



## **STATEMENT**

**BY**

**SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY H.E. DR. STERGOMENA  
LAWRENCE TAX**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SADC  
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE 2014  
GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE**

**3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2014  
MAPUTO**

Honourable Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Head of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission to the Elections in the Republic of Mozambique;

Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (CNE);

Members of the National Elections Commission;

Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties;

Members of the Elections Observation Missions;

Your Excellences, Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of Mozambique;

Religious leaders;

Members of the Civil Society;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen.

I am greatly honoured to welcome you to the launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the General Elections in the Republic of Mozambique, scheduled for 15 October 2014. I wish to express our gratitude for your presence at this very important occasion. This launch is of great significance, as it exemplifies SADC's commitment to the enhancement of democracy and governance, peace and stability in the region and to the ultimate objective of economic growth and sustainable development.

The participation and the involvement of SADC in the elections process in the Republic of Mozambique, coupled with your presence here today, conveys, once again a message of solidarity to the people of Mozambique and support for the democratic dispensation in Mozambique in particular, and the SADC Region in general. It is worthwhile to state that the presence of SADC here today 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.

**Honourable Minister,**

In accordance with the provisions of the SADC Treaty, the SADC Protocol on Political, Defence and Security Cooperation and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the Republic of Mozambique invited SADC to observe the 2014 General Elections. In this regard, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to observe the 2014 Mozambique General Elections.

To that effect, we are here today to officially launch the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) comprising of observers from SADC Member States who will be deployed across the country during the electoral period.

SADC attaches great importance to the entrenchment and consolidation of democracy. In this regard, it is expected that the enhancement and consolidation of democracy and peace should be done through the participation of the people in the political processes and governance. SADC believes that, full participation of all citizens in the democratic process is central to the success of democracy, and in upholding democratic values and principles.

**Honourable Minister,**

The **SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections**, the **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance**, and other international best practices provide an important framework and benchmark for the promotion of the universal values of democracy, good governance, rule of law and human rights in the region. I wish to take this opportunity to underscore the fact that the dissemination of democratic values and principles among all relevant stakeholders and society is the responsibility of all stakeholders. In view of this, SADC has no doubt that the people of Mozambique will ensure a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible electoral process.

As such, and as we head towards the polling day, the challenge and responsibility to have peaceful, free and fair elections lies on the hands of the people of the Mozambique. The process must allow the people of Mozambique to freely and peacefully choose their leaders, and to assure voters and those voted for, to honourably accept the people's verdict. We therefore encourage the people of the Republic of Mozambique to continue to demonstrate political maturity and responsibility by respecting democratic principles and practices.

**Honourable Minister,**

The forthcoming elections in the Republic of Mozambique, which are to be followed by elections in the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Namibia, are a true testimony that SADC Member States have entrenched democratic values and practices; with firm commitment to enhancing democracy and democratic institutions in our Region. It is important, therefore to underscore the paramount importance of the current elections, as they come at the time when we celebrate the dawn of sustainable peace and tolerance in the country.

We are pleased with the recent positive developments regarding the quest for lasting peace in Mozambique., particularly with the cease-fire and cessation of hostilities agreement signed between the Government and RENAMO on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2014, which was subsequently ratified by the President of the Republic of Mozambique and the President of RENAMO on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014, and passed into law by Parliament on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The agreement has restored confidence in the general public for the country to proceed with the General Elections on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

**Honourable Minister,**

Prior to the deployment of SEOM, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) undertook a goodwill and pre-deployment assessment mission to Mozambique, from 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2014, in order to ascertain the level of preparedness and readiness of the country to hold the forthcoming General Elections.

SADC is encouraged to note that the political atmosphere and security environment is conducive for the holding of peaceful elections.

While fulfilling its mandate, SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) will share information with other Election Observation Missions deployed in the country. In the same vein, consultations with stakeholders involved in the electoral process will be at the centre of our operations. This will enable us to stay abreast of the entire electoral process and ensure that we remain seized with the electoral environment and momentum.

In conclusion, I am pleased to announce that as mandated by the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, as the Executive Secretary of SADC, I have established an Office and designated my Secretariat officials to support the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) and the Head of the Mission. To that effect the activities of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) will be conducted here at the Hotel VIP. It is our hope that after the elections, we will come together again here at the same venue for the Mission to communicate its preliminary Statement and findings.

### **Distinguished invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is now my honour and privilege to introduce and invite the Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2014 General Elections in the Republic of Mozambique, Honourable Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Representative of His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, to now officially launch the Mission.

I thank you.

Merci beaucoup

Muito Obrigado.

Asanteni Sana.

