

Integrating a Gender Perspective into OAS Electoral Observation Missions

November 24, 2011

Professor Gordon Shirley, the Chief of Mission for OAS/EOM Guyana wishes to announce that at the November 28, 2011 general and regional elections in Guyana, the Organization of American States (OAS) through its Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) will for the first time in the Caribbean implement a methodology to incorporate the level of gender participation in its electoral observation missions. This methodology will allow the OAS to assess the full and equal participation of both women and men in the electoral process at all levels, as well as contribute recommendations to member states on how to improve in this area. The methodology assesses women and men's participation at the following levels:

- As voters;
- As candidates and political activists; and
- As leaders within state institutions.

"In general, the methodology will analyze the diverse factors that directly and indirectly influence the opportunities and the barriers to participation in the political process specifically faced by women", said Professor Shirley. "This gender mainstreaming initiative will contribute a significant new level of data on women's political participation throughout the region", he added.

The project was initiated in November 2009 with support from the governments of Canada, Germany, and Spain. Other pilot projects of this methodology to date have been conducted in the Latin American countries of Paraguay, Peru, Guatemala and Colombia.

"The OAS/EOM wishes to highlight the fact that Guyana is the only country in the Caribbean that to date has established a gender quota for party lists. The OAS/EOM hopes that this legal advance will be reflected in practice with the active participation of women in the coming election and that the country will continue to promote women's participation in all aspects of public life", said Professor Shirley.

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

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