



## PRESS RELEASE

### **SADC Expresses concern on statements made about its Electoral Observation Mission in Zimbabwe and the personal attacks to its Head of SEOM following the release of its Preliminary Statement on Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections**

**26 August 2023, Gaborone, Botswana:** The Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has noted with deep concern, statements made about the SEOM and the personal attacks directed at the Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM), Dr Nevers Mumba, the former Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, since the SEOM released its Preliminary Statement on 25 August 2023. Some of these statements and attacks which have been aired on television, social media and newspapers are crude, scurrilous and misleading.

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) is currently in the Republic of Zimbabwe to observe the electoral process of the 23-24 August Harmonised Elections in line with Article 3 of the Revised SADC Principles and Guideline Governing Democratic Elections (2021). The Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, appointed Dr. Nevers Mumba to lead the SEOM in Zimbabwe.

The SEOM is mandated to observe elections in terms of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, and all SADC Member States, including the Republic of Zimbabwe, are signatory to these principles, which have been operational since 2004. All SADC Member States send individuals to serve as observers under the SEOM. For the August 2023 Harmonised Elections in Zimbabwe, observers were seconded from the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Namibia, the Republic of South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Zambia.

Based on observations made by the observers who were deployed to all the provinces of Zimbabwe, and consultations with stakeholders, the SEOM issued its Preliminary Statement. This statement is a summary of initial findings adopted after consultations with Member States who form the SADC Organ Troika, supported by advice from the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC), which is a body of judges from the Member States, and with support from the SADC Secretariat. Therefore, the SEOM Preliminary Statement is a collective observation position of SADC Observers, Troika Members, SEAC, and the SADC Secretariat and not a subjective opinion of one individual. The SEOM remains on the ground to observe the post-election environment and to prepare and adopt a final report on the electoral process in Zimbabwe, still following the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

SADC reiterates its call for the people of Zimbabwe to remain calm and peaceful and use the legal system in case of any dispute regarding the outcome of the Harmonised Elections. The SADC also calls upon all to exercise responsibility and decorum in how they express opinions regarding the electoral process and the SEOM in general.

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**SADC in Brief**

SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and later, in August, 1992 transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

**Issued by the SADC Secretariat**

**26 August, 2023**

**Gaborone, Botswana**