



**STATEMENT ON THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SADC
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE 2013
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

IN

THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR

BY

**H. E. DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX
SADC EXECUTIVE-SECRETARY**

ANTANANARIVO, 14 OCTOBER 2013

- **Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Namibia and Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Madagascar 2013 Presidential Elections;**
- **H. E. Joaquim Chissano, Former President of the Republic of Mozambique and SADC Mediator for Madagascar;**
- **The Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission of the Transition (CENI-T);**
- **Your Excellences, Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of Madagascar;**
- **Representatives of the International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M);**
- **Representatives of Political Parties and Associations;**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Religious leaders;**
- **Election Observation Missions;**
- **Members of the Civil Society;**
- **Members of the media;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen.**

It is a privilege and honor, to welcome you to this gathering on the occasion of the launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2013 Presidential Elections, in the Republic of

Madagascar. Allow me to also take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your presence in this event.

Distinguished Guests, SADC accords greater importance to the current elections in Madagascar, indeed this is a great milestone. In accordance with the provisions of the ‘SADC Treaty’, ‘SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation’ and ‘SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections’; the Republic of Madagascar invited SADC to observe the 2013 Presidential and Legislative Elections. To that effect, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, has constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to observe the Republic of Madagascar Presidential Elections scheduled for 25 October, 2013.

To reach this impressive stage of elections, a lot of efforts were deployed by all parties engaged in the quest for a solution to achieve durable peace in Madagascar. At this juncture, let me take this opportunity to extend our appreciations for the efforts by all parties to the Roadmap, the Malagasy people, the SADC Mediator, the African Union (AU); United Nations (UN); the International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M) the International Community in general, and the public at large, for the tireless efforts and progress made in the implementation of the Roadmap. Efforts by all parties, and a number of stakeholders have indeed yielded tangible results, thus enabling the holding of these forthcoming elections.

The success of the 2013 elections will mark a 'new beginning' towards national reconciliation and reconstruction, and thus stability and development in Madagascar. It is our hope that once this phase is completed, the country will focus on socio-economic development and poverty eradication programmes. It is critical for all stakeholders to work together for the benefit and welfare of the Malagasy people, for the betterment of Malagasy people politically, socially and economically.

The Republic of Madagascar has been under four (4) years of political crisis that has led the country into a socio - economic deterioration. In April 2013, the World Bank reported that the economy of Madagascar has stalled with an overall economic growth that has been flat over the period 2009-2012.

This momentum needs to be maintained, and SADC sincerely believe that the spirit which guided the Malagasy political stakeholders to negotiate and sign the Roadmap in Antananarivo, on 15 September 2011, with the aim to return the country to a constitutional normalcy and rebuild the nation will prevail.

Distinguished Guests, it is gratifying to note that over the past years, SADC election observation missions have made a meaningful contribution to the consolidation of Democracy in the region through sharing lessons learnt and best practices. In the same vein, it is our expectation that these elections will contribute in the enhancement of good governance and democracy in the Region.

The presence of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) in the Republic of Madagascar is also to ensure that the provisions of the

SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections; the Madagascar Constitution and the Electoral law are adhered to in the conduct of these elections.

To facilitate this noble cause, SADC will deploy a sizeable number of Observers from the SADC Member States as well as from SADC Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of Madagascar, thus, allowing the Mission to cover extensively the electoral process in the country before, during and after the Elections.

In accordance with SADC Treaty, SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the conduct of the Observer Mission will be guided by the relevant legislation of the Republic of Madagascar and other relevant continental international instruments governing democratic elections, namely:

- The Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Madagascar;
- The Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar;
- Electoral Act;
- Law on Political Parties;
- Law on the Status of Opposition and Opposition Political Parties;
- Law on the Election of First President of the Fourth Republic of Madagascar;

- Law on the First Legislative Elections of the Fourth Republic of Madagascar;
- other relevant electoral legislation of Madagascar;
- the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
- the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation; and
- the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

Distinguished Guests, As a part of the best practices and aiming at enhancing reliability and validity of its findings, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission will share information with other Election Observation Missions in the country. In this respect, consultations with stakeholders involved in the process will be undertaken by the Mission in order to be seized with the electoral environment and momentum.

Distinguished Guests, activities of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) in the Republic of Madagascar will be conducted from its Headquarters based at the **HOTEL IBIS ANTANANARIVO ANKORONDRANO**, in Antananarivo.

It is our expectation that, after the election observation exercise, we will gather once again here at the same venue for the Observer Mission to present its findings and Preliminary Statement on the 2013 Presidential Elections in the Republic of Madagascar.

It is equally important to appreciate that for a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible electoral process; the dissemination of

democratic values and principles among all relevant stakeholders and society in general is the responsibility of all stakeholders. And as said by John Kennedy, I quote “ **change is the Law of life, and those who look only to past or present are sure to miss the future**”, and also by Pope John Paul II I quote “ **the future starts today and not tomorrow**”.

With these remarks, it is now my honor and privilege to introduce and invite the Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2013 Presidential Elections, in the Republic of Madagascar, Honorable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Namibia; Chairperson of SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (MCO); and also Representative of His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, to now officially launch the Mission.

Thank you very much

Muito obrigado

Merci beaucoup



Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax delivering the Statement of the Official Launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM).



Chair of ORGAN and SADC ES courtesy call on President of CENI-T, Mrs. Atallah Béatrice.