

Conclusions

- The people of Tanzania showed great enthusiasm to vote in their first multi-party elections in 34 years. The voters queued for long hours in some cases, with admirable patience and generally in a peaceful atmosphere.
- By registering no more than 350 voters at each polling station, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) made a creditable effort to deliver to the people of Tanzania good quality election services on polling day.
- The organisation and conduct of the elections varied widely throughout the country. In most areas, polling went smoothly – all election materials were received by Presiding Officers in good time and the election officials worked efficiently. In others, election materials arrived hours after polls should have opened and in some areas – notably in Dar es Salaam and a number of constituencies elsewhere – these never arrived at all.
- The failure to provide adequate facilities and polling booths at some polling stations compromised the secrecy of the vote in those stations.
- Other factors that were not conducive to ensuring the secrecy of the vote were the printing of numbers on ballot papers, often visible to party agents both at the time of issue and at the count, and the practice of writing the voter's registration number on the numbered ballot paper counterfoil.
- The NEC did not take full responsibility for the conduct of voter education, leaving this largely to political parties and other non-governmental groups and organisations. This meant that voters did not always have access to unbiased advice on election procedures.
- The rate of voter registration during the designated period began slowly. However, by the end of the extended time, and with the extra interest generated by the nomination of candidates, close to 9 million voters (some 80 per cent of the estimated total) had registered to exercise their right to vote.
- Opposition parties expressed frustration that they were unable to campaign effectively because they had not received the full payment of campaign assistance funds expected from the Government before the elections, and because they did not have equal access to the state-owned radio.
- Although the NEC was aware of the logistical challenge posed by the administration of these elections, it did not have the necessary structure and experience in managing multi-party elections to ensure that all voters wishing to do so were able to express their will on polling day. Notwithstanding the extension of the voting period until 8pm, the poll had to be continued in some constituencies on 30 and 31 October. In Dar es Salaam, the situation was so confused in some of the seven constituencies that voting was annulled and a re-poll scheduled. It became evident that one of the contributing factors to this confusion was the inadequate control of the distribution of materials, particularly ballot papers, which had resulted in the shortage of these vital election supplies in a number of different areas.

To its credit, the NEC attempted to meet the concerns of the political parties with regard to the selection of non-partisan election officials for the approximately 40,000

polling stations around the country by opening up the recruitment process and bringing representatives of political parties (polling agents) closer to the electoral process. This generated a large pool of people, many of whom had not previously served as election officials and therefore required training. Events on polling day suggested that the nationwide seminars conducted in the last week of the campaign were not sufficient preparation for the task ahead. This was one area where a Commonwealth offer of technical assistance was not taken up.

Further, dissatisfaction on the part of election officials in a number of constituencies with the arrangements made for the payment of their allowances caused delays in the opening of polling stations in those areas, and in the conduct of the count and the tally in others.

The inadequate preparations contributed to the chaos and confusion witnessed at a number of polling stations around the country on polling day. Nevertheless, of the total 232 constituencies involved, the NEC informed us that only 15 did not complete polling on 29 October 1995.

- Finally, the generally peaceful atmosphere which characterised the elections throughout the country is a tribute to the people of Tanzania, and evidence of their determination to make the democratic transition a success.