

## Chapter 5

# Summary of Conclusions

Our principal conclusions are as follows:

- The voters of St Kitts and Nevis were able to cast their ballots in an environment free from intimidation and harassment and in a manner which provided them with the opportunity to vote freely for the candidates of their choice. There was transparency of procedures and the secrecy of the ballot was assured. The result of the election reflected the wishes of the people.
- The Electoral Commission, the Supervisor of Elections, electoral officials and the police, should be commended for the way they performed their various roles in the electoral process.
- The significant disparities in the numbers of voters across the 11 constituencies suggest that an early opportunity should be taken by the Constituency Boundaries Commission to review the matter.
- The Government and/or Electoral Commission might consider whether a procedure can be devised to allow all political parties to be consulted on the appointment of electoral officials before these are finalised by the Electoral Commission.
- To remove evident concern about the overall security of election materials, including ballot papers, consideration might be given to the delivery of such materials to Presiding Officers on the morning of the poll, rather than the evening before as is presently being done.
- The Group's considered assessment is that the actual voting procedure should be reviewed, including the quality and format of the ballot paper and the practice of the Presiding Officer placing the completed ballot in the ballot box rather than the voter doing so.
- The existing voting procedure could benefit too from a better system of identifying voters, for example, through the use of a voter's card or other form of identification, as is the practice in other Commonwealth countries. The Commonwealth itself might be well placed to assist in any such review.
- Where the role of the media in the electoral process is concerned, the provision of fair and equitable access for all political parties to the publicly owned radio and television station ZIZ Radio and Television, and balanced coverage of their activities, should be ensured.
- The efforts of the Churches and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in brokering an agreement among the political parties of a Code of Conduct for the Political Process, were an important contribution to the environment in which this election was held. The Churches and the Chamber should also be commended for their work in monitoring the final weeks of the campaign and bringing their collective views to bear on important issues and promoting dialogue.
- The involvement of the Commonwealth Observer Group in this general election in St Kitts and Nevis was welcomed by political parties, and by the people themselves. The presence of the Commonwealth Group appears to have provided confirmation of the integrity of the democratic process and reassurance as to the validity of the election.