



**SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM)
TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
PRELIMINARY STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE
MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE (MP)
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
AND HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION
MISSION TO THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
IN THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**Delivered on 22 January 2015
Lusaka, Republic of Zambia**

Honourable Madame Justice Irene Mambilima, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Zambia,

Your Excellency Kgalema Motlanthe, former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa and Head of the African Union (AU) Election Observation Mission,

Honourable Ellen Molekane, Deputy Minister of State Security of the Republic of South Africa and Deputy Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission

Members of the SADC Organ Troika, Ambassadors Julius Metsing and Nicky Nashandi,

Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC),

Representatives of Political Parties,

Fellow Heads of International Electoral Observation Missions,

Distinguished Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC),

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Members of Civil Society Organisations,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all.

It is my singular honour and privilege to welcome you to this press conference where we present the preliminary findings of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2015 Presidential Election in the Republic of Zambia. We thank you most heartily for accepting our invitation.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are aware, the Republic of Zambia lost an illustrious leader, the late President Michael Chilufya Sata on 28 October, 2014. May his soul rest in eternal peace! As a result of that sad loss, H.E. Dr. Guy Scott, Acting President of Zambia, acting in accordance with Article 38 of the Constitution of Zambia, proclaimed 20 January 2015, as the date for the Presidential Election.

It is our custom as SADC Member States to observe elections in our region in order to enhance and consolidate democracy, and in particular to improve the quality of

our electoral processes. The SADC Electoral Observation Mission has a duty to establish the extent to which the Constitutions and electoral laws in member states, as well as the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, are followed.

In pursuit of these objectives, SADC has sent Electoral Observation Missions to no less than six Member States during the last nine months. Today, SEOM is here in the Republic of Zambia to observe the Presidential Election in this SADC Member State at the invitation of the Government of Zambia that was extended in December 2014. Following that invitation, His Excellency Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, constituted the Electoral Observation Mission and appointed me, in my capacity as Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, to head the Mission. Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, SADC Executive Secretary, was mandated to facilitate the deployment of the Mission.

I was supported by other members of the Troika of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, in the persons of Ambassador Julius Metsing, representing the Kingdom of Lesotho, and Ambassador Nicky Nashandi, representing the Republic of Namibia, the incoming and outgoing Chairpersons of the Organ, respectively.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In accordance with SADC protocols, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) undertook a Goodwill and Pre- Deployment Mission to Zambia from 4 to 7 January 2015 to assess the level of preparedness and readiness of the country to hold the Presidential Election. The SEAC Report established that the political atmosphere and security environment in the Republic of Zambia were conducive to holding the election.

The SEOM was officially launched on 10 January 2015, at Cresta Golfview Hotel in Lusaka, the Headquarters of the Mission. Sixty-Seven Observers (67) from nine SADC Member States were deployed in eleven teams to the ten Provinces of Zambia.

Prior to the launch of our Mission, we paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Mines, Energy and Water Development, who was representing the Acting President of Zambia. We also paid a courtesy call on the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ).

The SEOM engaged various stakeholders to gather information on the electoral process. This engagement was useful in assisting the Mission to understand the

political context and general environment of the election process. It also provided a platform from which the Mission learnt about the views and concerns of various stakeholders.

The SEOM met several stakeholders that included, inter alia:

1. Contesting Political Party Candidates or their representatives;
2. Representatives of the Media;
3. Representatives of Civil Society Organisations;
4. Non-Governmental Organisations;
5. The Deputy Inspector-General of the Zambian Police;
6. Other Election Observation Missions;
7. The SADC Heads of Mission in Zambia.

During the engagements with the stakeholders, various issues were raised and the Mission sought clarification about them from the relevant authorities.

