



**SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO
THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA**

**PRELIMINARY
STATEMENT**

BY

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COOPERATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AND
HEAD OF THE SEOM TO THE 2017 GENERAL ELECTIONS
HELD IN THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA**

**Delivered on 25 August, 2017
Talatona Convention Hotel,
LUANDA**

The Chairperson of the Angola National Electoral Commission (CNE);
Your Excellency José Maria Pereira Neves, Former Prime Minister of
Cape Verde and Head of the African Union Electoral Observation
Mission (AUEOM);

Your Excellency Miguel Trovoada, Former President and Prime Minister
of São Tomé and Príncipe and Head of Mission of the Community of
Portuguese Language Speaking Countries Electoral Observation
Mission;

Commissioner Antonio Chipanga, Head of the Electoral Commissions
Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC) Electoral Observation Mission;

Mr Mangral Bante, Head of the Economic Community of Central African
States (ECCAS) Electoral Observation Mission;

Your Excellency Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Executive Secretary of
the Southern African Development Community (SADC);

Distinguished Members of the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence
and Security Cooperation;

Distinguished Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC);

Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Angola;

Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties;

National and International Election Observation Missions;

Your Excellences Heads and Representatives of the Diplomatic Missions
accredited to the Republic of Angola,

Traditional and Religious Leaders;

Esteemed Members of the Media;

Members of Civil Society, Women and Youth Organisations;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Good morning”

“Bom dia”

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to this historic occasion on the presentation of the Southern African Development Community Electoral Observation Mission’s Preliminary Statement on the General Elections held on 23 August 2017 in the Republic of Angola. Allow me also to express my profound gratitude for your participation in this historic event.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

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The holding of the General Elections in the Republic of Angola marks yet another significant milestone towards democratisation of the Angolan Political System after the protracted civil war between 1975 and 2002. Since 1992 the Republic of Angola has held three General Elections in 2008, 2012 and 2017. These 2017 General Elections are the second to be conducted under the 2010 Constitution of the Republic of Angola.

The 2010 Constitution introduced, inter alia, term limits to the Presidency and to other key offices of Government, as well as strengthening the legal framework governing multi-party elections, and establishing an independent National Electoral Commission. These incremental steps potentially create a conducive environment for political stability, economic growth, and sustainable development.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

This Mission is a response to an invitation from the National Electoral Commission of the Republic of Angola (**CNE**) to SADC to observe the General Elections in August 2017, in line with the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Election (2015).

Pursuant to this, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) consisting of 70 Observers, was officially launched on 12th August, 2017 in Luanda, and deployed on 17th August to the following 14 provinces of Angola; Luanda, Bengo, Benguela, Bié, Cabinda, Cunene, Huambo, Huíla, Cuanza-Norte, Cuanza-Sul, Lunda-Norte, Lunda-Sul, Malange and Zaire.

The supervision of elections amongst SADC Member States is conducted by the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Co-operation. Tanzania has just completed its tenure as Chair of the Organ Troika under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In order to understand better the electoral process and the level of preparedness to hold elections, the SADC Mission engaged in a wide range of stakeholders' meetings involving the state, the National Electoral Commission, political parties, the media, civil society, faith-based groups, and international election observation missions.

It is worth noting that prior to this mission, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) undertook a Pre-Election Goodwill Mission from 26th to 30th June, 2017 with a view to assessing the political environment of the country as well as the level of preparedness of the Republic of Angola to hold these General Elections. This is part of our Long-Term election observation methodology as contained in the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

At this juncture, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission would like to highlight its Preliminary Findings on the conduct of the 2017 General Elections, which are informed by our evaluation of the Constitutional and Legal Framework of the Republic of Angola:

1. Article 4.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola provides that political power shall be exercised through free democratic elections under the terms of the Constitution and the law. In this context, the 2017 General Elections were contested under the Constitution and the Law on General Elections; the Law on the National Electoral Commission, the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Political Parties Funding; the Electoral Observation Law,

the Media Law, and the Electoral Code of Conduct. In this regard the SADC Electoral Observation Mission observed a number of good practices that have been enshrined in the Constitution and the laws mentioned above:

- (i) The administration of the elections is led by the National Electoral Commission which is required to exercise functional independence, and whose members are appointed by the Superior Council of the Judiciary, and the National Assembly respectively.
- (ii) Members of the National Assembly are elected under a proportional representation system and, in accordance with Article 143 of the Constitution, chosen in universal, free, equal, direct, secret and periodic elections by citizens who reside in Angola, and Angolan citizens residing abroad for work, study, illness, similar or other reasons¹. On the other hand, the Republic votes as a single constituency for the President who, under Article 109 of the Constitution, will be the individual leading the national list of the political party or coalition of political parties which receives the most votes in the General Elections.

¹ Reference to other reasons is provided under article 2.(2) of the Law on General Elections.

2. However, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission, also noted a few areas where improvements may be made to enhance the conduct of democratic elections in the Republic of Angola. These suggested improvements are determined by the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, as follows:

- (i) Given that voting results are ordinarily a matter for contest amongst political parties, it is important that the registration of voters and the maintenance of the voters' roll be a function assigned to the National Electoral Commission as an independent electoral stakeholder. Under the current arrangement this function is exercised by the Ministry of Territorial Administration.
- (ii) Whilst the law recognises the right of Angolans residing abroad to vote in elections, it is necessary to complement the law by delivering civic and voter education aimed at explaining diaspora voting opportunities contained under Article 2(2-3) of the Law on General Elections which also permit Angolans abroad to vote by correspondence. This is important as

currently there are a number of misconceptions about the voting rights of Angolans residing abroad.

