

GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION

**WORKSHOP
ON
CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**



DATE: 23rd & 24th October, 2003

THEME: Improving the Quality and Accuracy of the Electoral Rolls through the Implementation of Continuous Registration

In Association with
The International Foundation for Election Systems and USAID



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FOREWORD

In October 23-24, 2003 IFES supported GECOM in conducting a workshop to study the issue of voter registration in Guyana. The goal of this workshop was for GECOM staff to analyze and discuss the pros and cons of the current system in place in Guyana and receive first-hand reports of the benefits of the continuous registration system from international experts, and discuss whether such a system should be implemented in Guyana.

With the results of the discussions, a team of GECOM staff will further analyze the legal, administrative and financial issues to take into account for such a system to be implemented in Guyana.

We are grateful to Mr. Cayenne from Trinidad and Mr. Walker from Jamaica for their attendance and participation in this workshop. We would also like to thank Mr. Gocol Boodoo, Ms. Octive-Hamilton and Mr. Benn from the Guyana Elections Commission for their input and focus on specific issues pertaining to continuous registration.

SPEAKING NOTES

Dr. Steve Surujbally
 Chairman
 Guyana Elections Commission

Mr. Chairman
Commissioners of the Guyana Elections Commission
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Representatives of International Organizations
Chief Election Officer
Leader of the Political Party – ROAR
General Secretary of the PNCR
Representative of the Minister of Local Government
Former Chairman of GECOM
Members of the GECOM Secretariat
Special Invitees
Members of the Media

Allow me to join Mr. Lowenfield in welcoming you all to this landmark Workshop on Continuous Registration (CR). We feel that this occasion is auspicious for several reasons. For one thing, this Workshop signals the bringing together of all the stakeholders involved in the electoral process and representing the electorate in Parliament. Secondly, the *modus operandi* of the two-day sessions is constructed in such a way as to allow optimal participation and free and unfettered discussion. Thirdly, at the end of the day, whatever decisions are arrived at will be emanating from collective and consensual agreement.

In addition, we are singularly pleased to have within our midst, those who have weathered and storm the acquired the experience associated with Continuous Registration. I am, of course, referring to our guests and Resource Persons Mr. Howard Cayenne, the Chief Election Officer of the Election and Boundaries Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Mr. Danville Walker, the Director of Elections of the Electoral Office of Jamaica. Both of these gentlemen have been tried, tested and proven worthy. They were involved in the implementation of Continuous Registration in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica respectively. They are here to share their experiences with us – what can go wrong with CR, what corrective measures can be taken, how to handle the voter education pertaining to CR and so on. But perhaps more importantly, beyond their battle scars and experience, are the facts that: (1) These gentlemen and their respective Commissions immediately responded to our request to have our own Deputy Chief Election Officers exposed to the workings of CR, *locus in quo* (in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago) while on attachment to these Commissions, and (2) their very presence and immediate willingness to assist us translate the concept of South-South support and cooperation into practice, and exemplifies Caribbean togetherness and commonality.

And while I am engulfed in the emotion of expressing gratitude, allow me to thank my predecessor, Former Chairman Major General Joseph Singh who, even before I had my first day in the Office advised that I pursue vigorously the establishment of Continuous Registration as one of the meaningful steps in ensuring voter participation and in reducing the possibility of voter disenfranchisement.

Of course, as you will see, the Chief Election Officer and his team and the Permanent Commission comprising of Mr. Lloyd Joseph, Dr. Keshav Mangal, Mr. Moen Mc Doom, Mr. Haslyn Parris, Mr. Mohamood Shaw and Mr. Robert Williams also knew of the value of modernizing the Voter Registration process as an important tile in the mosaic of voter participation and, in extension the democratic process. They have never ceased to emphasize this conviction.

Allow me now to intimate to you a brief explanation on the genesis of this Workshop, and perhaps I can make making you understand why the gestation period became longer than that which we expected.

Commissioners and Secretarial Staff recognized that the history of elections in Guyana has been plagued by concern, even dissatisfaction, by many over the issues of accountability and the integrity and accuracy of the Electoral Roll. Foreign teams observing elections in Guyana have corroborated shortcomings in the registration process that had been expressed by stakeholders.

It is in this light and in the spirit of adherence to the democratic process that the Commissioners and the Secretarial staff were moved to seek a solution to the prevailing problematic which could have, (and had been proven to have), deleterious effects on the perceived fairness of elections.

One of our first steps was to look at the current legal framework associated with Periodic Registration and then to prepare, discuss and refine a draft document entitled "Proposed Legislative Changes to facilitate a System of Continuous Registration in Guyana". The Commissioners reviewed the document and were unanimous in their endorsement of it. Strengthened by this unanimity, we initiated, in June 2002, a consultative process with the major stakeholders. The purpose of the consultation was to extract considered opinions and guidance specifically on the following issues:

- (i) Firstly, of course, whether they felt a system of CR should still be implemented.
- (ii) Whether our proposed legislative changes had adequately covered the main areas to which amendments needed to be made.
- (iii) Whether there existed serious jeopardy, which needed to be discussed.

September 2002 dawned and we received no reply to our overtures. We sent reminders. Responses began to trickle in. Every political Party represented in Parliament informed us that they agreed with the principle of CR – some endorsements were more absolute and forceful than others. But, obviously, we were more attracted to the concerns relating to our proposals. It was clear that more dialogue was needed, and that the Secretariat needed to return to the draft board.

At about the same time, I was exposed to a Workshop which was organized by IFES in Mauritius. 36 Countries participated with officials sharing their candid experiences with the continuous registration system. It became clear to me that this was exactly the sort of dialogue and cross fertilization of ideas we needed on the subject here in Guyana. There and then IFES was approached and their response was as immediate as it was positive. Let it be recognized that IFES is in this instance the implementing arm of USAID, and the commitment USAID has shown to GECOM is exemplary over the years. The strategy agreed upon was firstly to expose our own officers to the system of CR and to invite experienced resource persons to give us insights to the system practiced in their countries. We succeeded in the first part as I have alluded to already – Mr. Benn and Mr. Lowenfield, the two DCEOs, were attached with

the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme to the electoral bodies of Jamaica and T&T respectively.

This Workshop represents the second phase. Arranging the actual Workshop took a bit longer than expected – but that was due mainly to the unavailability of our Resource Persons, they being involved in their own Local Government Elections earlier this year.

I mentioned before that this Workshop has the blessing of the Stakeholders and supporters of the GECOM; this is reflected in the prominence of the invitees attending today's Opening Session and the calibre of the Parties' proposed representation for the Workshop. And I think that at this stage I should inform you that the Commissioners made a conscious decision not to debate the issues among ourselves so as to arrive at a single position for this Workshop. We were convinced that such an attempt would be counter-productive. The discussions that must ensue must not be encumbered by fixed positions.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I think that it is recognized by all that voters' registration, regardless of the system used, is easily the most controversial of all aspects of the registration and election process. Complaints usually center on multiple registration, inaccurate voters' lists, registration of unqualified persons and improperly maintained registers. In other words, these complaints point to the fact that the voter registration process is a significant factor in the determination of free and fair elections.

Guyana has over the years relied on a periodic list to update the register for each election. Experience gained from past electoral events exposed the difficulties in identifying qualified voters, assigning voters to polling places and regulating the allocation of ballot papers to polling stations without an accurate and current register, especially when all of this must be accomplished under time constraints conditions.

The current trend in the Commonwealth suggests that many countries are moving in the direction of adopting the production of a continuous list or rolling register (as the British prefer to call it). It is believed that continuous registration has the potential to keep the electoral roll current, accurate and complete. We too are convinced of this.

Continuous voter registration is based on an initial voters list that is constantly updated. Throughout the year, election officials must identify newly eligible people and must determine those previously eligible persons who have ceased to be eligible to vote (for example, by death or by being declared legally incompetent). In addition, election officials must update information about people who have moved or who have married and changed their surname. With continuous registration, people register to vote only once under an individual-initiated process, but they must update their registration information when necessary. An individual-initiated or state-centered process can be used to identify eligible individuals with continuous voter registration.

We have circulated a document to the Workshop participants which delineates much more comprehensively the objectives of electoral registration and the necessary characteristics of a voter registration system which includes the compulsory need to be integral and non-discriminatory, transparent, secure, effective, audit capable and accountable, feasible and reliable.

We have gone even further and documented, taking into account all of the concerns raised by the stakeholders, the possible 20-odd jeopardies that could arise within the CR system. The Secretariat also prepared the corresponding control mechanisms that could be used to counteract the perceived jeopardies.

We are convinced that by the end of the deliberations, we would have arrived at some great degree of unanimity in support for the case of introducing Continuous Registration within the text of modernizing our voter registration process. But we cannot stop there and leave the process in vacuo. For this reason we have included, on the Workshop's agenda, discussions on the legal implications of Continuous Registration. We have proposed, and distributed for discussion, legislative changes that would be needed to facilitate CR. For example, the current Section which stipulates that registration shall begin and end on specific dates would have to be amended to give the Commission the power to provide for a permanent and continuous system of voter registration.

At this stage, Workshop participants, please allow me to guide your deliberations towards the nexus that must exist between Continuous Registration and Decentralization. It is of paramount importance that the activities of the several Registration Centers be optimally monitored at all times so as to circumvent and thwart any attempts at malfeasance, thus ensuring stakeholder confidence.

Finally, if we are to achieve our objectives, it is imperative that I even now entreat the participants to remain focused on the discussion at hand and not to wander off into realms of irrelevant peripheralities. Further, the debate must be carried on in an atmosphere of cordiality, notwithstanding any tensions and distrust that might exist outside of this Workshop. Immaterial and obviously counterproductive contributions by those who might have iconoclastic tendencies would surely not be conducive to a smoothness in the proceedings and will be frowned upon.

Ladies and gentlemen, the item on the agenda which I am fulfilling speaks of an "Opening Address"; I am not sure whether that means just the first speech that sets the ball rolling or whether I have in fact been mandated to declare this Workshop open at the end of the address. Permit me to interpret this as the latter - and I now formally declare this Workshop open.

SPEAKING NOTES

Pablo Galarce
 Program Manager
 International Federation for Election Systems

- Honorable ministers, Commissioners of the Guyana Elections Commission, Ambassador Roland Bullend, distinguished guests, members of the press, ladies and gentleman. Good morning, and thank you for coming
- IFES is pleased to support this important initiative to study the issue of voter registration in Guyana with funding from the United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- The goal of this workshop is for GECOM staff to analyze and discuss the pros and cons of the current system, receive first-hand reports of the benefits of the continuous registration system, and discuss whether such a system should be implemented in Guyana.
- To accomplish this, GECOM asked IFES to facilitate the visit of Mr. Howard Cayenne and Mr. Danville Walker. We are very pleased that they were able to join us.
- At the end of the workshop, the participants should make specific internal recommendations to either maintain the current system with specific improvements or adopt the continuous registration system. If the latter option is recommended, the presenters will offer specific expert recommendations as well as draft legislation and regulations to facilitate its implementation.
- As clearly defined in the IFES ACEPROJECT:
 1. A prerequisite of voting in elections is for prospective voters to be recorded in the electoral register, or voters list
 2. The presence of the voters list enables the election authority to carry out its two most important functions—verifying voter eligibility and controlling the legitimacy of the voting process
 3. The voters list confirms that voters have met all eligibility requirements and thereby plays a crucial role in conferring legitimacy on the electoral process. Conversely, problems with the voter registration process, particularly with the integrity of the voters list, can have an immediate and negative impact on the legitimacy of the election. Voter registration, therefore, is among the most important of all tasks of election administration.
 4. One major challenge for election administrators is to ensure that eligible voters are registered once and only once on the voters list, and that ineligible voters are removed from the list. It is also important to prevent ineligible voters from registering in the first place.
- The process of consolidating a democracy includes fostering the professionalism of the election mechanics. We are pleased to support this element of Guyana's democratic development, and we look forward to continue helping GECOM to assess the existing electoral laws and make recommendations based on the findings.

