

OBSERVER MISSION REPORT OF
NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT CENTRE FOR
SOUTH-SOUTH TECHNICAL COOPERATION



REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTION OF
THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

2021

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INTRODUCTION

Venezuelans voted in the country's Regional and Municipal elections on November 21, 2021.

Several international news outlets, notably the Washington Post, are covering the election. This election is significant for Venezuela's political situation because opposition parties register as candidates during the election, and scores of international observers watched the voting procedures firsthand.

Delegations from Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC) resolved to deploy an Observation Mission at the invitation of the President of the National Election Commission (NEC) Venezuela. On November 14, 2021, the Mission landed in Caracas, Venezuela. It consisted of three observers (Diar Nurbintoro, Niken Supraba and Eddy Supriyatno). The delegates had stayed in the nation till November 23rd, 2021.

Each of the three NAM CSSTC delegations was overseeing five polling stations: Escuela Municipal Juan Manuel Cajigal, Colegio Canigua, UENB La Union, Colegio Claret, and Luceo Nacional Alejo Fortique, which each had over 1,000 registered voters.

This report focuses on the voting procedures on election day.

OBJECTIVE AND METHOD

The goal of the NAM CSSTC deploying an Observation Mission is to observe the Regional and Municipal Election system and participation in an impartial manner, including observing accountability and transparency – in such a way that it will lead to peace as part of the effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The process employed in preparing this report is based primarily on the findings of the NAM CSSTC delegation deployed on election day.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- The Venezuelan governing system grants autonomy to municipalities and regions, which may explain why this election has special significance for both the political parties that ran for seats and the voters.
- There was serenity at the polling locations where NAM CSSTC delegates were stationed.
- Voters turned out in large numbers at the Escuela Municipal Juan Manue Cajigal voting site.
- Elders, as well as persons with disabilities, also came to vote at polling locations.

ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

- Polling station personnel include NEC employees assigned to the station as well as military personnel to ensure order during the election. The NAM CSSTC delegates also heard from the Committee that in some polling places, one citizen is sometimes appointed to participate in election administration.
- The roles of each employee (especially those from the NEC) are as follows: Collect the voter's identity card, enter the ID number into a machine to verify, assist the voter in entering their thumb fingerprints at the machine, and collect fingerprint ink when the voter exits the voting table.
- The election employs a machine for voting, and after electing a candidate, the voter receives a small piece of paper that he or she must place inside a box. The small document contains information about the candidate who was elected by the voter. Later, the paper would be counted on the spot. This is to see if there is a match between the machine's result and the outcome based on the paper.
- After which the box would be properly kept in a special location.

VOTER REGISTRATION

- This election is only open to Venezuelan citizens of voting age.
- The voter list was displayed on a wall in front of the polling station building. It listed the voters based on the number on their ID card.

MEDIA

The NEC provided the media with the opportunity to cover the voting process. The delegations spotted media at the polling site in El Hatillo. There were no restrictions for media, and they were able to shoot video and audio footage.

WITNESS/OBSERVER

- Each political party running for office is permitted to voluntarily deploy a witness to observe voting processes.
- The NEC designates citizen(s) to verify the validity of the result for the verification of votes on the box of reception.
- International observers are arriving from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. They are members of political parties and legal profession in their respective nations (e.g. Lawyers). Some are also policymakers, while others are NEC members in their respective countries.
- The participation of international observers during the Regional and Municipal Elections Monitoring is a remarkable move done by the Venezuelan administration – and this will serve as a tool to assure the election's openness and credibility.

SENSITIZATION

The voters that arrive at the station appear to be familiar with the procedure. They know what to present at the counter, and no one has any problems utilizing the machine. Prior to the election, it

appears that the government provided appropriate sensitization to citizens about how voting works.

FINDINGS ON ELECTION DAY

- Military troops and police officers assigned to polling places voted early in the morning, before their duties began.
- There were no noteworthy incidents at any voting place, according to the NAM CSSTC delegates. There was a machine error at the La Union polling station, but the authorities were able to rectify the problem immediately.
- The NAM CSSTC delegates witnessed a 1.5-hour delay in opening polling stations due to station preparation, which resulted in voting taking place much later.
- The NAM CSSTC delegates noted that the committee was sympathetic to the requirements of the elderly and individuals with disabilities (motor issues), since they were permitted to sit rather than stand while waiting in line. The NEC has made a great decision.
- The voters' secrecy/privacy regarding the candidates they chose was properly safeguarded.
- The NAM CSSTC delegations observed a visible presence of military personnel at the voting place. They were dressed formally, and some were armed with defensive weapons. They stayed away from the station by standing at the front gate or further away.
- When the NAM CSSTC delegates arrived at the polling centre at 5.30 p.m., the President of the NEC Venezuela announced that the voting would be extended until 7 p.m. due to the delay in starting the voting in the morning.

CONCLUSION

- The NAM CSSTC delegates are pleased that the election was held in a peaceful environment. Despite the fact that several registered voters were absent throughout the counting.
- Although certain voting processes differed greatly from those of other nations, the NAM CSSTC delegates believe that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution. Each law and regulation must be born of or drawn from the people’s customs/traditions and culture. As long as there are no objections from Venezuelans, voting operations in Venezuela are as perfect as they can be.
- The NAM CSSTC delegations congratulate all elements involved in the election’s organization: The government, including the NEC Venezuela, for the peaceful election process in Miranda, the role of military personnel in ensuring security and serenity at polling stations, and the role of police in ensuring the safety of international observers.

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

