



**LAUNCH STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE HONOURABLE DR. KATELE KALUMBA,  
FORMER MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**AND**

**HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM)**

**TO**

**THE 2019 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS**

**IN**

**THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR**

**ANTANANARIVO, 24 MAY 2019**

- Director of Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs representing Her Excellency, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence-Tax, SADC Executive Secretary;
- Distinguished Members of the SADC Organ Troika;
- The Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI);
- Members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI);
- Distinguished Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC);
- Representatives of Political Parties;
- Heads and representatives of Diplomatic Missions;
- Heads and representatives of International and Regional Organisations
- Heads and representatives of Electoral Observer Missions
- Representatives of Religious organisations and the Civil Society;
- Election Observers;
- Partners from the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my singular honour and privilege, to represent His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, and the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, at the launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2019, Legislative Elections in the Republic of Madagascar.

## **Distinguished Guests,**

This is the third SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) deployed to the Republic of Madagascar in the past six (6) months. You will recall, that our SEOMs had previously observed the Presidential Elections on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2018; and the subsequent Second Round of the Presidential polls held on 19<sup>th</sup> December of the same year. This shows the unequivocal commitment and support of the region to the strengthening of democratic tenets in this country as an effective contribution to good governance, human rights and sustainable political stability and development.

These SEOMs as I have just mentioned were preceded by the pre-election assessment Mission of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) which examined the level of preparedness of the CENI; and the political and security situation obtaining in the country at that time.

All Missions served to support the electoral process of the Republic of Madagascar in accordance with *the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines* to enable the Member State attain a level of performance that could be deemed to have largely met the basic fundamentals of the regional normative framework for elections and its related governance.

## **Distinguished Guests,**

In the 2018 Presidential Elections, the SEOMs noted: substantive improvements to the electoral system; the good practices in respect of the compilation of the electoral list; and the professionalism displayed by the military and other security agencies.

The SEOM in the 2018 Presidential Elections also observed certain best democratic practices and lessons: such as, the requirement for the sitting President to resign 60 days prior to elections; and the law that governs election campaign finances and establishment of the respective Election Commission, among others.

It was also pleasing to note that some of the proposals made previously by the SEOM to the 2013 elections in Madagascar, such as improvements to the laws relevant to the electoral system and the establishment, through legislation, of a permanent independent electoral commission in the form of CENI, were implemented.

In addition, the SEOMs made recommendations for consideration by the Government of Madagascar and CENI, which, while here, the Mission will seek to understand how these have been addressed.

Despite weaknesses that were observed and concerns raised by stakeholders in respect of the electoral system, both SEOMs concluded that the 2018 Presidential Elections were conducted within the requirements of the legal framework of the Republic of Madagascar and that they were largely in conformity with the relevant provisions of the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015)*.

## **Distinguished Guests,**

As earlier stated, to sustain the peace, it is imperative that results of elections as pronounced by the mandated electoral institutions are respected and accepted – and that any disputes are settled through established legal processes. This practice is very much in line with Article 4.1.11 of the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015)*.

In this regard, I wish to commend the former Presidents of the Republic of Madagascar His Excellency Mr. Hery Rajaonarimampianina and His Excellency Mr. Marc Ravalomanana as well as the current President His Excellency Mr. Andry Rajoelina and all political stakeholders for following established constitutional channels, which resulted in the acceptance of the results of the 2018 Presidential Elections and the subsequent peaceful handover of power. This clearly demonstrates the progressive democratic environment that currently prevails in the country, and the Malagasy nation now needs to reap the benefits of national reconciliation and social cohesion.

The forthcoming Legislative Elections are another important Constitutional imperative for the Republic of Madagascar in the consolidation of democracy where the voice of the people will be heard and which will guide the resolutions of the Executive.

## **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman,**

Our Mission in this country derives its mandate from the *SADC Treaty*; *the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation* and the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic*

*Elections (2015)*, to which all SADC Member States affirmed their commitment to the implement.

You may wish to note that the Principles and Guidelines are informed by key instruments of the African Union, such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as relevant Conventions of the United Nations. In addition, our Mission is guided by the Constitution and subsidiary electoral laws of the Republic of Madagascar.

In line with these regional and national frameworks, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission will assess the conduct of the elections against Article 4 of the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015)*, which outlines the *Principles for Conducting Democratic Elections*. These include:

1. Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
2. Freedom of association, assembly and expression;
3. Measures to prevent corruption, bribery, political violence, intimidation and intolerance;
4. Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the State Media;
5. Respect for values of electoral justice;
6. No undue restraints against the opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for;
7. Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions;

8. Civic and Voter education;
9. Acceptance of and respect for the election results by political parties as proclaimed to have been free, fair, transparent, credible and peaceful by the competent Electoral Commission in accordance with the law of the land; and
10. Provision of electoral justice through expedient settlement of electoral disputes as provided for in the law.

### **Distinguished Guests,**

The Legislative Elections are being held in terms of the provisions of the Constitution which provides for, among others:

- a. the election of members of the National Assembly by universal direct suffrage, through ballots;
- b. right of all citizens of Madagascar to elect candidates of their choice and to be elected;
- c. the enactment of laws that guarantee the civil rights of individuals, associations and political parties in the exercise of their freedoms, duties and obligations during elections; and
- d. the powers of the High Constitutional Court to determine electoral disputes, including those arising from legislative elections, and issue necessary orders which are to be obeyed.

It is out of the Constitutional Mandate that the Electoral Law has been promulgated to govern the conduct of Legislative Elections in the Republic of Madagascar.

I believe, therefore, that the Constitution and the Electoral Law provide an appropriate legal framework for the holding of democratic, free and fair Legislative Elections.

**Distinguished Guests,**

As indicated by the Director of the Organ of the SADC Secretariat, the Mission will cover 7 of the 22 regions of the country. The regions to be observed are as follows: Analamanga, Analanjirifo, Haute Matsiatra, Vakinankaratra, Atsinanana, Amoron'i Mania and Boeny.

In our view, this will enable us to sample various contexts of the political and demographic environment in the country sufficiently representative for the optimum assessment of the process.

However, together with other sister International observation missions, we are confident to cover a greater extension of the Country.

**Distinguished Guests,**

On behalf of the Southern African Development Community, I wish to strongly appeal to all stakeholders in this country to ensure that these Elections are managed in a peaceful, fair, transparent and credible manner. In the same vein, I also appeal to all the eligible voters to turn out in large numbers on the polling day to exercise their democratic right to vote.

As SADC, we look forward to an electoral process that adheres to democratic values and principles as envisioned in our SADC Treaty, the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and the *revised*



*SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015).*

Lastly, may I also take this opportunity to invite you all to attend the ceremony for the release of our Preliminary Statement regarding our observations of the 2019 Legislative Elections, scheduled to take place on 29 May 2019, at this same venue.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am now delighted and honoured, on behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, to declare the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2019 Legislative Elections in the Republic of Madagascar, officially launched.

***Thank you very much***

***Merci beaucoup***

***Misaotra tompoko***