

PACIFIC ELECTORAL NETWORKS MEETING

Commonwealth Secretariat – PIANZEA – Fijian Elections Office
Nadi, Fiji, 8-11 May 2016

Theme: “Promoting Electoral Integrity”

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network (PIANZEA) hosted the first Pacific Electoral Networks Meeting in Nadi, Fiji from 9-11 May, 2016.

The event was attended by heads of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) from Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Discussions during the three-day event focused on promoting electoral integrity in election administration

in the Pacific. EMB representatives shared electoral best practices, deliberated on the importance of EMB independence and impartiality and exchanged ideas on lessons learnt from past election observation missions.

Delegates at the Meeting also discussed about opportunities to promote the participation of women and persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

The Meeting concluded with the finalization of an Outcomes Statement that will be presented by the Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Mohammed Saneem in the upcoming Commonwealth Electoral Network Biennial Conference.

OUTCOMES STATEMENT

Electoral Management Bodies from across the Pacific met in Nadi, Fiji for three days from 9-11 May 2016, supported by two electoral networks - the Commonwealth Electoral Network, and the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) - and hosted by the Fijian Elections Office, under the theme of “Promoting Electoral Integrity in the Pacific”. International partners who joined the meeting included the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, International IDEA, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, United Nations Development Programme and UN Women.

The meeting reflected a commitment of Pacific Electoral Management Bodies, supported by the Commonwealth Electoral Network and PIANZEA, to working in collaborative partnership in promoting electoral integrity in the region.

We deliberated on ways to strengthen electoral integrity in the Pacific, including promoting electoral best practice, the independence and impartiality of Election Management Bodies, and capacity building and professionalism of staff. We noted the importance of measures to manage electoral risk and to enhance inclusion and access for all. We received a delegation from the disabled people’s organizations from the Pacific Regional Dialogue on Disabilities Rights. We affirm the political rights of people with disabilities and our role as election management bodies in supporting these rights.

We discussed a number of issues that are of particular concern and challenge in the Pacific including women’s participation, independence and resourcing of

micro and non-permanent Election Management Bodies, and capacity constraints, all of which can have an impact on electoral integrity.

We reiterated our commitment to promoting electoral integrity in the Pacific region. This important goal includes organising elections based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality, as reflected in international standards and agreements, and that are professional, impartial and transparent in their preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle.

We also discussed the principles of, role and beneficial function of international election observation as a way of strengthening electoral integrity. We recognised that the integrity of elections can be promoted and strengthened if they are observed on the basis of recognised international principles, if they are managed by independent and impartial and adequately resourced Election Management Bodies, and if those Bodies are able to collaborate and support each other through networks.’

We agreed that the outcome of this pioneering Pacific Electoral Networks Meeting be shared and presented at the forthcoming Commonwealth Electoral Network Biennial Conference due to be held from 22-24 June 2016 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Finally, we express our sincere appreciation for the warm welcome and excellent facilities extended to us by our hosts, the Fijian Elections Office, and the people of Fiji. The conducive environment contributed, in no small measure, to the success of our meeting.



Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Elections Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum with the participants of the Pacific Electoral Networks Meetings