



Statement Delivered by SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Tomás Augusto Salomão

Workshop on the Review of SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the Development of SADC Elections Handbook

June 06-07, 2013- Lansmore Hotel, Gaborone, Botswana

Distinguished delegates, let me take this opportunity to welcome you all to Gaborone and to this important workshop, which is in response to the assignment as mandated by Member States on the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC)

This consultative workshop is the first stage in the review of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the development of the SADC Elections Handbook.

Pursuant to the Decision of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ of 20 June 2011, in Lusaka, Zambia, the Secretariat has convened this workshop as part of the process of the revision exercise of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the development of the SADC Elections Handbook,

The workshop is part of the consultative process and an opportunity for Member States to make their inputs into the policy documents being developed and

further provide guidance in the review of the both the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the SADC Elections Handbook before presentation and adoption of the documents by Member States.

Cognisant of the SADC *Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections adopted in 2004* by SADC Member States in 2004, further significant commitments have been made by governments of the region to consolidate democracy and good governance and holding on regular basis peaceful, credible transparent, free and fair elections.

Inspired by the objectives and principles enshrined in the SADC Treaty signed in Windhoek, Namibia in 1992, in particularly Article 4 of the Treaty, SADC took another firm decision in 2005 to create an institutional mechanism that would ensure that election observation became a fundamental component of democratic processes in the region.

To this effect, the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC). was established, in terms of Article 9(2) of the SADC Treaty; and its creation was approved by Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Gaborone, Botswana, in August 2005. Following this development, a series of consultative meetings on the operationalisation of SEAC were also held with stakeholders in the SADC region with a view to providing support and strengthening the regional programme on electoral governance. The SEAC was formally constituted in August 2010 in Maputo, Mozambique and was inaugurated on 13 April 2011 in Gaborone.

Hence the SEAC is the electoral advisory body of the SADC whose aim includes, inter alia, advising SADC on elections and conflict mitigation; ensuring the implementation and review of *the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Elections* in the region; and providing guidance to Member States on elections and the enhancement of democracy and good governance.

The current revision exercise of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the development of the SADC Elections Handbook, is led by the the SEAC. Pursuant to the MCO Decision of 20 June 2011, the SEAC was mandated to undertake the revision of the SADC the *Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* and development of the *SADC Elections Handbook*.

The process of the Review of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the development of the SADC Electoral Handbook was informed by the experience of elections by the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM's); and by the major provisions enshrined in the OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa – AHG/DECL.1 (XXXVIII), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007); the AU Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions – EX/CL/35 (III) Annex II; and relevant covenants and human rights instruments of the United Nations (UN).

The revision and consultative process will at the next stage seek input from regional as well as regional experts for further refinement of the two policy documents.

The revision exercise of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the SADC Elections Handbook will take into consideration the civil and political rights; and socio-economic and cultural rights to electoral democracy, good governance and development; and to the realization of SADC's common and historical vision of a *shared future*.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you very much for your attention.