



**SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION  
TO THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR**

**LAUNCH STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HONOURABLE NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH (MP)**

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**AND**

**HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION**

**TO THE**

**20 DECEMBER 2013 SECOND ROUND PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE  
ELECTIONS**

**IN THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR,**

**DELIVERED ON 9 DECEMBER 2013**

**IBIS HOTEL  
ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR**

- Representatives of the International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M);
- The Deputy Executive Secretary, Dr Themba Mhlongo;
- The Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission of the Transition (CENI-T);
- Members of the CENI-T;
- Representatives of Political Parties and Associations;
- Fellow Election Observation Missions;
- Your Excellences, Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of Madagascar;
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Religious leaders;
- Members of the Civil Society;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

At the outset, may I request you all to please stand and observe a minute of silence in honour of the memory of former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa who passed away four days ago.

President Mandela has showed the way to many in the world of what can be achieved when we reconcile our differences. May the soul of Madiba rest in peace! The most fitting tribute that the people of Madagascar, and all of Africa, can pay to Nelson Mandela at this time in our history, is to organise and participate in a peaceful, non-violent and orderly election, and to entrench democracy in the country.

It is my pleasure to return to Madagascar to launch the SEOM follow-up mission to Madagascar.

On behalf of the Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, and in my capacity as Head of the SADC Election Observation Mission, I wish to thank you for

honouring our invitation to the launch of the SADC Election Observation Mission, the SEOM. I also wish to thank all the SEOM Members for responding positively to the invitation to participate yet again in this crucial phase of the election in Madagascar. As you go out to different parts of the country please remember that our responsibility as SADC Observers is to be strictly impartial and to ensure that the elections are conducted in line with the *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* and the laws of Madagascar.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts made by the SADC Deputy Executive Secretary, Dr Themba Mhlongo, to put in place all the administrative arrangements for the successful deployment of the SADC Team.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

You will recall that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) was engaged with the election observation in the Republic of Madagascar during the first round of the Presidential Elections held on 25 October 2013.

The launch of the SEOM to Madagascar and the presence of the SEOM Observers for the second round of Presidential and the Legislative Elections, attests to the commitment of SADC to assist the people of Madagascar in their efforts to return the country to constitutional normalcy as stated in the Statement of 27 October 2013.

The SEOM Mission is in the country as observers of the electoral process and in fulfilment of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation that requires cooperation of Member States in political processes, of which elections is a part. At this juncture, allow me to thank the Government of Transition, and the Electoral Commission for the cooperation extended to SEOM and all international observers. I am confident that the same cooperation and support will be extended during this mission.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the unconstitutional change of government in 2009, Madagascar has experienced political instability and economic dislocation. As a region, we are convinced that the political challenges facing this country can, and will, ultimately be overcome. The mediation process led by the SADC Mediator, His Excellency Joaquim Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique, has played a significant role in ensuring that the political and the electoral environment prevails in the country to ensure that democracy is returned to Madagascar.

I would like to stress that Madagascar is not the first country to have to work hard to bring about reconciliation among its own people, who may seem to have insurmountable differences. However, the history of our region has shown that peace and development are possible when we put aside our differences. Reconciliation is crucially important for any country emerging from political crisis.

The SADC Roadmap is an instrument put in place by the people of Madagascar to facilitate the transition to democracy in the country, and a return to constitutional normalcy.

As is an established tradition in our region, this Mission has been constituted and deployed under the leadership of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia. The constitution of the SEOM team to Madagascar follows the invitation by the National Independent Electoral Commission for Transition (CENI-T).

Every SADC Member State holding elections strives to apply the *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* and is observed by other SADC Member States, through the SEOM, to work for a credible electoral process

As indicated in our Observation Report of the first round of the Presidential Election, SADC is satisfied with the peaceful and orderly conduct of all the candidates and the people of Madagascar. As we go into this second round of the Presidential Election together with the Legislative Elections, I, on behalf of SADC, would like to appeal to all

the people of Madagascar, especially to the leaders at different levels of society, to engage in a peaceful election. SADC will discourage any individual or groups who may attempt to disrupt of the electoral process, before, during and after.

On behalf of the Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, H.E Hifikepunye Pohamba, I declare the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the Republic of Madagascar official launched.

Merci Beaucoup.