

San Salvador, 26 March 1984

## INTRODUCTION

In response to the invitation by the Government of El Salvador, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs decided to appoint observers to the Presidential elections on March 25. The role of the observers was to report to him about the fairness of the elections and whether or not the elections were conducted responsibly within the context of generally recognized democratic suffrage.

Our mandate was to observe and report upon an electoral process and not to make assessments or judgements about the internal political situation in the country. Messrs Gould, Filleul and Fairweather, assisted by Miss Howell and Mr. Mayne of the Canadian Embassy in San José, Costa Rica, visited a representative number of polling stations in the Western and Eastern region of the country and also in the capital, both before and during election day. Without exception, our freedom of movement was unimpeded, including unscheduled last minute changes in plans to visit voting places in outlying communities. During a visit to the headquarters of the Central Electoral Council, the observers were briefed by officials about the process for conducting the vote and reconciling the results using a sophisticated computer system. The results are to be verified by Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, an internationally recognized firm of chartered accountants and management consultants.

## THE VOTING SYSTEM

The foundation of the voting system for this election was a development of a new voters list of all persons 18 years of age and over. This was developed working with all available birth and death records from 1900 to February 27, 1984, and cross-checking these records with the 1982 voters list. In doing so, duplication of names of both living and dead persons was eliminated from the old register and the new list containing about 2.47 million names was arrived at. Each of these names had a registration number which was the number of the person's valid (cedula) or identification documents which contained his/her picture, fingerprints and places for placing a validation stamp at the time of voting.

Voters lists were prepared and arranged numerically in the three main voting categories. At the "municipal" level (261 locations), all cédula issued in the various municipalities were listed. At the departmental or provincial level (28 locations), the voters list comprised all the municipal list in that departmental area and at the national level (16 locations), complete voters list including all municipalities and departments were included. The concept was that if a person was not living in the municipality where his/her cédula was issued, he/she could vote at the departmental level, and if he/she was not