OVERVIEW FOR GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS AT WORKSHOP ON CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

Goocol Boodoo
Chief Elections Officer
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1:0 INTRODUCTION

The right of all adult citizens to participate in the affairs of their government is one of the cornerstones of democracy. Perhaps the most fundamental form of participation is the right to vote in free and fair elections. The ability to exercise the democratic right to vote is premised on the existence of a comprehensive and inclusive electoral register (or voters' list), which is rigorously maintained to ensure, as much as possible, that each eligible citizen is registered to vote once and only once. The delicate balance implicit in preparing electoral registers has been characterized succinctly by the Electoral and Administrative review Commission of Queensland, Australia:

Electoral rolls are a fundamental component of any voting system. Rolls constitute the official list of electors and are *prima facie* evidence of electors' right to vote. Enrolment procedures therefore need to strike the right balance between the need to be rigorous to ensure integrity of the rolls, and the need for flexibility to ensure that peoples' rights to enroll and vote are protected.

2:0 THE COMPLEXITY OF VOTER REGISTRATION

The Elections Commission's Secretariat has always been cognizant of the fact that voter registration is one of the key processes in the preparation for democratic multiparty elections in Guyana. However, as we seek to strike the right balance between the integrity of the roll and the protection of the rights of citizens, there are some major issues which we need to resolve.

- Should a voters list be created de novo at each election, or is it better to maintain an ongoing, continuous list?
- How do eligible voters identify themselves as such at the polling station – do they use a voter's identity card, a National I.D. Card or some other form of identification?
- If a voter's identity/national I.D card is used, what information must be on that card?
- Should registration be compulsory or voluntary?
- If registration is voluntary should it be at the initiative of the citizen or the state?
- What impact do local conditions, such as literacy rates, urbanization, population mobility, relative affluence, and history with democracy have on the type of voter registration system that is most feasible?
- What role does computerization play in the voter registration process – what aspects of voter registration are best handled by computerization?

The answers to these and similar questions must play an important role in determining the kind of voter registration system that best responds to the principles of facilitating inclusion and minimizing exclusion in a particular political context.

3:0 TWO GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Two important principles underlie effective voter registration:

- The first is that the system chosen for voter registration should facilitate the inclusion of all eligible voters in the electoral register, or voters list. Democratic governance requires the existence of free and fair elections conducted amongst a broadly enfranchised electorate. In order to realize this precept, then, all (or substantially all) eligible electors should be included in the voters' list. Their inclusion affirms their right to vote in the election.
- The second principle of voter registration is the obvious corollary of the first, namely, that it should prevent the exclusion of eligible citizens from the voters list.

4:0 EXCLUSION

There are two ways in which voters may be excluded from the voters' list – either through **legal** or **administrative** practices.

4:1 LEGAL EXCLUSION:

There was a time when voters in some societies were legally excluded from registering and voting on conditions such as:

- property ownership;
- wealth;
- literacy;
- race;
- gender; and even
- "moral fitness"

Over the years, all of these legal exclusions diminished in democratic practice, and today most are no longer viewed as legitimate. Legal exclusions that persist today in many countries, however, include age (normally eighteen years and older although somewhat higher in some cases), citizenship, residency, conviction for criminal offence and insanity. Such exclusions are usually mandated by political leaders in constitutional or electoral law rather than by administrative officials.

4:2 ADMINISTRATIVE EXCLUSION:

Administrative exclusion occurs when people who are ostensibly eligible to vote are not entitled to vote because they have been left off the voters' list. They may be excluded, for example, simply by their own choice or personal habits. A potential voter may have little or no interest in politics or the election. A change of address or even a voter's name may result in error or lack of registration. Exclusion may also occur due to limitations of the system of voter

registration, such as a poorly publicized deadline for completing the registration process. In keeping with the objective to prevent, or at least minimize, the exclusion of eligible voters, however, the registration system should maintain a priority to register all eligible voters. Although in practice it will not be possible to do so, adhering to this goal will encourage the identification of very clear performance criteria against which success in achieving a high degree of registration can be measured.

5:0 OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A VOTERS' REGISTER

There are three widely used approaches for the creation and maintenance of voters' registers/lists, viz:

- the periodic list;
- the continuous or rolling register; and
- the civil registry.

Choosing to design a voter registration system on the basis of one of these options, or some combination of them, is a primary concern for GECOM at this point in time.

As we consider each option in greater detail, two questions cannot be overlooked. These are:-

- Which option is most responsive to the variety of local conditions in which it must exist?
- Which option is realistic and affordable in the context of the financial and administrative environment in which it must be developed and sustained?

6:0 THE APPROACHES COMMONLY USED

6:1 THE PERIODIC LIST

The periodic register of voters, or periodic list, is one in which the Election Administration devises a new voters' list for each electoral event, without intending necessarily to maintain or update this list for the future. Such a list is produced immediately preceding the elections, normally within a relatively short time frame. The closer to the election that the list is produced, the greater its currency, at least with respect to the eligibility and residence of voters.

This system is relatively expensive and time consuming, since it requires election administration officials to come in direct contact with all eligible voters before the election. This method of voter registration may be particularly useful where the electoral administration infrastructure is not sufficiently developed to maintain a continuous list, where population mobility is high or where the citizenry is averse to the maintenance of lists of citizens by the State.

6:2 ADVANTAGES

- There is no need for a large election administrative machinery to maintain the register;

- The voter registration period is a discrete event, with clearly identifiable beginning and end points;
- There is no need to track changes in voters' personal information in the period between elections;
- The process can be a highly salient and focused event, maximizing the interest of the voters and serving to heighten interest in the election;
- The registration drive provides for a limited time period for a voter education campaign;
- The periodic list can be developed without resorting to high-tech computer hardware and software;
- The periodic list, because it does not require the maintenance of ongoing voter registration information, need not be computerized;
- The rationale for computerizing the voter registration process is less compelling for the periodic list than for the continuous list or the civil registry;
- Of the three performance measures of completeness, currency and accuracy, the periodic list performs particularly well on currency.

6:3 DISADVANTAGES

The periodic list approach as been found to be unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

- It has a significant cost spike. The costs of registering voters is highly focused during the registration period, rather than being spread throughout the electoral cycle;
- The spikes in developing periodic lists can be difficult to bear and can put a strain on available resources;
- The entire voter registration period is focused in a short time frame which makes it susceptible to unpredictable events (weather/political);
- By its very nature, the compilation of periodic lists is done in rushed circumstances; and
- The processing of all voter registration data, collected over a short time frame, places heavy burdens on other support areas, such as data entry or information processing.

7:0 THE CONTINUOUS LIST

A continuous list of voters is one in which the electoral register is maintained and continually updated by the election administration. This system requires an appropriate infrastructure to maintain the list. Typically, this requires adding the names and other relevant information for those who are satisfying eligibility requirements, such as citizenship, residency and voting age, as well as deleting the names of those who no longer meet eligibility requirements, through death, for example, or change of residency. Since the continuous list is regularly (or

continuously) updated, there is no need to conduct a final registration effort immediately preceding an election, as is normally the case with the periodic list. In addition, the continuous list may be maintained either locally, as in the United Kingdom, or nationally, as in Australia and Canada.

7:1 ADVANTAGES

The advantages of a continuous list of voters include the following:

- The voters' list is kept current, because it is updated on a regular basis;
- It allows the list to be open for public inspection at all times during the year, not only during a specified period;
- The cost of registering voters is spread across the entire period between elections, allowing for consistent budget planning. Despite this distribution of costs, there is still likely to be a cost spike at the time of the election or registration drive;
- Because work is spread out throughout the year, funding does not require a steep rise in any one year or during any one period.
- Partial elections create no particular election administration problem as the list is always ready;
- The continuous list allows for a shorter time frame for the completion of the final voters list;
- There is a relatively long time frame for making changes and corrections to the voters list when using the continuous list, because changes can be made throughout the year, not only during specific registration drives;
- The continuous list can provide opportunities for developing efficiencies in the creation of a voters list. For example, cost saving achieved by sharing data between agencies;
- A continuous list enables the government to use the voters' list for other purposes, such as industrial elections, or jury lists.
- A continuous list can result in higher rates of voter registration because of the ongoing character of the registration process;
- In some countries, continuous lists enable the sharing of registration information across levels of government, thereby minimizing duplication.

7:2 DISADVANTAGES

The advantages of a continuous list of voters include the following:

- The need for technical sophistication, particularly with computing hardware and software, to maintain and continually update information;

- Citizens must comply with requests to provide updated information. Their failure to do so may result in disproportionately large numbers of revisions in the final stage of list preparation. However, one response to this possibility is to allow access to other data for list maintenance. For example, motor registration and taxation records may allow passive updates to occur with minimal or no activity on the part of the voter;
- It requires the electoral authority to be diligent in maintaining the accuracy of the list. Serious problems have developed in countries where maintenance of the voter register has lagged or been sloppy; and
- To complete the updating of the list on an ongoing basis, there often is a need for considerable cooperation among several branches of government. An appropriate administrative structure, and administrative culture must be in place to respond to this requirement.

8:0 THE CIVIL REGISTRY

The civil registry is used for the purpose of extracting the voters' register in some countries. A civil registry is a list of basic information, for example, name, gender, age, nationality, marital status, and address, in respect of all citizens, and is maintained by the state. The electoral register is based on information available in the national civil registration system. The main advantages of this system are:

- the cost of the EMB for settling the register is greatly reduced, and is spread more or less evenly in the periods between elections;
- the database on which the register relies is regularly updated; and
- voters' registers have a high level of accuracy.

The main disadvantages of operating a voters' register compiled from a civil registry database are:

- a civil registry is expensive to establish and maintain;
- in a constituency-based system, the civil registry database must be so designed that each person's data is assigned to the correct administrative district;
- the potential for inappropriate use of the centralized databases is considerable; and
- the use of the civil registry makes the EMB dependent on the government for the voters' list.

9:0 MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN VOTER REGISTRATION

Modern technology has been identified as a vehicle to reduce the incidence of manipulation of the compilation and maintenance of the voters' register. Computerization of the registration process has been widely achieved, although some countries continue to prepare their registers manually. In the areas of data collection and processing, the use of modern technology has proven beneficial in saving time and reducing costs. At the same time the potential to enhance security of the process is considerable.

9:1 THE NEED FOR COMPUTERIZATION

Computerization of various components of the voter registration process can provide significant improvements in terms of cost savings and greatly increase reliability of the data. Computerization is particularly useful in performing the following tasks:

- initial recording of voter information;
- matching voter identity cards, including computerized storage of registration numbers, with the voter registry database;
- maintaining the continuous list, including distributing to voters a copy of information currently on file;
- printing copies of preliminary voters lists'
- maintaining records of material inventory at local registration offices as well as in the centralized office;
- regularizing data entry to revise preliminary voters' list;
- printing copies of final voters' list;
- general record keeping and maintenance;
- identifying duplicate registrations;
- producing statistics on voter registration by geographic area, as well as by gender, age, etc;
- providing consistency and standards with regard to data shown on voters; lists;
- providing copies (at low cost and without wasting paper) of the list on diskette, tape, or CD-ROM to political parties;
- keeping an audit trail of the changes made to each voter record, by whom, on the basis of what source information, on what data, to which record attributes, etc.

10:0

CONCLUSION

A list of voters that is current, comprehensive and accurate plays an important role in providing legitimacy to democratic elections. A well-documented voter registration process with open and transparent procedures, will help ensure that the system meets its requirements for legitimacy, and thereby contribute to, rather than detracts from, the integrity of the elections.

The current trend in the Commonwealth suggests that many countries are moving in the direction of adopting the continuous list or rolling register. It is believed that continuous registration has the potential to reduce significantly the concerns normally raised by stakeholders in relation to performance measures such as accuracy, completeness and currency.

New developments in biometrics technology, that is the ability to link information about a person with a biological feature of that person, have made it possible for registration and voting to be done using fingerprinting. Similarly, the availability of devices to read information on paper has enable registration data to be scanned, cutting the data processing time by one-third and offering a very high degree of security against multiple registration and other forms of malpractice. The first generation of these machines operated by way of optical mark recognition (OMR), has been credited with good performances in Ghana and Sierra Leone. Advanced devices designed to translate typed or printed words from paper and put them in machine-readable format have become available. One type operates by way of optical character recognition (OCR), and another, perhaps the most advanced to date, through intelligent character recognition (ICR). These devices promise much in terms of enhanced security and reduced costs in respect of the voters' registration process.

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CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION: THE JAMAICA EXPERIENCE

Danville Walker
 Director of Elections
 Electoral Office of Jamaica

In 1996 Jamaica embarked on an exercise to enumerate all qualified persons and also to implement a new Electoral Registration System, ERS and then move to a system of continuous registration of electors rather than the expensive house to house exercise that was required at least once every five years. The old house to house process saw the discarding of a Voters List that under normal circumstances most of it was still accurate and relevant data. Continuous Registration would use this last house to house exercise as a base list and then seek to keep it "fresh" by allowing persons to register when they wanted to do so, remove the dead, allow for change and prevent duplicate registrations.

The house to house exercise saw the enumeration of fewer than 1.2 million persons. The capturing of all data and the processing of that data is a time consuming and expensive exercise. To do something like that and then to throw out that list and start all over again with the technology available today is just dumb. Continuous registration needs no defense and therefore I cannot bother to waste too much time defending it. The house to house exercise is a huge and tedious process, which involved over twenty one thousand enumerators and scrutineers from political parties being employed to go house to house across the island and complete the registrations.

Whenever such a large number of persons have to be mobilized to undertake this exercise considerable recruitment and training was necessary. Persons of various skill levels are employed and this results in unacceptable quality of work in many areas. Additional resources are then needed to correct inaccuracies. House to house exercises in Jamaica were vulnerable to fraud and manipulation because payment to enumerators was driven by the number of registrations completed by the enumerators and scrutineers. Enumerators would seek to maximize their earnings by enumerating persons outside their given areas. By the time this was discovered by way of duplicates or incorrect placement on the voters list the enumerator was already paid. The alternative of paying a weekly wage would result in a "foot dragging" that would seek to maximize the amounts to be earned by achieving extensions to the exercise. All this work would be done only to be thrown out in a few years and start all over again.

In April 1999 after relevant legislation was put in place continuous registration started. This system allows persons who are eligible and want to register to do so without having to wait for an enumeration exercise to be registered. Also persons who were out of the country during an enumeration period would not be disenfranchised. Continuous registration ensured that the voters' list produced at the end of each six-month period would contain all persons who were qualified to vote and wanted to be on the voters list.

Processes in Continuous Registration

1. Enumerations
2. Duplicate Removal
3. Sittings
4. Removal of Dead Electors
5. Change of Address

- 6. Change of demographic data
- 7. I.D. Card Production

ENUMERATIONS

Continuous registration requires a person to go to the Fixed Centre in their constituency and request to be registered once they attain the age of the majority and once they choose to be registered. To complete a registration the demographic form is completed, the applicant's photograph and fingerprints are taken and the registration clerk informs the applicant that a visit will be made to verify the home address of the applicant. This visit to the applicant's home address is called residence verification. Once the application is processed and no duplicate fingerprints are found then the elector will be placed on the voters list. Continuous registration has been very successful with over 205,000 persons being registered since its inception. Initially there was some resistance to the idea of having to go to the registration center to be registered. Electors were "spoilt" by previous exercises where they did not have to leave their home and were chased down by an enumerator who was paid only if a registration took place. Electors were aware of this and would force enumerators to make repeated trips before "granting" a registration.

Continuous Registration Period	Total Electors Registered
April 1999 – March 31, 2000	19,902
April 1, 2000 – September 30, 2000	18,991
October 1, 2000 – April 12, 2001	34,664
April 17, 2001 – September 30, 2001	16,695
October 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002	52,626
April 1, 2002 – September 30, 2002	23,991
October 1, 2002 – March 31, 2003	21,545
April 1, 2003 – September 30, 2003	16,770
Total Registrations	205,184

With continuous elector registration a voters' list is published every six months.

Voters' List	Total Electors
1997 Voters' List	1,182,294
1998 Voters' List	1,194,205
Continuous Registration	Total Electors
May 31, 2000 Voters' List	1,194,205
November 30, 2000 Voters' List	1,223,286
May 31, 2001 Voters' List	1,250,570
November 30, 2001 Voters' List	1,263,633
May 31, 2002 Voters' List	1,301,638
November 30, 2002 Voters' List	1,321,571
May 31, 2003 Voters' List	1,340,059

DUPLICATE REMOVAL

Once enumeration is completed the form is sent to the Head Office where demographic, fingerprint and photograph data are entered into the system database. Fingerprint processing then takes place that involves minutiae extraction and sequence checks followed by fingerprint cross matching. Duplicates found are marked as such and not included on the voters' list. Over 35,000 duplicates have been found and removed from the voters' list since the new registration system has been implemented. There was a lot of "testing of the system" by some electors to see if the system could actually discover a duplicate registration. These were easy to discover as those persons did not change their demographic information. Other more unscrupulous persons seeking to pad the list did change their data and of course were found by fingerprint cross matching.

SITTINGS

Sittings are held every six months just before the publication of a new voters' list. In accordance with the electoral laws, electors who are suspected of having committed a malpractice with respect to their registration during the enumeration process can be summoned to a hearing by the returning officer. At the sitting the returning officer can request proof of any information supplied during the registration process. The sitting can also result from objections made by one or more scrutineers. The names of persons called before sittings are published in the major newspapers along with the time and place of the sitting. Depending on the outcome of the sitting the elector will either remain or be removed from the voters' list. Persons called before sittings include persons with duplicate enumerations and those whose residences cannot be verified. Sometimes persons register twice because they

haven't been educated on the rules covering continuous registration and they believe that if they move from one constituency to another they need to register again. This of course is not necessary and public education reduces incidences of this.

REMOVAL OF DEAD ELECTORS

Prior to continuous registration dead electors were eliminated because they were not available for the new registration period. Well at least that was the theory. To keep the voters' list current dead electors are continually removed from the voters' list. This is accomplished through the cooperation of the registrar general's department which issues death certificates and so have reliable records. Ministers of Religion and the Police also provide the Electoral Office with information on dead electors. We rely on interested stakeholders to inform the constituency offices of dead electors. No elector is removed however without verification by the Returning Officer. A report of all persons deceased and to be removed from the list is sent to the political parties prior to the publication of a new Voters list. This remains a significant challenge to the Electoral Office of Jamaica and is probably one of the weakest areas of continuous registration. We expect this to be less of an issue if the Registrar General Dept and the EOJ develop better synergies and database linkages.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The majority of persons on our voters' list were enumerated in 1997 when the new registration system was implemented and the last house to house exercise was used to create the "base" list. Since then many persons have changed their addresses. Continuous registration allows electors who change their address to be able to make this change to their registration information and apply for transfers to the new constituency. These electors are required to go to the Fixed Centre in their new constituency and apply for a change of address and transfer by filling out the relevant forms. A registration officer will then visit the elector's new address and verify residence. The change is then applied to our database at the Head Office and the elector's new address and constituency will be reflected on the new voters' list.

CHANGE OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Continuous registration allows persons who get married or have changed their names to make changes to their names and marital status. The relevant form is filled out along with proof in the form of official documentation (e.g. marriage certificate, deed poll) is presented to the registration officer and from there the change is effected to the system's database. New I.D. cards are issued to persons whose name change affects their signature.

I.D. CARD PRODUCTION

The voter identification card is one of the nation's most frequently used and readily accepted forms of identification. With continuous registration the production of I.D. cards is a continuously occurring process. Once a registration is completed and entered into the system database, residence is verified and the enumeration is approved then an I.D. card is produced. Many queries are received daily from persons awaiting I.D. cards and persons who have lost or have had their I.D. cards stolen and need new cards urgently. This has been the most utilized and tangible product of continuous registration and whether or not an election is approaching the I.D. cards are always needed.

CONCLUSION

Continuous registration has been a success; the number of electors on the voters' list continues to increase with a steady number of new registrations for each six-month period. The electorate has accepted the new system and public education after two elections have finally sunk in that no one is coming to their homes to register them. Systems have been put in place for visits to be made to the homes of those who are too old or disabled to travel to the registration centers. We have monthly meetings in each constituency to discuss issues relating to the registration of electors and where objections, criticisms and suggestions can be first received. Persons to be added or deleted from the voters list are compiled and distributed to political party liaison officers so that when the list is finally published there are no surprises. These procedures are in addition to the printing of a Preliminary Voters List two weeks prior to the printing of the Final Voters List. These procedures and the building of a sense of partnership between the EOJ and the stakeholders of the electoral system have removed all disagreement about the quality of the voters list. The list has become not just a product of the EOJ but of the partnership. In the last Parliamentary elections that was observed by the CARTER CENTER, their comment was that in the over 40 elections they have observed this is the first election that they are observing that the voter's list was not an issue of contention or quarrel.

Our system of removing dead persons from the list has seen the non-existence of complaints about dead electors voting on Election Day a constant remark heard after every Jamaican election in the past. The main accomplishment of continuous registration is the new confidence the public has in the published voters' list and the entire electoral process. Since the voters list is published every six months and therefore always current, no one can use the state of the voters list as a convenient political football.

KEEPING THE LIST CURRENT

There is a necessity to do exercises from time to time to keep the voters list current. Basically the things that will cause the list to become inaccurate over time are:

1. Non removal of Dead electors
2. Electors changing their residential addresses and not informing the electoral organization
3. Changes to the demographic data of electors not reported to the electoral organization

These can be addressed with periodic exercises that entail field work and matching data on the list to interviews of electors. The period between these types of exercise can vary depending on whether there is a developed system of national registration and adequate linkages to the electoral database and also based on feedback from political parties who are usually doing canvasses of constituencies from time to time. The EOJ is expected to embark on an exercise of this nature in 2004. Migration of electors tends to vary by location and all available data will be used to ensure as much efficiency as possible.

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION: THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Trinidad and Tobago, the most southerly of the Caribbean chain of islands has a land area of 4,879 sq. km. in Trinidad and 300 sq. km. in Tobago, and a total population of 1.3 million with a density of 240 per sq. km. The islands became a unitary state in 1889. The country achieved Independence from Britain in 1962, and Republican status in 1976 while remaining within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Administratively, Trinidad is divided into 14 areas, namely: 2 Cities, 3 Boroughs and 9 Regional Municipalities. For election purposes, with respect to national elections, Trinidad and Tobago is divided into 36 Parliamentary Electoral Districts (constituencies), two of which are in Tobago. With respect to Local Government Elections, Trinidad is divided into 126 Municipal Electoral Districts (2002), while Tobago is divided into 12 Tobago House of Assembly Electoral Districts.

The electoral process, as presently practiced, has its tradition in the Westminster first-past-the-post parliamentary system, with national elections being held every five years, Municipal Council elections every three years and Tobago House of Assembly Elections every four years. The body responsible for managing the election machinery of the country for National and Local Elections is the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

The Elections and Boundaries Commission is duly constituted in the Country's Constitution, Act No. 4 of 1976. The legislations which give effect to the constitutional provisions governing its operations are enshrined in the Representation of the People Act, Chap. 2:01 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago; The Elections and Boundaries Commission (Local Government) Act Chap. 25:50 (Act No. 18 of 1967); The Municipal Corporations Act, 1990 (Act No. 21 of 1990); and The Tobago House of Assembly Act of 1996.

At present, the Constitution provides for an Elections and Boundaries Commission comprised of a Chairman and not less than two (2) or more than four (4) other members who are appointed by the President, after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The term of office of the members terminates at the expiration of five (5) years, but they are eligible for re-appointment.

It should be noted that a member of the Commission may be removed from office only for inability to discharge the functions of his office whether arising from infirmity of mind or body or any other cause, or for misbehaviour.

