



**STATEMENT ON THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SADC
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE 2014
NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS**

IN

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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

PRETORIA, 26 APRIL 2014

- Honourable Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Deputy Chairperson of SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (MCO) and Acting Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of South Africa 2014 National and Provincial Elections;
- The Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC);
- Representatives of Political Parties;
- Election Observation Missions;
- Your Excellences, Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Republic of South Africa;
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Religious leaders;
- Members of the Civil Society;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to this important occasion of the launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the National and Provincial Elections in the Republic of South Africa. I wish to express, from the outset, my humble appreciation for your presence at this very important event, which exemplifies the inherent spirit of democracy and good governance in the SADC region.

The forthcoming elections in the Republic of South Africa, which are to be followed by elections in the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Botswana, the Republic of Mozambique 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 to underscore the paramount importance of the current elections, as they come at the time when we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the new multi-racial and democratic South Africa, after the end of the Apartheid in the country.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Consistent with the provisions of the *SADC Treaty*, *SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation* and *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections*; the Republic of South Africa invited SADC to observe the 2014 National and Provincial Elections, which are scheduled for 7th May, 2014.

In line with this invitation, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, has constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to observe the forthcoming elections in the Republic of South Africa.

In this regard, today we are officially launching the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) constituted by Observers drawn from SADC Member States that will be deployed throughout the nine (9) provinces of South Africa in the course of the electoral process.

SADC is committed to continuously consolidate peace, security, political stability and enhancement of democracy in the Region; in order to eradicate poverty, promote economic growth and sustainable development in the Region.

It is worthwhile to state that, in the process of enhancing democracy in the Region, SADC Member States have rooted and entrenched universal values and principles of democracy, respect for human rights and adherence to the principles of the rule of law.

At this juncture, it is equally important to underscore that for a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible electoral process; the dissemination of democratic values and principles among all relevant stakeholders and society in general is a responsibility of all stakeholders. The presence of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) in the Republic of South Africa is not only to support the democratic process in the country, but also to ensure that the provisions of the *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* are adhered to in the conduct of democratic elections.

To this end, the SEOM will deploy a sizeable number of Observers drawn from the SADC Member States so as to cover extensively the electoral process in the country before, during and after the elections.

The conduct of the SEOM will be guided by the *SADC Treaty*, *SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation* and the *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections*; as well as by relevant legislation of the Republic of South Africa and other relevant continental and international instruments governing democratic elections.

As a part of the best practices and aiming at enhancing reliability and validity of its findings, the SEOM will share information with other Election Observation Missions deployed in the country. In this respect, consultations with stakeholders involved in the elections process will continuously be undertaken by the Mission in order for us to stay abreast with the electoral environment and momentum.

I wish to take this opportunity to inform you that the activities of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) in the Republic of South Africa will be conducted from its Headquarters, here at the **SHERATON HOTEL**, in Pretoria.

It is our expectation that, after the election observation exercise, we will meet here once again for the Mission to present its findings and Preliminary Statement on the 2014 National and Provincial Elections in South Africa.

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to introduce and invite the Acting Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2014 National and Provincial Elections in the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho; Deputy Chairperson of SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (MCO); and also Representative of His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, to now officially launch the Mission.

I thank you very much.