

## ***E. POST-ELECTION DAY CONSIDERATIONS***

It is quite common to find that even unofficial election results are not available on election night. In such cases, partial results may not be sufficient to predict the final outcome. In some instances, several days or even weeks are required before the official results are announced. Because the greater the length of time that elapses between the count and the announcement of the results, the greater the level of suspicion and accusations of manipulation and fraud, this period presents a critical challenge to observers.

Observers should therefore attempt to follow closely any and all final vote tallying which may take place in the period leading up to the announcement of the official results.

Once the announcement is made, the observers should:

- determine the level of credibility given to the announcement, and the level of public acceptance;
- determine the percentage of votes cast as related to the total number of electors, to establish whether a majority of the population voted;
- calculate the total number and percentage of spoiled and rejected (invalid) ballots, to establish whether there is any significant impact on the results. If so, an attempt should be made to determine the cause of this occurrence;
- determine the number and percentage of votes and seats obtained by parties/candidates and assess the overall results, in order to establish whether the results indicate a clear, unqualified expression of the wishes of the electorate;
- try to establish whether all participating parties accepted the results, and, in the case of complaints or objections, the seriousness of these; and
- determine how expeditiously investigations and complaints were handled and by what authority.

**Given the importance of these factors, it is desirable that at least some observers remain for a reasonable period after polling day, in order to obtain first-hand information to complete their reports.**