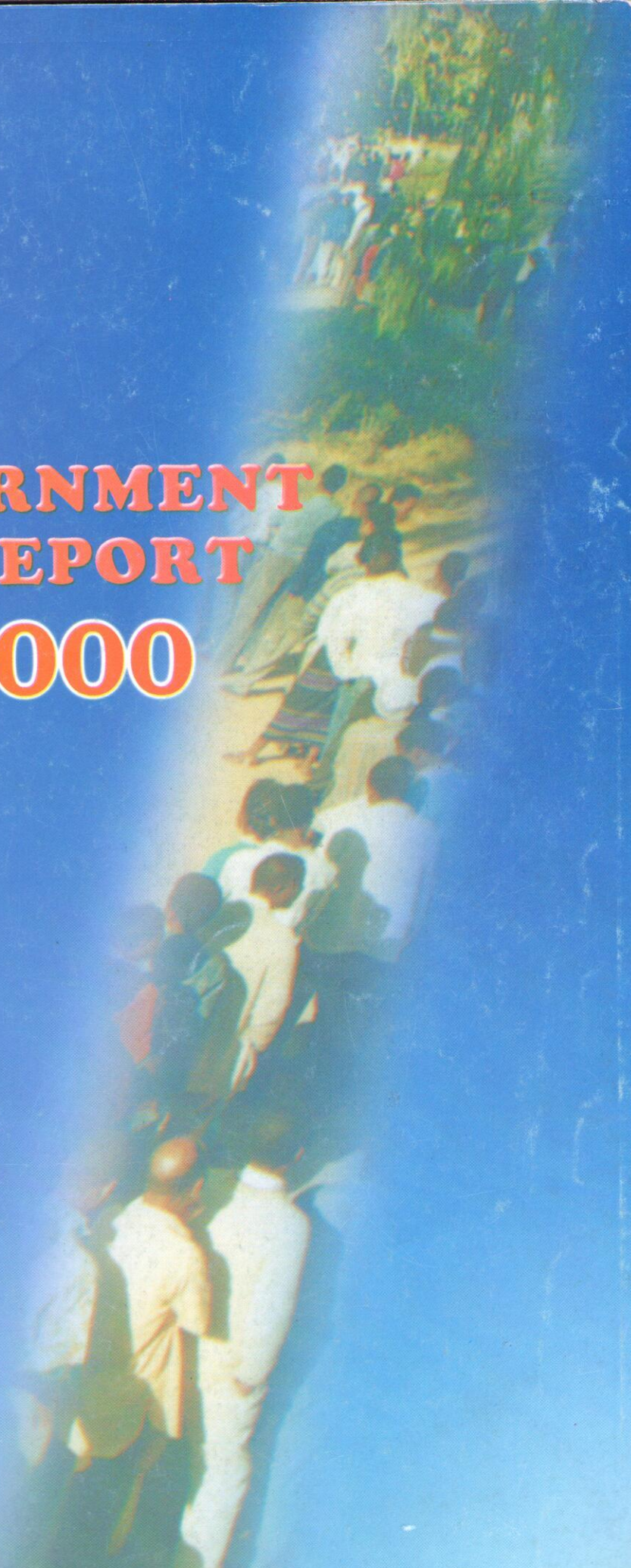
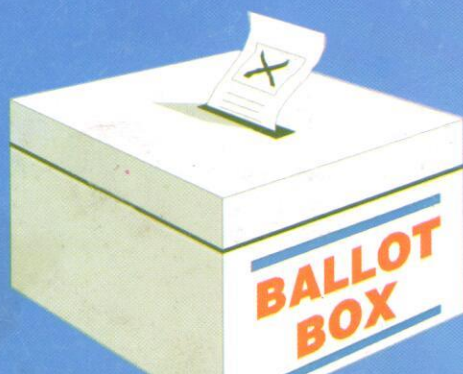




LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS REPORT 2000



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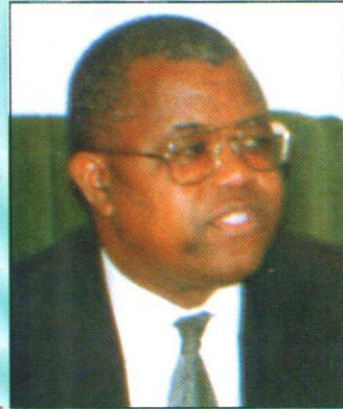
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THE MALAWI ELECTORAL COMMISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN
MALAWI BY CONDUCTING ELECTIONS WHICH ARE REGULAR, FREE, FAIR, TRANSPARENT,
COST EFFECTIVE AND CREDIBLE

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Justice James Kalaile

After the 1999 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, the Commission was severely criticized by several stakeholders regarding irregularities and poor management of the electoral process. For the Commission, the Local Government Elections which were held in the year 2000 were a litmus test on how the Commission could fair in holding future elections. I am therefore delighted to announce that the year 2000 Local Government Elections were, in contrast to the 1999 elections, well planned and managed.

In the year 2000 elections, the Commission frequently consulted political parties, donors and accredited NGOs in order to keep role players aware of the progress on the electoral calendar. Although some of the responses from these stakeholders were retrogressive, the Commission managed to build a good working relationship with them.

The Commission laid down its programmes clearly in advance and executed them timely. In order to accommodate certain adjustments, the elections were pushed from October, to November 2000. The determination of the election results was professionally conducted to the extent that no serious legal challenges were made as a consequence. Again, the playing field was on the whole level, in that use of special reporters (stringers) helped in covering campaign meetings.

As a result of these efforts by the Commission we now have an operational Local Government system in place with 861 wards throughout the country. The fruits of this exercise is the delivery of services to the residents of the wards. The Commission is very proud to be associated with these developments.

**Justice James Kalaile Sc
CHAIRMAN**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2000

1. INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Electoral Commission (herein after referred to as the "Commission") has the mandate to conduct Local Government Elections in all Local Government areas in the country under Section 147(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (the Constitution).

The Commission, for purposes of accountability, reports "directly to the President on the overall fulfilment of its functions and powers" according to section 6(i) of the Electoral Commission Act, 1998 (EC Act).

The last Local Government Elections were held in 1992 and the first such election in the Multiparty Era were on 21st November, 2000. This report is an account of the November, 2000 Local Government Elections (the elections).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

According to the Constitution, the elections should have been held in 1995, a year following the dissolution of local councils.

This was not possible because the country did not have the enabling Local Government Elections Act until 1996 when the same was passed. Even then, the provision for structures for Local Assemblies was not in place until the Local Government Act was passed in December, 1998.

The new act settled for a decentralisation policy of local assemblies which Cabinet approved in October, 1998 and was implemented in March 1999. The National Assembly was dissolved the same year paving the way for the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections.

The Commission was obligated by Section 63 of the Constitution to hold the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in 1999 and slated the local poll for 2000 to allow for the demarcation of wards to precede the local elections.

3. PLANNING THE ELECTIONS

3.1 The Commission drew up an action plan with five major programmes viz: Ward Demarcation, Computerisation of the Voters Roll, Election Strategy, the Legal and Policy Strategy and the Management Strategy. The elections were launched on 20th November, 1999.

The Commission also drew up a comprehensive budget for the elections and one for capacity building. While the budget for 1999 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections was K1.2 billion, the 2000 election budget was pegged at K500 million representing a cost of US\$1.5 per capita as compared to US\$8 per capita in 1999.

3.2 Electoral Assistance

To Consolidate its planning, the Commission availed itself of the assistance of two Officers from the Malawi Army and a Transport Officer from the Ministry of Local Government. These were seconded to the Logistics Section of the Commission.

3.3 Finances for the Election

Section 15(i) of the Electoral Commission Act (EC Act) obliges the Commission to disclose sources of funds for an election hence the financial expenditure of this election were as follows:-

In the 1999/2000 financial year, Parliament appropriated K500 million for the elections; however, a shift in the election date saw only K56 million being utilized in the 1999/2000 fiscal year.

In the 2000/2001 financial year, K300 million was appropriated for the election. The provision of K300 million was on the understanding that government ministries/departments would provide vehicles for the elections. Since the government could not provide all the required vehicles, the Commission resorted to hiring 231 vehicles at a total cost of K17 million. Again some of the vehicles that were provided by the Government were not road- worthy, and as a result the

Commission spent approximately K16 million on repairs to get them on the road.

DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The International Community made the following pledges towards the financing of the elections:

	MWK
Japan	8.0 million
Denmark	5.1 million (Kroner 5m)
Norway	25.0 million
Britain	40.0 million (\$500,000)
USA	8.7 million

These Donor pledges were honoured rather late in the elections calendar and this exerted pressure on the Commission's plans.

As a stop-gap, the Commission acquired the necessary services and goods on credit. It also used money from Government to fund some of the activities which the donors had pledged to finance.

In the final analysis the election took place at a total cost of K456,244,997. This amount is considerably lower than the cost of the General Elections at K1.2 billion. The reduction in the cost of the elections can be attributed to four factors:

1. A shorter registration period (14 days only)
2. Use of left over materials from the general elections such as film, registration forms, indelible ink, ballot boxes and polling booths.
3. Cheaper ballot papers: the ballot for the general elections were printed in the United Kingdom while those for the Election were printed in South Africa. In addition, ballots for the General Elections had candidate photos while these had no photos.
4. Use of vehicles from Government Ministries and Departments as opposed to hiring during General Elections.

The K456,244,997 expenditure was broken down as follows:-

	MWK
Management of electoral process	56,698,347
Civic and Voter Education	22,086,333
Demarcation of Wards	13,312,030
Registration of Voters	129,851,034
Polling	211,793,505
Institutional Building (MEC)	22,503,748

Of this expenditure, the Government spent K373,327,991 while the donor community provided K82,917,006

Problems

There were some hurdles encountered in financing the elections and these basically fell into two categories. Firstly, the Commission's cooperating partners such as the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), the Police, the Army, the District Assemblies' Chief Executives expected the Commission to pay for all the services they rendered to it. This put pressure on the Commission's finances so that some activities were delayed because the Commission could not readily release the required financing. Secondly was the delay in releasing funds by the donors. While the donors had made commitment to finance some of the activities, the pledged money was not made available to the Commission in time for the elections. This affected the implementation of the electoral calendar especially where activities depended on procurement of materials.

Recommendations

All government organs should be aware that elections are just one function of the government and that they are financed by the government. It should therefore be a requirement that government ministries, departments, parastatals assist in election work as part and parcel of government contribution.

On delays of releasing of funds by donors, it is recommended that Government should take full responsibility for meeting the cost of elections and donor funding should only be accepted as and when it is made available.

4. DEMARCATION OF BOUNDARIES

Section 148(1) of the Constitution requires the Commission to demarcate wards.

Accordingly, using the principles of equal population, communication facilities, physical features and wishes of the people through public hearings, the Commission demarcated 861 wards for the election.

Being the first local election during the multi-party era and due to the newness of the decentralisation policy, some stakeholders failed to attend the public hearings which were a crucial phase in the demarcation process whilst others requested for extra wards after the hearings had long been held. As a result the Commission was accused of rigidity or of favouring some stakeholders who had argued their cases during the public hearings.

5. CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION

The Commission is mandated to "create the necessary conditions and take all necessary actions for promoting awareness amongst persons residing in Malawi of the need to register as a voter for the purpose of an election and of the need for their full participation in the election" according to LGE Act Section 8.

In compliance with this mandate the Commission accredited eight nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) to carry out Civic and Voter Education. These were:

- Association for Progressive Women (APW)
- Church and Society, Blantyre Synod Projects Office
- Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)
- Model Institute for the Youth (MIDY)
- Civil Liberties Committee (CILIC)
- Malawi Centre for Advice, Research and Education on Human Rights (Malawi CARER)
- Malawi Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (MIDEA)
- Public Affairs Committee (PAC)

The Commission distributed voter education

materials through the local government assemblies, accredited NGOs, political parties and traditional leaders. In addition, the commission packaged information kits for use by the media and the MBC Elections Task Force.

The Commission also maintained constant liaison with the media through such initiatives as Poll Watch Column in the Nation Newspaper and spot news in the print and electronic media.

It also collaborated with the Story Workshop and Education Trust (SWET) on "Tilitonse" episodes on election awareness.