These concerns included amongst others, allegations of:

- Biased and partisan media;
- Insufficient Voter Education;
- Voters Roll of 2011 which was updated up to June 2012;
- Utilisation of Government resources by ruling party;
- Low women representation amongst candidates;
- Incidents of political violence, intimidation and political intolerance;
- Unauthorized campaigning by public officers;
- Advantage of incumbency around the PF Presidential candidate; and
- Readiness by some political parties to concede defeat.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SEOM observed that prior to the election, the political atmosphere was generally peaceful. However, the SEOM noted that there was inter-party intolerance and suspicion which resulted in sporadic incidents of violence. In some instances, gatherings and rallies of some political parties were disrupted by the members of their competing parties during the campaign period.

The SEOM noted that the legislative frameworks guiding the elections included amongst others, the Electoral Code of Conduct which stipulated the duties and responsibilities of stakeholders to the elections, including the public and private media. The Mission observed that there was an attempt by the public and private media to comply with the Electoral Code of Conduct in that respect.

The SEOM further noted that campaigning ended at 18:00 hours on 19 January 2015, and that no campaigning took place on the day of the election.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the Election Day, the SEOM observed the following:

- In general, polling stations opened on time, and the opening procedures were followed in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral law;
- The voting process generally went smoothly. The SEOM observed that there was no violence reported by its observers during voting. The SEOM also noted that the presence of the police contributed to the peaceful atmosphere during the entire voting process;
- Party agents and monitors were present at the opening at all polling stations observed;
- The layout of the polling stations promoted easy flow of voting, so that throughout the process, voting was orderly;
- Voters were unable to vote without producing their voters card;
- Most polling stations closed at 18h00 as provided for in the Electoral law. Voters who were still in queues at the formal closing of the polling stations could cast their vote;
- Counting at most polling stations started immediately after the closing of the polling stations. The prescribed counting procedures were adhered to by the Counting Assistants;
- Ballot boxes were sealed in the presence of party agents, observers and monitors;
- Heavy rains presented logistical and administrative challenges, and hampered the voting process.

The SEOM noted that voting and counting continued beyond 20 January 2015 as a result of the weather conditions, and this was duly communicated by the ECZ.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During the observation exercise, the SEOM noted some best practices in the electoral process in the Republic of Zambia. These included:

- a) Freedom of association, expression and opinion during the electoral campaigns;
- b) The holding of public presidential debates between political party candidates facilitated by radio and television stations;
- c) Improved media coverage for all political parties; and
- d) Electronic transmission of election results.

In order to further improve the quality of the electoral process in the Republic of Zambia, the SEOM makes the following recommendations for consideration by the Government of Zambia and other relevant stakeholders:

- A concerted effort to encourage women to participate in the political processes of the nation as candidates;
- Maintenance of an updated voters Roll and;
- Adequate civic and voter education by the ECZ to encourage the youth and women to participate in elections.

In the course of observing the elections, the SEOM noted that there was general adherence to the relevant national legal instruments as well as the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

The SEOM took note of some incidents of violence during the election campaign; however it was observed that this did not hamper the participation of voters in the election.

Based on its observations, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission concludes that the 2015 Presidential Election in Zambia was peaceful, transparent, credible, free, and fair, thus reflecting the will of the people of Zambia in accordance with the National Laws and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

The SEOM urges and appeals to all Candidates and their political parties, and other stakeholders, to respect the will of the people and to uphold the laws of the Republic of Zambia by accepting the outcome of the election as and when announced by the constitutionally mandated body – the Electoral Commission of Zambia. Any challenge to the election results should be done in accordance with the laws of the country.

Zambia is known to be a peaceful country and we appeal to all political parties to behave in a manner that promotes peace, security and stability of the country and her citizens.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SEOM congratulates the Electoral Commission of Zambia which was able, at short notice, to professionally organise, conduct and deliver a credible election.

Finally, on behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, the SEOM congratulates the people of the Republic of Zambia for the manner in which they conducted themselves during the electoral process.

I would like, on behalf of all SADC observers, to express our sincere gratitude to the people of Zambia for their warm welcome and cooperation during the work of our Mission.

Zikomo

Thank you very much.

Cresta Golfview Hotel,
Lusaka,
Republic of Zambia