



**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
**SADC ELECTION OBSERVER MISSION (SEOM)**  
**TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**  
**18 MAY 2012**

The SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) was launched on 12 May 2012, by Hon. Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Head of SEOM and Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, together with Dr Tomáz Salomão, SADC Executive Secretary and representatives of the Troika, from the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Zambia in their capacities as Incoming and Outgoing Chairpersons of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation respectively. The SEOM has since deployed 65 observers from the SADC Member States to the ten electoral districts of Lesotho and we can state that our observers are on the ground in the execution of their mandate.

The Leadership of the SEOM, comprising the Heads of the Member States represented, has and continues to conduct extensive consultations with the stakeholders and to date has held meetings with political parties, Chairperson of the IEC, religious leaders, government representatives and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Kingdom of Lesotho for discussions on what is obtaining on the ground. These interactions, amongst others, entailed the exchange of views. Important to note is that the campaigns are taking place in an environment that is generally peaceful and conducive for this purpose.

The Electoral Code of Conduct augmented by the Electoral Pledge as signed by the political stakeholders encourages political tolerance, maturity and the acceptance of the election outcome.

Political Parties contesting the parliamentary elections have held rallies in various constituencies. Members of the SEOM have attended and observed the electoral campaign events as they unfold.

To date, the SEOM has not witnessed any acts of political disturbance. We will continue to encourage the Basotho stakeholders to remain committed to the spirit of political tolerance in order to safeguard the fundamental rights of the electorate to choose their preferred candidate in a conducive environment.

On logistical issues, the SEOM continues to interact with the Independent Electoral Commission of the Kingdom of Lesotho (IEC) with the purpose of gauging the country's readiness as the election date draws near. The SEOM has been assured that electoral materials will be delivered timeously to all the electoral districts and to the polling stations.

The SEOM urges the international community, through all other observer missions on the ground, to support the Basotho in the execution of this noble responsibility. The SEOM reiterates its resolve to observe the conduct of elections which amongst others, involves pre-election observation of the election process (voting and counting) and post-election observation.

These parliamentary elections are a significant milestone in the consolidation of democracy in Lesotho, the region and the continent. We remain committed and unwavering in our support to the people of Lesotho and are encouraged by the level of enthusiasm displayed by the electorate. The SEOM is appealing to the people of the Kingdom to exercise their right to vote and be voted for in an environment that is peaceful and conducive to deliver an election that will be transparent and be a true reflection of the will of the people.

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