

## 7. Gathering facts: Observation Checklist

A key aspect of election observation consists in gathering facts about the election. In this regard, it is simply unacceptable to send scores of people into the field to observe an election without proper guidance. For this reason, the commission requires the observer group to present to it a copy of its checklist of things to look out for, which is the basic tool for purposeful Election Day observation.

A good election observation checklist has three major attributes:

- It is tailored to the specific election to be observed, as electoral practices may differ from place to place
- It elicits mainly factual responses from the observer, and not his/her feelings and opinions.
- It is designed in such a way that the responses are easily processed and analyzed.

In turn, a good election observation checklist offers two main advantages:

- In turn possible uniform observation by all the members of the group, so that there is a firm basis for common judgment.
- It makes the basis of report writing factual and not subjective.

It is to be noted, however, that an observation checklist is an organizing tool. So the observer must record any happening that s/he considers to be capable of having an effect on the election, even though provision is not made for it in the checklist.

