



FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

The processes for Free and Fair elections are based on the universal values of democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and the supremacy of the constitution in the political arrangements. Elections can either advance democracy, development, human rights and security, or undermine them. For this reason, promoting and protecting the integrity of elections is critically important. Only through credible elections can they legitimize governments, as well as effectively safeguard citizens to exercise their political rights.

For Free and Fair Elections :

1. The constitution is the supreme law of the land. It sets the tone, the spirit and the framework from which all other laws and the form of government draws its LEGITIMACY.
2. The constitution must allow for all Fijian citizens to participate freely and equally in DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. All subsequent electoral laws are obliged to reflect this.
3. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the conventions that protect group rights and freedoms must prevail in any democratic elections. These FREEDOMS and responsibilities must be safeguarded in the constitution.

These fundamental rights include freedom of opinion and speech, assembly, association and movement and quite importantly our right and responsibility as citizens of Fiji to participate in government.
4. All laws and regulations made for running elections need to stick to the principles of good governance. The language should be worded as simply, accurately and focused on promoting PARTICIPATION AND COMPLIANCE.
5. ELECTORAL INTEGRITY is about Independence of the electoral institutions. Appointments of Electoral Office holders must be through an Independent appointing body that guarantees the separation of powers between the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary.
6. For an INDEPENDENT process it is important to set up pre-election observations, election observation missions (EOMs) and special advisory missions at all phases of democratic elections.
7. Any Independent Electoral WATCHDOG ROLE must be guided by the 2012 UN *“Declaration of the Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organisations and Code of Conduct for Non-Partisan Citizen Election Observers and Monitors.”* (Non-Partisan means any entity or group that hold a neutral position)
8. Ongoing DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION between the policy-making bodies, the electoral management body (EMB) and all political players can help build a transparent electoral administration and a framework that is acceptable to all in democratic elections.
9. Citizen-led and State-driven Public-friendly CIVIC EDUCATION programs informing all on electoral systems and processes must be encouraged as an important part of democratic elections.
10. Transparency, Accountability, Participatory and Inclusivity are the key GOOD GOVERNANCE guiding values for democratic elections.

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights States: ‘Everyone has the Right to Democracy’

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his or her country.

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.