



**STATEMENT
BY
HIS EXCELLENCY OLDEMIRO BALOI
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE
AND
HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM)
TO
THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS
IN
THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

LUSAKA, 30 JULY 2016

Your Excellency, Mrs Emilie Ayazah Mushobekwa,
Deputy Executive Secretary of SADC;

Distinguished Members of SADC Organ Troika;
Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of
Zambia;

Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties;

Heads of International Electoral Observation
Missions;

Your Excellencies, Heads and Representatives of
the of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the
Republic of Zambia;

Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council;

SADC Election Observers;

Representatives of Local Election Observers;

Religious Leaders and Members of the Civil
Society;

Members of the media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the official launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2016 General Elections in the Republic of Zambia.

On behalf of His Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and indeed on my own behalf, please accept my sincere gratitude for your presence on this august occasion.

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here to observe the forthcoming 2016 General Elections, at the invitation of the Electoral Commission of Zambia, of the Republic of Zambia, as provided for in the *SADC Treaty*; the *SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation* and the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections*.

His Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique and Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) and mandated the Executive Secretary of SADC to prepare the logistics for its deployment. A considerable amount of work has already been done by the Secretariat, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC), the Troika and other stakeholders, to ensure the success of the SEOM.

SADC Member States continue to uphold and implement the culture of election observation, which brings pride to us as a region. The deployment of the SEOM to this country is therefore in line with this collective culture of promoting these shared political values, systems and ideals, expressed through institutions that are democratic, legitimate, and must be increasingly effective.

We are aware that in preparation for these elections, the Electoral Commission of Zambia carried out civic and voter education. In this exercise, the Electoral Commission of Zambia interacted with various stakeholders.

This is highly commendable as it ensures shared expertise and inclusivity, that contributes to incorporate trust and confidence in to the electoral process.

We have also been informed that voter registration started on 14 September 2015 and concluded on 31 March 2016 and that this process was overseen by the ECZ. We therefore believe that this provides eligible citizens of Zambia a chance to exercise their right to choose the leadership they prefer, in line with the laws of the land and the related regional and international frameworks. Such commitment and adherence to these common standards makes our region one of the most peaceful on the continent.

The holding of these elections boldly testifies that Zambia continues to demonstrate maturity in the observance and practise of democratic governance. Because of this virtue that the Zambians uphold, we are confident that these elections will be a success.

The work of the SEOM is guided by the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections adopted in 2015, which are aligned to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007). The work of the SEOM is also guided by the relevant legislation of the Republic of Zambia, such and as its Constitution and the Electoral Law. Key to these, are the provisions addressing the election of the President of the Republic of Zambia, Members of Parliament and Councillors.

During this election, as is standard practice, Observers will assess the conduct of the elections against a set of pillar principles drawn from the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections such as:

1. Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
2. Freedom of association;
3. Political tolerance;
4. Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the state media;
5. Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for;
6. Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions;
7. Voter education;
8. Acceptance and respect of the election results by political parties as proclaimed to have been free and fair by the competent Electoral Commission in accordance with the law of the land; and
9. Challenge of the election results as provided for in the law.

**Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to take this opportunity to inform you that the deployment of SEOM was preceded by SEAC's arrival in April 2016, where it engaged stakeholders in Zambia, sensitising them on the Revised Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. This was followed by a high powered SEAC Pre-election Goodwill Mission which was undertaken from 5 to 12 June 2016. As you know, SEAC was established by the SADC Heads of State Summit in 2005 to advise on matters of elections, democracy and good governance. We are now at the third stage, which is the deployment. SEAC is composed of eminent justices, senior advocates and distinguished scholars with immense experience in matters of democracy building and governance. As is the culture, the objective of the mission was to assess the level of readiness and preparedness of the Republic of Zambia to hold these elections. The findings reveal that, in general, the Electoral Commission of Zambia and the relevant stakeholders in the Republic of Zambia

have taken necessary measures to ensure that the principles for conducting democratic elections as outlined in the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, are observed. We therefore conclude that the Republic of Zambia is prepared and ready to hold elections on 11 August 2016, concurrently with the Referendum that seeks to amend the Constitution to enhance the Bill of Rights contained in Part III of the Constitution of Zambia.

**Esteemed guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

As SADC observes these elections, it encourages the Electoral Commission of Zambia to conduct its work professionally; the political leadership to lead by example in terms of electoral behaviour; and the electorate to act responsibly. As SEOM, we are confident that the deployment of our observers will contribute to enhance the credibility of the overall electoral process.

As a region, we have made great strides in ensuring participation of citizens in decision making, as a part of our efforts to promote democratic values, practices and strengthening institutions of democracy.

Our Member States have Constitutions that enshrine principles and provisions of equal opportunities and full participation of all citizens in the political processes. In this context, this is provided for, in the newly amended national Constitution of Zambia, (Act No.2 2016) which came into effect on 5 January 2016.

Furthermore, the Constitution of Zambia underscores the need to ensure that Zambia's electoral procedures, among other aspects, guarantee citizens the liberty to exercise their political rights.

The country's Constitution also stipulates the need for the holding of elections that are free and fair, free from violence, intimidation and corruption. It equally emphasizes the need for an electoral process that is independent, accountable, efficient and transparent, that provides for the timely resolution of electoral disputes. It

is in light of this provision, that we appeal to all
Zambians, that should there be any areas of
disagreement, they should follow the laid down
procedures, as provided for by the laws of the land and
the relevant institutions should respond timely and
effectively to the questions that may arise. As SEOM,
we expect that all the activities undertaken during this
election should be in observance of these rights and
freedoms which are also encapsulated in the revised
SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic
Elections.

Having said all this, I am pleased to inform you that
the SEOM to the 2016 Zambia General Elections is now
fully constituted and comprises observers from 10 out of
14 SADC Member States that will be deployed throughout
in various constituencies.

As the day of the 11th of August, 2016 approaches,
allow me to mention that the outcome of this election lies
in the hands of the people of the Republic of Zambia.
The manner in which they conduct themselves will
determine the outcome of this election. As alluded to

earlier, and for the sake of emphasis, we strongly call upon the political stakeholders to strictly adhere to all relevant legislation governing the elections in the Republic of Zambia, which are provided for in the country's statutes.

We also urge all political parties to adhere and accept the results of the elections and lodge their complaints and grievances through the relevant institutions, such as the Constitutional Court.

May I, therefore, take this opportunity to encourage all stakeholders to ensure that these General Elections are run in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible manner; and that the electoral process adheres to democratic values and principles; and commend all the stakeholders, for their efforts in putting in place an enabling environment for holding these General Elections.

Lastly, may I also take this opportunity to invite you all to attend the release of our Preliminary Statement scheduled for the 13th of August 2016, at this very venue.

**Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my singular honour, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, H.E Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, to declare the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2016 General Elections in the Republic of Zambia, officially launched. We look forward to a lot of work from all the members of the SEOM and successful General Elections in the Republic of Zambia.

Thank you very much

Merci beaucoup

Muito obrigado.