

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON POST ELECTION REPORT 2016

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, HONOURABLE BARON DIVAVESI WAQA MP

ON THURSDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2016

HON.SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

I have much pleasure in tabling the **“Post-Election Report 2016”** with respect to the **Nauru General Election 2016** held on the 9th and 11th of July 2016 in accordance with **Section 11(a) of the Electoral Act 2016**.

Mr. Speaker, changes that were introduced under the Electoral Act 2016 include the **automatic registration of voters**. This meant that any person attaining the age of 20 years was automatically registered. This resulted in the voter turnout increasing by 28% (6,469) compared to 5044 at the 2013 general election.

The Government introduced two amending Bills to Parliament resulting in the enactment into law of the: **Electoral (Amendment) Act 2016 and the Electoral (Amendment No2) Act 2016**.

The Commission also submitted for Cabinet’s approval 3 sets of Regulations, namely the: **Electoral (Proxy Voting) Regulations 2016; Electoral (Mobile Polling Station) Regulations 2016 and Electoral (Voter Verification) Regulations 2016**. These matters are discussed in Chapter 1 of the report.

Mr. Speaker, the Electoral Commission carried out a number of Electoral activities in its preparation for the July 2016 general election. These included: **Awareness and Information Sessions; Training; Planning; Budgeting and Procurement Activities**. These activities are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of the report.

For the 2016 general election in Nauru International and Regional Observer Groups from the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Pacific Islands Forum

Secretariat were invited to Nauru to observe and report on the conduct of the election. The group's recommendations are in the Executive Summary and in Chapter 4 of the report.

It is a credit to the Electoral Commission and the people of Nauru in general that the reports from the Observer groups were positive and indeed a strong commendation on the growth and progressive maturity of the **Nauru Electoral System**. The **Commonwealth Secretariat** in its report concluded that the election was **“inclusive, transparent and competitive”**; while the Team from the **Forum Secretariat** reported **“a free, safe and fair”** election.

THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT:

Mr. Speaker, in brief the **Post-Election Report 2016** contains the following highlights:

1. For the first time, bedridden voters were able to vote from their homes, including voters with disabilities, make up **63% of the Mobile Voters; the others were from RON Hospital (17%) and Correctional Centre (8%)**.
2. On Proxy Voting, **710 proxy voting applications were granted/approved and of these only 11 proxies did not cast their vote**.
3. On Invalid votes, **the total number of invalid votes was 2% out of the 92% of votes casted**.
4. The Commission was served with an Injunction Order on Polling Day which necessitated the suspension of voting for the Constituency of Aiwo on 9th of July 2016. With the assistance of the then Speaker, the writ for election for the constituency of Aiwo was withdrawn and a new writ for election for the constituency was issued for the conduct of voting in that constituency on Monday 11th July 2016.

5. **Mr. Speaker**, On voter turnout, the confirmed number of registered voters determined after the election is **6,886, making the official percentage of voter turnout at 94%**.
6. There were **6% of the voters on the Roll**, who were identified as **Non-Voters**. They were each issued with Notices as required under Section 55 of the Electoral Act 2016. However, the Commission has established from the responses that **there were 698 duplication of registration cases; 259 were of deceased persons still on the roll; 301 were overseas; 23 cases of infirmities; 4 did not vote due to religious beliefs; and 89 only had not provided sufficient reasons for not voting.**

Mr. Speaker, the Commission **“Has recognized the importance of learning from this election and finding ways and means of improving on future elections”**. For that purpose, the Commission is currently developing its Electoral Strategic Plan 2016-2020 for the short-medium and long term. The Plan will be a road map to help the Commission do a better job of administering future elections.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT’S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mr. Speaker, the recommendations by the two Observer Groups may require either policy or legislative changes or both. It is recommended by the Commission that while the Government and Electoral Commission will address each of the recommendations that require their respective consideration, that a **Electoral Taskforce Committee** be set up with a Terms of Reference and to work with the Commission, to consider the proposed electoral reforms and make recommendations to the Commission and the Government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONCLUSION:

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Commission for having done exceptionally well and had exceeded all expectations in the conduct of the 2016 general election; given the challenging circumstances it faced and the limitations posed by the timeline from its establishment in early March 2016 to the conduct of the general election in early July 2016.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the 2016 Post-Election Report to this august House.