of the National Assembly to secure their nominations.

On Friday August 4, the National Assembly elected the New Front candidate, Ronald Venetiaan as president with 37 votes, 3 more than the required 34. The presidential candidate of the Millennium Combination received 10 votes, and there were four invalid votes. The vice presidential candidate of the Millennium Combination, Jennifer Geerlings-Simons, withdrew her candidacy. OAS Mission officials observed these proceedings.

On August 12 the inauguration of the president and vice president took place. The Chief of Mission attended this event.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Debriefing the Observers

The first step in compiling information from which to make concluding statements and recommendations was the debriefing of the observation team. On the afternoon of May 26, the day after the elections, OAS observers gathered in Paramaribo to discuss their previous day's activities. In many cases, the observers had left their districts immediately after accompanying the ballot boxes to the MPS, following the completion of the counting at the polling stations where they had been present at the closing. Many of them had to drive the rest of the night or early morning, an additional three or four hours back to Paramaribo.

A representative of the Observer Mission of the EU/UNDP attended the OAS debriefing.

The observers reported in great detail on the findings from their assigned districts. There was a great deal of useful interaction between the observers, both to ensure whether any difficulties that were being reported were common to more than one area and also to exchange experiences and questions based on the experience of many on the OAS team.

The general assessment was that the elections had proceeded smoothly, without significant problems apart from the significant difficulties related to the voters' list and the distribution of polling cards. All in all, the atmosphere had been tranquil. Polling station officials had displayed professionalism for the most part and appeared to be generally familiar with required procedures.

B. Conclusions

Although the elections on May 25, 2000 were generally managed in a satisfactory way, a number of fundamental administrative and logistical problems continued to beset the process and prevent citizens from voting. Some of these difficulties are the same as those that the OAS had identified in previous elections, and which it had offered to assist in addressing.

The people of Suriname take elections seriously and participate in them enthusiastically. The people and political parties appear to respect the rights of their opponents most of the time and demonstrate an appreciation of the give-and-take that is required to consolidate democracy. Electoral authorities, navigating through a maze of agencies and regulations that must be followed precisely, approach their activities seriously, work hard, and devote themselves to producing open elections. Despite a demanding timetable for elections, officials dedicate their efforts to complying with the timetable as closely as possible.

In keeping with many member states of the OAS, the demand which elections place on human and financial resources is great compared to the national wealth available to pay the costs of elections. The Mission appreciates the pressures that are made on Suriname's election administrators and institutions.

Its long experience in Suriname as an election observer and in other important capacities, at the invitation of successive governments, causes the OAS Mission respectfully to offer some matters for consideration in the future.

C. Planning, Training and Preserving Institutional Memory

The sudden death of Mr. Jules de Kom, who, although retired, had served as the policy adviser to the Minister of Home Affairs resulted in a considerable loss of institutional memory before the 2000 elections. He had been in charge of electoral preparations in 1996 and had been a member of the Technical Commission for the Preparation of the Election in 2000.

The report of the 1996 OAS Mission recommended that the considerable local experience gained in the elections of 1987, 1991, and 1996 be incorporated into guidelines or a handbook for elections. In view of the attrition of key personnel, that initiative becomes all the more pressing. A handbook on electoral procedures could do much to facilitate the transmission of experience from one generation of officials to the next.

If requested, the OAS would be prepared to assist in the modernization and strengthening of the CBB and the preparation of handbooks and other tools to ensure the transmission of accurate information to electoral officials, working in close partnership with those officials. The Organization already has considerable experience in the strengthening of election management in a number of its member states.

Suriname extracts its list of eligible voters from the Civil Registry. The OAS Mission suggests that authorities consider efforts well before the next election to build a civil registry based on a network of personal computers, which are inexpensive to install and uncomplicated to operate and maintain. The OAS has already undertaken, or has been invited to undertake, the strengthening of civil and electoral registries in nine of its 34 member states.

