



# **NATIONAL MONITORING AND CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM**

**GENERAL ELECTIONS REPORT  
DECEMBER 9, 2015**

**ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**



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## **BACKGROUND**

The National Monitoring and Consultative Mechanism (NMCM) was born in 2000 as a result of the political unrest which evolved following the 1998 General Elections. The ruling New Democratic Party won 8 of the 15 parliamentary seats with 45.29 percent of the popular votes with the Opposition Unity Labour Party gaining 7 seats with 54.62 percent of the popular votes.

It was the view of the ULP that although the NDP had won with 8 seats under the first past the post system, they had no moral right to govern the country with a smaller percent of the votes. A number of protests was organized which included Trade Unions, the Women and Youth Movement.

The protests were discontinued after the OECS and CARICOM Governments intervened leading to what is now known as the Grand Beach Accord where the then Prime Minister James Mitchell and Opposition Leader Ralph Gonsalves signed the agreement on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2000 where new General Elections were to be held no later than March 2001.

**The signatories to the agreement were:**

**The Rt. Hon Sir James Mitchell**, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and President of the New Democratic Party.

**Dr. The Hon Ralph E. Gonsalves**, Leader of the Opposition and Political Leader of the Unity Labour Party.

**Mr. Jeffrey Providence**, President, Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

**Mr. Fitz Jones**, President of the National Labour Council and Chairman of the Organisation for the Defense of Democracy.

**Mr. St. Clair Leacock**, President, Employers' Federation.

**Mr. Israel Bruce**, President, National Youth Council

**Dr. the Hon. Denzil Douglas**, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and Chairman of Caricom.

**Dr. The Hon Keith Mitchell**, Prime Minister of Grenada and Chairman of the OECS.

**Those participating in the meeting were:**

**Mr. Fitz Jones**

President of the National Labour Council and Chairman of the Organisation for the Defence of Democracy

**Mr Lanceford Weekes,**

President of the Public Service Union

**Mr. Glen Jackson**

General Secretary of the Public service Union

**Mr. Noel Jackson**

General Secretary of the National Workers Movement

**Mr. St. Clair Leacock**

General Secretary of the National Workers Union

**Mr. Lloyd Smart**

General Secretary of the Commercial, Technical and Allied Workers Union

**Mr. Israel Bruce**

President of the National Youth Council

**Mr. Jeffrey Providence**

President of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce

**Mrs Audrey Scott**

Nurses Association

**Dr. Rosalind Ambrose**

Public Relations Officer, Medical Association

**Mr. Louis Straker**

ULP Opposition Parliamentarian

**Dr. The Hon Ralph Gonsalves**

Leader of the Opposition and Political Leader of the United Labour party

**Hon Lester Bird**

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

**Hon Roosevelt Douglas**

Prime Minister of Dominica

**Dr. The Hon Keith Mitchell**

Prime Minister of Grenada and Chairman of the OECS

**Hon Brunel Meade**

Minister of Agriculture and Housing, Montserrat

**Dr. The Hon Denzil Douglas**

Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and Chairman of CARICOM

**Dr. The Hon Kenny D Anthony**

Prime Minister of St. Lucia

**The Rt. Hon Sir James Mitchell**

Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

**Hon Ralph T O'Neal**

Chief Minister of the British Virgin Islands

**Hon Victor Banks**

Minister for Finance, Anguilla

**Mr. Swinburne Lestrade**

Director General, OECS

In an effort to ensure that the period leading to the elections was a peaceful one and that General Elections were conducted in a free and fair manner, the Grand Beach Accord mandated the formation of the National Monitoring and Consultative Mechanism (NMCM), a body comprising the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the National Youth Council, the National Council of Women, the Organisation In Defense of Democracy (ODD), the National Labour Congress, the SVG Bar Association, the Peoples Progressive Movement, the Unity Labour Party, the New Democratic Party and the SVG Christian Council as Chair and Convener. It must be noted that the SVG Christian Council was not a signatory to the Grand Beach Accord but was considered to have the moral suasion and impartiality that would be necessary in the establishment and implementations of the NMCM as recommended by the Accord

The NMCM has so far monitored the 2001, 2005 and 2010 General Elections and the 2009 Constitutional Referendum and now the 2015 Elections.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the recommendations coming out of the 2010 National Monitoring and Consultative Mechanism (NMCM) Election report was that the NMCM should be re-activated in advance of elections to monitor the entire process, beginning with the registration process.

With general elections constitutionally due no later than March 2016, and with a heightened political climate, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council, as Chair and Convener of the NMCM initiated discussions among the Heads of Member Churches of the Council on the Code of Conduct for elections with a view to review and make changes and additions to the 2010 document. Evaluations were done on a number of Codes from the region and elsewhere.

The principles as are enshrined in the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines were included in the Code along with the articles dealing with fundamental rights and freedoms. Included in the Code of Conduct for the first time were stated objectives.

In June 2015, discussions were held with the four political parties, namely the Unity Labour Party, the New Democratic Party, the Democratic Republican Party and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Green Party to get their support for the revised Code and to be part of the NMCM. All four parties gave support to the document and to the reactivation of the NMCM.

