



**Interim Statement of the Commonwealth Observer Group  
Saint Lucia General Elections  
26 July 2021**

**Statement by Mr Alvin Smith, Chair of the Commonwealth  
Observer Group**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) was constituted by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, following an invitation from the Government of Saint Lucia.

This is the Interim Statement of our observations. The final report will set out the full findings on the process and our recommendations in greater detail. This will be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, and thereafter shared with the Government of Saint Lucia, the Electoral Commission, political parties, Commonwealth governments and then made public.

On 26 July, eligible voters came out in large numbers to cast their votes, demonstrating their determination, faith and commitment to democratic processes in Saint Lucia. The COG noted that this election was conducted in the midst of a pandemic and commends the polling staff and voters for following COVID-19 protocols on Election Day. The COG noted the patience, orderliness and peace, which characterised the voting process and hopes that this will continue to prevail.

Ahead of Election Day, we met with a broad range of stakeholders to gain a comprehensive picture of the electoral processes and political environment. We met with the Electoral Commission, the main political parties, independent candidates, representatives of civil society, including women and youth groups, media, the Police and other international observers.

The Group deployed across the country on Election Day, covering all 17 Electoral Districts.

**INITIAL OBSERVATIONS**

- The 26 July General Elections were peaceful and inclusive. We commend the Electoral Commission, the staff of the Electoral Office and in particular, the polling staff for their dedication, professionalism and diligence in delivering a credible process.

- The COG reported positively on the voting and counting processes in the polling stations visited and in particular the management of the occasional long queues. The COG also noted that the process would have benefitted from a more consistent application of the procedures.
- The COG noted the overwhelming preponderance of women as electoral officials and acknowledge their invaluable contribution.
- The Voters' Register is inaccurate. Deceased and ineligible persons have not been consistently removed since 1979.
- The COG noted that contrary to the provisions of the laws of Saint Lucia, no provisions to vote were made for people in quarantine and those on remand.
- The decision to use tents as polling stations proved to be a challenge for both polling staff and voters, as they were not sufficiently protected from the adverse effects of the weather and made adherence to COVID-19 protocols more difficult. On the whole however, the COG was impressed by efforts made to adhere to COVID-19 protocols by both voters and polling staff.
- Elderly and disabled voters were not always given priority at polling stations and their access was often difficult.
- The COG noted the active participation of young people in the electoral process.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The COG commends the people of Saint Lucia for the enthusiastic, peaceful and transparent manner in which the elections were conducted and notes that the results conclusively reflect the will of the people.

The COG hopes that the final report and its recommendations will be helpful to the people of Saint Lucia in strengthening the country's democracy.

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