In an effort to make the electoral information abundantly available, the Commission produced the following:

- Question and Answer Booklet on Elections: 8,000 booklets
- Comic Strip Booklet: 21,394 Comic Strip booklets
- Instruction Manuals for the Media and Voter Education Trainers: several copies were made and circulated to all accredited NGOs and to support the stringers covering the Local Government Elections respectively.
- Teaching Manuals for Malawi Prison Services: several copies in English and translations in Chichewa and Chitumbuka were prepared for delivery in the country's 23 prisons enfranchised for the first time.

6.5 Supervision and Monitoring

It was not possible to monitor the operations of the NGOs in the field realistically because all of them received their funding late and started their activities late in the electoral calendar.

However, two of the accredited NGOs, the Church and Society Projects Office of Blantyre Synod and Malawi CARER furnished the Commission with periodic reports and final reports. Their reports will guide future planning of civic and voter education in Malawi.

6. MEDIA COVERAGE

Media coverage was largely supported by the Commission through constant liaison with and payment to the media houses.

The coverage was through paid up news releases of the electoral process in the newspapers and the national broadcasters, MBC and Television Malawi (TVM). Only FM 102.5 Capital Radio gave the Commission free coverage throughout the election.

To assist the capacity of MBC to give equitable coverage to all contesting parties and candidates, the Commission released three vehicles for news gathering and also engaged and paid part time reporters.

9. CAMPAIGNING

9.1 Participating Parties

Only five of the twenty registered political parties contested the elections, namely;

1. AFORD which contested elections in 200 wards
2. MCP which contested elections in 623 wards
3. MDP which contested elections in one ward
4. NIP which contested elections in 32 wards
5. UDF which contested elections in 858 wards

There were also 256 independent candidates who contested the elections.

Under Section 41 of the LGE Act the campaign period was of any duration closing 48 hours before the polling date. Campaign started immediately after the launch of the elections in November 1999 and it intensified after the demarcation of the ward boundaries.

9.2 Briefing of Political Parties

Political Parties were consulted and briefed on the electoral process as follows:

1. At the launch of the Local Government Elections at Ryalls Hotel on 20th November

1999.

2. At Capital Hotel on 22 June, 2000 where Political parties were briefed on the revised Local Government Elections calendar, progress made on demarcation and computerisation.
3. At Ryalls Hotel on 24 August 2000, where they were briefed on the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, and the registration exercise which covered position of centres and wards, the registration period and registration procedures.

The demarcation exercise necessitated the realignment of some of the registration centres that had been used during the 1999 General Elections. The meeting on 24 August 2000 was therefore organised to brief the political parties on the position of centres and wards, about the registration period and procedures for registration, nomination and the polling process.

These meetings strengthened the relationship between the Commission and political parties.

As a result there were less accusations against the Commission of being partisan.

9.3 Multiparty Liaison Committees

The Commission established Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLCs) in the country in October, 2000, for the purposes of managing electoral related conflicts at the grassroots.

The committees comprise the following:-

- Returning Officer as Chairperson;
- The Officer-In-Charge of Police;
- Criminal Investigation Officer;
- District Heads of Political Parties represented in Parliament;
- Representatives of Public Affairs Committee (PAC)/National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE);

The formation of MPLCs enhanced the impartiality and transparency of the whole electoral process in that they conducted investigations on matters referred to them and

arbitrated on cases of violence.

10. REGISTRATION

According to Section 77 (2) of the Constitution, registration of voters is open to a citizen of Malawi or, if not a citizen, has been ordinarily resident in the Republic for seven years; has attained the age of 18 years and is ordinarily resident in the Constituency or was born there or is employed or carries on a business there.

The registration exercise was carried out to capture the above categories of persons. In addition, it was also meant to register people who had failed to register during the 1999 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections. The exercise involved a number of tasks such as:-

10.1 Training on Registration

The Commission employed the cascade approach in training of registration staff. Training sessions were organised for all the Returning Officers and District Education Officers who in turn trained other registration staff.

At the end of the exercise registration personnel were well trained to effectively discharge their duties.

10.2 Transport for Registration

In order to minimize transport costs, the Commission requested the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) to direct Government Ministries and Departments to release vehicles for use by it instead of wholesale hiring. The response to the request was generally favourable although some departments provided unserviceable vehicles.

10.3 Distribution of Materials

Distribution of materials such as registration kits, cameras and registration forms was orderly. All materials were distributed in time.

Due to a shortage of cameras to cover the 3,366 centres, the Commission borrowed cameras from the Mozambique Electoral Commission. These

cameras were used in the second phase of the registration exercise. The Commission is obligated to the Mozambique Electoral Commission for this assistance.

10.4 Registration process

The registration process was in two phases. The first phase ran from 28th August to 10th September, 2000 and the second from 18th September to October, 2000.

In both phases, a total of 103,307 people were registered throughout the country as follows:-

Northern Region	29,980
Central Region	41,759
Southern Region	31,568

10.5 Transfers

Due to the demarcation of boundaries and the creation of wards within Constituencies and in line with Section 12 (1) of LGE Act, the Commission effected transfers to enable voters register in wards as determined. Whereas there were 193 Constituencies for the General Election, there were 861 wards for the elections. Transfers were needed to relocate voters into these wards.

At the end of the registration period, statistics indicated that only a few people obtained transfers. In view of this poor response, the period for transfers was extended to mid October, 2000.

10.6 Duplicate Certificates

Duplicate voter certificates were issued during the 14-day registration period to those who had registered before but had lost their certificates. The certificates were given upon verification of the particulars of the voter in the record cards.

10.7 Registration of Prisoners

In accordance with Section 77 of the Constitution and for the first time in the history of elections in Malawi, the franchise was extended to eligible prisoners in all the 23 prisons in the country. Registration of prisoners took place on appointed days in consultation with prison authorities.

Prisons were designated satellite centres for purposes of the elections.

10.8 Bottlenecks

During the registration period, the Commission faced some problems most important of which were:

10.8.1 Communication

Most of the Returning Officers failed to instantly respond to requests on vital information, for example, on numbers of centres and statistics of registered voters. Where they responded, it was noted that the information, in most cases, was inaccurate.

10.8.2 Deadlines

Most Returning Officers failed to meet the deadlines as outlined in the election calendar.

10.8.3 Transport

Although Government committed itself to provide vehicles, most of them were unserviceable and as a result there was insufficient transport for the exercise.

10.8.4 Resources

Returning Officers deliberately abused their offices and resources provided by the Commission for elections. Some resources were used for personal errands rather than electoral activities.

11. NOMINATION

In accordance with the election calendar, nomination papers were supposed to be received on 2nd and 3rd October, 2000. However, this was extended to 7th October to give an opportunity to political parties to identify replacement of candidates who had failed English Proficiency Test and allow those who had sat to know their results.

11.1 English Proficiency Test

For the election, the requisite qualification was Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC). However, in compliance with section 30 (ii) of the LGE Act, the Commission provided for candidates who did not have the requisite qualifications to take an English Proficiency Test which was administered by the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB).

11.2 Analysis of Nomination Papers

A total of 1,970 nominations were received by the Returning Officers on behalf of the Commission. The Commission disqualified 14 MCP candidates from 7 wards in Phalombe because the party had sponsored two candidates in each of the wards.

At the end of the nomination period 131 candidates were declared unopposed. These candidates were deemed elected according to Section 24 of the LGE Act, 1996.

12.0 POLLING

12.1 Planning Meeting for Polling

The Commission had a planning meeting with important players in the process to map out strategies for allocation of vehicles in assemblies, payment of allowances and training for polling.

12.2 Meeting with Security Forces

Section 55 of the LGE Act provides that "the Commission shall be responsible for creating and guaranteeing all necessary and indispensable conditions for the custody, conservation and inviolability of all polling materials".

Accordingly, a meeting was held with senior members of the Malawi Army and Police to work out modalities for the security of materials and personnel during polling. They agreed to provide security and maintain peace in all polling centres.

12.3 Training on Polling

The training of trainers on polling and counting process was undertaken by Ms Joyceline Lucas, a training specialist from the Commonwealth Secretariat. While in the country, Ms Lucas reviewed the polling manuals in line with the requirements of the election.

The trainers in turn trained Assembly Election Supervisory Teams in their respective assemblies who in turn trained Presiding Officers in the zones. Finally, the Presiding Officers trained their Clerks.

