



The eighth Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBS) got underway at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa in Montego Bay Tuesday (Sept. 18), with 43 representatives from 23 countries across the Americas in attendance.

The two-day meeting, being held for the first time in the Caribbean, aims to promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices of electoral administrations in the region. It is being jointly hosted by the Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

ECJ Chairman, Professor Errol Miller, in welcoming the participants, said that Jamaica, in its jubilee year, can be proud of its electoral system

He noted that the system, inherited from Britain, has been reformed over the years to correct flaws, and can now stand up to "the highest principles of democracy and the conduct of elections anywhere in the world."

Minister of State for Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, Hon. Julian Robinson, said that while Jamaica boasts a world-class electoral system there are some matters that must be addressed.



These, he said, relate to the underrepresentation of women; accountability of parliamentarians and elected officials; and how to encourage and facilitate greater youth involvement in the political and electoral processes.

"How can we ensure that we have parliaments that reflect broadly the representation in

our society? How can we bring more young people into the fore?” he questioned.

Mr. Robinson, who was speaking on behalf of Minister with responsibility for Electoral Matters, Hon. Phillip Paulwell, said also to be addressed are the capping of election expenses and succession planning, including the matter of term limits.

He challenged the participants to use the meeting to focus on strengthening the electoral processes in the hemisphere, cognizant that at the heart of democracy in the region is a strong electoral system.

“It is imperative that we have electoral systems that remain on a solid footing but that we also expand our democracies by ensuring that they are more inclusive, and that our elected officials are more accountable,” he stated.

The main topics to be discussed at the meeting are: the role of EMBs in candidate selection and vote counting; and data transmission and preliminary results reporting.