The elimination of thousands of names that had appeared on the Preliminary Voters' list and an estimated 1,000 or more persons who were "inadvertently" deleted resulted in a good deal of vocal dissatisfaction and chaotic scenes as a sizeable number of individuals milled about trying to obtain polling cards on Election Day. Differing demographic situations in the interior and urban areas contributed to this problem. The OAS is open to discussing the strengthening of the Voter Registry, if requested.

D. Updating the Voter Registry

Delivery of Polling Cards

The OAS was told that, as in 1996, over 40,000 polling cards had not been distributed prior to May 2000. In an estimated electorate of 267,000 persons, this number of undistributed cards is exceedingly high. Citizens should not be blamed for causing this problem. While some number of them may wait until the last minute, or until it is too late, to pick up their polling cards, it is primarily the responsibility of election officials to make every effort to get them into the proper hands in time.

This situation was worsened by the migration of citizens to other countries or movement within the country. A current and accurate census would seem to be one of the most important ways

of having an up-to-date civil registry. An incomplete list of citizens contributes to an inaccurate civil registry, which in turn would produce a gap between eligible voters and those who are able to obtain their polling cards.

The OAS also notes that difficulties with the lack of street names and house numbers, especially in new urban residential areas, have hampered the delivery of voting cards. Some 240 new street names had not been assigned before the creation of the polling cards and most new neighborhoods had not been properly mapped. Existing maps date to the 1970s. There is also a severe shortage of neighborhood maps. In Paramaribo, a *ressort* may contain as many as 300 streets, and this entity is not divided into smaller units. It would be much easier to maintain the street signs and house numbering systems in smaller neighborhood units, and this would also assist in the delivery of polling cards. In addition, a large number of new street signs were still in storage after Election Day.

E. Strengthening and Modernizing the Civil Registry

Just as the electoral system is decentralized in Suriname, so is its administration. Numerous bodies all must perform a number of steps efficiently in order for elections to be efficiently managed. The voter's list is produced by the government computer center (CEBUMA) on a mainframe computer and the civil registry office (CBB) was unable to access information and manage it readily. Requests for additions or corrections to the voters' lists had to be communicated back and forth and considerable delays and errors were caused by miscommunication. The same was true for the production of polling cards. CEBUMA is also responsible for assigning each voter to one of the 463 polling stations. These lists are also used to distribute the polling cards.

If the OAS were requested to assist in the modernization of the civil registry system, these types of issues could be addressed simultaneously.

F. Preparation of Electoral Documents

The Mission found a special need for care in the production of ballots, especially for local council elections. It was reported by OAS observers that several ballots contained mistakes and that, in one instance, some ballots showed candidates not registered in their constituency. The time allotted by the election law for the preparation of the ballots is very short. A fully integrated computer system could help in ballot preparation and printing.

G. Electoral Institutions and Infrastructure

The Mission noted the need for special attention to be paid to the MPS for the district of Paramaribo, which accounts for more than half of the polling stations in the country (227 of 463). Both in 1996 and 2000, major problems or delays occurred there. In 1996 no computer equipment was available in Paramaribo and a backlog in the processing of the incoming results developed. In 2000 the MPS of Paramaribo was the last to report the official results for this highly populated district. The Mission suggests that a fully automated processing system be set up for Paramaribo to allow results to be reported in the same time frame as other districts.

OAS observers also noted the chaos involved in picking up and delivering polling station material for Paramaribo. In the early morning of Election Day a major traffic jam developed when

227 vehicles tried to enter the depot to pick up the heavy trunks with the election materials and the two large ballot boxes. Many people needed assistance carrying this material to their vehicles. This situation repeated itself in the early hours of the next morning when the materials had to be returned. A rainstorm further complicated the situation. The confusion made it difficult to control the audited results of each polling station immediately, and this contributed to the delays in the processing of the election results by the MPS of Paramaribo.

Decentralization might help and the system would benefit from a number of trial runs for the processing of ballot boxes well ahead of time.