Discussions were also held with the Seventh Day Adventists, The Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies(PAWI) and the Spiritual Baptist Faith inviting them to be members of the NMCM. This decision was arrived at after an examination of the Census figures which showed they all had an increase in membership. They all gave their commitment to be members of the NMCM.

The membership of the NMCM therefore comprised of representatives from the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Chamber of Industry and Commerce, The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Bar Association, The National Council of Women, The Association of Evangelical Churches, The Spiritual Baptist Faith, The Seventh Day Adventist, the New Democratic Party, the Unity Labour Party, The Democratic Republican Party, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Green Party with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council as Chair and Convener.

The NMCM convened its first meeting on 6th August and held several meetings during the period. Generally, the meetings of the NMCM were not well attended by the political Parties. The NDP was not represented at the first two meetings were the Code was being represented. The representative from the Democratic Republican Party did not return to meetings after the issue of duty free concessions were denied. After attending the first two meetings, the SVG Green Party declined membership.



## **PRE-ELECTION PERIOD**

In reviewing the pre-election period, it is worthy to note that after the 2010 General Elections the country remained in an election/campaign atmosphere throughout the entire five years leading up to the 2015 general elections.

It is within this environment that the National Monitoring and Consultative Mechanism was expected to function.

A budget was prepared in June which was discussed with the Prime Minister and his Permanent Secretary, he being both Minister of Finance and Minister with responsibilities for electoral matters. The budget of Sixty-two thousand eight hundred and fifty dollars (\$62,850.00) was approved by Cabinet after several amendments. The original budget was for four months and this had to be modified to three months.

The early start of the NMCM afforded it time for full preparation before the calling of the date. The Mechanism was able to deal with the Code in detail ensuring that there was no ambiguity. Members were able to participate fully in refining the document. Members of the NMCM also deliberated on the guidelines for Monitors. This proved very useful in re-defining the guidelines.

Several meetings were convened by the NMCM. They dealt with a number of issues ranging from the functioning of the NMCM to issues which were lodged by the Parties.

At the first meeting of the NMCM, the SVG Green Party raised the issue of the status of the Freedom of Information Act which they claimed was preventing them from accessing information they needed. They also noted that they were being denied duty free concessions although they were a registered Party while the two parties in parliament were receiving duty free concessions on items for election campaigning. This view was also shared by the Democratic Republican Party.

Representation was made on their behalf with the Prime Minister in his capacity as the Minister responsible for electoral matters on the two issues mentioned. On the issue of the Freedom of Information Act, it was noted that the Act was passed in the House of Assembly in 2002 but was not proclaimed by the Governor General as after review by the Attorney General and Senior Public Servants it was felt that the ambit of the Act was too wide and needed to be reviewed taking into account the Privacy Act.

Cabinet in a decision on August 24<sup>th</sup> 2015, granted the same level of duty free concessions to both the New Democratic Party and the Unity Labour Party. These included T-shirts, Elections paraphernalia, Vehicles, Public Address System and Generators.

On the matter of duty free concessions, it was also noted that there is no system of qualifying or objective criteria to determine who qualifies and as such anyone can form a party and claim concession. Consequently, the operational approach is that concessions would be granted to the parties in parliament.

It must be noted the NMCM was in agreement that some form of concessions should be available to the other "recognised" political parties i.e. the ones that have declared candidates, manifesto etc. Thus, representation was made a second time to solicit some form of concession, not necessarily the same level as the two parties but again this was denied.

The Green Party also raised a number of issues by way of letters; these include the Supervisor of Elections refusing to hand over Nomination Papers and Appointment of Agents Paper to the Party; that the NMCM seek to have the Government give the Green Party the sum of Twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$12,750.00) for the Upkeep of their office as was being given to the New Democratic Party. On investigation these allegations were proven to be false. The Green Party also failed to accept one representative per organisation as agreed by all and indicated that they could not trust the members of the NMCM and decided they could not continue their membership in the NMCM. It should be noted that the Green Party since its formation has failed to be part of the NMCM.

In the period after the re-activation of the NMCM, the campaign became intense and as a result, monitoring of political meetings began even before the Code of Conduct was signed by the Parties. Actual monitoring began in late October.

While the Code was not official, most of the monitoring was based on the 2010 Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct was signed at a ceremony on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Methodist Church Hall. While this ceremony was intended to get a commitment of support for the Code and to show some level of unity of spirit much heated debate took place on the interpretation of the constitution on the issue of whether there was a Prime Minister after the calling of an election.

The Code was signed by Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves on behalf of the Unity Labour Party, Dr. Hon. Linton Lewis on behalf of the New Democratic Party, Mrs. Anesia Baptiste on behalf of the Democratic Republican Party and Monsignor Michael Stewart on behalf of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council and the NMCM. As stated elsewhere in the report, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Green Party declined to be a part of the process.

The 2015 Code of Conduct was intended to:

1. **Foster democracy** through peaceful, free and fair elections conducted at regular intervals in which voters are permitted to cast their ballots freely, without interference, fear, intimidation or bribery.
2. **Promote respect for human rights**, the pursuit of civil and political liberties, the tolerance of divergent opinions, full and active participation of all in the political process.

3. **Encourage participation in the electoral process** by the People and to uphold their right to make political choices.
4. **Promote an election process free from violence.**

It must be noted that while the parties seemingly are in agreement with the need to the NMCM's work, they at times seem not to consider the importance or value of the group.

Sixteen Pre-Election Monitors participated in the monitoring of meetings both on main land and in the Grenadines. Meetings were monitored in all fifteen constituencies

There were times when schedules were not always available from the parties and also last minute changes made to scheduled meetings posed challenges to the monitoring process. There were times when monitors turned up for meetings only to realize they were cancelled.

At times platform Speakers acknowledged the Monitors and other times they did not. As a result of the monitoring beginning way in advance of elections being called, Monitors were not supplied with T-shirts identifying them as Monitors in the initial stages. This however did not affect the process.

While the campaign during the initial stages of monitoring was very robust, they were however kept in line with the Code of Conduct and there was really no

significant departure to the Code. Scheduling of meetings were also not very intense.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> November at a meeting of the ruling Unity Labour Party, the Political Leader of the Party and Prime Minister announced the dissolution of Parliament with immediate effect and election date of December 9<sup>th</sup>. Nomination day being 20<sup>th</sup> of November and the 15-day registration period beginning on 9<sup>th</sup> November. Thereafter the campaigning went on a different level. The campaigning was taking place in an environment where the two major parties were confident that they would win the elections. This led to a high level of hostility among supporters from opposing parties. It was from this point that the Code was not always adhered to.

The defacing of both private and public property was very evident in many areas in the country and in particular in the constituency of East Kingstown with the Sion Hill area being the high point, not only was there total disrespect for property with paint being found everywhere, but there was congregation of persons from the opposing parties present for the entire days for a prolonged period. This matter was discussed at the NMCM and the campaign managers for both parties who were also members of the NMCM expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation and gave a commitment to work with their supporters towards rectifying the situation.

Areas of concern raised by the Monitors included:

1. Schedules of meetings from the political parties were not always forthcoming on a timely manner.
2. Police presence and traffic problems – unnecessary traffic congestion can be avoided and a smoother flow of traffic obtained if officers are present at the meeting sites half an hour or an hour before the commencement of political meetings.
3. The deploying of Police Officers to some political meetings was inadequate thus making it difficult at times to control the crowd and the traffic at the same time.
4. The choice of venues for meeting needs to be reviewed to avoid unnecessary traffic congestion.
5. Racial comments made on political platform.
6. Threatening language used by candidates and party supporters against their opponents.
7. Parties breached the agreed upon Code in several areas including character assassination, half-truths, innuendoes and personal attacks.
8. At some meetings candidates did not deal with issues of national growth and development. The real issues were not addressed substantially.
9. At some meetings vehicles were not allowed to pass freely especially those bearing stickers of opponent's party.
10. In one case a candidate was referred to as an 'alien' and it was said he is not from Earth.
11. There were several references and quotations from the scriptures, Gospel shows and on occasions persons prophesying that they had a vision from God that a particular party will win the elections. These were used to vilify others, garner support and solicit votes in the elections.

One major area of concern of the NMCM and raised by the general public thought calls to the NMCM's Office was the distribution of building materials under the Government's 'Lives to Live' programme from the Public Works facility at Arnos Vale. It was felt that the distribution at the time could have been interpreted as bribery and using state resources for political campaign.

The NMCM sent two letters to the Prime Minister and Leader of the ULP appealing to him to interrupt the programme until after the December 9<sup>th</sup> elections. Concern was expressed about the timing of the distribution and the volume of the distribution among others. Election, we noted, must not only be free and fair; they must also appear to be free and fair. The distribution however continued until the day before elections. Several calls were made to the NMCM's Office by members of the public about bribery in including the distributing of chicken and money but we were unable to substantiate these allegations.

A letter was sent to the President of the New Democratic Party dealing with the race issue which was featuring prominently in the campaign and in particular making reference to the comments of 'too many black people are following the ULP', 'we don't want a black man to lead us' and that 'too many young people were following the ULP' which were in contravention of the Code.

Unlike previous elections, the fifteen-day registration period was monitored by the NMCM. This period saw a heightened registration of persons also with increased transfers. Some registering Officers had to work way beyond scheduled times in an effort to accommodate those wishing to be registered or transferred.



The constituencies of East Kingstown and East St. George saw very high levels of activity at the registration centres during the entire fifteen-day period. In many cases Justice of the Peace were on site at the Centres to sign the transfer certificates which facilitated same transfer.

With this high volume of registration during such a short period and the publication of the final voters' list three days after the close of the registration period, it leaves room for discrepancies in the registration process as there is no time to investigate both new registration and transfers as would be done in normal times of registration. It placed immense pressure on the electoral officials to ensure accuracy. The fifteen-day registration period does not allow for adequate checks and balances and provide limited time for political parties to scrutinise the list and to make any objections.

