



**STATEMENT BY HON. NETUMBO NANDI- NDAITWAH, MP,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA, AND HEAD OF THE SADC OBSERVER MISSION TO
THE ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR AT THE
LAUNCH OF THE SADC OBSERVER MISSION**

**IBIS HOTEL
ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR**

14 OCTOBER 2013

His Excellency Mr Joaquim Chissano, Former President of Mozambique and SADC Mediator,

Madame Béatrix Atallah, President of the National Independent Electoral Commission Of The Transition (Ceni-T);

Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Executive Secretary Of SADC;

Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations accredited to The Republic of Madagascar;

Heads of Election Observation Missions and their teams;

Civil Society Organizations;

Religious Leaders;

Esteemed members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon,

Not long ago, I was together with some of you in the Kingdom of Swaziland to Observe Elections in that country. Today, we meet on yet another equally important SADC Election Observer Mission, this time in the Republic of Madagascar.

On behalf of the SADC Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, I wish to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to you all for making yourselves available to

undertake yet another mission away from your families and your work. However, I believe that this is a sacrifice worth making.

For the economic development and prosperity of our people will largely depend on the entrenchment of democracy in our region. Thus your observation of the elections is a significant contribution for the consolidation of peace, democracy and economic stability in our region.

I also wish to thank the Government and the people of Madagascar for their welcome and their hospitality. I trust that as you are deployed in various parts of the country, you will have the opportunity to interact and forge enduring friendship with the people of Madagascar.

This launching ceremony marks the official engagement of the SADC Observer Mission to observe the 2013 Presidential and Legislative Elections in the Republic of Madagascar.

Therefore, in my capacity as Representative of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, I wish to announce the presence and deployment of the SADC Election Observer Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Madagascar.

As a Regional Election Observer Mission, SEOM is guided by various instruments which include the SADC Treaty, the SADC Protocol on

Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, as well the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

These instruments not only provide guidance and benchmarks for shared political and democratic values, but are also commitments by Member States to hold democratic elections, in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible manner.

As in other Missions, the observers will employ a systematic assessment of the electoral process in accordance with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

In the implementation of its mandate, the SEOM will respect and abide by the above mentioned SADC instruments, as well as the Constitution and Laws of Madagascar.

Distinguished guests,

You will recall that SADC, the African Union (AU) and the UN have had a long and arduous engagement with the political stakeholders in Madagascar, in order for the country to return to its constitutional normalcy.

In this regard, we pay tribute to the SADC Mediation team under the able leadership of His Excellency Mr Joaquim Chissano.

Throughout this process, President Chissano demonstrated patience, commitment and determination to help the Malagasy stakeholder to

implement the road map. It is his skillful mediation which made it possible for the political stakeholders to commit themselves to the SADC roadmap.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to call upon all stakeholders, especially the Presidential Candidates contesting the elections, to exercise tolerance and restraint in order to ensure adherence to the Guidelines and Principles which I already alluded to earlier.

I am satisfied to note that thus far, the Presidential Candidates and their supporters have campaigned peacefully and without intimidation.

In the same vein, I would like to encourage the Malagasy people to exercise their fundamental political and democratic right, by going out in big numbers to cast their votes.

Distinguished Observers, SADC is not here only to observe the present elections, but has supported this process since the crisis broke out more than four years ago. To demonstrate our commitment and regional solidarity with the people of Madagascar, the SADC leaders have also made a solemn commitment to provide funding to the tune of USD 10 million. The delay in the implementation of the SADC Roadmap has resulted in the delay of the remittance by member states. This delay should not be

misinterpreted as a lack of commitment on our part. In fact, some countries, including Namibia, have already remitted their contributions.

On behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, I have the pleasure to officially launch the SADC Election Observer Mission, (SEOM) to the 2013 Elections in Madagascar.

I thank you!