In the past, each polling station received two large tables (8 by 4 feet). During the elections of 2000, however, no tables were made available. Since most polling places were in schools, it may have been assumed that the furniture there would suffice. However, it proved very difficult to handle and count the large ballots on the small tables available in the schools. In many polling stations, staff was seen sorting or counting the ballots on the floor. This may have contributed to disorganization, exacerbated the tiredness of election officials and provoked problems with counting.

H. Post-Election Contacts with Electoral Authorities

On August 7, 2000, the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Resident Coordinator met with the head of the Civil Registry (CBB) to obtain a clearer sense of the problems experienced in establishing the voters' lists and in distributing polling cards. He told the OAS team that some 45,000 polling cards had not been distributed before Election Day, and attributed this to failures to inform the Registry of changes of address. He also noted that people were extremely mobile, especially in the interior for economic reasons (e.g., gold mining), and frequently left to live abroad. This does not appear to have been taken into account by the political parties. Regardless of the reasons, in an electorate of some 267,000 persons, the number of undistributed polling cards represents an exceedingly high percentage of eligible voters.

The head of the CBB mentioned the benefits of re-establishing government offices in the interior that had been destroyed during the civil war. By providing several government services in addition to those relating to the civil registry, the costs associated with operating such offices should be reduced. The considerable experience of the OAS in decentralization could be devoted to this effort, if requested.

Regarding the 10,000 persons whose names had been struck from the voters' lists by the President before the elections, the chief of the CBB pointed out that these persons were in addition to the 45,000 whose polling cards had not been distributed. In short, he was reporting, after the fact, that an estimated 55,000 potential voters either had been removed from the final voter's list by the President or had not received their correct polling cards.

The Mission is deeply concerned about the number of persons who were not able to vote, for any reason, especially when decisions were made without informing persons about the rationale or at the last minute.

The Mission suggests that the OAS would also be prepared to discuss other aspects of these election-related issues upon request.



Table 6
UNOFFICIAL (UNAUDITED) FINANCIAL STATEMENT

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES		
UNIT FOR THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY		
PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF		
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION IN SURINAME-2000		
From inception to May 9, 2001		
Summary of Expenditures Using OAS Expenditures Categories		
CATEGORY OAS EXPENSE	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDITURES
1	Recurrent Personnel Services -Special Observer Contracts and related costs.	\$ 17,768
4	National and International Travel Stipends / Travel - This category includes expenditures for per diem expenses for international and Local observers, as well as international and local travel.	31,258
6	Equipment, Supplies and Maintenance - This obligation item includes fuel, lubricant, insurance, and vehicle maintenance. It also includes field equipment, supplies and communication system equipment, among others).	18,327
7	Building and Maintenance - This category includes repairs and maintenance for fixed installations of the office as well as rent and service payments such as water, electricity, and, telephone costs.	3,475
8	Local and International Contract Services - These category includes for both national and international personnel, as well as local contracts for administrative, security, drivers personnel, and translation services.	54,827
9	Other Expenses - This category includes shipping, telephone and fax, insurance, seminar, conferences, among others.	2,638
	Total	\$ 128,293

		Beginning Cash Balance 2000	\$	-
		Contributions 2000		162,000
		Interest Income		87
		Cash Available Balance	\$	162,000
		Total Expenditures		128,293
		Unliquidated Obligations		8,329
		Fund Balance	\$	25,143
Certified by				
Javier Goldin, Chief				
Financial Reporting & Policy Division				

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

**AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAME AND THE
GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

