**ROC officially launched**

On 30 April 2014, the Independent Electoral Commission of the Republic of South Africa, IEC, launched the National Electoral Commission’s Results Operation Centres (ROCs). This centre presents the IEC with an opportunity to demonstrate the pursuit of transparency in the management of elections. It will serve to capture the final stages of the delivery of elections.

There will be 10 ROCs throughout the country that is in the Nine provinces and the National one.

On Election Day, operations will be managed from these centres in full view of the country and the international community. The launch signifies the shift of operations from the IEC headquarters and will operate until the conclusion of voting and the official results are declared.

The ROC also will serve as a base for all stakeholders who will use it as a base for their operations. It boasts the Exhibition centre that will show case 20 years of Electoral democracy, new technological innovations; security and other features introduced for the 2014 elections.

The ROC will display results from all the 22 263 voting stations nationwide set up to cater for more than 25, 4 million voters with 29 parties contesting the National Assembly seats and this in turn will be the same for all parties contesting for seats in the provincial legislature. The results will also be beamed on giant screens in designated areas around the country including votes cast by South Africans abroad.

Queries will also be processed as they arise in real time. Political representatives, observers and members of the media will be provided with designated workstations to allow for observation and monitoring of results.

The launch was attended by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Jacob Zuma, and other senior government officials, members of the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of contesting political parties and the SADC SEOM troika and SEOM media representatives.

**IEC meets international observers**
The Deputy Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, IEC, said is all systems go for the Election Day on Wednesday 7 May 2014. Terry Tselane said everything have been put in place for the IEC to ensure credible elections.

The IEC official made the comments during a meeting with International observers present in South Africa on Friday in Johannesburg. The main purpose of the briefing session was to present the state of readiness of the IEC; including an update on the elections timetable; logistics and security arrangements for the actual polling day.

Tselane urged the observers to report any irregularities they may encounter at their respective polling stations to the presiding officers and not for them to physically intervene.

He warned the observers deployed in the hot pots areas were violence may arise to inform the IEC so they can be escorted by the law enforcement officers.

This week the South African Police Minister, Nathi Mthethwa revealed that Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape, Madibeng municipality in the Northwest and Malamulele in Limpopo are the areas earmarked as possible spots likely to threaten peaceful elections.

There are 24 International Observers Missions and the IEC said this is the highest number of observers the country has experienced since its democratic elections in 1994.

The IEC Deputy Chairperson acknowledged that the high numbers signifies the importance attached to the 20 year celebration of democracy in South Africa, adding that the International Observers are a key asset to enhance the work of the Commission.

What makes this year’s elections significant is the fact that the born frees will be casting their votes for the first time and the first elections without the presence of its founding President the late President Nelson Mandela.

END

**Background facts**

Registered voters : 25, 4 million

22 263 polling stations

29 political parties contesting the national elections

218 elections officials of which 926 are permanent employees of the IEC
188 SADC observers from eight member states

**Stakeholder meeting**

The TROIKA met with the IEC on Friday (2 May). They were briefed on the institution’s preparedness to conduct the election process.

**SEOM meets Commonwealth**

On Saturday 3 May the SEOM had a briefing session with the Commonwealth Observer Mission. The objective of the meeting was to exchange information on the current news in relation to the state of readiness of the South African Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, the electoral environment in general and also to chart a way forward for future collaboration of the observer missions.

SEOM reported that approximately 182 members have been deployed to all the 9 provinces and the observers are being guided by the SADC, AU, IEC – SA election guidelines. Thus far the level of preparedness is relatively good all indications are pointing towards a more competitive election with newer players such as AGANG, EFF and COPE likely to take weaken the ruling party ANC support base although it is estimated that percentage loss will be a few point in comparison to the last election.

Commonwealth as a traditional partner of SEOM, in which most of the SADC countries also boast membership had raised concerns in the last elections related to long queues experienced by the electorate due to the fact that people could vote wherever they found themselves. During briefings given by the IEC the changes introduced such as streaming of electorates in the voting stations however clarification was given that one can only cast their national vote anywhere while provincial votes can only be cast in provinces where they registered.

SEAC gave an update on the pre-elections mission undertaken noting that AGANG leader Dr Mamphele Ramphele expressed skepticism on the objectivity of the SADC Mission following past missions undertaken. SEAC was able to discuss this matter thoroughly with her as they were also observing these elections.

The two missions will keep in contact during the whole mission especially as the Commonwealth Mission on Election Day will be highly mobile with a plan to spend on average 20 minutes at each polling station with a total of 6 members each deployed in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

SEOM has on average 3 members in each team deployed in the 9 provinces.

The SEOM Troika was led by H. E. Dr. Mbuende, Namibia; H. E. Mr. Metsing, Lesotho;
Mr. Mohamed, Tanzania; SEOM drafting and media teams and Prof. Tobeneyer, SEAC. Commonwealth was led by Mr. N. A. Addo, Chairperson, Ghana, Mr. A.C. Sau, Observer, Mozambique; Ms. D. Pine-Mcharity, the Caribbean and the Commonwealth Secretariat.