12.4 Distribution of Polling Materials

Materials were delivered to the assemblies by 12th November, 2000. These included the following: Polling kits, miscellaneous forms, torches, batteries, lamps, indelible ink and polling booths where necessary.

12.4.1 Polling Booths

Section 61 of the LGE Act provides for a booth to ensure that a voter is screened against the public when casting a vote. Due to the resource constraints, it was not possible to construct polling booths at each and every polling station. The Commission advised Returning Officers that where buildings existed a corner or provision be made to enable a voter cast a vote in secret. Where there were no buildings, booths were provided.

12.4.2 Computerised Voters' Registers

The Commission provided computerised registers to those centres which had their manual voters registers missing as an alternative to ensure that voters were not turned away.

12.4.3 Ballot Papers

Section 60 of the LGE Act provides that the Commission shall arrange for the printing of sufficient quantities of ballot papers for candidates for an election.

The Commission contracted the printing of ballot papers to a South African printer for security reasons. An order of ballot papers was placed before registration was completed.

The total ballot paper requisition was 5,422,268 against an expected voter population of 5,228,055. An allowance of between 100 and 200 extra ballot papers was made for each centre providing for voters who might have transferred their votes (supra 10.5) from other centres

The ballot papers arrived in the country four days before polling.

12.4.4 Polling Centre and Station

In compliance with section 51 of the LGE Act, the Commission established polling stations in all the centres where registration took place.

A total of 6,313 polling stations were established throughout the country, distributed as follows:

North	:	937
Centre	:	2282
South	:	3094

Each polling station catered for 1,200 voters. Polling stations with a registration of up to 1,000 were manned by one Presiding Officer, one Usher, and two Clerks. Where registration exceeded 1000 but less or up to 1200 an additional Clerk was deployed to assist in checking the identification of prospective voters.

12.4.5 Transport

Vehicles that were identified for registration were insufficient for polling since the latter exercise had various sub-activities.

An appeal was therefore made to government institutions through the Office of the President and Cabinet to use government vehicles. The shortfall the Government could not provide was met from hiring.

12.4.6 Communication

The Commission paid for telephone and fax bills of District Commissioner offices from August to November, 2000 for two lines dedicated to



Transportation of materials to polling centres

election duties. The arrangement, however, was open to abuse since the offices used the same lines for communication of their routine activities. As a result the communication costs were on the higher side.

12.4.7 The Polling Process

Polling was held on 21st November 2000 in 4883 stations and 3366 centres throughout the country. However at one station in Njuyu Ward (Bala) in M'mbelwa District Assembly, voting took place on 22nd November 2000 because the Presiding Officer for the station failed to turn up on the election day.

An average of 14 per cent of the registered voters turned out to cast their votes. This is in contrast to 94 per cent of the registered voters who turned out to cast their votes in the 1999 general elections. The turnout was remarkably lower in urban centres as compared to the rural areas.

Several analysts like political scientists, journalists and NGOs attributed this to a number of factors:

- Voter fatigue
- Voters losing interest in voting because Parliamentarians had let them down
- Inadequate civic and voter education because

of late funding by donors.

- Voter disillusionment with political parties that lacked clear direction.
- Imposition of unpopular candidates by political parties.
- The coincidence of the polling date with the planting season.

12.4.8 Postponed Elections

Elections did not take place in 15 wards for a number of reasons. In Karonga, Chilumba and Nyungwe; Mtakataka in Dedza; Chankhanga and Kapalankhwazi wards in Kasungu, elections were postponed due to death of candidates.

In Chibanja, Nkhorongo, Chibavi, Mchenga Utuwa North and South ward in Mzuzu City ward; Mzenga North in Nkhataba Bay; Mlongoti in Rumphi; Lundu North and South wards in Chikwawa, elections were postponed due to printing errors.

In Chilomoni ward in Blantyre City Assembly, elections were postponed because the MCP candidate appeared to have been nominated by voters from another ward. The UDF candidate was therefore declared unopposed. However, on verification, the Commission certified that the nominees had transferred to Chilomoni Ward. As the printing of ballot papers had already been completed it was not possible to include her on the ballot paper hence the postponement.