Appendix 2

FORMS USED TO REPORT OBSERVATIONS

Appendix 3

SEQUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES ON BALLOTS

	I. Paramaribo	II. Wanica	III. Nickerie	IV. Coronie	V. Saramacca
1.	BVD	NPLO	NPLO	MC	MC
2.	DA'91	NHP	DOE	PALU	NPLO
3.	NPLO	DNP2000	NK	NF	ABOP
4.	DNP 2000	HPP	PVF	BVD	NHP
5.	MC	PALU	D 21	DNP2000	D 21
6.	HPP	BVD	NHP	PSV	BVD
7.	DOE	ABOP	DNP2000	DA'91	NK
8.	PALU	MC	NF		DNP2000
9.	PVF	Pendawa Lima	Pendawa Lima		HPP
10.	PSV	DOE	BVD		PVF
11.	NHP	NF	DA'91		NF
12.	APS	NK	HPP		DA'91
13.	ABOP	DA'91	MC		
14.	Pendawa Lima	D 21			
15.	NF	PSV			
16.	NK	PVF			
	VI. Commewijne	VII. Marowijne	VIII. Para	IX. Brokopondo	X. Sipaliwini
1.	BVD	DNP2000	NK	NF	BVD
2.	NK	ABOP	ABOP	ABOP	MC
3.	MC	MC	Pendawa Lima	DA'91	APS
4.	HPP	APS	APS	BVD	DNP2000
5.	PVF	NF	NF	DNP2000	NF
6.	Pendawa Lima	DA'91	NPLO	MC	ABOP
7.	NF	NK	DNP2000		DA'91
8.	NPLO	BVD	BVD		
9.	DNP2000		MC		
10.	D 21		DA'91		
11.	DA'91				
12.	NHP				
13.	ABOP				

Source: *De Ware Tijd* (morning daily newspaper), 43ste Jaargang, No. 10499, May 02, 2000

Appendix 4

VOTING STATISTICS: 1991, 1996 AND 2000

Voting Statistics 1991						
District	Population	Registered voters	Population registered (%)	Voter turnout	Voter turnout (%)	Population that voted (%)
1. Paramaribo	20,5335	133,311	64.9	86,887	65.2	42.3
2. Wanica	63,935	42,938	67.2	33,754	78.6	52.8
3. Nickerie	32,755	19,891	60.7	16,625	83.6	50.8
4. Coronie	2,636	1,825	69.2	1,462	80.1	55.5
5. Saramacca	11,695	7,779	66.5	6,686	86.0	57.2
6. Commewijne	19,673	12,894	65.5	10,716	83.1	54.5
7. Marowijne	15,472	4,919	31.8	2,666	54.2	17.2
8. Para	11,667	7,799	66.8	5,655	72.5	48.5
9. Brokopondo	8,235	2,902	35.2	1,397	48.1	17.0
10. Sipaliwini	28,870	13,254	45.9	6,075	45.8	21.0
Totals	400,273	247,512	61.8	171,923	69.5	43.0

Voting Statistics 1996						
District	Population	Registered voters	Population registered (%)	Voter turnout	Voter turnout (%)	Population that voted in (%)
1. Paramaribo	213,894	140,356	65.6	87,907	62.6	41.1
2. Wanica	70,004	47,057	67.2	35,596	75.6	50.8
3. Nickerie	31,324	21,311	68.0	17,024	80.0	54.3
4. Coronie	2,848	1,855	65.1	1,560	84.1	54.8
5. Saramacca	13,425	8,537	63.6	7,182	84.1	53.5
6. Commewijne	21,154	13,829	65.4	11,630	84.1	55.0
7. Marowijne	12,415	7,893	63.6	4,663	59.1	37.6
8. Para	13,424	8,858	66.0	6,369	71.9	47.4
9. Brokopondo	7,162	3,682	51.4	1,861	50.5	26.0
10. Sipaliwini	21,154	15,828	74.8	5,841	36.9	27.6
Totals	406,804	269,206	66.2	179,633	66.7	44.2

