

NATIONAL REPORT

1. **COUNTRY** : Saint Lucia
2. **COVERAGE OF REPORT** : November 2012 – June 2014

3 (a). CURRENT PRIORITIES

- (a)(i) **Electoral process ongoing** YES (x)

3(b) STATUS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROCESS

The electoral process which embodies voter registration and ultimately general and by – elections in the intervening years, is governed by the Elections Act Cap I: 02 which provides for continuous registration of qualified citizens. Following the registration process, Supplementary Lists for new and change of address registrations are prepared and published for the first half of the year, not later than June 30th, and for the second half year, not later than December 31st.

At the publication of the Supplementary Lists, the public is invited to scrutinize these lists to make claims for the inclusion of any name omitted from the lists and to raise objections to the inclusion of any name which should have been excluded there from.

Not later than January 31st, a consolidation of the two Supplementary Lists along with the Revised lists of Electors of the previous year, assumes the finished product of a new Revised List of Electors, which has to be published in all the electoral districts of the island not later than March 31st of the current year. The new Revised Lists of Electors for each electoral district remain in force until the next cycle of revision, and as such will be the lists to be used for any election that is called. Accordingly, a state of readiness to conduct any elections prevails.

Contingent with the aforementioned activity, the department continued the issuance of a new, more modernized and secure National Identification Card to qualified registrants.

Issuance of the National Identification Card is now ongoing, it is estimated that approximately one hundred and fifteen **thousand (115,000)** out of a total population of **one hundred and sixty thousand (170,000)**.

Notwithstanding that there are still some issues of concern. The most critical of these relate to the accuracy of the electoral registers. In this regard, some duplication of registration still exists as well as an inflation aspect of the registers as it relates to registrants residing overseas. In the case of the latter, there is no effective mechanism in place to track these migrations so as to ascertain whether these persons were residing overseas continuously for five years or more, which situation debars them from registration and accordingly are not eligible to vote in accordance with the existing elections law.

In order to address these situations, appropriate computer database modifications are required, along with the initiation of specific electoral procedures in particular, for addressing the overseas registrations. Therefore is need to create an electronic link between the various governmental agencies, particularly with the Immigration Department to assist in monitoring the movements of persons in and out of the country.

Electoral reform ongoing YES (x)

(i) ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT STRUCTURE

As a result of the level of confusion and uncertainty that currently exist amongst government agencies particularly, between the Ministries of the Public Service and that of Finance, relating to the classification of the staff structure and the permanency of the department, we are seeking to have the following its various sub-units legislated in an effort to give legitimacy to its structure, both administrative and technical:-

Permanency

The electoral office will operate on a full time basis providing continuous registration and other electoral services.

The department

The Electoral Department will constitute the following sections; - the Commission, Administration, Registration (including centre operations), Verification (internal and field audits), Management Information Systems (MIS) and Civic and Voter Education.

Deputy Chief Elections Officer

There shall be a Deputy Chief Elections Officer, who is subject to the authority, direction and control of the Commission, and he shall perform such of the functions and exercise such of the powers of the Chief Elections Officer as may be assigned to him by the Commission.

In the absence of the Chief Elections Officer or if the office is vacant, the Deputy Chief Elections officer may act in his place and, while acting, shall possess the like powers and perform the like duties as a Chief Elections Officer.

The support staff structure is as follows:-

Administration

Administrative Assistant
Administrative Secretary
Accountant
Assistant Accountant
Accounts Clerk
Office Assistant Driver

Voter Registration

Registration Supervisor
Registration Clerks
Camera Technician

Verification

Verification Supervisor
Verification Clerks

Data Control and Filing

Data Control and Filing Supervisor
Data Control and Filing Clerks

Management Information System (MIS)

Information Technology (IT) Manager
Computer Programmer
Network Administrator/Webmaster
Computer Technician

Voter Education

Civic and Voter Education Officer
Voter Education Co-ordinator
Voter Education Officers

Gratuity scheme

The Commission is seeking, with the approval of the minister, regulations establishing a gratuity scheme and other terminal benefits in respect of the employees, including the Chief Elections Officer.

