

C. *ELECTION DAY: OBSERVING VOTING ACTIVITIES*

Two options are available to observers visiting polling stations. Ideally, activities in only one polling station should be observed for a period starting before the opening of the polls, throughout the day, to after closing time. (The counting process will be discussed in the next section.) However, most international observers, because of their limited numbers, find it preferable to visit a number of polling stations, in order to obtain a wider overview of the polling day activities, to make some unexpected visits (the surprise element), and to establish an international presence in the region or district, rather than in only one location.

1. PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE POLLING STATIONS

Observers should arrive at polling stations prior to the time scheduled for the opening of the polls. At this time it should be noted whether:

- all required election officials are present;
- all accredited party/candidate representatives are present;
- other national or international observers are present;
- all election supplies and lists of electors are on hand and functional;
- ballots, ballot boxes and seals have been carefully guarded and secured up to and since their arrival at the poll;
- all forms, protocols and other documents have been signed by those responsible, as required by law;
- the responsible election officials are fully aware of and follow all requirements for setting up and opening the poll;
- ballot boxes are shown to be empty before being sealed in the presence of party/candidate representatives and observers;
- the serial numbers on the ballot boxes, ballot stubs and on the seals used (where applicable) are recorded by those present;
- adequate security for the poll has been provided;
- queues of voters waiting for the polls to open are controlled and orderly; and