



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

IN

THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

BY

**DR. TOMÁZ AUGUSTO SALOMÃO
EXECUTIVE – SECRETARY OF SADC**

HARARE, 15 JULY 2013

- HONORABLE BERNARD KAMILLIUS MEMBE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AND HEAD OF THE SADC ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM);
- THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION (ZEC);
- ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS;
- YOUR EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ACCREDITED TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE;
- MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS;
- LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF POLITICAL PARTIES;
- RELIGIOUS LEADERS;
- MEMBERS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY;
- ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA;
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

It is a privilege and honor for me to welcome you to this august assembly on the occasion of the launch of the SADC Election Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Harmonized Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe, scheduled for 31 July 2013. In the same vein, allow me to also take this opportunity to express our gratitude, as SADC family, for your presence in this event.

Indeed, the holding of the 2013 Harmonized Elections in Zimbabwe marks a new era towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the country, thus creating an enabling environment for economic growth and sustainable development.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) signed by the concerned parties, on 15 September 2008, under the auspices of SADC, provided a platform for national dialogue and reconciliation among the Zimbabweans, in the quest for peace and political stability in Zimbabwe.

At this juncture, it is fair to appreciate the efforts deployed by the Parties to the GPA and the People of Zimbabwe in general towards progress in the implementation of the GPA, which yield tangible results, in particular through the 'YES Vote' to the New Constitution in the Referendum, on

16 March 2013. Indeed, through the New Constitution that put forward a vision of a future, the Zimbabweans will be able to turn another page of their history towards progress and prosperity.

As a matter of fact, SADC Member States have rooted and entrenched the universal values and principles of democracy, respect for human rights and adherence to the principle of the rule of law; therefore showing its commitment in regard to enhancement of Democracy through strengthening democratic institutions in the Region.

It is in this context, in accordance with the provisions of the SADC Treaty, SADC Protocol on Political, Defense and Security Cooperation and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections; that the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe invited the SADC to observe the forthcoming 2013 Harmonized Elections, to be held on 31 July 2013.

To that effect, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, mandated the Executive-Secretary of SADC to

facilitate the process of constituting and deploying the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2013 Harmonized Elections in Zimbabwe.

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

The SADC attaches paramount importance to these Elections, since they are part and parcel of the process of consolidation of the democracy in the country; whereby peace and stability must be preserved as a cornerstone for the achievement of the development goals. Therefore, the dissemination of democratic values and principles among all stakeholders and society in general is equally responsibility of all stakeholders.

The SADC is here today to reiterate its solidarity and render support to the ongoing democratic process in the Republic of Zimbabwe.

This ceremony is a true testimony of the SADC commitment to continuously consolidate peace, security and political stability and enhancement of democracy in the Region. Indeed, the ultimate goal is to eradicate poverty through deeper regional integration, economic growth and sustainable development.

The presence of the SADC Election Observation Mission (SEOM) in Zimbabwe is also to ensure that the provisions of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections are adhered to in the conduct of democratic elections.

In addition to the SADC Treaty, SADC Protocol on Political, Defense and Security Cooperation and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the conduct of the Mission will be guided by the relevant legislation of the Republic of Zimbabwe and other relevant international instruments governing democratic elections, namely:

- the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe;
- the Electoral Act;
- the Electoral Regulations;

- 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.

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 ongoing and undertaken by the Mission in order to be seized with the electoral environment and momentum.

As a matter of fact elections are important part of the democratic process. The SADC Member States' Constitutions enshrine principles of equal opportunities and full participation of all citizens in the political process. To exercise the right to vote and to be voted for through universal suffrage is a genuine way for the true participation of citizens in the political process and the decision on their future.

Now, as we are heading towards the ‘polling day’, the challenge and responsibility to have peaceful, free, fair and credible Elections lies in the hands of the Zimbabwean People. The process must assure voters and all stakeholders to honorably accept and respect the people’s verdict. We therefore encourage the people of Zimbabwe to continue to demonstrate political maturity and responsibility by upholding democratic values, principles and practices.

I am also pleased to announce that as mandated by the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, I as the Executive Secretary have established an Office and designated my Secretariat Officers to support the SADC Election Observation Mission and the Head of the Mission. To that effect the activities of the SEOM will be conducted in Harare at:

**THE RAINBOW TOWERS HOTEL
HARARE**

In conclusion, it is our expectation that, after the election observation exercise, we will gather once again here at the same venue for the Mission to present its findings and Preliminary Statement.

With these remarks, it is now my honor and privilege to introduce and invite the Head of the SADC Election Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2013 Harmonized Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe, Honorable Bernard Kamillius Membe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and also Representative of His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania 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



Hon. Member and Dr. Salamao during the launch.



Some Members of SADC Elections Advisory Committee (SEAC) and observers during the SEOM launch.



Ministers, Heads of Diplomatic missions to Zimbabwe and other VIPs during the SEOM launch.



More Observers during the launch.