



Statement by His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation

It is my honour and privilege to address fellow citizens of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

A fundamental tenet of our community is the consolidation of democracy, which is defined by regular, credible, free, fair, and transparent electoral processes. In 2004, the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government adopted the *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections*. The ideals behind these principles are aimed at giving the citizens of the SADC region a peer-to-peer mechanism through which we can achieve an orderly political and economic transition. Central to this is the need to provide all our citizens a say in how we govern our communities.

In pursuit of this ideal, SADC regularly deploys its Electoral Observation Mission to its Member States, who will conduct national elections. In this regard, the citizens of the Republic of Zimbabwe are participating in a general election to choose their political leadership on 23 August 2023.

In the spirit of our communal values as SADC, we wish the people of Zimbabwe a peaceful and orderly electoral process. On behalf of the SADC family, I call upon all citizens of Zimbabwe to exercise their constitutional rights and participate in this crucial phase in their system of governance and to enhance our common goal for regional economic, political and social development.

I encourage everyone to stay calm before the announcement of the election outcome.

I wish the Zimbabwean people peaceful elections.

**H.E. HAKAINDE HICHILEMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA AND
CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND
SECURITY COOPERATION**

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