The Commission regulates its own procedures, and, in the exercise of its functions, is not subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. In pursuance of its objectives, the Commission is structured to reflect a Central Electoral Office and fifteen (15) district offices. The Central Electoral office deals with administrative matters with regard to policy, personnel and finance. It also deals with the maintenance of the register of electors, the production of identification cards, the preparation of maps and the distribution of electoral and other supplies to the district offices. The Central Electoral Office houses the office of the Chairman and members of the Commission as well as that of its chief executive officer, the Chief Election officer and other administrative staff. Each district office, in the system referred to as an Area Registration office, is situated at a central location in the district

it services, and is staffed based on the size of the electorate of the particular area. The structure of the organization is graphically illustrated at Appendix 1.

The Commission is required to put in place infrastructure which would allow for the exercise of the franchise through the conduct of free and fair elections to the House of Representatives, the Councils of the Municipal Corporations and to the Tobago House of Assembly.

To achieve this goal, the Commission, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, focuses on three (3) major functions i.e.:

- (1) The delimitation of electoral boundaries in respect of Parliamentary, Municipal Corporations and Tobago House of Assembly elections;
- (2) The registration of persons in the national community so qualified; and
- (3) The conduct of elections.

DELIMITATION OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS/CONSTITUENCIES

These exercises which are influenced by population growth and shifts are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution in the case of Parliamentary Elections, and the relevant legislations in the case of the Municipal Corporations Elections and the Tobago House of Assembly Elections. The Commission is obliged to submit to Parliament, in a report, its recommendations with respect to the number of electoral districts and the descriptions of the boundaries of each district defined. This report is submitted as follows:

Parliamentary Elections	-	Not less than two years and not more than five years
Municipal Elections	-	Not less than two years and not more than three years
Tobago House of Assembly Elections	-	Not less than two years and not more than four years

The recommendations, as approved by Parliament with or without modification, form the basis of an Order made by His Excellency the President which said Order defines and describes the number and boundaries of the electoral districts for the specific elections.

THE SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION

Registration in Trinidad and Tobago is voluntary (there are no sanctions for non-compliance), yet it is the first step in the process which gives effect to the exercise of the franchise. The system of registration is continuous except during an election period and is known as Permanent Personal Registration. It is permanent in that once registered, the registration remains in force (subject to adjustment, eg. change of name and/or address) unless there is valid cause for cancellation (death, migration, etc.).

The system is personal in that a prospective registrant must apply in person to the registration officer if the registration is to be effected. In actuality, no person can apply for registration on behalf of another person. It also provides for the issue of an identification card to the registrant when the registration is affected.

Registration is carried out in accordance with the Registration Rules as set out in the Representation of the People Act, Chap. 2:01, the legal instrument by which the Commission is guided. It should be noted that the system itself may undergo change from time to time. For instance, the Commission may request all registered persons to re-register or to update their registration. Failure on the part of registered persons to comply with such requests within the specified time may result in the registration being cancelled.

QUALIFICATION FOR REGISTERING

Persons, ages 15 to 17 years, who are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago or Commonwealth citizens with residence qualification, are eligible to register as non-electors. On attaining age 18, and after a field check to verify the correctness of the data supplied at the time of registration, the person is deemed to be an elector and the name is included on the register of electors. Non-Commonwealth citizens with five years residency may also register as non-electors. [Non-Commonwealth registrants residing within the City or Borough limits are entitled to vote in Municipal Councils Elections, but this does not apply to Tobago House of Assembly Elections.]

Persons age 18 and over who are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago or Commonwealth citizens with residence qualification are eligible to register as electors. Persons registered as electors and or as non-electors are issued with identification cards.

FACILITIES FOR CONDUCTING REGISTRATION

For the purpose of registration, Trinidad and Tobago is at present divided into fifteen (15) registration areas. Appendix 11. The boundaries of these areas, for the most part, coincide with those of the administrative divisions of the Country. To enable a more manageable and effective manner of registration, registration areas are divided into smaller units described as polling divisions. In delineating the boundaries of polling divisions, due consideration is given to ensuring that communities are not divided; as a consequence, the size of the electorate of polling divisions varies. At present, the fifteen (15) registration areas are divided into 1,190 polling divisions, 1,135 in Trinidad and 55 in Tobago. From time to time, the total number of polling divisions may be increased or decreased due to growth and or shifts in population.

The Commission, through its Registration Officers, is obliged to field check each application for registration, to verify the data given by the applicant before the registration is effected, and the name of the registrant included in the Commission's Register of Electors. As a consequence, maps of registration areas showing the polling divisions into which each registration area is divided are prepared for use at the respective registration office, and as aids to field investigators.

To service the fifteen (15) registration areas, fourteen (14) registration offices and seven (7) sub-offices have been established. Each registration office is staffed based on the number of electors in the registration area it services, and is headed by a registration officer.

The Commission's registration data is processed by computer, and the corresponding identification cards are produced using a Computer Image Identity System [CIIS], updated in August 2003 to a Multiple Identity Document Issuing System (MIDIS). The use of the computer allows for greater efficiency in the processing of the registration data, in the production of identification cards and in the preparation of List of Electors, by polling division, by Electoral District, by Registration Area, or by Streets or Blocks within a polling division.

PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL LIST OF ELECTORS

The Commission has a statutory obligation to produce, for public scrutiny, an Annual List of Electors for the entire country. The relevant parts of this list are placed at the respective registration offices, and the public is invited, through the media, to examine same. This measure is intended to provide the opportunity for persons to make representations for corrections, where necessary, and to make objections to names appearing thereon.

- **RATIONALIZATION OF A PARTICULAR MODEL APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Most countries have electoral systems that, to a large extent, are the result of a historical accident rather than a design, planned and formulated, to take into consideration the social and economic peculiarities of the particular country. Guyana, as is the case of Trinidad and Tobago, has an electoral system that is the direct outgrowth of its colonial past and historical experience.

Whereas voter registration, resulting in the compilation of a voters' register, is a prerequisite for elections in most developed and developing democracies, the system of voter registration varies depending upon the countries prevailing constitutional and established election system. For example, Trinidad and Tobago's constitutional system provides for a parliamentary representation system of government based on the first-past-the-post and single-member district system of representation. Notwithstanding the varying systems of voter registration, there are fundamental purposes to all, viz:

- preventing voter fraud;
- enabling persons duly qualified to exercise their franchise; and
- providing support for other functions of the electoral system;

The continuous [on-going] system of registration as obtains in Trinidad and Tobago is considered to be the best suitable system. While it may not perfectly accomplish all the purposes cited above, the fundamental tenets of the system cannot be seriously challenged.

Under the continuous system of registration, names are added to the Register of Electors, on a daily basis, based on applications of persons who have met the qualification to be registered. Also, based on information obtained and verified, with respect to change of names or change of addresses, amendments are made to the Register accordingly, and deletion of names from the Register of Electors are made with respect to persons who are no longer qualified as voters.

Whereas the major objective of the continuous system of voter registration is to provide a register of electors for the conduct of elections, what makes the system efficient is that it allows for the gathering of data on a daily basis. It also updates the Register of Voters continuously and not just for a specific election. It is important to note however, that the continuous system of voter registration requires, in addition to funds, physical and human resources, a great deal of time and effort.

To facilitate the continuous system of voter registration, voter registration centres [registration area offices] are established in each of the administrative regions into which Trinidad and Tobago is divided. These offices operate on a continuous basis during regular working hours and during such other times as may be approved by the Commission.

The Commission's registration records are, at present, computerized. However, the Commission recognizes the need for a more comprehensive computerization of its operations in order to decrease the time and effort required for the system to function at its full capacity, and to further enhance its performance.

Persons who are qualified to be registered are issued with a National Identification Card at the time of registration. Whereas the ID Card is essentially an electoral document, it has gained wide usage and acceptance in other areas of national life, and has proven to be a potent force in an almost automatic and continuous registration drive.

The identification card is a secure type document and bears the holder's name, signature, photograph and other particulars. The identification card, together with the Register of Voters, and the electoral ink used at the polling station during polling, has proven to be the basis for the integrity of the electoral system.

The continuous system of registration enables the Commission to be furnished with an updated Register of Electors on an almost daily basis, as a consequence it provides the ideal base to support the other functions of the electoral system. In particular;

- Determining the size of the polling divisions;
- Providing information for the delimitation of electoral boundaries;
- Providing voter information;
- Determining the number and location of polling stations;
- Determining the number of ballot papers to be printed

An ideal voter registration system is one that optimizes the purposes of voter registration at an acceptable cost in terms of time, money and effort. While no one system is suitable to all countries, the continuous system of registration has been proven suitable to Trinidad and Tobago based on its geographical size and population, and with regard to the purposes achieved and the cost incurred.

There is no doubt that the purposes for which voter registration is intended could be attained by a similar system. Considering the vast geographical area that is Guyana, it is imperative that matters, such as the cost and time to be incurred by adopting a system of continuous registration, be carefully assessed.

- **METHODOLOGY FOR KEEPING THE REGISTER CURRENT**

The method for keeping the register current is contained in the legal obligations that are enjoined upon the Elections and Boundaries Commission, and through the Commission its Chief Election Officer, the various registration officers and staff and finally upon the individual electors themselves. All these stakeholders have their roles and responsibility in keeping the register current.

The law requires the Chief Election Officer to 'make such arrangements and do such things as are necessary for the initiation and maintenance of the unit and central registers'; i.e. to initiate and maintain the register of electors. Provision is also made for registration officers for each registration area and attendant staff attached to those registration area offices to carry out the registration duties.

At these established offices the electors who are qualified to be registered may apply to the registration officer for the area in which they live. To facilitate the process, there are fourteen registration area offices throughout Trinidad and Tobago

and a total of twenty-one separate office locations. The staff at each registration area office bears some relation to the size of the electorate they are expected to serve.

There is also the responsibility of the registered person to inform the registration officer of any change of residence. The law states 'A registered person who has changed his place of residence from one polling division to another in the same registration area or from one address to another in the same polling division shall give notice to the Registration Officer of the registration area of the change of residence in the form as set out as Form No. 22 in the Prescribed Forms Rules'. The law also provides for persons who have changed their place of residence from one registration area to another to notify the registration officer of the registration area in which they now reside.

The maintenance of an updated Register is the responsibility of both the Commission and the registrant. On the one hand, it is the responsibility of the registrant who changes their place of residence, whether it is within or between registration areas to notify the registration officer of that change. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the registration officer to update the Register by effecting the necessary additions and amendments, and as far as practicable by removing from the register the names of persons who are no longer qualified as registered voters. This is vital, as the main planks for keeping the Register current are the continuous updates resulting from additions [new registration], amendments [changes of address] and cancellations [removal of names of persons no longer qualified].

There is the other legal requirement which focuses on the problem of the currency of the list. Registration Rule 73 states:

The Commission may require a Registration Officer to carry out or cause to be carried out a check on all registered persons or of all electors or of any other persons in his registration area or any part thereof for the purpose of maintaining the accuracy of the unit registers in his registration area.

Under this provision the Commission within recent times (May – July 2001) conducted a House-to-House Survey. To carry out the exercise, the Commission appointed temporary Itinerant Assistant Registration officers (IARO's) to assist Registration Officers in conducting checks in their respective areas as required by Registration Rule 73 previously quoted. The main objective of the checks was to ensure as far as practicable that each person whose name appeared in the Unit Register are listed at their correct address within the polling division, thereby maintaining the accuracy of the Unit Register. To achieve this objective each temporary IARO was requested to visit each address listed in the polling division within the registration area to which assigned in order to:

- (a) Ascertain that each elector whose name appears on the list for that polling division resides within the polling division at that location;
- (b) Obtain information as to the electors whose name appears on the list for that polling division and who may have died, migrated, removed or are now unknown at that address;

- (c) Effect the transfer of the registration of persons now living at addresses within the polling division, but who have been registered previously elsewhere; and
- (d) Ensure that the address of the elector corresponds with that contained on the electoral list.

