

Venezuela Electoral Council requests international observers



Caracas, Feb 21 (RHC)-- Venezuelan National Electoral Council, CNE, President Tibisay Lucena has announced that the governmental body is requesting international observers for the country's upcoming presidential election in April. Out of the 11 points established in previous talks with the country's right-wing opposition, six are related to the electoral process and the CNE, including the demand for independent international observers.

"One of them was already accomplished by Venezuelan Ambassador Samuel Moncada, who formally handed in a petition to the U.N. Secretary General asking for an electoral accompaniment and observance by an international delegation for the next presidential elections," Lucena said. She further explained that "technicians from the CNE, external auditors, political organizations' technicians, national observers and companions from technical missions such as the Electoral Experts Commission of America (CEELA)" will be present in order to "guarantee the transparency of the electoral process."

Tuesday was the last day for new voters to register nationwide, but voters outside of Venezuela will have until February 25th to register for voting. Lucena said every registered Venezuelan citizen over 18 years old will be able to vote in the next presidential election, whether or not they live in the country.

Regarding the external voting system, she added that "nothing has changed since 2000," the first time Venezuela enabled voting from a foreign country. She also announced that the raffle for the electoral

service will be done on March 15, and “contemplates the participation of members of board, regional and municipal assemblies.”

The CNE is making an effort to comply with the proposed electoral chronology so the elections can be held next April 22nd. “We're in compliance with every one of the points included in the agreement, but we're also working in the regular guarantees to make Venezuelan citizens feel confident about the voting process,” said the head of the electoral institute.

The electoral time table establishes that candidates will be able to register on-line between February 24th and the 26th, and the nominations will be presented to the National Assembly on the next day. The definitive electoral record will then be published on March 5th. Political campaigns will take place between March 22nd and April 19th.

Luceno pointed out that the electoral process is an “opportunity to solve the problems and differences of the Venezuelan people in a peaceful way,” and called the Venezuelan people to freely participate in the presidential elections.

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