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PRESS RELEASE ON DEPLOYMENT OF SADC OBSERVERS TO THE 2013 ZIMBABWE HARMONISED ELECTIONS OF JULY 31, 2013

The deployment of SADC Observers got into full swing following the launching of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) to the 2013 Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections on July 15, 2013 at the Rainbow Towers Hotel in Harare, Zimbabwe.

SEOM was launched by Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ, Hon. Bernard Kamillius Membe, the United Republic of Tanzania's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation in his capacity as the Representative of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, which makes him the Head of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM).

The SEOM was launched in the presence of over 600 witnesses, among them various dignitaries including cabinet ministers, the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the Chairperson and members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC), Members of other Election Observation Missions, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Republic of Zimbabwe, Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties, Religious Leaders, Civil Society, Representatives of other Elections Observers, members of the press corps and many other interested parties.

Clustered in teams of two to three observers from SADC Member States, 173 SADC Observer Teams have thus far been deployed to the 10 Provinces of Zimbabwe including Harare. The deployment is in progress, to cover all the 210 constituencies before the end of this week.

During the Pre-election Phase, the Teams started observing the two-day Special Vote of the armed forces that took place on July 14 & 15, 2013.

Member States:

Angola	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia	Swaziland
Botswana	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania
Democratic Republic of Congo		Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia
				Zimbabwe

All correspondence should be addressed to the Executive Secretary

It is now continuing with observation of electoral campaigns, media coverage, and stakeholder meetings. Closer to elections date, that is July 31, 2013. the observation will include the distribution of polling materials.

Polling Phase will consist of observing opening of the polling stations, the ballot casting and counting.

The Post-election Phase is about the release of the SEOM Preliminary Statement on the findings of the Observation exercise.

It is anticipated that SEOM will remain in the country to witness the official announcement of the outcome of the 2013 Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections.

At least 50 foreign observer groups drawn from regional and sub-regional organisations were invited to observe the 2013 Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections, among them, the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific, the African Union, the Association of South-Asian Nations, Caribbean Community, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Lusophone countries, East African Community, Non-Aligned Movement, the Pan African Parliament, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and many others.

Some individual African countries that in the past have also invited Zimbabwe to observe their elections have also been invited, including Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Invitations were also extended to individual countries from other regions of the world. From Asia and the Middle East, these are China, India, Indonesia, Iran, and Malaysia. From the Americas, Brazil, Jamaica, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba, are the individual countries invited, while from Europe it is Russia, Belarus and Serbia that were invited. The United States-based December 12 Movement was also invited.

The SEOM Headquarters will keep all stakeholders posted through **"The SADC Election Observer's Diary - 2013 Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections"**, a daily summary of SEOM work to be published on the SADC website as well as emailed.

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**ISSUED: SEOM HEADQUARTERS
HARARE, ZIMBABWE**

JULY 17, 2013

Member States:

2

Angola	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia	Swaziland
Botswana	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania
Democratic Republic of Congo		Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia
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