This massive exercise, undertaken at a cost of \$10 million resulted in the following:

- (i) 129,680 names were deleted from the Register [including names of persons who had died, migrated or unknown in the area]
- (ii) 46,576 transfers of registration
- (iii) 4,013 amendments from changes of address

It may be noted that coming on the heels of the completion of the Survey was a Parliamentary General Election which resulted in both major contesting political parties each obtaining eighteen (18) of the thirty-six (36) seats contested.

At the established registration area offices the transactions that keep the registers current are basically new registrations, change of addresses and cancellations. For the year 2002 the Commission's registration area offices affected 38,383 registrations, 17,421 changes of address, and cancelled 7,851 registrations. This had the effect of updating or keeping the register current. These activities constitute only a part of the activities that are conducted at registration area offices. The average annual cost of the operations of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, excluding elections, is approximately TT\$28 million dollars, or \$4.5 million US for an electorate of just under 900,000 persons.

The Trinidad and Tobago Identification Card, while it is an electoral document, has been promoted by the Commission to the electorate for use in other areas of national life. This concept has been truly successful in that people require and seek to obtain an Identification Card to facilitate transactions in their daily lives, not least of which is the right to vote. It therefore assists the Commission in encouraging qualified persons to register, to the extent that the Commission is fairly satisfied with the level of voter registration in Trinidad and Tobago. As the Identification Card expires after ten years and has to be renewed, this fact requires electors to revisit the registration offices to have it done. A large number of renewals have changes to the electors' addresses, a situation which aids in keeping the register current.

The system in Trinidad and Tobago allows for the registration of persons from the age of fifteen years and upwards. Registered persons between the ages 15-17, on attaining age eighteen (18) become eligible to be electors. Registration Area Officers and their Assistant Registration Officers conduct field checks to determine whether the person still lives at the address. Where it is verified that the information given at the time of registration is still valid the person is then deemed by the registration officer to be an elector and placed on the register of electors.

Administratively also, registration officers visit the District Registrars of Births and Deaths, for their area and obtain information regarding persons who have died. Wherever names, ages and addresses correspond to registered electors, these records are taken and a field investigation conducted to ascertain the true facts.

On that basis the appropriate action may be taken, such as the cancellation of the record.

- **PROCEDURAL PRACTICES FOR DEALING WITH THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES AND TRANSACTIONS**

The maintenance of the Register of Electors is one of the overall responsibilities of the Elections and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. The Act under which the Commission operates considers this such a high responsibility that apart from establishing the human resource by statute for the purpose of registration very early in the legislation (in section 4), it goes on to direct the Commission to take extraordinary measures as it sees fit. Section 4(3) of the Act states:

- (3) If in his opinion circumstances so require, the Chief Election Officer may, and if so directed by the Commission, shall –
- (a) require assistant registration officers to visit every house within the polling divisions assigned to them and to receive applications for registration under the Registration Rules;
 - (b) assign assistant registration officers to any psychiatric facility, to any place where persons are detained in legal custody, to any divisional headquarters of the Police Service or to the headquarters of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

However, the daily transactions that are a part of the work at registration area offices established for that purpose fall into six main categories. They are: registrations, transfers of registrations, renewals of expired ID Cards, replacement of lost, mutilated, destroyed or damaged ID Cards, change of names by registrants, and retakes of photographs that may be unsatisfactory. The details as to the procedures for these transactions are at Appendix 111. At Appendix IV, is a detail as to the volume in some of the categories mentioned during the years 1998 to 2002. This has ranged from a high of 37.38% of the electorate in 2000 attending the offices for services of one type or another to a low 21.63% in 2002 (Appendix V). It should be noted that a significant number of persons come to collect their ID Cards – it is a useful and valued document. In the five year period 1998 – 2002, 1,328,371 persons came to the various registration area offices throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

- **ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CAN SERVE TO ENHANCE THE COMPILATION AND MAINTENANCE OF VOTER REGISTRATION**

Information Technology and its use have become indispensable to the continuous voter registration system presently used in Trinidad and Tobago. First introduced in 1985 to assist registration officers in the production of the statutory Annual List of Electors, Information Technology had its electoral debut in 1986. Its use then did highlight a need for a more comprehensive and professional approach to obtain the most optimal results. A reorganization as to the method of transmitting information from registration area offices to the Central Electoral Office for processing was undertaken in 1987. Information from electors who have changed their address, their name and who have to be added to the register or deleted from it cannot be accurately and expeditiously done without the use of Information Technology.

It is impossible to think of the system of registration functioning without it. Information Technology is also used to produce the Identification Cards issued to every registered person. The stored images and signatures are retained and can be used to issue replacement to such lost or damaged documents.

- **THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MAINTAINING A CURRENT REGISTER**

The Commission is exploring the widening of the use of Information Technology in the future at its registration area offices. This will ensure the speedy electronic transmission of information from the various far flung registration area offices to the Central Electoral Office. Registration information and services will be provided to electors in a matter of minutes and days, as opposed to days and months. It is envisaged that registration area offices will one day be connected on-line to the central system database, with live image capture at registration area offices. There will exist therefore the capability of being able to add an image of the voter to the electoral list printed for use at each polling station on polling day. This also as far as I am aware is the development in biometrics technology for identification in voter registration and elections that may be considered by the Commission in Trinidad and Tobago.

- **LEGAL PARAMETERS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**

The legal framework for the voter registration system as it exists in Trinidad and Tobago begins with the establishment of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, an entity that has been given the responsibility and authority for the registration of voters, the conduct of elections and the delimitation of electoral boundaries. All this is contained in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with the added proviso that it is to be independent and not subject to any person or authority in the exercise of its functions. Its members are appointed by the President of the Republic after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

There is a whole body of legislation, more specifically The Representation of the People Act Chap. 2:01 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago which encompasses in detail the legal duties and responsibilities of the Commission and its staff and also contains the rules, registration and election, for carrying out those duties.

The Laws after dealing with the establishment of the offices and function of the Chief Election Officer and other staff of the Commission goes on to treat with franchise and registration, then elections, the election campaign offences and legal proceedings.

The registration rules outlines the procedures for registration at the Commission's various registration area offices and the publication and format of the Annual List of Electors on the 1st July every year.

- **SITUATIONS WHICH REQUIRE APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**

The Commission is always conscious of the need for high quality in the services it provides to the electorate as part of this process of continuous registration and strives to improve upon that service wherever possible. The demand for the National Identification Card outstripped the Commission's capacity to produce it in

a very timely fashion. The lead time for the introduction of new equipment and technology is sometimes quite lengthy. While recognizing in 2000 that its aging ID Card production machinery needed replacing, events since then delayed implementation. Elections intervened almost annually since 1999, in 2000, 2001, 2002 and immediately after the July 2003 Local Government Election the new ID Card system was brought on stream.

At the end of 2003 it is anticipated that long delays for persons who are entitled to receive an ID Card when they are newly registered or when they apply for a replacement of an expired ID Card or whenever they make changes to their names or any other particulars, that such delays will be a thing of the past. The new equipment was implemented in August 2003.

Additionally, the continuous registration process itself points to needs for services elsewhere as populations grow or shift. Within the past year the Commission has established two new sub-offices. These are smaller-staffed registration area offices in remote areas far from their main office. They have proven to be very convenient and welcomed by the population in the area as indicated by the significant volume of registration transactions conducted at them. Offices at convenient locations to ensure the efficient delivery of services provided to the electorate are methods also of building confidence in the system.

The Commission has in the past promoted the use of the ID Card in other areas of national life so that it is fairly embedded in the national population that everyone should possess an ID Card. It is now surprising to find persons past middle age who have never had an ID Card. It is free, it is necessary and it is accepted by most of our local institutions, private as well as public. The ID Card is all pervasive in our society and persons have over the years developed confidence in it.

- **OTHER ISSUES**

The upgrade in technology is not by itself sufficient to ensure the most effective operational standards of any organization. The training and development of staff in the Department is now one of the priorities of the Commission in its continuous quest for improved effectiveness and efficiency. On-going in-house training in registration and election procedures would no doubt enhance the performance of the Commission in the delivery of its services. There is no better confidence building mechanism, both on the part of the organizations' employees and in the public, than the delivery of prompt and efficient service to all stakeholders.

METHODS OF ADDRESSING JEOPARDIES/ISSUES

Calvin Benn
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INTRODUCTION

Continuous Registration may be described as a system whereby the national register of registrants and the electoral list are continually updated and maintained.

A system of continuous registration requires appropriate infrastructure to maintain the list adding names and other relevant information for those who satisfy eligibility criteria such as citizenship, age, residency requirement and deleting the names of those who no longer satisfy eligibility requirements (by way of death, change of residency etc.)

It is felt that the difficulties associated with the execution of periodic registration in Guyana renders this form of registration inadequate and inappropriate. Continuous registration is considered to be superior to periodic registration because it is argued that among other things, this system:

- (a) Provides for closer and more thorough screening of every applicant for registration, and
- (b) Ensures greater integrity for the data.

The proposal for GECOM to move away from periodic registration to a system of continuous registration represents a major change in the operations of GECOM. This proposal is a reflection that GECOM has become proactive towards the execution of its functions. It is also a reflection that we are beginning to see new possibilities and challenges as we strive to improve the quality and accuracy of our electoral rolls. It is the emergence of these new possibilities and challenges which are driving/influencing GECOM to undertake a fundamental reassessment of its objectives and operations.

When one examines the system of continuous registration there are some very obvious issues/jeopardies that come to mind. Following is a discussion on some of those issues/jeopardies as they are perceived to relate to Guyana and the manner in which they have been addressed by Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

This presentation also offers suggestions that could be utilized by GECOM in addressing the particular issues/jeopardies.

METHODS OF ADDRESSING JEOPARDIES/ISSUES

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
1.	Establishing identity of registrant/elector.	<p>The birth certificate is the only validating document. It is compulsory that the original and a copy of the birth certificate be tendered. The copy is retained by registration officials.</p>	<p>1. The birth certificate is tendered.</p> <p>2. Scrutineers must verify each registration.</p> <p>3. Biometrics is an integral part of the identification process (finger prints are cross matched).</p>	<p>1. The birth certificate and passport should be tendered when a person is registering. A copy of the birth certificate or the relevant pages of the passport should be retained.</p> <p>2. Biometrics should be an integral part of the process.</p> <p>3. Scrutineers should verify each registration.</p>
2.	Claims to naturalization	<p>1. It is compulsory that the original and a copy of the naturalization certificate be tendered. The copy is retained.</p>	<p>It is compulsory that the original and a copy of naturalization certificate be tendered. The copy is retained by the registration officials.</p>	<p>1. It should be compulsory that the original of the Naturalisation Certificate be tendered and a copy retained.</p>

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
		<p>2. There is also provision in the law requiring the judiciary to forward all source of evidence of naturalization during and before the period of electoral registration.</p>		<p>2. Additionally, the law should provide for the Ministry of Home Affairs to forward all relevant naturalization source of evidence periodically to GECOM.</p>
3.	<p>Verification of source documents.</p>	<p>1. Copies of birth certificates are kept and a file index of birth certificate numbers used by registrants is maintained. Periodically a comparison check is conducted to ensure that there is no multiple use of any birth certificate.</p> <p>2. An internal audit of the system is conducted by using the index of birth certificates.</p> <p>3. Data on naturalization certificates are checked against information forwarded from the judiciary.</p>	<p>1. No. name is included on the electoral list unless data and source documents are verified by scrutineers and staff.</p> <p>2. There is provision in the law for Registrar of Births and deaths to provide the Electoral Office with information/data regarding births and deaths.</p>	<p>1. No mane should be included on the registration/electoral list unless data and source documents are verified by scrutineers and staff.</p> <p>2. The provision whereby the Registrar General Office provides relevant data to GECOM should be enforced.</p> <p>3. The laws should provide for the Ministry of Home Affairs to forward all relevant naturalization source evidence periodically to GECOM.</p>

