



T&T Electoral Authorities Agree to Collaborate for Better Coverage of Elections

March 8, 2010 (Port of Spain) - The Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) of Trinidad and Tobago has agreed to collaborate with the local media to improve journalistic performance in the coverage of elections.

The commitment was given by senior EBC officials attending the ACM workshop on the coverage of elections at the offices of the United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean in Port of Spain on Saturday March 6.

The workshop was sponsored by the Trinidad and Tobago Publishers and Broadcasters Association (TTPBA) and facilitated by ACM trainers Wesley Gibbings, Raoul Pantin and Lennox Grant.

It was attended by 12 local journalists and representatives of the TTPBA and Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT) and an EBC team led by Chairman, Dr Norbert Masson.

The ACM Elections Handbook for Caribbean Journalists was launched at the workshop and the ceremony was addressed by TTPBA Vice President, Yaseen Rahaman; MATT Vice President, Judy Raymond; Director of the UNIC, Angelica Hunt; Chief Elections Officer, Howard Cayenne and ACM President, Wesley Gibbings.

At the close of the workshop, it was decided that the EBC and the media community should pursue development of a self-regulatory framework for the promotion of sound media practices in the periods before, during and after elections.

In his opening remarks, Rahaman stressed the importance of high journalistic standards in the coverage of elections and pledged the TTPBA's support for any initiative to achieve this objective.

Raymond called for good judgment in the use of material generated from the political platform and warned that politicians do not enjoy the cover of parliamentary privilege at public meetings.

Gibbings advocated a system of media monitoring and refereeing along the lines of the 2006 self-regulatory mechanism employed for elections in Guyana during which Grant served as a media referee along with veteran Jamaican journalist, Wyvolyn Gager.

The ACM is in discussions for the hosting of similar workshops in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica and Suriname. The Handbook has already been launched in Jamaica and accompanied by training programmes in Guyana, Barbados and St Kitts and Nevis.