A number of transfers and registrations were challenged by Agents of opposing parties, some of which were upheld while others were not. It must be noted that were the opposing parties both agreed those registrations were not allowed.

Meetings were held with the three overseas observer teams namely the Organisation of American States, the Commonwealth and CARICOM. The issue of campaign financing, the 15-day registration period, and an independent Election body were some of the recurring issues discussed in the meetings. The issue of the involvement of women in politics and duty free concessions to political parties were also looked at.

## **ELECTION DAY AND THE VOTING PROCESS**

Some twenty-eight Monitors were deployed throughout the Country to monitor the process in all fifteen constituencies. All the Polling Stations with the exception of the Polling Station on Mustique and the one on Mayreau were visited. These two were not visited due to logistical arrangements. It must be noted that the majority of Monitors had previously monitored elections here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines some having been involved since the formation of the NMCM in 2001.

Monitors reported that all Polling Stations with the exception of Polling Station F on Bequia began promptly as 7.00am. While some Presiding Officers displayed a higher level of competence and exhibited a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the electoral process they all carried out their jobs in a professional manner. Based on the observations of the monitors in their visits to polling stations and based on the reports they received at the polling stations visited it can be concluded that the voting process was conducted in a transparent manner and free from interference.

It must be noted that the Polling Stations were more adequate and user friendly than in previous years which enhanced the process allowing for a more transparent and privacy of the voting process. Many were in more spacious accommodation which allowed for privacy of the vote while others made provision for the use wheel chairs.

While the secrecy of the vote was respected, there were inconsistencies in the way the ballot paper was folded which at times compromised the secrecy of the vote.

The two Monitors noted that on their visits to Polling Station I1 in Central Leeward the box was not sealed during the day as the Presiding Officer noted that she only got six seals and had to use them at the close of the Polls.

All Polling Stations had the required compliment of staff along with the Polling Agents. The New Democratic Party and the Unity Labour Party had Polling Agents in all Polling Stations visited. The SVG Green Party and the Democratic Republican Party only had Agents in some of the Polling Stations where they were contesting the elections.

Monitors indicated they were fully accommodated by Presiding Officers except in one case Polling Station B1 in Owia in the North Windward Constituency where the Monitor was denied entry by the Presiding Officer as she indicated that only regional and international monitors were allowed. This situation was rectified following the intervention of the Returning Officer for the Constituency.

The voting process went smoothly during the day with most Polling Stations recording a heavy flow of voters in the morning session. By mid to late afternoon most of the lines were sparsely. There were a few complaints of the process being too slow thus the long lines in some cases.

All Monitors observed the opening and closing of a Polling Station and noted that all procedures were strictly followed. Procedure for counting of votes, recording results, packing and sealing of ballots were all done as required.

The 100-yard restriction area was not always adhered to due to the location of the Polling Stations in proximity to the to the road thereby making it impossible in some cases to observe the restriction.

**OFFICIAL FINAL COUNT**

	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>ULP</b>	<b>NDP</b>	<b>GP</b>	<b>DRP</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Votes Cast</b>
1	North Windward	6295	2713	2390	5	15	7	5130
2	North Central Windward	5297	3015	746	-	17	9	3787
3	South Central Windward	5788	2476	1888	4	-	11	4379
4	South Windward	6035	2507	1748	25	-	11	4291
5	Marriaqua	6210	2643	1887	5	-	12	4547
6	East St. George	7789	3135	2528	13	35	22	5733
7	West St. George	6880	2682	2104	-	45	19	4850
8	East Kingstown	6583	2295	2444	-	23	9	4771
9	Central Kingstown	6644	2084	2600	11	-	18	4713
10	West Kingstown	6328	2015	2459	14	-	20	4508
11	South Leeward	7340	2620	2738	-	19	19	5396
12	Central Leeward	6102	2497	2184	-	-	16	4697
13	North Leeward	5704	2255	2267	-	-	15	4537
14	Northern Grenadines	3841	601	1924	-	-	9	2534
15	Southern Grenadines	2691	708	1120	-	-	5	1833
	<b>Total</b>	<b>89,527</b>	<b>34,246</b>	<b>31,027</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>65,706</b>

The final voters list comprised of 45,823 males and 43,704 females giving a total of 89,527. The figures show that the Unity Labour Party received 52.1% of votes cast, the New Democratic Party 47.2%, the SVG Green Party 0.1%, the Democratic Republican Party 0.2% while there was 0.3% rejected ballots.