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
4.	<p>MULTIPLE REGISTRATION</p> <p>(i) People deliberately enrolling at false addresses in the same electoral division/sub-division.</p> <p>(ii) A person who is already registered in a district and seeks to be registered in another district.</p>	<p>1. Master Registration Lists are supplied to each office.</p> <p>2. These lists are checked to find out if persons were registered before.</p> <p>3. Comparative data checks are run periodically</p> <p>4. All registration must be checked by Registration Officials to ascertain the existence of persons at the given/stated addresses.</p> <p>5. No name is placed on the list unless electoral officials verify the existence of registrants/electors.</p>	<p>1. There is reconciliation of data collected in the field and cross-matching of finger prints.</p> <p>2. A 'residence' check is made by scrutineers and staff to verify the existence of persons.</p> <p>3. Application for registration is forwarded to the center only AFTER verification of existence is done.</p>	<p>1. There should be field checks to verify residence.</p> <p>2. Each registration officer should be provided with a copy of the national register on an Information Technology platform in alphabetical order to be used to establish whether or not the person's name is in the current register. Biometrics should be an integral part of the process.</p>
	<p>(iii) A person who has not been registered but who is eligible and seeks new registration (each in a different district) within a short period of time.</p>	--	--	<p>1. Reconciliation of all requests for registration at the secretariat.</p> <p>2. Biometrics should be an integral part of the process.</p>

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
	(iv) A person who states a change to the name on his identity document on each occasion that a new registration is sought.	--	--	<p>1. Requiring the person to provide Deed Poll along with his/her birth certificate in order to prove the change of name.</p> <p>2. Retaining copies of all source documents tendered.</p>
5.	People deliberately enrolling false names at real or false addresses.	<p>1. Original and copy of birth certificate must be tendered.</p> <p>2. Field verification of all transactions is compulsory.</p>	-Do-	<p>1. Original birth certificates should be tendered and copies retained.</p> <p>2. There should be field checks to verify residence.</p>
6.	People deliberately enrolling real (other people's) names at real or false addresses.	<p>1. Original and copy of birth certificate must be tendered.</p> <p>2. Field verification of all transactions is compulsory.</p>	1. There is reconciliation of data collected in the field and cross-matching of finger prints.	<p>1. Original birth certificates should be tendered and copies retained.</p> <p>2. There should be field checks to verify residence</p>

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
			<p>2. A 'residence' check is made by scrutineers and staff to verify the existence of persons</p> <p>3. Application for registration is forwarded to the center only AFTER verification of existence is done.</p>	
7.	People deliberately registering at wrong addresses	<p>1. Original and copy of birth certificate must be tendered.</p> <p>2. Field verification of all transactions is compulsory.</p>	<p>1. There is reconciliation of data collected in the field and cross-matching of finger prints.</p> <p>2. A 'residence' check is made by scrutineers and staff to verify the existence of persons.</p> <p>3. Application for registration is forwarded to the center only AFTER verification of existence is done.</p>	<p>1. Original birth certificates should be tendered and copies retained.</p> <p>2. There should be field checks to verify residence.</p>

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
8.	Data collection errors.	Thorough checking of registration record cards by Clerk and Registration Officer and at every other level in the process.	All work in the field go through a four tier system of checks and balances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check by Registration Officer - Check by scrutineers. - Check at the Head Office - Cross referencing of finger prints at Head Office. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intensive training of staff. 2. Birth certificates should be reconciled with data on forms. 3. A rigid system of checks and balances as exists in Jamaica.
9.	Manipulation of information/registration process by field staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thorough investigation of all such complaints. 2. Instituting disciplinary measures including dismissal. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanism above will detect these breaches. 2. Punitive measures are prescribed by the law. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanism at 8 above will detect such breach. 2. Thorough investigation of complaints. 3. Persons found guilty should be penalized in accordance with the law.

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
10.	<p>Illegally or 'improperly' assisting others to register by providing false information especially on behalf of the mentally, retarded, disabled and nomads/street persons.</p>	<p>The law is very specific with reference to these categories of persons. All persons entitled to be registered. There is the category of non-electors. This act constitutes an offence and is punishable by law.</p>	<p>Special provisions are made in the law with reference to these categories of persons. Special request must be made to the Director of Elections who makes the necessary arrangements to affect such registration.</p>	<p>Special provision should be made with respect to procedure and penalties for such breaches.</p>
11	<p>Inclusion of ineligible persons on the electoral list/national register of registrants:</p> <p>(i) Authentication of documentation of non-resident and Commonwealth citizens.</p> <p>(ii) Persons of unsound mind</p>	<p>Commonwealth citizens must present birth certificates (original and duplicate), permission to stay (original and duplicate) and passports. Duplicates of birth certificates and permission to stay are retained. Persons must be resident for one year to register as electors. Persons who are from countries outside the Commonwealth must present birth certificates, passport and evidence of residence.</p>	<p>Authentic documents must be tendered to the satisfaction of scrutineers and staff.</p>	<p>1. Requiring persons requesting to be registered to provide specified documentary proof of: (a) age and (b) citizenship or required residency which ever is applicable.</p> <p>2. Verification at the Secretariat of all registration documents – including the copies of the eligibility documents received from the registration officers and confirming the eligibility of the persons requesting to be registered, before placing these persons on the Register of Registrants.</p>

Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
12.	Persons disqualified under the provisions of any law relating to corrupt or illegal practice and other offences in connection with elections.	--	Photographs of offender with name and any aliases of the offence are published in each constituency.	1. The system utilized in Jamiaca should be adopted.
13.	The current registration forms are designed for manual data entry and are not appropriate for computerized data capture.	The forms utilized are designed for computer data capture.	The forms utilized are for computer data capture.	Forms should be redesigned for computer data capture and should be user friendly.
14.	A person who is known to be residing permanently in one division/district but who is also known to be resident in another division/district and who seeks to be registered at other addresses.	The law specifies that a person can only register at one address.	The use of biometrics addressed this issue.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biometrics should be an integral part of the process. 2. Reconciliation of source documents at the center. 3. Field checks should be conducted to verify residences.
Ser.	Jeopardies/Issues	Election & Boundaries Commission Trinidad & Tobago	Electoral Office – Jamaica	Guyana Elections Commission
16.	Removal of deceased electors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Registrar of Births and Deaths forwards information to Registration Officer. 2. Registration Officer collects information from hospitals in registration area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Death certificate is tendered and names removed at centre. 2. Scrutineers do field verification. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. G.R.O. submits information on relevant forms. 2. Information should be verified by scrutineers and staff through field verification.

		<p>3. Field verification is done and check card completed.</p> <p>4. Information/verification is forwarded to Head Office for removal of names.</p>	<p>3. Forms are also completed/verified by scrutineers and submitted to head office.</p>	<p>3. All verification must be submitted to Head Office for names to be removed from the list.</p>
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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

Ms. Zel Octive-Hamilton
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 Guyana Elections commission

PREAMBLE

Simply put, Continuous Registration is a process whereby the National Register of Registrants (N.R.R) is maintained and continually updated, and the list of electors is extracted from the N.R.R and published at a specified interval. However, despite the fact that to embark on such a process would entail an elaborate infrastructure, I am confident that given the dynamics of our society, there would be tangible benefits to be derived through its implementation.

In my attempt to address the stated topic, I must indicate that since no decision has been taken on the nature of the proposed new system to be adopted, my approach to the topic is focused on generalizations rather than specifics, and consequently my presentation is structured as follows:

- (a) Introduction- The call for Continuous Registration
- (b) The Current System
- (c) Interdependence & Linkages among the Processes
- (d) Suggested Legislative Changes
- (e) Conclusion

INTRODUCTION - THE CALL FOR CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

Often the conduct of registration, and the conduct and results of elections have been the sources of suspicions, dissatisfactions and controversies among stakeholders, including the citizenry. These suspicions and dissatisfactions result in lack of confidence in the electoral process. They also often correlate with shortcomings in the electoral procedures and their execution, which have been reported by international and local institutions and observer groups. Consequently, a number of recommendations have been made. For instance, there has been a call for the review of the registration and electoral procedures, and in particular that consideration should be given to the registration of persons and the updating of the voters roll on a continuous basis- albeit with the concomitant legal changes.

It is from this background in addition to GECOM's "self- evaluation" that the proposal of Continuous Registration" is being tabled. Thus within the spirit of the democratic process, GECOM is seeking the involvement of stakeholders, to determine the feasibility of implementing Continuous Registration, and the characteristics that will inform its implementation.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Presently Guyana utilizes a system of Periodic Registration, whereby an order is made specifying the qualifying date-i.e the date at which a person must be at the minimum age for eligibility to be registered, and the period within which the registration exercise will be conducted.

The present legislation provides for two types of registration exercises; (1) National Registration for updating of the National Register of Registrants (NRR); and (2) Registration specific to an

election, referred to as "Claims and Objections", for the updating of the Electoral Roll. The Legislation obligates the Elections Commission to inform the public of the commencement and conclusion dates of all registration exercises, and the manner in which they will be conducted.

National Registration accommodates the registration of all persons who are fourteen (14) years and over at the qualifying date, and who also satisfy the citizenship requirement. A component of this process is the photographing of each person registered and his or her issuance with a National Identification Card. Claims and Objections allow for the registration of all unregistered persons who are eligible to be electors-i.e persons who are eighteen (18) years and over at the qualifying date and who satisfy citizenship and or residency (domicile) requirements. Claims and Objections also allow registered electors to make changes to their personal data, including name and place of residence, so as to enable the currency of their eligibility as electors.

In Guyana, however, in spite of the introduction of significant legal and administrative reforms, Periodic Registration has not resolved the essential concerns of all stakeholders.

INTERDEPENDENCE & LINKAGES AMONG THE PROCESSES

As prescribed by law and prior to the conduct of "Claims and Objections" for any elections, the Election Commission must compile a Preliminary Voters' List from the eligible electors on the NRR. The said list, after compliance with the statutory requirements of the "Claims and Objections" period and after necessary modifications thereto, is published to establish the Official List of Electors for the Poll, thereby forming the basis for the Poll.

In order to facilitate the Registration Process the country is divided into Registration Districts. Each district comprises a number of divisions referred to as "Registration Divisions". Similarly, prescribed under the Representation of the People Act Cap: 1:03, is the said configuration for the purposes of General & Regional Elections termed, "Polling Districts" and Polling Divisions". A Preliminary List of Electors for each division is compiled, and the said list after the aforementioned process of "Claims and Objections" becomes the Revised Voters List (RVL) which if necessary is then further sanitized by GECOM to become the Official List of Electors for the said "Polling Division" on the day specified for the holding of General & Regional Elections.

In addition the Official List of Electors is also used as the source not only to establish eligibility to vote in General, Regional & Local Government Elections, but also for the extraction and compilation of the Non- Resident Electors and Disciplined Services Rolls for General & Regional Elections.

Since the accuracy of the electors roll is absolutely dependent on the efficiency of the Registration Process, and since the electors roll provides the basis for the proper conduct of elections, then any deficiency in the Registration Process would adversely affect the outcome of the elections.

SUGGESTED LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Worthy of note is that the laws pertaining to Guyana's Registration Process and the Electoral Processes are contained in separate and distinct pieces of legislation, i.e the Constitution; the National Registration Act Cap:19:08; the Representation of the People Act Cap:1:03; the Local Authorities (Elections) Act Cap:28:03 and other complimentary Legislation. Over the years there have been extensive amendments to these laws. However, these amendments

have all been made in a somewhat adhoc manner, and in some instances without adequate and due regard to the nexus among the various legislations, thus making the process of garnering the pertinent information pertaining to the Registration and Election Processes onerous and time consuming.

Given the current state of our laws, it is my humble view that the Commission before embarking on the introduction of the proposed system of Continuous Registration, ought to give serious consideration to the consolidation of all the legislation governing the Registration and Electoral Processes as evident in sister Caribbean Territories, so as to more easily enable the Commission and its Staff to effectively carry out the Commission's mandate.