(ii) ELECTION AMENDMENTS

For some time now the department has been making representation to the Attorney General Chambers to undertake legislative reform in an effort to improve the electoral process, by making it more efficient in keeping with best practices as demonstrated by other jurisdictions. As a result, we are making the following recommendations the subject of this conference to indicate how determined we are in improving our processes as it relates to the registration of voters and administration of elections.

Photos on ballot papers

Incorporate passport size photos of nominated candidates on the Ballot Paper **(Form No. 12)** and on the Notice of Grant of Poll **(Form No. 10)**.

Nomination deposit Fees

Nomination deposit fees should be increased to **five hundred (\$500.00)** dollars in **legal tender**.

Code of Ethics

A Code of ethics for general elections should form part of the legislation governing the conduct of general elections as an additional schedule of the Elections Act.

Voting Stamp

Replace the words "black lead pencil" with "a voting stamp approved by the Electoral Commission"

Polling Stations

Polling stations should be established in premises of convenient access, with an outside door for the admission of electors with another door through which electors could exit after voting.

Level access

A polling station may be established in premises with level access to accommodate persons on wheelchairs.

Persons with disabilities

Template for the visually impaired

The Presiding Officer should, on request, provide a template to an elector who has a visual impairment to assist him or her in marking his or her ballot.

Use of cellular phones

The members of the Electoral Commission, the Chief Elections Officer, Deputy Chief Elections Officer or designated staff, the Returning Officer, Elections Clerk, the Assistant Election Clerk, the Presiding Officer and the Police Officer on duty, the candidate or his authorized agent, are allowed to use cell phones within the polling station.

Agent's identification

An agent in a polling station may, in a manner authorized by the Chief Elections Officer, wear a badge identifying his or her function and the political affiliation of the candidate.

Recount

A recount should only take place when the difference between the number of votes cast for the candidate with the most votes and the number cast for any other candidate is marginal i.e. **1.5 to 2%** of total votes polled.

Mobile voting - (to increase voter % turnout)

Mobile polling station

When a polling division consists of hospitals, homes for the elderly and other similar institutions, the returning officer may establish a mobile polling station to be located in each of those institutions.

Voting hours for Mobile polling station

The returning officer should set the times during which a mobile polling station will be located in the institutions.

Notice

The returning officer will give notice to the candidates of the itinerary of the mobile polling station in accordance with the instructions of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Provisions applicable to mobile polls

Subject to the instructions of the Chief Elections Officer, the provisions that relate to ordinary polls should apply to mobile polling stations.

Elector who is confined to bed

At a polling station that has been established in a home for the aged or in a chronic care facility, when the presiding officer considers it necessary, the presiding officer and the poll clerk should:-

- (a) suspend temporarily the voting in the polling station; and
- (b) with the approval of the person in charge of the institution, carry the ballot box, ballots and other necessary election documents from room to room in the institution to take the votes of electors who are confined to bed and ordinarily resident in the polling division in which the institution is situated.

Procedure for taking the votes

When the vote of an elector who is confined to bed is taken, the presiding officer should give the elector the assistance necessary for the elector to vote. Not more than one representative of each candidate may be present.

Advance polling

Establishment of advance polling stations

Each returning officer should, as directed by the Electoral Commission establish in his or her electoral district, advance polling stations for the purpose of allowing the following categories of registered electors to cast their ballot in advance polls:-

- Members of the Electoral Commission;
- The Chief Elections Officer and his staff;
- Election day workers i.e. the Returning Officers, the Election Clerks, Assistant Election Clerks, Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Assistant Poll Clerks;
- Nominated Candidates and their spouses
- Persons who will be absent from the state on elections day.

When advance polls to be open

An advance poll shall only be opened between the hours of 6.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. two days before polling day.

Correctional Officers

Members of the Prison Service (Correctional Officers) should be permitted to vote in an advance poll in accordance with the Second Schedule of the Elections Act.

(iii) VOTER REGISTRATION

Removal of the Qualifying dates for 18 year olds

In an effort to efficiently and effectively transfer the registration records of persons who turn eighteen (18) years of age from the National Register to the Register of Electors, it has become necessary to eliminate the qualifying date as a prerequisite to getting registered as an elector for this group of persons.

