



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

**H.E. DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH
OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE 2018
PRESIDENTIAL, LEGISLATIVE AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

**KEMPINSKI HOTEL FLEUVE CONGO,
KINSHASA,**

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

10TH DECEMBER, 2018

Your Lordship, former Chief Justice Ernest Linesi Sakala, Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);

Members of the SADC Organ Troika;

The Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI);

Members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI);

Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC);

Heads and Representatives of Political Parties;

SADC Ambassadors Accredited to the DRC;

Heads and representatives of International Organisations, and Diplomatic Missions;

Religious leaders and members of the Civil Society;

Election Observers;

Partners from the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me to welcome you all to this launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2018 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In line with SADC Principles and Guidelines for Governing Democratic elections, SADC has been invited by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to observe the 2018 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Based on his mandate, as the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the DRC.

The SADC observation mission will observe elections during the pre-elections phase, the elections, and the post-elections. SADC observation mission will be led by the former Chief Justice Ernest Linesi Sakala, as mandated by the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on politics, defense and security cooperation.

The 2015 Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections introduced Long Term Election Observations, which enable SADC to deploy, assess, and report on various inter-related segments of the pre-election, election and post-election phases of the electoral cycle. To this effect, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) undertook pre-election assessment Missions to the DRC in March 2017, November/December 2017, July 2018 and November 2018. Based on the Pre-Election Reports, SADC continued to work with the Government, CENI, Political and other Stakeholders, to support the DRC in ensuring a conducive environment for elections. The final pre-assessment mission of SADC indicates DRC's preparedness for the 2018 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial elections.

SADC will continue with observations, during and after elections, and activities of the SEOM in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be coordinated from its Headquarters, located at the Kempinski Hotel Fleuve Congo, here in Kinshasa.

Before I formally introduce the Head of Mission, may I call upon all Congolese to use this opportunity to remain united, calm and allow the democratic dispensation to take its course, through the 2018 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial elections scheduled for 23rd December 2018. Your support and votes during these elections will determine the political future of the DRC. Please practice your democratic right and vote for your candidates.

At this juncture, it is my honour and privilege to introduce and invite the Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2018 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), His Lordship, Mr Ernest Linesi Sakala, former Chief Justice in the Republic of Zambia to officially launch this Mission.

Thank You

Merci beaucoup
Muito Obrigada