



LAUNCH STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE RICHARD MSOWOYA

**HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE
2025 GENERAL ELECTION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

DAR ES SALAAM

21 OCTOBER 2025

Distinguished Members of the SADC Organ Troika;

Distinguished Representatives of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania;

Professor Kula Theletsane, Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs and Representative of His Excellency, Mr. Elias Magosi, the Executive Secretary of SADC;

Chairperson and Representatives and Members of the Independent Electoral Commission;

Distinguished Representatives of International Electoral Observation Missions;

Your Excellencies, Heads and Representatives of the Diplomatic Missions Accredited to the United Republic of Tanzania;

Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC);

SADC Election Observers;

Representatives of Local Election Observers;

Religious Leaders and Members of the Civil Society;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the official launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) on behalf of His Excellency, Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika,

President of the Republic of Malawi, and the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government for inviting SADC to observe the country's General Election, scheduled for 29th October 2025 in the United Republic of Tanzania. The people of the United Republic of Tanzania are not alone in an electoral process this year. This is the third general election in the SADC Region in this one-month period between September and October 2025. It is my humble pleasure to reiterate that peaceful elections have just concluded in the Republics of Malawi and Seychelles. This is a demanding but vital process in terms of funds, time, and human resources.

To this end, let me express our gratitude to all SADC Member States and their citizens for enabling the deployment of our SEOMs by providing resources and observers for this purpose. To the personnel of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) involved in this process, I say, your hard work is greatly appreciated.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

SADC observation of elections in its Member States, is based on the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021)*. All SADC Member States affirmed their commitment to the implementation of these Principles and Guidelines. The Principles and Guidelines provide an objective and scientific methodology for the observation of elections, in order to contribute to the consolidation of democracy in the Region, by enhancing best electoral practices and addressing any electoral shortcomings. The Principles and Guidelines are also informed by key instruments of the African Union (AU), such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of 2007, as well as the relevant Conventions of the United Nations (UN).

Consistent with the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the deployment of this SEOM was preceded by a Pre-Election Assessment Goodwill Mission of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) from 11th to 21st July 2025. To enhance democratic consolidation, all Member States should gear their

efforts towards the implementation of various recommendations of the SEOMs, in particular, where such recommendations seek to close gaps and address specific challenges in the electoral systems. It is important to bear in mind that such recommendations improve the integrity and credibility of our elections.

Please allow me to express my gratitude to the stakeholders who made time to meet with the SEAC during the pre-election phase; and thank them in advance for availing themselves during the election-phase consultations that we will be starting tomorrow, 22nd October 2025.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) has been in the United Republic of Tanzania since 12th October 2025 to observe the General Elections set for 29th October 2025. The SEOM noted that, the elections are governed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, and a comprehensive set of relevant laws that include National Elections Act, Political Parties Affairs Laws Act, just to mention a few.

It is in line with these national legal instruments, that 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 democratic and development processes;
2. Enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association, assembly and expression;
3. Observance of the provisions of relevant legal frameworks in relation to the date or period of elections;
4. Measures to prevent corruption, bribery, favouritism, political violence, intimidation and intolerance;

5. Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the State Media as well as access to information by all citizens;
6. Respect for values of electoral justice such as integrity, impartiality and fairness;
7. No undue restraints against the opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for;
8. Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions;
9. Capacitation and empowerment of citizens through civic and voter education;
10. Acceptance of and respect for the election results by candidates and political parties as proclaimed to have been free, fair, transparent, credible and peaceful, by the competent and Independent Electoral Commission in accordance with the law of the land; and
11. Provision of electoral justice through expedient settlement of electoral disputes as provided for in the law.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is essential that all stakeholders understand that the mandate of the SEOM is to determine the adherence of the Member State holding elections to the relevant provisions of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. In this respect, please allow me to elaborate for the benefit of all.

In order to fulfill its mandate, the SEOM assesses and evaluates the following, amongst others:

- (i) whether the legal and constitutional framework guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and human rights.
- (ii) the structure and model of the electoral system, the Electoral Management Body (EMB), the Electoral Act and regulations and the nature of civil and political rights; and economic, social and cultural rights.
- (iii) the establishment, process of appointment and retention of members of EMBs; in addition to assessing the composition, status, independence, impartiality, professionalism and preparedness of the EMB for the election.
- (iv) the SEOM shall ensure that the delimitation of election boundaries was done in a manner acceptable to stakeholders, and whether the factors that prompted delimitation were in accordance with the laws of the land.
- (v) Whether the delimitation process was undertaken in accordance with the national law and without undue exclusion of particular groups or political interests.
- (vi) The procedures for nomination and provision of reasonable time frames to allow political parties and candidates to comply with the requirements of the registration process.
- (vii) The existence of a Code of Conduct governing all political parties and candidates.
- (viii) The neutrality of the security forces in providing election security; and the existence of requisite special voting facilities for security forces to enable them cast their votes.
- (ix) The requirements and practices regarding direct and indirect access to the mass media for political parties, candidates, supporters and the general public;

- (x) The requirements and practices concerning reporting by state controlled, public and private media about political parties, candidates and supporters or opponents.
- (xi) The capacity and quality of civic and voter education programmes to afford all prospective voters accurate, comprehensible and adequate information upon which to make electoral choices.
- (xii) The extent to which the process enjoys the trust of the electorate, including inclusiveness, accuracy, and transparency, and whether the electorate are able to own and identify with the process.
- (xiii) The appropriateness of locations of polling stations, and adequacy and accessibility of their facilities;
- (xiv) The production and distribution to polling stations and storage of ballots and other sensitive election materials;
- (xv) The conduct of voting, including assistance to voters, counting, tabulation and announcement of results; the transparency of procedures and adequacy of safeguards against inaccuracies; and
- (xvi) The conduct of procedures and processes concerning electoral complaints and challenges by citizens, prospective voters, and those seeking election, including the provision of effective remedies for violations of electoral related rights.

In order to obtain an objective and impartial basis from which to draw its findings, the SEOM necessarily requires to consult a broad, diverse, and unrestricted range of stakeholders in each Member State holding elections. Some of the most critical stakeholders are the competing political parties as well as the Civil Society Organizations. We understand that 18 out of 19 registered political parties are contesting in the general election.

You will therefore understand that given our limited time, our mission may not be able to engage with all political parties in the country. Let me point out that our observers will be deployed to **27 out of the 31 regions of the URT** and therefore will be able to complement the efforts of the mission headquarters in this regard. **Due to capacity challenges, SEOM will not deploy to Mtwara, Shinganga, Tabora and Tanga regions.**

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to inform you that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 29th October 2025 General Elections in the United Republic of Tanzania consists of 80 personnel. They are from 10 SADC Member States **namely, the Kingdoms of Eswatini and Lesotho, and the Republics of Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.**

Our observers will be deployed to **27** regions of the United Republic of Tanzania. The SEOM observations will focus on the pre-election, election and post-election periods, which includes the campaigns, the voting day and the process of the counting of the ballot papers.

SADC urges all registered voters to exercise their civic and political rights by going out to vote on 29th October 2025. We 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 the SADC Treaty, the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation; and the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

May I also take this opportunity to invite you all to attend the release of our Preliminary Statement regarding our observations of the 29th October 2025, on 31st October 2025, at this very venue.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my honour and privilege, on behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency, Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, to formally launch the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2025 General Election in the United Republic of Tanzania.

Thank You Very Much

Merci Beaucoup

Muito Obrigada

Asante Sana