



**STATEMENT BY THE SADC CHAIRPERSON, HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

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**14th December, 2018**

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) expresses solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo in their endeavour to hold Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Elections on the 23rd of December 2018.

SADC notes the concerted efforts made by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to prepare the logistics for holding successful elections within the mandated time frames.

SADC notes with great concern the destruction of electoral materials after the occurrence of a fire on 13th December 2018 at one of the central warehouses of CENI in Kinshasa.

SADC is further concerned about the loss of life and destruction of property in the recent incidents of violence in Kalemie, Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi.

SADC calls on all political players to uphold the freedom of expression, assembly and unhindered campaigning which are the hallmarks of the democratic exercise of the will of the people during this period.

SADC, in line with its revised Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, strongly urges all stakeholders, particularly leaders of political parties, civil society, media and law enforcement authorities, to continue promoting a culture of tolerance and restraint and ensure that the 23rd December elections are not only successful but also peaceful and transparent.

SADC wishes to further emphasise that the forthcoming elections represent a major milestone in the history of the DRC and are instrumental in establishing sustainable peace and political stability.

SADC further wishes to inform all stakeholders that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) will continue to closely follow the electoral process and will report its observations to the relevant SADC political Organ in line with the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015).

**Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and  
Chairperson of SADC  
14th December, 2018.**