



MEDIA RELEASE

SADC LAUNCHES ELECTORAL OBSERVER MISSION IN DRC

On 11 November, 2011, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) officially launched the biggest and strongest ever Electoral Observer Mission for the Democratic Republic of Congo Presidential and Parliamentary Elections to be held on the 28 of November, 2011. The Mission, comprising more than 200 observers from SADC Members States as well as from SADC Diplomatic Missions accredited to the DRC, was launched, on behalf of the President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, H.E Jacob G Zuma by Honourable Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, Minister of Correctional Services of the Republic of South Africa and Head of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM). Also in attendance was the Deputy Minister in the Office of the President, Hon. Obed Bapela and the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Tomaz A Salomão.

The activities of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission will be conducted from the main office based in Kinshasa. In addition, SADC has established three Satellite Offices in Goma in North Kivu Province, Lubumbashi in Katanga Province and Mbunji-Mayi in Kasai-Oriental Province. This will allow the Mission to cover extensively all electoral processes in the country before, during and after the voting date. The SADC Electoral Observer Mission will also be attending and observing political party campaigns and rallies amongst other activities.

Furthermore, the conduct of the Mission will be guided by the relevant legislation of the Democratic Republic of Congo and international instruments among others, namely: the Constitution; the Electoral Act; the Electoral Code of Conduct; the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation; and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

Indeed, the current peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo, five years after the first democratic elections in the history of the country, is evident that the 'inter-Congolese Dialogue' towards peace, reconciliation, stabilization and normalization of the country through democracy and democratic institutions, fully supported by SADC's collective effort, has yielded tangible results that we witness today. The DRC of today is completely different from the DRC of 2006 during the first democratic elections.

Therefore, the second General Elections to take place on the 28 November 2011 in the Democratic Republic of Congo constitute a significant milestone, since they mark the entrée of the second phase of the process of democratization and the 'consolidation stage'. In this regard, the dissemination of democratic values amongst all stakeholders and society constitute a major challenge, thus calling for responsibility of all stakeholders to campaign and contest peacefully. The presence of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission is in support of the delivery of a credible, transparent and legitimate election by the Electoral Commission.

The SADC Electoral Observer Mission was launched in the presence of the Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the DRC, International electoral observer missions, leaders and representatives of political parties, leaders and representatives of the religious community, members of the civil society and the media.

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