The postponed elections were conducted on 24th April, 2001 and the Commission announced the results in all the wards except for Chankhanga in Kasungu Town Assembly. Persons who neither registered nor obtained transfers to vote in that ward were allowed to cast their votes contrary to the provisions of the LGE Act. This was an irregularity.

12.4.9 Counting of Votes

Counting of votes was at polling stations in compliance with Sections 76 and 77 of the LGE Act. Ballots were counted by the Commission's polling staff in the presence of party and or candidates' representatives, local and international



Results being tallied at COMESA Hall Blantyre, November 2000

observers where they were available. (Appendix 2 for list of observers).

The results were displayed publicly at all stations while party and candidates' representatives were given copies of the results.

12.4.10 Determination of results by the Commission

The Commission determined the results of the election at its offices, at Development House in Blantyre. The determination was based on records delivered to the Commission by Returning Officers in all the Assemblies according to Section 95 of the LGE Act, 1996.

The Commission announced the results on 24th November, 2000 at the tally centre which was set up in Chichiri Conference Centre where media and party representatives were present. The results were declared as follows:-

AFORD	-	120 Wards
MCP	-	83 Wards
NIP	-	1 Ward
UDF	-	612 Wards
Independent Candidates	-	27 Wards
Postponed Election	-	15 Wards
Stalemate	-	2 Wards
Total gazetted	-	860 Wards

According to Section 83 of the LGE Act, 1996 the results were gazetted and published in the Nation and Daily Times Newspapers. MBC and TVM also broadcast the results.

13. COMPLAINTS

The commission received a number of complaints challenging the results because of alleged electoral irregularities as follows:

- (i) Nkhotakota District Assembly
Nkhula Ward

The Commission declared results of the ward void after establishing that one of the centres Ntambwadzi was misallocated to another ward.

- (ii) Lilongwe Town Assembly
Kabwabwa Ward

The Commission nullified results of the poll after establishing that one of the contestant was unlawfully decampaigned by one of her rivals in the run up to the polls

- (iii) Machinga District Assembly
Mposa Ward

Results for the ward were declared void after the Commission had established that the candidate who won the election on 21st November, 2000 presented a fake Malawi Junior Certificate of Education (JCE).

- (iv) Nsanje District Assembly
Dinde Ward

A serious irregularity occurred at Dinde Polling Centre. A Voters' Register was reportedly missing up until 11.00 o'clock in the morning and by then, a lot of voters had been returned without voting. Complainants were communicated of the developments made following their complaints. By-elections and re-runs were therefore slated for April 24th, 2001.

14. CONCLUSION

The Commission's strategy launched in November 1999 was timely, thorough and impressive. It was the fulcrum on which the success of the election depended.

However, the Commission felt it was let down by its collaborating partners in the implementation of the strategy except for the Malawi Government which supported the programme fully by timely funding the electoral activities. For example;

a) The donors released their pledges late in the elections calendar. This put pressure on the Commission's finances so that some activities were delayed because the Commission could not readily fund them.

b) Politicians played the election down as evidenced by their lukewarm participation in the demarcation of boundaries' public hearings. As a result requests for more wards were made after public hearings.

c) Some Returning Officers were perfunctory in their duties. They delayed in responding to requests for vital information, submitted inaccurate returns and asked for unnecessary extra-budgetary expenses.

d) Some government Ministries and Departments released unserviceable vehicles for the election. As a result, the Commission had to hire vehicles to complete the exercise in time. This involved extra expenditure.

The Commission encountered these adversarial conditions irrespective of the meetings it organised with the respective collaborating partners. These issues are of great concern to the success of future elections. The Commission therefore appeals to its partners to be sensitive in the implementation of election calendars in order to meet the set down deadlines. Meeting deadlines is a recipe for winning the confidence of the voters.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Demarcation of Wards

The Demarcation of Ward boundaries exercise was characterised by political interference after the Public Hearings.

In future, the Commission should emphasise to

political parties that resolutions passed at a public hearing would seal the demarcation of boundaries. More importantly, political parties once invited to participate in important exercises such as demarcation of wards, efforts should be made to treat such invitation with the seriousness that they deserve

15.2 Campaign

Generally, the campaign for Local Government Elections 2000 was peaceful. There were no major incidents of violence or intimidation throughout the country and the Commission did not receive any complaints. The MPLCs played a crucial role in sorting out issues at the grassroots.