Apart from consolidation of the laws, it is my considered opinion that a change in our present system of Periodic Registration would entail significant legal modifications to the current laws. However, because the nature of the proposed system has not been determined or defined, it would be prudent to adopt a generalized approach pertaining to the relevant legislative amendments, and therefore it is my proposal that due consideration be given to the following aspects of the laws:

- (i) Registration of persons - sec: 6 National Registration Act Cap: 19:08, as amended by sec: 3 Election Laws (Amendment) Act 15 of 2000 - In addressing this section provision should be made for the Commission to introduce the proposed system of Continuous Registration. The section should also specify the manner in which the exercise would be undertaken, the criteria for a person's eligibility to be registered and whether such registration should be mandatory or not.
- (ii) Registration Districts and Registration Divisions- sec: 5 National Registration Act Cap: 19:08, as amended by Act 15 of 2000 – Given the fact that there are at present clearly defined boundaries, and in view of the increased "residential settlements" phenomenon there may be need for modification to the present law to accommodate boundary re-demarcation and to determine the criteria for so doing.
- (iii) Preparation of Preliminary list- sec: 14 of National Registration Act Cap: 19:08 as amended by sec: 4 of Act 15 of 2000 – Amendments to this section should provide for the inclusion of the time for preparation and publication of the list of eligible electors, the currency of the list i.e during what period would the list be considered current, as well as an amendment to the marginal notes to reflect the preparation and publication of the said list. Provision should also be made for the use of Information Technology in relation to preparation of the list.
- (iv) Publication of Preliminary List and claims and objections thereto- sec: 15 National Registration Act Cap: 19:08 as amended by sec: 4 of Act 15 of 2000 – Amendments to this section should address the time for preparation and publication of the list and the place and manner of such publication. Having regard to the proposed system the timeframe normally prescribed for claims and objections may be shortened. Conversely there may be need for the list to be published on more than two (2) buildings within a division, and for the notice of publication to be advertised in the print and electronic media in addition to the publication of the notice in the Official Gazette, as prescribed by s:15 (1) of Act 19:08 amended by s: 4 of Act 15 of 2000. Further, consideration should also be given to the enactment of provisions for the use of the print and electronic media when publishing the Preliminary List.
- (v) The Regulations made under sec: 19 of National Registration Act Cap: 19:08 – In terms of the Regulations and Forms prescribed there under, I advocate that both be reviewed with a view to making them more compatible with the proposed system, including the enactment of provisions for the prescribed Forms to be produced in a manner that is computer and data friendly.
- (vi) PART V(Miscellaneous Offences) National Registration Act Cap: 19:08 as amended by Act 15 of 2000 – A recommendation is hereby made for Part v to be revisited, to

incorporate sanctions to negate occurrence of some of the jeopardies associated with the proposed system of Continuous Registration which have alluded to by the DCEO (Ops) in his presentation.

- (vii) Identification Cards sec: 12 National Registration Act Cap: 19:08 as amended by sec: 9 of Act 15 of 2000 – Amendments and /or enactments should be made to address the life of an Identification Card and the procedure(s) for its renewal. Even though at present there are provisions under the current Regulations to address replacement of Identification Cards, and to address Partial or Total Loss thereof. There may be need for a review of those provisions in view of the proposed system. Further, as obtain in sister Caribbean Territories, a cost could be levied for such replacement.
- (viii) Consequential modifications should be made to the Representation of the People Act Cap: 1:03 in view of the nexus between this Act and the National Registration Act 19:08. For example consideration should be given to the modification / simplification of sec: 2(3) of Act 1:03 and other affected section(s) depending on the characteristics of the proposed system of registration. Also sec: 96 of Act 1:03, which deals with the tabulation of elections results should be amended to introduce the use of Information Technology for this activity.
- (ix) Modifications should be made to the Local Authorities (Elections) Act Cap: 28:03, if necessary, depending on the characteristics of the proposed system of Continuous Registration.
- (x) Depending on the characteristics of the proposed system, there may be need to revisit some Articles of the Amended 1980 Constitution to ensure that there are no inconsistencies and /or violations to individual rights as a consequence of amendments that would have been made to the various pieces of legislation.
- (xi) Appointment of Scrutineers – sec: 8 Election Laws (Amendment) Act 15 of 2000 - In view of the proposed system this section should be amended to extend to the entire Registration Process the duties and responsibilities prescribed there under.
- (xii) Appointment of Registrars, Deputy Registrars etc: - sec: 4 National Registration Act 19:08 – This section should be amended to reflect the establishment of a permanent structure in order to facilitate the proposed system. Consideration should also be given to sec: 3 of Act 19:08 with a view to addressing the anomaly as currently reflected by the organogram, i.e the law caters for one Deputy Commissioner, whereas the structure reflects two.
- (xiii) Power of the Commissioner to require information – sec: 13 National Registration Act 19:08 – This provision should be amended to identify the appropriate officers of the relevant authorities e.g the Registrar General, the Chief Immigration Officer and the time for submission of specified information. These should be mandatory requirements, conditioned by adequate sanctions. In terms of the Immigration Authorities, even though there is provision under the Regulations made under sec:19 of Act 19:08 for the Chief Immigration Officer to furnish specific information within a stipulated timeframe, this provision is not geared to facilitate the proposed system. Therefore, it is my recommendation that the said regulation be repealed and addressed by the suggested amendment to sec: 13 of Act 19:08.

CONCLUSION

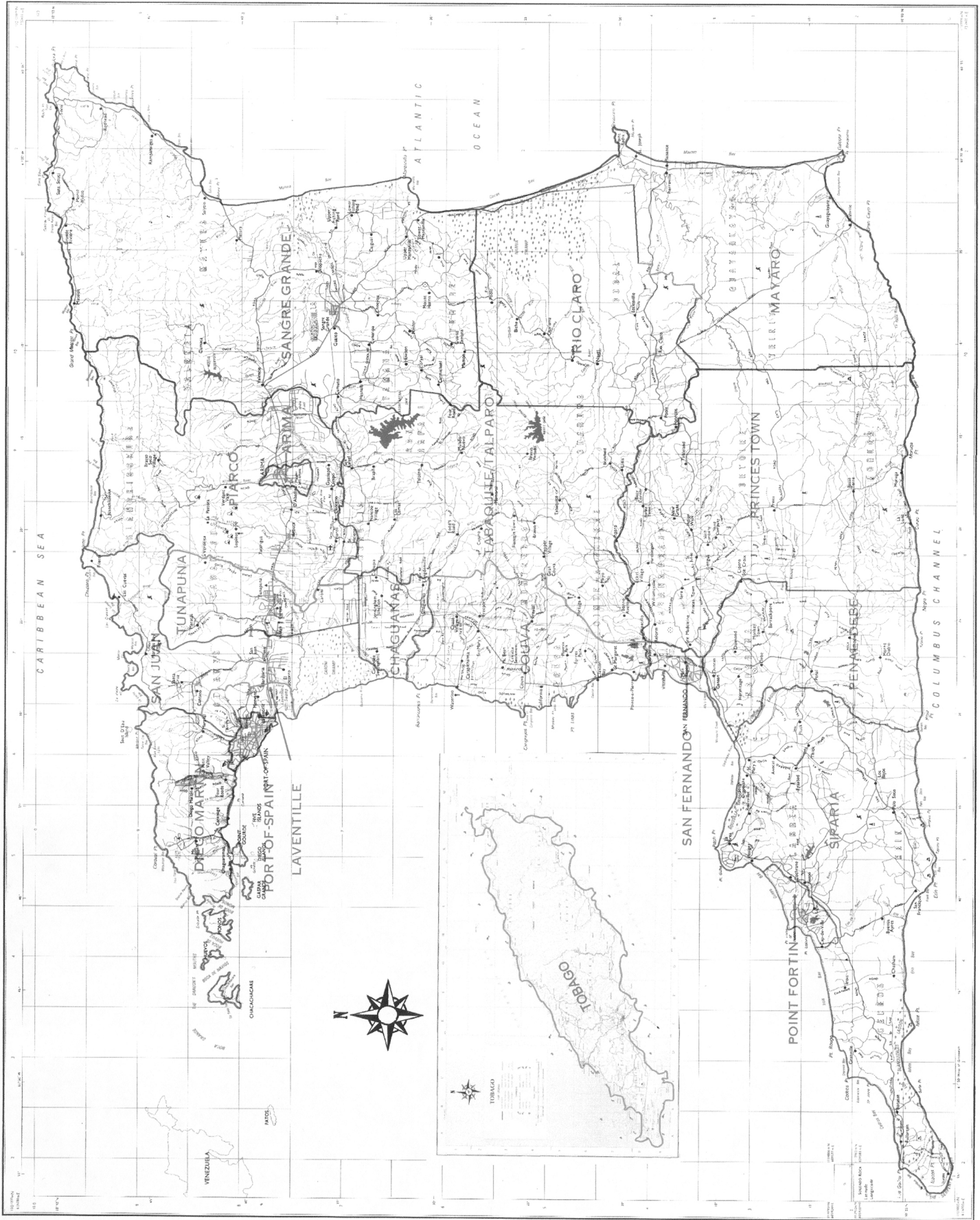
In Guyana recent history suggests that the current system of Periodic Registration is unsuited to the peculiarities of the Guyanese society.

Legislation on Voter Registration and Elections must not only provide for each eligible elector to cast his or her vote, and empower the Elections Commission to ensure that each elector is provided with the opportunity to freely cast his or her vote, but must also provide for the issuance - that in accordance with the democratic process each elector is allowed to cast only one vote.

I concur with the position taken by all the Parliamentary Political Parties, who have agreed in principle on the implementation of Continuous Registration. It is my view that if well legislated, Continuous Registration will serve to adequately address the peculiarities of the Guyanese Society, and the concerns espoused by all stakeholders with respect to elections.

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION REGISTRATION AREAS

APPENDIX II



REGISTRATION AREA OFFICE

Registrants living in the Registration Area visit the office and apply for the following transactions

1. Registration
2. Transfers
3. Renewals
4. Replacements
5. Change of Name by Marriage or Deed Poll
6. Retakes

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

REGISTRANT

Persons seeking to be registered must visit their Registration Area Offices or Sub Offices and those physically incapacitated can make a request to have same effected at home in accordance with Registration

Rule # 8(3).

DOCUMENTS TO BE PRODUCED WHEN SEEKING REGISTRATION:

- (a) Original Birth Certificate
and where applicable
Original Affidavit.
- (b) Original Marriage Certificate.
- (c) Registered Protocol of Deed (Deed Poll) if name changed other than by marriage.
- (d) Legal Residence as authenticated by the Ministry of National Security or Immigration
Division in respect of Commonwealth and Non Commonwealth Citizens.
- (e) Copies of the above documents as applicable.

CLERICAL PROCESS

The Clerk checks the documents presented for correctness, authenticity and that copies are attached. A check is made against the List of Electors for that registration area and also the countrywide list of electors for verification that the registrant is not already on the EBC Master File.

Upon being satisfied that the registrant is not on the EBC Master File a Registration Record (Form # 10) is completed. A description is taken on how to locate the registrant at the address given. A Form 13 (Acknowledgement of Registration) and A 134 or Form #19 (Check Card) are also completed at the said time. The registrant signs the document, Registration Record (Form 10) after it has been checked by him/her. Photographs are taken. The documents are checked by the Registration Clerk II as a further proof of the accuracy of information provided. Documents are entered in two registers:

- (a) Register of Registrations (Electors and Non-Electors)
- (b) Check Card Book

These documents are then passed to the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk) for transmission to the Registration Officer for field investigations.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Documents taken by Field Investigators are signed for by them and also as a form for accountability purposes initiated by the Registration Clerk III. Field Investigations are undertaken to verify:

- (a) Correctness of PD;
- (b) Correctness of Address;
- (c) Registrants 18 years and over whether they meet the necessary requirements to be electors. (Section 12(1)(a) and (b) of the Representation of the People Act refers); and
- (d) To establish the identity of the registrant.