**The results therefore show the following candidates as the duly elected Parliamentary Representatives.**

<b><u>Constituency</u></b>	<b><u>Candidate</u></b>	<b><u>Political Party</u></b>
North Windward	Montgomery Daniel	ULP
North Central Windward	Ralph E Gonsalves	ULP
South Central Windward	Saboto Caesar	ULP
South Windward	Frederick Stephenson	ULP
Marriaqua	St. Clair Prince	ULP
East St. George	Camillo Gonsalves	ULP
West St. George	Cecil McKie	ULP
East Kingstown	Arnhim Eustace	NDP
Central Kingstown	St. Claire Leacock	NDP
West Kingstown	Daniel Cummings	NDP
South Leeward	Nigel Stephenson	NDP
Central Leeward	Louis Straker	ULP
North Leeward	Roland Matthews	NDP
Northern Grenadines	Godwin Friday	NDP
Southern Grenadines	Terrance Ollivierre	NDP

## **POST ELECTION PERIOD**

Following the preliminary count at the close of the polls, it was alleged that in the constituency of Central Leeward the election was not won by the Unity Labour Party candidate as indicated by the preliminary results published by the Electoral Office but by the NDP candidate and this caused confusion at the Police Station where the final count was to be done. However, after the final count the results remained the same in favour of the Unity Labour Party. The NMCM did not observe the final count.

The road leading to Government House where the swearing in of Prime Minister, Ralph Gonsalves, Deputy Prime Minister Sir Louis Straker and Attorney General Judith Jones-Morgan was to be done was blocked by supporters of the New Democratic Party. The swearing in ceremony was scheduled for 1.00pm but had to be delayed for several hours until the final count was completed and the writs issued to the Governor General by the Supervisor of elections. The crowds disbursed before the ceremony took place.

It was alleged that a number of irregularities were committed during the conduct, counting and transportation of the ballots. The New Democratic Party indicated that they were going to protest until justice was achieved.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council, in response to the tensions and potential for escalated unrest met with the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister and Supervisor of the Elections. Out of these meetings it issued a statement which included “The council recognised the legitimacy of the citizenry’s right to peaceful protest but expressed concern for both parties to ‘manage’ their supporters responsibly to avoid the situation degenerating and reiterating the need to respect and follow the constitutional and judicial provisions for settling grievances of this nature.”

At the meeting with the Leader of the NDP on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December he outlined several concerns regarding the integrity of the process and noted that there were irregularities and discrepancies as never seen before in local elections and spoke to concerns regarding the ballot boxes, voter lists and illegal registration. The meeting urged the Party Leader to encourage his supporters to use restraint in their protest action on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> and in as far as was possible to avoid any crossing of supporters of his party with the supporters of the ULP who would be at the Swearing in ceremony.

A meeting with the Prime Minister was held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> again to look at how the tension can be lessened. The Prime Minister opined that the New Democratic Party’s position was without merit as the three overseas Observer Mission had indicated that the elections were free and fair. He noted that if the Party had



problems with the results they can either file elections petitions or a constitutional motion with the court of law.

The issue of the Swearing ceremony for Ministers which to take place later that day was raised. The delegation noted that it was a Government function and not a party function and asked the Prime Minister to ask his supporters not to wear their party jerseys to the function as they had been previously asked to do. The Prime agreed to do a Press release to the effect. The issue of moving from the Leader of the Party to Prime Minister of all and for the country was emphasised.

The meeting with the Supervisor of Elections was held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>. This meeting was to get an update and clarifications on issues surrounding the alleged voter irregularities in Central Leeward. She explained the process in detail and also gave an opportunity to inspect the ballot boxes cursorily. She informed that there were work boxes that had been mistaken for ballot boxes and shared her regret regarding several of the accusations and what she considered irresponsible and mischievous misinformation

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The December 9<sup>th</sup> General elections are concluded and now behind us. It provided Vincentians with the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to choose those who will be entrusted with the responsibility of leading St. Vincent and the Grenadines over the next 5 years. The results declared by the Office of the Supervisor of Elections are the Unity Labour Party 8 seats, the New Democratic Party 7. Allegations of voting irregularities before, during and after the elections have been raised. The maturity of a democracy is in the ability of its people to manage conflicts and disagreements as well as to resolve differences. It is commendable that the constitutional and judicial channels provided to address such grievances are being utilized and as such the matter is before the court of law. This is a process which should be respected by all persons as a critical machinery of our democracy.

There is room for improvement to ensure transparency, and confidence at all levels. We have made several recommendations in this report. The international monitors from the Commonwealth and the OAS have also made strong recommendations. We urge the Government to embrace and implement these recommendations since they can only help to improve our election process and our governance under the rule of law.

One of the issues which became evident during the election period was the need for the NMCM to conduct sessions for its membership on the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and on the Representation of the People Act. Some of the issues the NMCM had to grapple with included what happens to the country after Parliament has been dissolved? Who is in charge? Is there a Prime Minister and leader of the Opposition? Are there any Ministers of Government? What is the role of the Governor General during this period?

The issue of who or what constitutes a political party came in for some scrutiny. At present there are no regulations governing political parties. If someone says they have a political party and acquire their symbol how can they be treated differently from parties in parliament needs to be addressed.

While Police Officers are required to maintain law and order on election day, it appears that they are not provided with the pertinent information in relations to the Representation of the Peoples Act. On Election Day, it requires more than just simply keeping law and order in the usual way, it requires an understanding of the regulations governing the conduct of elections to carry out the duties in a meaningful way.

