

**WELCOME REMARKS**

**ON BEHALF OF**

**H.E. ELIAS M. MAGOSI**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SADC**

**ON THE**

**OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE 2022 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**AVANI LESOTHO HOTEL, MASERU, LESOTHO**

**3RD OCTOBER, 2022**

**Honourable Frans Kapofi, Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs of the Republic of Namibia and Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho;**

**Distinguished Members of the SADC Organ Troika;**

**Chairperson/Representative and Members of the National Electoral Commission;**

**Distinguished Heads of International Electoral Observation Missions;**

**Your Excellencies, Heads and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions;**

**Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council;**

**SADC Election Observers;**

**Leaders and Representatives of Political Parties;**

**Religious Leaders and Members of the Civil Society;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**A very good morning to you all!**

On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Elias Mpedi Magosi, the Executive Secretary of SADC, I am honoured to deliver these welcome remarks on this occasion of the launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the National Assembly Elections in the Kingdom of Lesotho scheduled for the 7th of October 2022. Allow me to take this opportunity to acknowledge your presence and thank you all most sincerely for creating the time from your busy schedules to attend this official launch.

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In line with the SADC Principles and Guidelines for Governing Democratic Elections (2021), SADC has been invited by the Independent Electoral Commission of the Kingdom of Lesotho, to observe the 2022 National Assembly Elections. And in accordance with the mandate of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, as outlined in the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), the Organ Chairperson, H.E Hage Geing, President of the Republic of Namibia, constituted the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Kingdom of Lesotho, comprising observers from 11 Member States.

The Chairperson of the Organ further appointed Honourable Frans Kapofi, Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs of the Republic of Namibia, to Head the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

To this end, SADC will observe these general elections based on the adopted practice that supports Member States in ensuring regular and credible elections, namely the three-tier electoral observation approach that involves pre-election assessments, assessments during elections, and post-elections assessments, as contained in the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

SEOM arrived in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho, on 25th September 2022. As part of the preparations for this mission and as is the norm, SADC observers have undergone a refresher training from 29th September to 1st October 2022, here in Maseru. The training equipped them with the requisite skills to effectively observe, assess and report on the electoral process using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). It is therefore commendable for the Kingdom of Lesotho to afford SADC the opportunity to participate in this important process to consolidate democracy in the country, and by extension, in the SADC region as well.

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At this juncture, allow me to introduce and invite the Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the 2022 National Assembly Elections in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Honourable Frans Kapofi, to lead the official launch of this important Mission.

**I thank you for your attention!**

**Muito Obrigado!**

**Merci Beaucoup!**

**Asante Sana!**

**Rea Leboha!**

Honourable Minister, you may take the floor!