

15.07.2006

GECOM APPOINTS TEN RETURNING OFFICERS

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) appointed 10 Returning Officers in another major step forward in the preparations for the 2006 General and Regional Elections. Seven of them took their respective Oaths of Office yesterday (Friday, July 14, 2006) in front of Mr. Gocool Boodoo, Chief Election Officer, at a simple ceremony at the Boardroom the Commission.

The Returning Officers, who were respectively appointed to Guyana's 10 Electoral Districts and who took the Oath of Office (one Returning Officer to One Electoral District), are Mr. Ian Hernandez - Electoral District No. 1; Mr. Bhudnarine Ramnarine - Electoral District No. 2; Mr. Deolall Ramlall - Electoral District No. 3; Mr. Alwyn Edwards - Electoral District No. 4; Mr. Randolph Mitchell - Electoral District No. 5; Mr. Suresh Sookdeo - Electoral District No. 6; and Mr. Harry Persaud - Electoral District No. 7.

Ms. Lynette Stephens - Returning Officer Electoral District No. 8; Mr. Leonard Zammet - Returning Officer Electoral District No. 9; and Ms. Mavis Lewis - Returning Officer Electoral District No. 10 were sworn in later as they did not arrive in time for the swearing ceremony.

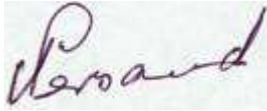
The Returning Officers are tasked with multiple responsibilities, all aimed at contributing towards the holding of the elections in a free, fair and transparent manner. Their responsibilities include inter alia:

- i. Being responsible to the Chief Election Officer for the proper conduct of the poll within his/her polling Districts;
- ii. Maintaining close liaison and coordination with the Chief Election Officer and the Elections Secretariat;
- iii. Reporting to the Chief Election Officer through the Deputy Chief Election Officer and the Assistant Chief Election Officer;
- iv. Supervise the work of the Deputy Returning Officers, Election Clerks and all other Election Officials within his/her Polling District;
- v. Administer the Oath of Office to all staff members before they perform any function under the Representation of the People Act, Cap. 1:03;

vi. Assist the Training Instructors with the training of Polling Day Officials.

The Returning Officers are also required to ascertain the total votes cast in favour of each List of Candidates in their respective Polling District. This is done by adding up the votes recorded in favour of the respective lists in accordance with the relevant Statements of Poll. Immediately thereafter, they are required to publicly declare the votes recorded for each List of Candidates.

Witnessing the Returning Officers taking their Oaths of Office were Dr. Steve Surujbally, Chairman of GECOM, Mr. Moen McDoom - Commissioner, Mr. Mahmood Shaw - Commissioner, Dr. K. Mangal - Commissioner, Ms. Alison Sutherland - Commonwealth Observer, Ms. Ann Fudge and Mr. Eugene Petty - OAS Observers and representatives of various Political Parties.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Vishnu Persaud', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Vishnu Persaud, MCIPR

Public Relations Officer