



**Address to SADC Observers by Hon. Maite Nkoana-
Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and
Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa and Head of the
SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the
Presidential Elections in the Republic of Zambia, 20 January
2015**

Cresta Golfview Hotel

Lusaka, Zambia

SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax;

SADC Election Observers,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Presidential elections in the Republic of Zambia, to be held on 20 January 2015.

The success of this SEOM depends on your support and cooperation. It is my duty as the Head of this Mission, supported by members of the Organ Troika, to provide guidance and leadership to this important Mission.

As of today, 10 January 2015, the following Member States are on the ground and constitute the SEOM;

1. Angola;
2. Botswana;
3. Lesotho;
4. Malawi;
5. Mozambique
6. Namibia;
7. South Africa;
8. Tanzania; and
9. Zimbabwe

I was informed that you have received orientation on 8 January 2015, which allowed for initial engagement with stakeholders to get an understanding of the election preparations and processes.

The purpose of this meeting today is to enable you to know each other prior to your deployment to the respective regions and constituencies. I believe that in the past few days you would have become acquainted with the different members of our team. Whilst we are here in Zambia, we will be working as SADC observers and should represent our region with pride.

Distinguished observers,

When undertaking this Mission, it is important to familiarize yourselves with the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia, the Electoral Laws of the country and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. Understanding these documents and adherence thereto is very important if you are to execute your tasks efficiently and professionally.

Both the logistical and operational information presented to you by the SADC Secretariat is very elaborate and clear. It covers issues of accreditation, your conduct as election observers, security, administration and interaction with the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), funding of the observers, communication, accommodation, reporting, Official Spokesperson for the Mission, cooperation with other observer missions, handling of the media, debriefing of observers and the conclusion of the mission.

The Mission is a demonstration of the trust that the people of Zambia have placed in us through their invitation to SADC to observe the elections. However, we must remain cognizant of the fact that as much as we are observers of the electoral process, the local population and other interested parties also have this Mission under scrutiny.

I wish to take this opportunity to urge you as members of the Mission to conduct yourselves with integrity, diligence and to maintain professionalism. You are expected to participate actively in your work in a coordinated fashion. Daily reports from teams

on the ground need to be submitted to the Drafting Committee at the SEOM headquarters.

I would also like to caution regarding the handling of the media. As we all know back in our countries, the media can build you up but equally it can destroy as well. For some media houses good news is not news, and they do their best to find contradictions or bad news.

Ladies and Gentleman

Please note that the official spokesperson for the Mission is the Head of the Mission. Observers should therefore refrain from engagement with the media and making statements that may jeopardise or compromise the objectives of the Mission.

In the event that an observer is not able to fully attend to request or queries from the electoral stakeholders, it should be referred to the Head of the Mission.

The Spokesperson is the Head of the Mission, or any other person duly delegated. All enquiries from the Media should be directed to the Head of the Mission or the Mission headquarters.

Before I conclude, I want to place emphasis on the reporting aspects from all the teams to be deployed by the Mission. It is critical that we report accurately and verify every report or/and occurrence that we observe as it is your reports that will be consolidated into the Mission's Preliminary Statement and Final Report. These documents have a bearing on the credibility of SADC as an institution.

For smooth execution of your task, please ensure that when on duty you always display your identification provided by the Electoral Commission of Zambia.

We are now a SADC family in the Republic of Zambia, and I am looking forward to your cooperation to ensure the successful completion of our Mission.

As you deploy to your allocated areas of operation, I wish you well and once again professional conduct, mutual respect and team work must be the Mission's standard.

Thank you.