The Office of the Supervisor of Elections must be complemented for their continued commitment to ensuring that the voting process becomes less complemented. Their efforts at reducing the voters list and the innovations of developing the web page to allow for easy identification of polling stations by

exact location of building by just using voter registration number must be complimented.

The misconception surrounding the election machinery was very evident during the period. Information is given by several sectors and individuals and in many instances the information is not totally correct and this leaves confusion in the minds of individuals. This was very noticeable during the registration process. When politicians give incorrect information to persons it places severe burden on Registering officers as these individuals are often of the opinion that the Registering Officers do not know their jobs.

The NMCM thanks the political parties and the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines for a relatively peaceful election day. Some concerns raised about the electoral process were referred to the law courts but the outcome to date has not challenged the final result at the polls.

The NMCM is very mindful that no election machinery is perfect and in this light recommends that the Office of the Supervisor of elections continues to implement measures to further enhance the entire process.

Based on our observations and on discussions we recommend the following which we feel can further enhance the process of free and fair elections in the country.

1. Efforts at further reducing the voters' list to make it more real should continue with input from of the political parties.

2. Efforts should continue to make all Polling Stations Voter friendly to all sectors of our population.
3. A Voter education programme should be developed and implemented by the Office of the Supervisor Election in advance of the calling of general elections. This should include the registration and voting process and the overall management of the election machinery.
4. Since the inception of the NMCM, the body has called for the abolition of the fifteen-day registration period after the Election Writ has been issued. This period could be opened to illegitimate transfers and registrations as it does not provide parties with time to make objections. It also places extreme pressure on the Office of the Supervisors of Elections to have the final list published without the necessary time for checks and balances. Again we recommend that consideration be given to examine the implications of the fifteen-day registration period.
5. Early in the last term of Office, some efforts were made to examine the Representation of the People Act. This did not reach far. The time is now overdue for a general over hall of the Act to make it more in tune with present day realities.
6. The Office of the Supervisor of Elections along with the Attorney Generals' must spearhead initiatives to have guidelines for registration of political parties enacted before the next General Elections.
7. Legal provisions should be made for both Domestic and Foreign Observers with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
8. That urgent and immediate attention be given to continuing the conversation on campaign financing with a view towards creating a model which is acceptable to all major political parties. This model should be guided by values of fairness and accountability while holding in tension principles of transparency and privacy. It should also appreciate the

vagaries/varieties of abilities while at the same time recognizing and addressing dynamics which can create unreasonably unfair advantage.

9. That further efforts be made and systems developed towards ensuring that the Office of the Supervisor of Elections function independent of the *Government* [save the provision of allocated funds for the execution of the office and other necessary relations] and that these systems be deliberately designed to engender a culture of confidence and transparency with respect to the office.
10. Some attention should be given to providing Police Officers with information on the Representation of the People Act with a view to making them more resourceful on election day.
11. The Police should ensure that in granting approval of venues for meetings they do not inhibit the smooth follow of traffic and that every effort should be made to avoid crossing of opposing parties.
12. The NMCM should make a concerted effort to have continuous dialogue with the political parties and the police during the campaigning process.
13. The NMCM should also develop a Voter Education Programme along with the jingles.
14. The NMCM should endeavour to have Monitors present at the final count following the elections.
15. The need for the NMCM to have continuous dialogue on the constitution and the Representation of the People Act should be vital to its operation.
16. The use of social media during the election period needs to be examined, taking into account the misuse by party supporters especially in the diaspora and in its use in voter education.

**Appendix i**

**ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES CHRISTIAN COUNCIL**  
**NATIONAL MONITORING AND CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM (NMCM)**

**Principles**

WHEREAS the Peoples of the Islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who are known as Vincentians-

- a. have affirmed that the Nation is founded on the belief in the supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man;
- b. desire that their society be so ordered as to express their recognition of the principles of democracy, free institutions, social justice and equality before the law;
- c. realize that the maintenance of human dignity presupposes safeguarding the rights of privacy of family life, of property and the fostering of the pursuit of just economic rewards for labor;
- d. desire that their Constitution should enshrine the above mentioned freedoms, principles and ideals;

**Fundamental Rights and Freedoms**

Where every person in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely-

- a. life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law;
- b. freedom of conscience, of expressions and of assembly and association: and

- c. protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation,
- **Have asserted that forgiveness and reconciliation are integral to nation building: Whereas**
  - ❖ *The principles and beliefs enshrined in our constitution are best protected through the democratic process underpinned by fairness, the rule of law, freedom to express divergent opinions, equality of access to opportunities and through adherence to constitutional provisions that stipulate the rights and responsibilities of the citizen.*
  - ❖ *It is the desire of the Undersigned persons drawn from civil society organizations throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines to encourage Political Parties to endorse the principles and codes set out in the Code of Political conduct for the common good of the People and in the national interest of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.*
  - ❖ *The political parties and their candidates who are signatories hereto (respectively the 'Parties' and 'Candidates') have agreed to pledge themselves to the **Code of Ethical Political Conduct** contained below*

