



WELCOME REMARKS

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SADC ELECTORAL
OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE 2019
SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL
ELECTIONS**

BY

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Honourable Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia, Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of South Africa;

Members of the SADC Organ Troika;

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC);

Heads and Representatives of Political Parties;

Heads and representatives of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations;

Religious leaders and members of the Civil Society;

Election Observers;

Partners from the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) for the 8th May 2019, National, Provincial and Local Elections in the Republic of South Africa.

Let me begin by thanking all of you for honouring our invitation and attending to this launch. This demonstrates our collective commitment to the consolidation of democratic principles and constitutionalism in our Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Based on the invitation by the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) to SADC to observe the 8th May 2019 Provincial and Local Elections in the Republic of South Africa, and in line with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of South

Africa. The SADC Electoral Observation Mission is led by Honourable Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia

To this effect, SADC will observe elections based on its three-phase approach, which includes, the pre-elections phase, the elections phase, and the post-elections phase. The pre-election observation phase was deployed on 4th to 9th April 2019, during which, a Goodwill Mission was deployed to among others, assess if the legal, political, and security environments are conducive to the holding of credible elections in conformity with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. As we launch the SADC Electoral Observation Mission here today, pre-elections observations will continue, until the 7th of May 2019, on the eve of elections.

The elections observations phase will take place on the election day, the 8th May, 2019, intended to assess the electoral processes and laid down procedures, and if the environment was conducive for voters to exercise their civic rights.

The Post-election observations phase, will start immediately after elections, and aims at promoting electoral integrity, as well as peace and stability in the post-election period, and in doing so, to give effect to the commitments contained in the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission will cover all the 9 Provinces of the Republic of South Africa: namely the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Western Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and North West, deploying forty-seven (47) observers.

I am confident that these elections will further contribute to the enhancement of democracy in the Republic of South Africa, and in the region. May I therefore, call upon all electoral stakeholders in the Republic of South Africa to continue with the ongoing preparations in an inclusive and peaceful manner. May I also take this opportunity to encourage South Africans, to exercise their civic right by casting their votes, and elect their leaders democratically and in a peaceful manner, and allow the democratic dispensation to take its course, through the 8th May 2019 National, Provincial and Local elections. Your vote during these elections will continue to determine the political future of the Republic of South Africa. Please go out and vote to exercise your democratic right and vote for your preferred candidates.

Let me also thank all observers who are participating in the SEOM and commend the respective Member States that have contributed observers to the SEOM to the Republic of South Africa. While observing elections, you are at the same time representing SADC, and you are the SADC torch-bearers. We believe in your professionalism, and we are very confident that you will conduct yourselves in a manner that is commensurate with the principles and obligations of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission.

At this juncture allow me to inform you that the activities of the 2019 SADC Electoral Observation Mission in the Republic of South Africa will be coordinated from its Headquarters, located here at the Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria, up to the 16th of May 2019. All interested stakeholders are free to engage with the Mission.

Before I formally introduce the Head of Mission let me also take this opportunity to wish our observers success, as they deploy to the various provinces of the Republic of South Africa.

May I now introduce and invite Honourable Joseph Malanji, M.P., the Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2019 National and Provincial and Local Elections in the Republic of the South Africa to officially launch this Mission.

Thank You!