



Director of Elections, Orrette Fisher, has called on countries across the Americas, to work towards enhancing their electoral systems, noting that this is critical to strengthening the democratic process.

He was speaking to representatives from Caribbean and Latin America countries at Tuesday's (Sept. 18) closing of the [Eighth Inter-American meeting of Electoral Management Bodies](#), held at the Hylton Rose Hall Resort in Montego Bay.

"In an increasingly fast-paced world, election management bodies are being forced to keep apace if they are to remain relevant. Technical innovations in electronic voting, counting and transmission are being used in varying degrees in different jurisdictions to facilitate speedy and accurate results," Mr. Fisher said.

He noted that Jamaica has been making improvements to its electoral process pointing to the institution of the Elections Information Management System (EIMS) in 1997, which he said, "has contributed significantly" in strengthening the electoral system.

"Prior to 1997, the process of delivering preliminary results after an election was delayed and time consuming... in 1997 the Electoral Office, with the technical assistance of Mona Geo Informatics Unit, developed (the) results management and transmission software, which was designed to be the primary source of (real time) and accurate information for all election-related events, including the opening of the polls, periodic voter turnout reports, incidents, and the preliminary results on Election Day," he informed.

He said the system has also satisfied the need for transparency and accuracy, enhance accountability, and has reduced speculation and tension.

"The EIMS, among other things, provides public assurance and increases trust and

confidence in the electoral process. It also provides authentic information ahead of party/candidate tabulations and stimulates interest and satisfies heightened anticipation for results," he stated.

In addition to the EMIS, Mr. Fisher said that measures employed since 2002 to enhance data transmission, vote counting and preliminary results reporting, "has really brought our election system to the forefront in terms of technology"

"For us to be able by 8 o'clock, to say how many polling stations opened on time and to have the media houses being able to declare the winner of the election by 8:30 pm, that's something that is new and ground-breaking," he stated.

He said that the government is committed to ensuring that continued improvements are made to advance the process.

"I think that we are moving in the right direction and we will be always looking at how we can continue improving...the process and to utilise technology, especially where it increases efficiency and reduce cost," the Director of Elections pointed out.