Presently to qualify for registration the following applies:-

A person shall be qualified to be registered as an elector for one electoral district only if, on the qualifying date i.e **February 15th or July 15th**, he or she-

(a) Is a person who is –

(I) Is a citizen of Saint Lucia , or

(II) A Commonwealth citizen who has resided continuously in Saint Lucia for not less than 7 years immediately preceding the qualifying date;

(b) Has attained the age of 18 years; and

(c) Has resided continuously in that electoral district for a period of at least 2 months preceding the qualifying date.

- The qualifying date however should remain in force and applied to subsection (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (c) particularly in the case persons who are already registered and wants to carry out a change of address from one electoral district to another or within the same electoral district.
- These persons would have to show proof of address by presenting at least two recent utility bills or other correspondence bearing their name and present address.
- The rationale for removing the qualifying date for persons turning eighteen is because when elections are called either before or after the qualifying dates of February 15th and July 15th , a large number of persons who turn eighteen after these dates are not eligible to be

registered to vote, causing much despair, mistrust of the process and frustration amongst the ``youth''.

- The call has been made by some stakeholders of the democratic process to remove the qualifying date to allow more persons to participate in the process of voting. This we had to review carefully. However, with the issuance of the new National Identification Card to persons between the ages of 5 - 18, we have strategically created the platform for accommodating the transfer of records of those persons automatically onto the voters' list.
- By removing the qualifying dates for persons turning eighteen years of age approximately two thousand (2,000) youthful voters will be allowed to be registered to vote at an election, this would auger well for achieving full participation in the democratic process.

Identity Cards for Non-Nationals

- (i) Non-nationals, who may be eligible to vote and have access to other social services, will be issued with an Identity Card specifically designed for them.
- (ii) As a result of issuing the new National Identification Card, Commonwealth Citizens who may be eligible to vote, but has not met the full requirements for Citizenship, are not being issued with identification cards. It is recommended however, that an identification card be designed and legislated specifically for this category of persons.
- (iii) The card will be called "**SAINT LUCIA IDENTITY CARD**" it will basically contain the same information and features as that of the National ID Card but the holder will be photographed against an **ORANGE** background.

Mobile registration

A person who is physically incapacitated can apply to be registered and photographed at their place of residence e.g. dwelling house or institution.

Documents required for registration

New Registrations

- Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Certificate of Citizenship, Registration or Naturalization
- National Insurance number

Change of Address

- Marriage Certificate
- Deed Poll
- Notarized Affidavits or Statutory Declarations

Any other document(s) deemed necessary by the Chief Elections Officer.

Replacement of Identification Card

All persons applying for the replacement of lost identification cards shall attach two passport size photos of them and affix \$5.00 stamps on a Statutory Declaration form signed by a Justice of the Peace or Notary Royal before the new card is issued.

CUSTODY OF DOCUMENTS

Computerization of records

- Whereas provisions are made in the Elections Act for retraining registration records in hard copy i.e. Master Registration Cards **(Form #5)** (Election Regulations Cap. 1.02), it has become necessary to store registration records, including digital captured images of the photograph and fingerprint, application forms and other relevant documents of each elector, electronically in the departments computerized database.
- To legitimize the process, it is necessary that an amendment be made to the regulations to facilitate this procedure.

Access to Personal information

At the written request of an elector, the Chief Elections Officer should send the elector all the information in the Chief Elections Officer's possession relating to him or her.

Deletion of names from register

In addition to the existing legislation relating to deletions from the register, the Chief Elections Officer should delete from the register the name of an elector who -

- (i) makes a signed request to the Chief Elections Officer to have his or her name deleted from the register;
- (ii) has died and concerning whom a request has been received to have the elector's name deleted from the register, to which request is attached a death certificate or other documentary evidence of the death.

Voting Cards

Voting Cards – notice to registered electors

The Chief Elections Officer should, at least six months before the anniversary date of the general elections, send a notice of confirmation of registration to every elector whose name appears on the list of electors.

Form of notice

The notice of confirmation of registration should be in the form established by the Chief Elections Officer and shall indicate the electoral district and polling division where the elector is duly registered; the address of the proposed polling station and a telephone number to call for further information.