## **Objectives**

This Code of Political conduct is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. ***Fostering of democracy*** through peaceful, free and fair elections conducted at regular intervals in which voters are permitted to cast their ballots freely, without interference, fear, intimidation or bribery.
2. ***Promotion of respect for human rights***, the pursuit of civil and political liberties, the tolerance of divergent opinions, full and active participation of all in the political process.
3. ***Encouraging participation in the electoral process*** by the People and to uphold their right to make political choices.
4. ***Promoting an election process free from violence.***



NOW THEREFORE it is hereby agreed and declared by the Parties and their Candidates as follows:

1. **Candidates will address themselves to** issues and principles dealing with national growth, development and the real concerns of the people.
2. **Candidates will maintain the highest moral principles and ethical standards** *with respect to their conduct during the campaign, the elections and the post-election period.*
3. **Promote and Enforce respect, tolerance, harmony and peace** *amongst their supporters and the general public during the campaign, the elections and in the post-election period by being positive role models*
4. **Candidates will not say or do anything** to incite, encourage or foster hatred, resentment or any form of violence, but rather will do everything to promote tolerance, harmony, and peace.
5. **Candidates will not engage, recruit, or deploy** *any individual(s) for the purpose of violence, intimidation or harassment, including intimidation by congregating in groups wearing similar identifiable colours at or near to election stations on election day;*
6. Candidates will not make grandiose promises, which they know cannot be kept.
7. **Candidates will not use half-truths**, lies, innuendoes or bribes to gain political advantage.
8. **Candidates will not use race, religion, country of origin, or class** to mobilize support or to vilify any individual, family or section of the society.
9. **Candidates will not engage** directly or indirectly in character assassination.
10. Candidates will maintain the highest moral principles in keeping with Christian Ethics during the campaign, the elections, and after.
11. **Candidates will not plagiarize** *or disparage the symbols, colours or acronyms of others parties;*
12. **Candidates will not Permit** *the use and abuse of State resources for political campaigns;*
13. **Candidates will not threaten** *or cause any persons to be threatened with loss of their jobs if they support or refuse to support a political party by attending or failing to attend political meetings.*
14. **There shall be no** organised and advertised motorcades.
15. Chairpersons of meetings shall appeal for peaceful behaviour at all times.

16. Candidates shall take all reasonable steps to influence supporters and members of the public to abide by the Code of Conduct.
17. *Candidates will take deliberate steps to publicly disassociate themselves from criminal elements and criminal activity.*
18. *Candidates will uphold the integrity of the electoral process.*
19. *Candidates will ensure that their conduct is above reproach.*
20. All parties shall cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order.
21. Where political meetings are held at roadsides, vehicles shall be allowed to pass freely.
22. Each party shall have equal free time on the National Broadcasting Corporation. The principle of equality shall also hold for other electronic media, in so far as free access is concerned.
  - 22b. The principle of equality shall also hold for the use of strategic venues for the holding of political meetings.
23. Parties shall respect hours of church service and not disrupt public worship as far as possible. Churches holding public meetings in times of Elections shall inform the Commissioner of Police of their intentions in order to avoid unnecessary clashes with planned political meetings.
24. Political parties shall avoid defacing public buildings and structures. The rights of private property owners shall be respected.
25. Posters may go on lampposts and other appropriate structures provided that no nails or staples or metallic objects are used to affix same.
  - 25b. Political Parties shall publicly discourage the defacing or removal of their opponents' election campaigning material.
26. Political Party Leaders shall maintain an open line of communication with one another.
27. The members of the NMCM shall meet with the Commissioner of Police from time to time.
28. Parties shall adhere to the letter and the spirit of the Representation of the People Act.
29. **The Christian Council along with the NMCM**, shall monitor political meetings and ensure that the Code of Conduct is observed.

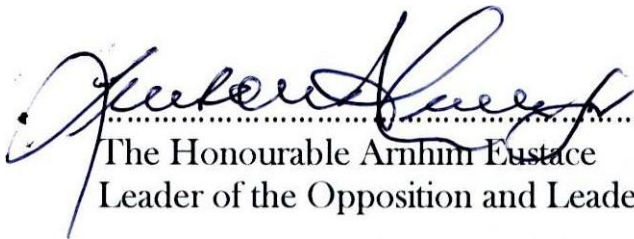
Chairpersons and Platform Speakers and other authorised Persons making public statements on behalf of Political Parties have the same responsibility as the Candidates in adhering to the Code of Conduct.

The Christian Council and the NMCM are responsible for monitoring the Code, which includes the adherence to the letter and spirit of the Representation of the People Act. Although this Code is not a legislative instrument it is expected that all Leaders and Candidates shall scrupulously adhere to it. The public is invited to register objections to any breach of the Code and report to the Council and the NMCM accordingly.

Signed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015



.....  
Dr. The Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves  
Prime Minister and Leader of the Unity Labour Party.



