



FINAL PLAN FOR RECOUNT OF GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2020

Prepared by GECOM Secretariat under the guidance of the Commission

27/04/2020

PLAN FOR RECOUNT OF VOTES CAST FOR LIST OF CANDIDATES
GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission took a decision to do a national recount of all of the ballots cast in the General and Regional Elections held on 2 March 2020, given its broad powers under the law; specifically, Article 162 (1) (b) of the Constitution and Section 22 (1) of the Election Law (Amendment) Act No. 15 of 2000. According to Article 162 (1) (b)

“The Elections Commission shall issue such instructions and take such action as appear to it necessary or expedient to ensure impartiality, fairness and compliance with the provisions of this Constitution or of any Act of Parliament on the part of persons exercising powers or performing duties connected with or relating to the matters aforesaid.”

Further, Section 22 of the Election Law (Amendment) Act outlines how the Commission could remove difficulties.

“If any difficulty arises in connection with the application of this Act, the Representation of the People Act or the National Registration Act or any relevant subsidiary legislation, the Commission shall, by order, make any provision, including the amendment of the said legislation, that appears to the Commission to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty; and any such order may modify any of the said legislation in respect of any particular matter or occasion so far as may appear to the Commission to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty.”

The goal of the national recount is to provide results of General and Regional Elections 2020 which are credible. The Commission has agreed that the singular objective of the national recount is to ensure the final count of votes cast in the elections is accurate and meets the credibility criteria. A Team from the Caribbean Community has been invited to scrutinise the recount operation.

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The Commission provided broad guidance to the Chief Election Officer to prepare an operational plan. Accordingly, this plan details the modalities for achievement of the Commission mandated national recount pursuant to its objective.

2. APPROACH

- a. The national recount will be done in accordance with the processes generally delineated in relevant Sections of the ROPA 1:03 in particular 83, 84(6) to (11), 87, 89 (1), 90 and any other provisions that the Commission may deem necessary;
- b. The national recount is to be supervised by the Commission, meaning the Commission will give direction to the Secretariat on the parameters and execution of the recount.
- c. The national recount is to be done by staff of the GECOM Secretariat will proceed continuously each day, including weekends and holidays from 8:00hrs – 19:00hrs for the duration of the exercise;
- d. The national recount is to be done at a central venue namely the Arthur Chung Conference Centre and at all times account will be taken of the guidelines for prevention of COVID-19;
- e. Representatives of political parties who contested the elections will be invited to be present at the national recount exercise. On a daily basis, they will be provided with information on the progress of the recount;
- f. The national recount will be executed in the presence of a CARICOM High-Level Team that will be expected to provide a written report to the Commission on the credibility of the exercise;
- g. As far as practicable, the national recount will facilitate the presence of local and international observers;
- h. Information on the progress of the national recount by District will be broadcast to the public through traditional and social media. GECOM's website and Facebook

page; the media corps through electronic mail, radio and television stations will be used throughout the exercise.

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3. ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

- a. To provide overall supervision and guidance to the Secretariat for the conduct of the national recount;
- b. To serve as the final arbiter of issues not resolved at lower levels in the established procedure;
- c. To provide an order on the national recount that will be gazetted;
- d. To provide information to the public before, during and at the conclusion of the process;
- e. To approve and finalise arrangements for observers.

4. METHODOLOGY

- a. The national recount will be done according to the list of polling stations in each District;
- b. A total of ten (10) workstations have been identified for the national recount exercise. Each workstation will deal with a single ballot box at a time by District with a team of three (3) staff and one (1) supervisor. The recount will commence the allocation of workstations as follows: Districts 1 – two workstations; District 2 – two workstations; District 3 – three workstations and District 4 – three workstations simultaneously. The count for District 4 shall continue at the three workstations assigned to it. The counts for Districts 5 through 10 shall be conducted based on the completion of, and at the workstations assigned to Districts 1, 2 and 3.
- c. The numbered ballot box will be examined to ascertain that the seals are intact. All its contents will be emptied, and the electoral materials sorted, assessed and counted in accordance with the ballot box checklist. [Please see Annex 1](#). At the end of the recount the contents of each ballot box will be replaced, sealed and returned to the container for storage. The Team Supervisor will maintain the movement of ballot box logs that details the chain of custody.