The documents are returned, recorded and validated or invalidated. They are passed to the Registration Clerk III to initiate the necessary processes.

CODING AND FILING OF DOCUMENTS

The validated documents are coded, batched and sent to Central Registry for onward transmission to the Computer Section for the production of ID Card and to be updated on the EBC Master File. The original Registration Records (Form #10) are returned to the Registration Clerk III for entry in the Master List (List of Additions) - those who are qualified as electors.

The registration records of electors are then filed in the appropriate unit registers - surname in Alpha order (the Protective Services first). Those relating to non-electors are kept separately. Update Reports are generated from the Computer Section and returned. These are checked and appropriate action taken as required so that the correct information appears on the EBC Master File.

THE TRANSFER PROCESS

REGISTRANT

Registrants visit the Area Offices or Sub Offices to complete Notice of change of residence or address (Form # 22).

Change of Addresses can either be Internal (within the registration area) or External (movement from one registration area to another). Questions are posed for compliance under Registration Rules 43 and 44(1). The Notice of change of residence or address (Form #22) must be signed by the registrants or a thumb print taken. A description as to how to locate the registrant at the address given is also taken. In the case of Internal Transfers, the Registration Records are removed from the Unit Registers to facilitate the field investigation (a photograph is on the RR). In Column 35 of the Registration Record an appropriate notation is made. However, a photograph is taken for the External Transfer - again to facilitate the field investigation process.

CLERICAL PROCESS

A Check Card (Form # A 134 or Form #19) is completed and attached to the Notice of change of residence or address (Form #22). The documents are checked by the Registration Clerk II or Senior Clerk before the departure of the registrant. These are then entered in the Transfer Field Check Book and handed over to the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk).

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Documents taken by the Field Investigators are signed for by them and also as a form for accountability purposes initialed by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk). The Forms #22 are investigated for verification:

- (a) Polling Division;
- (b) Correct Address; and
- (c) Registrants 18 years and over whether they meet the necessary requirements to be electors. (Section 12 (1)(a) and (b) of the Representation of the People Act refers).

The documents are returned, recorded and validated or invalidated. They are passed to the Registration Clerk III to initiate the necessary processes.

CODING AND FILING OF DOCUMENTS

The transfers are then separated into two categories - INTERNAL and EXTERNAL.

(a) Internal Transfers:

The new address is entered in Column 37 of the Registration Record (Form #10) and then entered in an Internal Transfer Book. The new address and P.D. are then coded, checked, batched and transmitted to the Computer Section for amendment to the EBC Master File. The Registration Clerk III updates the Master List by deleting the name from the previous Polling Division and adding it to the new Polling Division.

(b) External Transfers:

These registration records are requested by use of a Form A 72. These requests are entered in an External Transfer Book with each Registration Area being separate.

The Registration Area which is sending these registration records (Form #10) would record on the Master List (Deletions Lists) the name of these registrants and reason for deletion.

Upon receipt of these requests on the A73, the signature on the notice of change of residence and address (Form #22) and ID Number are compared with the registration records (Forms #10) for compatibility. The new addresses are entered in Column 37 of the Registration Record. The new addresses and PD are coded, checked, batched and transmitted to the Computer Section for amendment to the EBC Master File.

The Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk) updates the Master List by adding these names.

The registration records relating to Electors are then filed in the appropriate Unit Registers.

Update Reports generated by the Computer Section are returned to the respective Registration Offices. These are checked to guarantee that the pertinent information appears on the EBC Master File.

THE RENEWAL PROCESS

REGISTRANT

Registrants visit the Area Offices or Sub-Offices to complete the renewal transaction or can make a request in accordance with Registration Rule 8(3).

Registrants can renew their ID Cards two months before the expiration of same. At the time of renewal, the following can also be effected:

- (i) Correction of Date of Birth;
- (ii) Correction or Addition of Name;
- (iii) Change of Name; and
- (iv) Change of Address.

All Renewals are entered in numerical sequence in a Book "*Renewal of ID Cards*". However, the majority of the Renewals will fall into the category of No Changes - i.e. the Registrant only wants to get an ID Card to replace the expired one. In the case of No changes and Changes, two photographs are taken and the signatures are placed on signature strips. The photographs replace the old ones on the original and duplicate RR and the signature strips will facilitate the production of an ID Card. In Column 35 of the Registration Record an appropriate notation is made.

Where the Registration Records are available and corrections are sought, these are done at the same time provided that the appropriate documents are produced. In the case where Transfers are being sought, they are handled in the same manner as Internal and External Transfers.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Documents taken by the Field Investigators are signed for by them and are initialed as a form of accountability by the Registration Clerk III. The Form #22 is investigated for verification of:

- (a) Polling Division;
- (b) Correct Address; and
- (c) Compliance with Section 12 (1)(a) and (b) of the Representation of the People Act..

The documents are returned, recorded and validated or invalidated. They are initialed for accountability by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk) and also to initiate the necessary processes.

CODING AND FILING OF DOCUMENTS

Renewals with no changes are coded, checked and batched and transmitted for the production of new ID Cards.

Those transactions which need changes are also coded but kept separately to facilitate easier processing. These corrections are also effected in the Master List by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk).

The transfers are coded in the same way as Transfers with the new Addresses appearing in Column 37 of the Registration Records and the Master List being updated. Registration Records are filed in the appropriate Unit Register. Appropriate action is taken on Update Reports.

THE REPLACEMENT PROCESS

REGISTRANT

Replacements are effected pertaining to lost, stolen, destroyed, mutilated, or defaced ID Cards and also to correct information regarding Date of Birth and Name. This is done in accordance with Registration Rule 47.

Registrants are given statutory declarations (A 71) and Deposit Payment Vouchers to have completed as required. The latter is either to pay the fee of either \$10.00 or \$20.00 dollars.

On completion of the required forms or form, the replacements are effected with photographs and signature strips being completed. All replacements are entered in a Replacement Register. In column 35 of the Registration Record an appropriate notation is made. In the event of any change made to Name or Date of Birth, that is reflected in either Columns 1, 13 or 32 of the Registration Record.

Internal Transfers can be handled at the same time. However, in the case of External Transfers, the RR must be requested after the completion of the field investigation so that the source document can be available when the replacement is being effected. The documents are checked for accuracy by the Registration Clerk II or Senior Clerk before the registrant departs.

All transactions for which no field investigations have to be undertaken are sent for Coding, Checking and batching. Transactions which require field investigations must be first field checked before any further action can be taken.

All Replacements must be checked and initialed by the Registration Officer before being sent for processing.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Documents taken by the Field Investigators are signed for and also a form for accountability purposes initialed by the Registration Clerk III. The Forms #22 are investigated for verification of:

- (a) Polling Division;
- (b) Correct Address; and
- (c) Compliance with Section 12 (1)(a) and (b) of the Representation of the People Act.

The documents are returned, recorded and validated or invalidated. They are initialed for accountability by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk) and also to initiate the necessary processes.

CODING AND FILING OF DOCUMENTS

Replacements with no changes are coded, checked and batched and transmitted for the production of a new ID Card.

The transactions which need changes are also coded but kept separately to facilitate easier processing. These corrections are also effected in the Master List by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk).

The transfers are coded in the same way as Transfers with the new Addresses appearing in Column 37 of the Registration Records and the Master List being updated. Registration Records are filed in the appropriate Unit Register. Appropriate action is taken on Update Reports.

CHANGE OF NAME PROCESS

REGISTRANT

Registration Rule #45 provides for Change of Name. The registrant is required to produce to the Registration Officer satisfactory evidence before any change is effected. A Notice of change of name (Form #23) is completed. The registrant must also surrender his/her old ID Card. Sometimes these transactions are accompanied with a change of residence or address (Form # 22).

In the case of External Transfers, the field investigation must be first completed satisfactorily, the RR requested from the previous Registration Area and only when the source document is available can the change be effected. A notation is made in Column 35 of the RR. Also amendments are made to the name in Columns 1 and 32 of the RR. All transactions are checked for accuracy by the Registration Clerk II or Senior Clerk before the departure of the registrant.

Transfers are entered in the Transfer Field Check Book and sent to the Field Officers for investigations.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Documents taken by the Field Investigators are signed for by them and also as a form for accountability purposes initialed by the Registration Clerk III. The Forms #22 are investigated for verification of:

- (a) Polling Division;
- (b) Correct Address; and
- (c) Compliance with Section 12 (1)(a) and (b) of the Representation of the People Act..

The documents are returned, recorded and validated or invalidated. They are initialed for accountability by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk) and also to initiate the necessary processes.

CODING AND FILING OF DOCUMENTS

These transactions are coded, checked, batched and transmitted for the production of new ID Cards and to update the EBC Master File. These change of names are also reflected in the Master List maintained by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk).

The transfers are coded in the same way as Transfers with the new Addresses appearing in Column 37 of the Registration Record and the Master List being updated. Registration Records are filed in the appropriate Unit Register. Appropriate action is taken on Update Reports.

THE RETAKE PROCESS

REGISTRANT

Registrants, whose photographs have been spoilt or misplaced, may be required by the Registration Officer to have their photographs retaken or prints submitted. Registration Rule 24(10) refers.

Correction of minor errors and omission in a registration record can be treated as a Retake so that a correct ID Card can be produced. Registration Rule 19 refers.

Photographs and signature strips are completed. In Column 35 of the Registration Record an appropriate notation is made. The documents are checked for accuracy by the Registration Clerk II or Senior Clerk before the departure of the registrant.

All transactions for field investigations - Internal Transfers - are entered in the Field Check Card Book and given to the Registration Clerk III for field investigations by the relevant Field Officers.

Retakes for which no field investigations are needed are sent for Coding, Checking and Batching.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Documents taken by the Field Investigators are signed for by them and also as a form for accountability purposes initialed by the Registration Clerk III. The Forms #22 are investigated for verification of:

- (a) Polling Division;
- (b) Correct Address; and
- (c) Compliance with Section 12 (1)(a) and (b) of the Representation of the People Act..

The documents are returned, recorded and validated or invalidated. They are initialed for accountability by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk) and also to initiate the necessary processes.

CODING AND FILING OF DOCUMENTS

Retakes with no changes are coded, checked, batched and transmitted for the production of a new ID Card.

The transactions which need changes are also coded but kept separately to facilitate easier processing. These corrections are also effected in the Master List by the Registration Clerk III (Chief Clerk).

The transfers are coded in the same way as Transfers with the new Addresses appearing in Column 37 of the Registration Record and the Master List being updated. Registration Records are filed in the appropriate Unit Register. Appropriate action is taken on Update Reports.

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING THE REGISTRATION OFFICES DURING THE PERIOD 1998-2002					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
* ELECTORATE	900,525	920,788	938,030	958,227	859,689
TRANSACTION					
REGISTRATIONS:					
ELECTORS	13,385	10,265	15,176	14,118	18,561
NON-ELECTORS	19,388	18,634	19,566	20,004	19,822
	32,773	28,899	34,742	34,122	38,383
CHANGE OF ADDRESS					
EXTERNAL - IN	7,525	8,818	13,866	10,989	5,895
EXTERNAL - OUT	6,718	7,450	13,530	10,968	5,616
INTERNAL	7,980	8,475	12,350	9,492	5,910
	22,223	24,743	39,746	31,449	17,421
RENEWALS	87,420	93,608	97,229	50,852	33,265
REPLACEMENTS	14,957	13,645	15,341	15,087	16,018
ID CARDS DELIVERED	98,500	137,623	163,537	105,932	80,856
TOTAL	255,873	298,518	350,595	237,442	185,943

* ANNUAL LIST FIGURES

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

YEAR	ELECTORATE	TRANSACTIONS	PERCENTAGE
1. 1998	900,525	255,873	28.41%
2. 1999	920,788	298,518	32.42%
3. 2000	938,030	350,595	37.38%
4. 2001	958,227	237,442	24.78%
5. 2002	859,689	185,943	21.63%