It is recommended that committees as these, be provided with enough knowledge and skills in conflict management to continue with their role with a clear and open mind. This would be one way of ensuring the sustenance of democracy and averting potential conflicts in future elections. In the meantime, the Electoral Commission is sourcing funding for the MPLCs to enable them operate efficiently and effectively at the grassroots level.

15.3 Registration of Voters

All in all the registration exercise was a success as all the centres throughout the country were provided with sufficient materials to accommodate new registrants, old registrants who had lost certificates and those who wanted to obtain a transfer. Besides, the transferring period was extended to 20th October, 2000.

15.3.1 Information gathering had been a problem.

This is not a healthy situation and there is need to advise Returning Officers to create a focal point within their offices to ensure timely attention and responses to important electoral issues. Similarly the Commission should ensure that the Press Officer has access to most of the communication to Returning Officers. This could assist in checking contradictory information before it goes out of the office.

15.3.2 Transfers will continue forever.

To enable as many people as possible to transfer voluntarily, the Commission should conduct this activity at least three months before the polling date.

15.4 Presentation of Nomination Papers

The changes in the dates of presentation of nomination papers affected the schedule and accuracy of work in the printing of ballot papers

Any extension in the electoral calendar especially the nomination date should have a corresponding change to the polling date. The last day of nomination should as much as possible be set at least two and a half months before the polling date to ensure a thorough analysis and give printers of ballot papers enough time to prepare for the exercise.

To avoid unnecessary inconveniences caused by withdrawals of candidature, it is proposed that the electoral law should come up with a deadline on the withdrawal of candidates from the race.

15.5 Polling

The plans that were put in place in preparation for polling contributed greatly to the success of the polls. The few problems faced were inevitable as ruled supreme.

15.5.1 Acquisition of vehicles

The policy to maintain vehicles from Ministries/Departments before elections should be discontinued as this can lead to abuse. Ministries/Departments should release road worthy vehicles and maintenance of those vehicles can be done after use.

15.5.2 Ballot papers

Ballot paper requisition should be done at least two and half months before the polling date in order to have ample time to check the nomination information to avoid transposition of symbols and candidates.

15.5.3 Registration

Registration of voters is for 14 days and changes in the voters rolls should end in good time, say three months before polling date. This would enable Officers to visit each and every assembly to ascertain the number of polling stations.

15.5.4 Polling Booths

The Commission should come up with a simple and special polling booths where screening should only be on the ballot paper. The person could mark their choice in an object say a box placed in one of the tables.

15.6 Donor Assistance

As indicated, the Commission did not enjoy the best relationship with the donor community. Government should take the challenge to fund elections and let donors play their role at their own pace. With this, the Commission can be expected to deliver elections in time and as smoothly as planned.



Training of Ward Demarcation Committees for the Northern Region

ANNEXE I

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS – FIRST PHASE

Southern Region

1. Nsanje District
2. Chikwawa District
3. Mwanza District
4. Chiradzulu District
5. Thyolo District
6. Luchenza District
7. Phalombe District
8. Mulanje District
9. Zomba District
10. Zomba Municipal
11. Machinga District
12. Liwonde Town
13. Mangochi District
14. Mangochi Town
15. Balaka Town
16. Balaka District

Central Region

1. Ntcheu District
2. Salima District
3. Salima Town
4. Dedza District
5. Dedza Town
6. Mchinji District
7. Dowa District
8. Ntchisi District
9. Nkhonkhotakota District

Northern Region

1. Chitipa District
2. Rumphi District
3. Karonga District
4. Karonga District
5. Nkhata Bay District
6. Likoma District

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS – 2ND PHASE

Southern Region

1. Blantyre District
2. Blantyre City

Central Region

1. Lilongwe District
2. Lilongwe City
3. Kasungu District
4. Kasungu Town

Northern Region

1. M'belwa District
2. Mzuzu City

ANNEXE 2

International Organisations

British High Commission
Royal Danish Embassy
High Commission for the Republic of Zimbabwe
American Embassy

Local Organisations

Malawi CARER
Public Affairs Committee
Civil Liberties Committee
Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
Projects Office Blantyre Synod
Church/NGO Consortium.