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- d. In order to establish the credibility of the recount it will be conducted in a two-step method:
- i. Ascertain the number of electors who appeared to have voted at the polling station.
 - ii. Count the used ballots --valid votes, rejected and destroyed ballots and unused ballots against
 - iii. In the event of any dispute in relation to the validity of a ballot paper, the counting clerk will consult with the Team Supervisor of that workstation. If the matter remains unresolved the Supervisor must consult with the CEO.
- e. The ballot box checklist will be completed prior to the count of votes cast for general and regional elections;
- f. Ballot papers will be authenticated through scanning for security feature, as determined;
- g. Each vote will be called, and ballot paper displayed for all persons present to view;
- h. A tally sheet will be prepared while votes are called for general in the first instance and regional in the second instance.
- i. Statements of Recount (SOR) will be prepared manually based on the tally count. **Please see Annex 2.** The ballot box checklist will be attached to the SOR that is signed by the counting clerk and party representatives;
- j. If errors or anomalies are detected, comments and observations will be recorded on the Observation Report by the Counting Clerk. **Please see Annex 3.**
- k. Copies of the signed SOR will be distributed to party representatives present at the recount by the Team Supervisor. The original SOR will be given to the CEO and copied to the Chairperson. A copy of the SOR will also be logged to the Tabulation Centre;
- l. At the end of the recount for each district, all original SORs will be tabulated to determine the final count in a central tabulation centre. The SORs will be projected on a screen and tabulation in the presence of persons entitled to be there. Under the oversight of the Supervisor, a matrix of the total number of valid votes for each list of candidates will be prepared and could be viewed simultaneously in the

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presence of all persons present. Each District matrix will be signed by the tabulation clerk, team supervisor and designated party representatives;

- m. At the end of the national recount exercise, the CEO will compile a cumulative statement of the final count for all ten (10) Districts. This report of the national final count will include information on number of votes cast for each list of candidates and a summation of the Observation Reports of anomalies, for submission to the Commission to determine the finality of the count.

5. DURATION

There will be a single shift of ten hours. Teams of four persons inclusive of the team supervisor will be identified and briefed on the recount procedures. Teams for each workstation will work on alternate days. A total of ten (10) workstations will be located inside the building.

Total number of Ballot Boxes – 2339

Total number of Workstations – 10

Daily Hours of Work – 10

6. PERSONS PRESENT IN EACH WORKSTATION

An estimated total of fourteen (14) persons are expected to be present in each workstation. Three (3) staff and one (1) team supervisor will be involved in the conduct of the national recount; six (6) party representatives except in the recount of District 4: a maximum of 10 representatives and two (2) observers will witness the count. A police rank will be in each workstation to buttress the security of ballot boxes. The COVID-19 Task Force has advised that eight (8) workstations could house 14 persons and two (2) workstations would house 10 persons.

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No.	PERSONS AT EACH WORKSTATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
i.	Staff to conduct and supervise the recount	4 persons
ii.	Party Representatives	6 persons
iii.	CARICOM Team	1 person
iv.	Observers (local and international)	2 persons
v.	Police Rank	1 person
	TOTAL	14 persons

7. PERSONS ENTITLED TO BE PRESENT

- a. **Representatives of Ten (10) Contesting Parties (10)** - One election agent per political party (for each workstation).
- b. **Observers** - One representative for local observer group and one per international observer group (for each workstation). It is recommended that all domestic observer groups merge and provide **one representative** to observe the recount. That representative could be rotated on a daily basis. A weekly roster should be provided to the Security Liaison.
- c. **Adviser to GECOM** – Commonwealth Adviser remains in country and would be invited to observe the recount process.
- d. **CARICOM Team**

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8. VENUE

The Commission identified the Arthur Chung Conference Center as the central location for national recount. The Secretariat underscores *Section 7 -- Social Distancing and Physical Distancing Protocols* -- of the Order by the Minister of Public Health (MOPH) regarding COVID-19 Emergency Measures that recommends the number of persons to be present in an establishment at any one time. Further, the report of a site visit by medical practitioners of the MOPH informed GECOM's decision on the layout for the recount operations.

9. RESOURCES REQUIRED

- a. Checklists for ballot box;
- b. Statement of Recount (SOR) format;
- c. Tally sheets, ballot box seals;
- d. Rental of equipment to establish additional workstations;
- e. Movement of ballot boxes from GECOM Headquarters to the place of the National Recount;
- f. Security arrangements to be made in collaboration with Guyana Police Force for physical security and escort of ballot boxes;
- g. Transportation arrangements for staff participating in the recount exercise.

10. SECURITY

Guyana Police Force will be responsible for the physical security of the containers and ballot boxes as done in all election exercises. Party representatives will be notified as to the time for opening and closing of containers so that the removal and placement of locks on the containers would be seamless.

11. REPORTING

- a. CEO will report to the Chairperson the status of the count on a daily basis;

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- b. Chairperson or designate will provide media briefings before, during and after the national recount exercise is completed.
- c. Chairperson or designate will provide periodic briefings to diplomats and accredited observers and the public on the progress of the national recount.

12. LIMITATIONS

- a. The guidelines for social and physical distancing in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic must be a guiding principle. As such staff should not be over exposed in terms time spent in the building and number of persons in the building at any given time;
- b. The hours of work from 08:00hrs to 19:00hrs daily has been determined by the site visit report of the Ministry of Public Health.

13. NEXT STEPS

Following the approval of the operational plan.

- a. The Commission shall prepare and gazette an order for execution of the national recount;
- b. Secretariat staff to be briefed on the procedures for the national recount.

Prepared by GECOM Secretariat for the Commission's approval.

Approved by:

Chairperson
Madam Justice (ret'd)
Claudette Singh