Voting Statistics 2000						
District	Population	Registered Voters	Population registered (%)	Voter turnout	Voters turnout (%)	Population that voted (%)
1. Paramaribo	228,551	129,868	56.8	90,705	69.8	39.7
2. Wanica	71,120	49,224	69.2	39,033	79.3	54.9
3. Nickerie	32,830	20,978	63.9	17,449	83.2	53.2
4. Coronie	2,790	1,765	63.3	1,497	84.8	53.7
5. Saramacca	13,269	8,661	65.3	7,680	88.7	57.9
6. Commewijne	20,662	14,201	68.7	12,133	85.4	58.7
7. Marowijne	13,560	9,149	67.5	5,655	61.8	41.7
8. Para	15,155	9,675	63.8	6,953	71.9	45.9
9. Brokopondo	7,270	4,394	60.4	2,555	58.2	35.1
10. Sipaliwini	23,806	17,031	71.5	7,203	42.3	30.3
Totals	429,013	264,966	61.8	190,863	72.0	44.5

Appendix 5
SAMPLE BALLOTS

Appendix 6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

List of elected members

	District	Name	Combination/ Party	Number of votes	Observation
1.	Paramaribo	Angoelal, S.	NF / SPA	35	
2.		Bakker, W.J.	NF / NPS	344	
3.		Bouterse, D.D.	MC / NDP	11,795	Preferential
4.		Derby, F.M.E.	NF / SPA	1,791	Re-elected
5.		Geerlings-Simons, J.	MC / NDP	194	Re-elected
6.		Jessurun, W.	DA'91 / AF	5,163	Re-elected/ preferential
7.		Kallan, A.K.	NF / NPS	72	
8.		Kertokalio-Moertabat, R.	NF / PL	230	
9.		Lachmon, J.	NF / VHP	10,026	Re-elected/ preferential
10.		Raveles-Resida, Y.R.	DNP 2000	124	Re-elected
11.		Rodgers, O.R.	NF / NPS	221	Re-elected
12.		Sardjoe, R.	NF / VHP	106	Re-elected
13.		Soemita, W.	MC / KTPI	707	Re-elected
14.		Hassankhan, M (replacing P.S. Somohardjo)	NF / VHP		
15.		Berrenstein, R (replacing R.R. Venetiaan)	NF / NPS		
16.		Playfair, F. (replacing J.A. Wijdenbosch)	DNP 2000		
17.		Wijdenbosch, R.J.	NF / NPS	899	Re-elected
18.	Wanica	Rathipal, M. (replacing D. Balesar)	NF / VHP		
19.		Kruisland, A.Ch.	NF / NPS	2,419	
20.		Mangal-Ramsaran, S.	NF / VHP	3,568	Preferential
21.		Ramkhelawan, S.D.	MC / DA	1,026	re-elected/ preferential
22.		Randjietsing, R.	NF / VHP	9,408	re-elected/ preferential
23.		Ronodikromo, E.R.	NF / PL	3,852	Preferential
24.		Rozen, H.	NF / SPA	332	
25.	Nickerie	Ferreira, C.	NF / NPS	1,404	
26.		Jairam, S.	PVF	569	Preferential
27.		Mahabier, R.	NF / VHP	235	
28.		Mahawat Khan, M.L.A.	NF / VHP	1,154	
29.		Matai, K.	NF / VHP	3,676	preferential
30.	Coronie	Bendt, H.L.J.	NF / NPS	286	re-elected/ preferential
31.		Paal, A.R.	PALU	355	Preferential

	District	Name	Combination/ Party	Number of votes	Observation
32.	Saramacca	Jogi, M.	NF / VHP	1,149	Preferential
33.		Malhoe, S.	MC / NDP	1,280	re-elected/ preferential
34.		Sital, R.J.	PVF	1,728	re-elected/ preferential
35.	Commewijne	Asmowiredjo, H.A.	MC / KTPI	962	re-elected/ preferential
36.		Djoehari, H.S.	NF / PL	535	re-elected
37.		Tamsiran, R.	NF / PL	2,230	re-elected/ preferential
38.		Tilakdharie, C.	NF / VHP	1,646	
39.	Marowijne	Kingswijk, C.	NF / NPS	1,050	Preferential
40.		Lie Kwie, R.M.	MC / NDP	654	Preferential
41.		Thomas, R.	NF / NPS	247	re-elected
42.	Para	Karwofodi, R.	NF / NPS	973	re-elected/ preferential
43.		Panka, R.W.	MC / NDP	1,048	Preferential
44.		Sait, R.	NF / PL	805	
45.	Brokopondo	Kanalie, C.L.	DA'91 / AF	342	Preferential
46.		Pinas, I.I.	MC / NDP	524	re-elected/ preferential
47.		Fonkel, L.M.	NF / NPS	233	Preferential
48.	Sipaliwini	Abauna, L.	NF / NPS	1,214	re-elected/ preferential
49.		Aboikoni, A.A.	DNP 2000	690	Preferential
50.		Bonjaski, W.	NF / NPS	508	
51.		Naana, H.A.	MC / NDP	1,043	re-elected/ preferential

