

OAS Affirms Transparency of CAFTA Referendum

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Costa Rica's first ever referendum went off without problems, according to the mission of observers from the Organization of American States (OAS) in Costa Rica Sunday for the popular vote on the Central American Free-Trade Agreement with the United States (CAFTA).

OAS yesterday congratulated Costa Rica for its “elevated civic spirit, tranquility and massive participation,” in the referendum.

In a statement, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza expressed his “satisfaction over the high level of citizen participation and the peaceful development of the electoral process.”

Ninety-three OAS observers spread out around the country to evaluate Sunday's vote and reported that “the process has been carried out in a satisfactory manner and that a consistent majority of citizens have behaved in an orderly, transparent way,” the statement said.

The observers also called for Costa Ricans to “democratically respect the results emitted by the Supreme Elections Tribunal (TSE),” which continues to count votes and had counted about 98% at press time.

The OAS mission plans to stay in Costa Rica a few more days preparing a report on the vote to present to the organization's Permanent Cabinet.