- (iii) Advance knowledge of the location of polling stations is critical for the benefit of voters, candidates, monitors and observers. Whilst Article 87 of the Law on General Elections states that the National Electoral Commission should draw up and approve the numbers and locations of polling stations within 35 days before the election date, the law is silent regarding exactly by when, before the election date, the list of polling stations should be disseminated to the relevant electoral stakeholders. In this regard, Article 87 only states that the dissemination of such information should be done “with proper advance notice”. Providing a clear and reasonable timeframe for the dissemination of the locations and numbers of the polling stations will address concerns raised by stakeholders during the SEOM consultations.

- (iv) Whilst Article 63(2) of the General Election Law, as complemented by Article 2.2 (r) of the Electoral Code of Conduct attempt to create circumstances of equality

during the campaign period, by for example, proscribing the use of state resources for the benefit of one party over another, it is not very clear how the implementation of these legal provisions works in practice.

3. The Mission also noted that, in support of electoral campaigns and according to the Political Party Funding Law, the Government of Angola disbursed the amount of **one billion and forty million** Angolan Kwanzas which is equivalent to **6.3 Million US\$** for each political party contesting in the 2017 General Elections. The Mission notes that the disbursements were done on the basis of equality of political parties which is highly commendable given that the law only provides for equitable financial support.
4. The Mission further observed that, the electoral legal framework in Angola provides for the allocation of media time for all political parties contesting in the elections. Through this, 30 days before the polling day, each political party was afforded daily coverage of 10 minutes by the National Radio of Angola and 5 Minutes by the Public Television of Angola. However, some stakeholders alleged selectivity and partiality on media coverage done by public media on the reporting of electoral activities.

5. With regard to the elections and security climate in Angola, the Mission observed that all the provinces were generally safe for observers to be deployed. An estimate of 120,000 police officers were deployed to provide extra security during the election period.
6. The Mission also observed that electoral campaigns and rallies were conducted in a generally peaceful manner reinforced by the presence of security officers in the rallies that we observed.
7. The Mission further found out that, the number of registered voters in 2012 elections was 9,757,671 compared to 9,317,294 registered in 2017. Some stakeholders were concerned at this discrepancy. The Mission however learnt that the difference was caused by, amongst others, the cleaning of the voters' register to remove individuals who no longer qualified for registration as voters and deceased electors. However, the Mission was not able to independently verify the reasons for the discrepancy.
8. There was an extensive civic and voter education programme that was delivered by the National Electoral Commission, the Police, the Church and Civil Society Organisations.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On the Election Day, the SADC Electoral Observation Mission observed the following:

- i. The political and security environment on the polling day, remained generally calm, peaceful and conducive to the holding of democratic elections;
- ii. Most of the polling stations were opened and closed on time. Additionally, the voting and the counting procedures were adhered to as prescribed in the 2011 Organic Law on the General Elections. However, in some of the polling stations, there were prolonged delays in starting the voting process; but the voting process was concluded on time without leaving any voters out;
- iii. The presence of the National Police of the Republic of Angola within the prescribed parameters of the polling stations was noted;
- iv. Political party agents, National as well as International Observers were present during the opening, counting and

closing processes in the majority of the polling stations that were observed;

- v. The election supervisors at the polling stations were well trained, disciplined and professional. Generally, the layout of the polling stations facilitated easy voting process and, voters who required special attention were given priority and assisted accordingly.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The SADC Mission reiterates its acknowledgment of the steps that have been taken by the Government of the Republic of Angola in promulgating the 2010 Constitutional and Legal Framework to govern elections. Most of the Constitutional and legal provisions are in line with the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

There are however some areas that we would encourage the Government and stakeholders in Angola to consider reviewing along the following recommendations:

1. With respect to the registration of voters it is recommended that the National Electoral Commission as an independent body should be responsible for voter registration. This will be in line with Article 107 (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (2010) which provides for the organization of the Electoral Administration by an independent body.
2. It is necessary to complement the law by delivering civic and voter education aimed at explaining diaspora voting opportunities contained in the Law on General Elections in order to dispel misconceptions surrounding the voting rights of Angolans residing abroad.
3. The National Electoral Commission is encouraged to further educate and sensitise voters, particularly those employed in essential services such as the Police, Military, Medical and other related professions, of the existence of the early voting modalities under Article 102 of the Law on General Elections.

4. The National Electoral Commission is encouraged to simplify the processes of the inspection and verification of the voters' register.
5. The Law on General Elections should be amended to provide a clear and reasonable timeframe for the dissemination of the locations and numbers of the polling stations.
6. An appropriate monitoring and implementation mechanism is recommended to ensure that State resources and the public media are not used to benefit any single political party's campaign programme over others.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Overall the general elections of 23 August 2017, have been held in a fair, free and peaceful environment occasioned by adherence to the electoral laws in the areas we observed.

As indicated earlier SADC has adopted the Long-Term election observation method. To this end we now evaluate the major inter-related segments of the electoral cycle in order to come up with the final assessment of the pre-election, election and post-election processes. Our Long-Term election observers will therefore continue to observe the post-election period until the 31st August 2017. The Final Statement will

be released within 30 days after the announcement of the results of these General Elections. Thereafter the SADC Electoral Advisory Council will return within three months to conduct a post-election review in line with the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

Your Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the candidates and their respective political parties, who emerge and be announced as winners. We wish the next Government a good start and success.

Finally, on behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; and the SADC Electoral Observation Mission; and indeed on my own behalf, may I take this opportunity to wholeheartedly congratulate the People of the Republic of Angola for the manner in which they conducted the electoral process.

Thank you very much!

Obrigado!

Merci beaucoup!

Asante sana!