Appendix 7

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, LOCAL COUNCILS AND DISTRICT COUNCILS Official results of the elections of May 25, 2000

I. Paramaribo			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	11	196	21
PALU			
MC	3		
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000	2		
DA'91	1		
Total	17	196	21

II. Wanica			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	6	97	15
PALU			
MC	1		
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000			
DA'91			
Total	7	97	15

III. Nickerie			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	4	63	11
PALU			
MC			
PVF	1		
ABOP			
DNP2000			
DA'91			
Total	5	63	11

IV. Coronie			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	1	14	4
PALU	1	9	3
MC			
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000			
DA'91			
Total	2	23	7

V. Saramacca			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	1	38	6
PALU			
MC	1	11	1
PVF	1	11	2
ABOP			
DNP2000			
DA'91			
Total	3	60	9

VI. Commewijne			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	3	56	8
PALU			
MC	1	4	1
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000			
DA'91			
Total	4	60	9

VII. Marowijne			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	2	33	6
PALU			
MC	1	17	3
PVF			
ABOP		2	
DNP2000			
DA'91			
Total	3	52	9

VIII. Para			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	2	35	7
PALU			
MC	1	13	2
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000		1	
DA'91			
Total	3	49	9

IX. Brokopondo			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	1	18	2
PALU			
MC	1	11	2
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000			
DA'91	1	23	3
Total	3	52	7

X. Sipaliwini			
Political party or Combination	National Assembly	Local Council	District Council
NF	2	38	6
PALU			
MC	1	12	2
PVF			
ABOP			
DNP2000	1	8	1
DA'91			
Total	4	58	9

Appendix 8

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION TO SURINAME - 2000

1	PARAMARIBO	1	Colin Granderson	Chief of Mission –Trinidad and Tobago
		2	Bruce Rickerson	Deputy Chief of Mission – OAS/United States
		3	Christopher Healy	Local Coordinator – OAS/United States
		4	Cristina Gumbmann	OAS/The Netherlands
		5	Edwin St. Catherine	Saint Lucia
2	WANICA	6	Mersada Elcock	Barbados
		7	Ada Chicas	Belize
3	NICKERIE	8	Rampersaud Tiwari	Canada
		9	Kenneth Hall	Barbados
*4	CORONIE	10	Alma Jenkins Acosta	Panama
5	SARAMACCA	11	Keri Culver	United States
6	COMMEWIJNE	12	Merlin Brinkerhoff	Canada
7	MAROWIJNE	13	Senen Magariños	Spain
8	PARA	14	Bernice Robertson	Grenada
9	BROKOPONDO	15	Harold Sahadeo	Guyana
10	SIPALIWINI	16	Gary Brana-Shute	United States
	EOM Support Team		Evelyn Ensberg	Secretary
			Firoz Amierali	Chief Driver - Transport Coordinator
			Carol-Ann Tjon Pian Gi	Administrative Assistant
			Joseph Edsel Edmunds	Director, Office of the OAS General Secretariat
			Lilian Bundel	National Office – Finance
			Patricia Berkleef	National Office - Secretary
			Michael Koole	National Office – Finance

* The same team of observers visited the Districts of Coronie and Saramacca

Appendix 9

LETTERS OF INVITATION AND ACCEPTANCE