.....  
The Honourable Arnhim Eustace  
Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the New Democratic Party



.....  
Mrs. Anesia Baptiste  
Leader, Democratic Republican Party

SVG Christian Council

P.O. Box 445  
St. Vincent & the Grenadines  
Tel: (784) 451-2386  
.....  
31:2386

Monsignor Michael Stewart  
 President, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council

Appendix ii

**2015 NMCM MEMBERS**

NAME	ORGANISATION	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
Julian Francis	Unity Labour Party	Silverfox694@yahoo.com	593-3921
Christine Da Silva	SVG Chamber of Commerce	chrissy@vincysurf.com	532-9147
Beverly Richards	National Council of Women	beverlyrichards102@hotmail.com	454-0866
Elmore Edwards	New Democratic Party	el1053@live.com/ canute1053@gmail	431-1356/492-4767
Patina Knights	SVG Bar Association	pknights01@hotmail.com	432-3005
Karima Paris	Democratic Republican Party	kardonpar@gmail.com	528-4169
Ian Enoch	Spiritual Baptist	ian.enoch@going-places.tv	493-1705
Bishop Sonny Williams	Association of Evangelical Churches	sonnyofsv@yahoo.com	457-4728
Pastor Terence Haynes	Seventh Day Adventist	haynestwh@hotmail.com	494-3771/485-6739
Msgr Michael Stewart	SVG Christian Council	boundaryworks08@gmail.com	533-3342
Godfrey E. Samuel	SVG Christian Council	godfreys@hotmail.com	495-0387

Appendix iii

**NATIONAL MONITORING AND CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM  
ELECTION MONITORS**

1. Nicolette Dalton	-	North Windward	-	496-9293
2. Anakie Nero	-	North Windward	-	492-7526
3. Kenrick Quashie	-	North Central Windward	-	498-6552
4. Stevern Thomas	-	South Central Windward	-	434-2965
5. Muriel Byam	-	South Central Windward	-	593-3337
6. Silma Mc Lean	-	South Windward	-	431-1195
7. Josette Lewis	-	South Windward	-	527-0094
8. Samuel Young	-	Marriaqua	-	454-0935
9. Teneka Caine	-	Marriaqua	-	434-4877
10. Paula Morris	-	East St. George	-	492-4008
11. Marla Nanton	-	East St. George	-	492-0156
12. Eugena Shillingford-Stewart		West St. George	-	532-8695
13. Shenica Haynes	-	West St. George	-	495-3922
14. Anthony Anderson	-	West Kingstown	-	532-0360

15. Beverly Richards	-	West Kingstown	-	454-0866
16. Jessica Bess	-	Central Kingstown	-	455-3085
17. Carlos Williams	-	Central Kingstown	-	526-9102
18. Noretta John	-	East Kingstown	-	495-5370
19. Joel Abraham	-	East Kingstown	-	530-4860
20. Edwin Allen	-	South Leeward	-	527-3949
21. Sharlene Wyllie	-	South Leeward	-	455-7169
22. Niesha Williams	-	Central Leeward	-	529-1969
23. Ossiah Stephens	-	Central Leeward	-	455-2996
24. Rose-Ann Samuel	-	North Leeward	-	534-2595
25. Leslyn Tucker	-	North Leeward	-	494-9223
26. Sunior Joseph	-	Northern Grenadines	-	530-3077
27. Amanda Jackson	-	Southern Grenadines	-	496-3517
28. Ketty Rhynd	-	Southern Grenadines	-	527-1601

Appendix iv

## ELECTION DAY MONITORING

<p><b>North Windward</b></p> <p>Nicollette Dalton L Anakie Nero</p>	<p><b>East St. George</b></p> <p>Paula Morris L Marla Nanton</p>	<p><b>Central Kingstown</b></p> <p>Carlos Williams L Jessica Bess</p>	<p><b>North Leeward</b></p> <p>Leslyn Tucker L Rose-Ann Samuel</p>
<p><b>North Central Windward</b></p> <p>Kennick Quashie L</p>	<p><b>West St. George</b></p> <p>Eugena Shillingford Steward L Shenica Haynes</p>	<p><b>West Kingstown</b></p> <p>Beverly Richards L Anthony Anderson</p>	<p><b>Northern Grenadines</b></p> <p>Junior Joseph</p>
<p><b>South Central Windward</b></p> <p>Muriel Byam L Stevern Cupid</p>	<p><b>Marriaqua</b></p> <p>Samuel Young L Teneka Cain</p>	<p><b>South Leeward</b></p> <p>Edwin Allen L Sharlene Wyllie</p>	<p><b>Southern Grenadines</b></p> <p>Union Island Amanda Jackson</p> <p>Canouan Ketty Rhynd</p>
<p><b>South Windward</b></p> <p>Silma Mc Lean L Jozette Lewis</p>	<p><b>East Kingstown</b></p> <p>Joel Abraham L Noretta John</p>	<p><b>Central Leeward</b></p> <p>Niesha Williams L Ossiah Stephens</p>	

