

27.08.2006

STATEMENT BY DR. STEVE SURUJBALLY, CHAIRMAN

GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Today, the holding of the 2006 National and Regional Elections, marks another important milestone in the History of our country. Today each elector is given the opportunity to exercise his/her constitutional right to choose the political party of his/her choice, by voting, to manage the affairs of our country for the next five years.

As you go to your Poling Station to cast your vote, please reflect on the need for all Guyanese to contribute towards the conduct of peaceful and successful elections. Elections which we could all look back on with a sense of ownership and pride in the knowledge that every one of us contributed towards the holding of elections that were transparent, and free from fear and intimidation.

GECOM calls on all citizens to go to the Polling Stations early and cast your votes. Thereafter, please return to your homes or other places of legitimate activity in a peaceful and normal manner. Please note that your patience at the Polling Station is extremely important. It is a contributory factor to satisfactory management of the electoral process. Accordingly, we appeal to all electors to conduct themselves in a manner that assists Polling Day Officials including Party agents and security personnel.

At the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), the Secretariat staff has been working tirelessly with the Commission towards ensuring that all of the technical and administrative arrangements are in place according to our electoral laws. A high level of commitment, professionalism and efficiency has been evident in preparation for these elections. This has resulted in the Commission reaching a satisfactory state of readiness which will witness GECOM delivering elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, which meets international best practice, and which I am confident will withstand international scrutiny

After the Poll is closed at 18:00 hours (6:00pm) on Monday, August 28, 2006, it is GECOMs responsibility to count the ballots and declare the results. This will be done by:-

- i. the display of Statements of Poll (SoPs) signed by the Presiding Officer and Party Agents (who observed the conduct of the Poll) being posted at a conspicuous place at each Polling Station;
- ii. the declaration of the results for each Electoral District by its respective Returning Officer; and
- iii. the declaration of the Official Results by the Chief Elections Officer.

In acknowledgement of the anxiety that is usually associated with any delay in the announcement of elections results, we have developed and publicized a schedule for periodic announcements as we are receiving and certifying them. Let me emphasise that the Chief Election Officer is the only person legally authorized to announce the official results of the elections. Please do not pay heed to results being publicized by anyone else.

Please be assured that we at the Guyana Elections Commission are committed to holding elections that are properly conducted in a manner free from fear and anxiety. We assure you that we have honoured our responsibilities regarding the preparations for the elections and we have set the machinery in place for the holding of successful elections.

We call upon all Political Parties and their respective supporters to conduct themselves in a manner that will not result in any elector being intimidated, physically hurt or in any other way being prevented from or discouraged from voting on Election Day. In fact, we urge you to join GECOM in encouraging all registered electors to go to their respective Polling Stations and vote on Monday August 28, 2006.

Let us pool our collective efforts towards the holding of successful elections on Monday, August 28, 2006 so that, afterwards, we could go about our individual lives with love, care and respect for each other regardless of ethnicity, political affiliation or allegiance.

Thank you.

Dr. Steve Surujbally, A.A.
Chairman
GECOM