3© STATUS OF ELECTORAL REFORM

Upon approval by Prime Minister, the proposed legislative changes will be forwarded to the Attorney General Chambers for electoral regulation amendments to accommodate the department's thrust towards more effective and efficient electoral administration.

3(d) CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES WITH REGARD TO TECHNICAL MATTERS OR HORIZONTAL COOPERATION

Staff Training

The department's major priority is to identify suitable training programs for employees leading to professional qualifications in the areas of electoral administration, database management and Civic and Voter Education.

Establishing a GIS Unit

Seek technical assistance from the **Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ)** in developing and establishing a Global information System (GIS) unit to aid the department in properly identifying and demarcating electoral boundaries and their accompanying polling divisions after realignment by the Boundaries Commission.

Traditionally, boundaries have been identified through existing landmarks such as roads, rivers, buildings and imaginary lines drawn between two or more features.

The introduction of the technology will apply the physical features of the earth to be recorded in relation to coordinates of the earth. It means that electoral boundaries and corresponding polling divisions will be defined and recorded using geographical coordinates.

4 - HORIZONTAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES IN WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS BEEN INVOLVED (ASSISTANCE RECEIVED OR PROVIDED)

The department sought assistance from the Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ) in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS) to enhance the computerized registration application system currently used for the issuance of identification cards and the production of the voters' lists.

5 OUTLOOK AND EXPECTATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

- Undertake an island-wide verification exercise of the sixty-six thousand (66,000) registered voters who did not vote in an effort to ascertain whether they are residing overseas or are deceased.
- Further decentralize the registration services by establishing permanent registration offices in the northern, eastern and western parts of the island.
- Ensure that all proposed amendments to the Elections Act Cap. 1.02 are legislated.

6 - SUMMARY OF MAIN INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS AND AREAS TO BE STRENGTHENED

Identification of Areas	Strengths	Areas To be strengthened
Electoral Training	Quite a number of qualified staff in place	Training in Global Information System (GIS) to create a unit which deals specifically with georeferencing and mapping.
Civic Education	A unit has been established to handle all aspects of voter education, including the department's website.	There is need to strengthen this unit the employing another two persons to assist in developing the unit.
Electoral Reform	Existing guidelines governed by The Saint Lucia Constitution Order 1978 and the Saint Lucia Elections Act Cap 1.02	Amendments to the Elections Act Cap.1.02 for the inclusion of the permanency of the department and other voter registration and election administration procedures.
International observation of elections	Experience in observing elections in many jurisdictions	Continuation of election observer opportunities.

<p>Technical assistance</p> <p>(Global Information System mapping Technology and database management).</p>	<p>The use of a computerized system for the registration of voters and the production of the voters' lists.</p>	<p>Assistance in sourcing computer hardware, development software in election management, voter education and Global Information Systems (GIS).</p>
<p>Other forms of horizontal cooperation (campaign financing)</p>		<p>Assistance in drafting legislation for the introduction of campaign financing in Saint Lucia.</p> <p>Training of at least two members of staff in the areas of GIS Technology and electoral software management.</p>
<p>Civil Registry and Electoral Registry (if applicable)</p>	<p>Currently there is dialogue between the two agencies as it relates to electronically linking these two components.</p>	<p>Assistance in designing a software program to interface with the two departments.</p>

7 - INITIATIVES THAT COULD IMPROVE THE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY UNIORE OR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, OR TAKE BETTER ADVANTAGE OF IT:

Professional educational programs leading to certification in areas of Electoral Management, etc.

8 – REGARDING THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, AND CONSIDERING WORK EXPERIENCES, GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED, WHAT CHALLENGES, ADVANCES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE YOU FOUND?

There was a great increase in the participation of women in the last general election which was held in Saint Lucia on November 28, 2012. Ten (10) out of a total of fifty-two (52) candidates contested were female. There are more women serving as poll day workers, party agents and other political operatives than men.

Generally, women play a more active role in the democratic process as they outnumber their counterparts two to one. We have no legislation or procedures that discriminate against the involvement of women or other 'perceived' marginalized groups in our society.

