

13 August 2017

SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) launches in the Republic of Angola for the 2017 General Elections

Luanda, Angola: The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2017 General Elections in the Republic of Angola was officially launched by the Head of Mission, Honourable Dr Susan Alphonse Kolimba (MP), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, at the Talatona Convention Hotel, Luanda, Angola, on 12 August, 2017.

SADC is deploying seventy (70) observers from 9 SADC Member States to 14 of the 18 Provinces of the Republic of Angola namely Bie, Bengo, Benguela, Cabinda, Cunene, Cuanza-Norte, Cuanza-Sul, Huambo, Huila, Luanda, Lunda Norte, Malanje, Moxico and Zaire. The Observers have been drawn from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Honourable Minister informed the meeting, composed of a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of the National Electoral Commission (CNE), Heads and representatives of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of Angola, representatives of political parties, members of civil society, and the media; that the SEOM would observe the 2017 General Elections in accordance with the *revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections of 2015*. She observed that in order to foster peace and security and enhance the process of integration, it was important to institutionalise and strengthen Member State's capacity to manage their democratic processes in a manner that contributed to stability and the improvement of the general welfare of citizens.

The Head of the Mission reported that, in line with *the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections*, the SEOM was preceded by the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) Pre-Election Goodwill Mission from 26 – 30 June 2017, whose aim was to assess the state of preparedness of the CNE and the country in general, to hold the 23 August General Elections. The SEAC Mission was followed by the arrival of the main Short Term Electoral Observation Mission on 9 August 2017, and the Long Term Election Observation Mission which is scheduled to operate from 25 – 30 August 2017.

Angolan electoral stakeholders attending the launch were assured that the SEOM would always strive for impartiality and the promotion of Member State's adherence to the *2015 revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* as well as observe the national laws and regulations of the Republic of Angola.

Guests attending the launch event were officially welcomed on behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary, by Mr. Jorge C. Cardoso, the Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs.