



**LAUNCH STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HONOURABLE JOSEPH MALANJI, M.P., MINISTER OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**AND**

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

**TO**

**THE 2019 NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS**

**IN**

**THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**PRETORIA, 29 APRIL 2019**

Honourable Kabinga Pande, Alternate Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the Republic of South Africa;

Distinguished Members of the SADC Organ Troika;

Your Excellency, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Executive Secretary of SADC;

Chairperson/Representative and Members of the Independent Electoral Commission;

Distinguished Heads of International Electoral Observation Missions;

Your Excellencies, Heads and Representatives of the Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of South Africa;

Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council;

SADC Election Observers;

Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties;

Representatives of Local Election Observers;

Religious Leaders and Members of the Civil Society;

Members of the media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of 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, it is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the official launch of the SADC Electoral Observation

Mission (SEOM) to the 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 National and Provincial Elections in the Republic of South Africa.

Let me begin by commiserating with our Member States which have suffered natural disasters as a result of cyclones and floods, namely, our host, South Africa, and Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

### **Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SADC Electoral Observation Missions (SEOM) is here at the invitation of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of the Republic of South Africa. This practice is in conformity with the *SADC Treaty; the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation* and the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015)*.

To this end, H.E. Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, and Chairperson of the Organ, constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) which I am leading.

These are the sixth national and provincial elections in South Africa since the advent of democracy in 1994. Despite the fact that the first transitional democratic elections of 1994 faced challenging conditions in the aftermath of the dismantling of apartheid, South Africa has progressed remarkably well, serving in many respects as an example to the rest of the region. SADC thus duly recognizes and acknowledges these tremendous strides toward the consolidation of democracy.

In this regard, let me take this rare opportunity, as Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission, to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the people of South Africa, as the country celebrates 25 years of democracy, a significant milestone in the fulfilment of its democratic project.

**Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

SADC observes elections in its Member States based on the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015)*. The Principles and Guidelines are also informed by key instruments of the African Union such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) as well as relevant Conventions of the United Nations.

All SADC Member States have affirmed their commitment to the implementation of the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, which have been designed to assist the region to improve its democratic tenets but also to contribute to conflict prevention through the use of modern standards and techniques of election observation.

These include the use of Long Term Election Observation and Information and Communications Technologies to enhance data collection and analysis. This approach is expected to engender informed assessments of electoral processes and outcomes that should contribute to enhanced regional efforts to assist Member States in identifying best practices, related challenges and shortcomings, through evidence based observation.

## **Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In view of the above and consistent with the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the present deployment of the SEOM was preceded by a Pre-Election Assessment and Goodwill Mission of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) from 4 to 10 April 2019.

The SEAC is a mechanism instituted by the SADC Summit in 2004, composed of eminent legal experts, scholars and retired senior diplomats, to advise the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation on matters of elections, democracy and governance; as well as on mediation strategies arising from electoral conflicts.

In this regard, the SEAC mission to the Republic of South Africa noted, among other issues, that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) managed to:

- register 26.7 million voters;
- put in place the required ballot measures to accommodate a record 48 political parties, 10,000 candidates on the National Assembly party lists, and 8,000 candidates on Provincial Assembly party lists;
- prepare for 22,924 voting stations and the exact locations of these voting stations have been published ahead of the elections.

In the interaction with various political stakeholders, the SEAC mission noted their concerns, including the following:

- (i) Although women constitute 54.5% (14.7 million) of the registered voters, they form far less than 50% of the candidates on the party-lists for elections;
- (ii) Political parties in general mention gender and youth equality in elected positions, but only one political party actually has a policy that it fully implements with respect to a 50-50 gender representation quota;
- (iii) Given that the elections come 25 years after the advent of democracy, it was expected that there would be a surge in the registration of the age-group between 18-25 years. However, the youth, both as voters and candidates for political office remain apathetic. There are 9.8 million eligible voters who did not register to vote, and of these 60% are youths;
- (iv) Some in the communities have taken advantage of the forthcoming elections to heighten violent service delivery protests, attacks against African foreigners and their property, and used these to threaten the peaceful conduct of the elections.

The SEAC Mission however noted that overall, the South African electoral law and system is aligned to the revised SADC Principles & Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During its deployment to the 2014 National elections in South Africa, the SEOM had observed that despite some short-comings and concerns, such as, the late opening of some of the voting stations; delay of the delivery of some voting materials; and sporadic localized incidents of violence. Such short-comings and concerns were not of such magnitude as to affect the credibility of the overall electoral process.

To this end, the SEOM acknowledges the efforts that have been made by South African authorities to ensure that the current elections are held in a peaceful and orderly environment, and that voting materials are delivered on time to all the voting stations.

### **Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are aware that the elections set for 8th May 2019 are for the purposes of electing members of the National and Provincial Legislatures, and are mainly governed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; the Electoral Act (No. of 73 1998); the Electoral Commission Act (No. 51 of 1996); and the Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act (No. 103 of 1997).

It is line with these national legal instruments, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission will assess the conduct of the elections against a set of central principles stipulated in the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections such as:

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,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to inform you that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2019 National and Provincial Elections consists, in total, of 46 personnel from 9 SADC Member States namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



Our observers will be deployed to all the nine (9) provinces of South Africa, namely, Eastern Cape; Free State; Gauteng; KwaZulu-Natal; Limpopo; Mpumalanga; Northern Cape; North West; and Western Cape. Our observations will focus on the pre and post-election periods which includes the campaigns, the voting day and the process of the counting of the ballot papers.

May I, therefore, encourage all stakeholders to ensure that these elections are conducted in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible manner. We look forward to an electoral process that adheres to democratic values and principles envisioned in our SADC Treaty, the Protocol of Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation; and the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

Lastly, may I also take this opportunity to invite you all to attend the release of our Preliminary Statement regarding our observations of the 2019 National and Provincial Elections, scheduled for 10 May 2019, at this very Venue.

**Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my singular honour, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, H.E Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, to declare the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2019 National and Provincial Elections in the Republic of South Africa, officially launched.

***Thank you very much  
Muito Obrigado***

***Merci beaucoup***

***Siyabonga***