



**LAUNCH STATEMENT BY H. E. BRIGADIER GENERAL  
GODFREY MIYANDA, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA AND HEAD OF THE SADC  
ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM) TO THE  
FIRST ROUND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR**

**NOVOTEL HOTEL, ANTANANARIVO**

**12 NOVEMBER 2023**

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

**Distinguished Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Madagascar;**

**Professor Kula Theletsane, Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs and Representative of His Excellency, Mr. Elias Magosi, the Executive Secretary of SADC;**

**Chairperson, Representatives and Members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI);**

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

**Your Excellencies, Heads and Representatives of the Diplomatic Missions Accredited to the Republic of Madagascar;**

**Members of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC);**

**SADC Election Observers;**

**Representatives of Local Election Observers;**

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

**Members of the Media;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the official launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) on behalf of His Excellency, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government for inviting SADC to observe the country's First and Second Round Presidential Elections, now scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> November and 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023, respectively, in the Republic of Madagascar.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

SADC observes elections in its Member States based on the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021)*. All SADC Member States affirmed their commitment to implementing these Principles and Guidelines. The Principles and Guidelines provide an objective and scientific methodology for the observation of elections in order to contribute to the consolidation of democracy in the Region, by enhancing best electoral practices and addressing any electoral shortcomings. The Principles and Guidelines are also informed by key instruments of the African Union (AU), such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of 2007, as well as the relevant Conventions of the United Nations (UN).

Consistent with the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the deployment of this SEOM was preceded by a Pre-Election Assessment Goodwill Mission of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) from 24<sup>th</sup> July to 02<sup>nd</sup> August 2023. Precedent to that Mission, in November 2022, the SEAC also conducted a Post-Election review to assess if and how recommendations arising from the SEOM observations of the Post-Election Review Assessment Mission of the First and Second Round Presidential Election of 2018, as well as the Legislative Election of 2019, that were conducted in the Republic of Madagascar, respectively, have been implemented.

## **Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) has been in Madagascar since 02 November 2023 to observe the First Round of Presidential Elections set for 16 November 2023. The SEOM noted that the elections are governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Madagascar, and a comprehensive set of relevant laws, which include Act No 2018-009 Governing the Election of the President; Act No 2015-020 on the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI); Act No 2018- on the General Regime for Elections and Referenda; and the Decisions of the High Constitutional Court.

It is in line with these national legal instruments that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission will assess the conduct of the elections against a set of central principles stipulated in the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, such as:

1. Full participation of the citizens in the democratic and development processes;
2. Enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association, assembly and expression;
3. Observance of the provisions of relevant legal frameworks in relation to the date or period of elections;
4. Measures to prevent corruption, bribery, favouritism, political violence, intimidation and intolerance;
5. Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the State Media as well as access to information by all citizens;

6. Respect for values of electoral justice such as integrity, impartiality and fairness;
7. No undue restraints against the opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for;
8. Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions;
9. Capacitation and empowerment of citizens through civic and voter education;
10. Acceptance of and respect for the election results by candidates and political parties as proclaimed to have been free, fair, transparent, credible and peaceful, by the competent and independent Electoral Commission in accordance with the law of the land; and
11. Provision of electoral justice through expedient settlement of electoral disputes as provided for in the law.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is essential that all stakeholders understand that the mandate of the SEOM is to determine the adherence of the Member State holding elections to the relevant provisions of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. In this respect, please allow me to go into some detail for the benefit of all.

In order to fulfil its mandate, the SEOM assesses and evaluates the following, amongst others:

- (i) whether the legal and constitutional framework guarantees freedom of expression, assembly, association and human rights.

- (ii) the structure and model of the electoral system, the Electoral Management Body (EMB), the Electoral Act and regulations and the nature of civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.
- (iii) the establishment, process of appointment and retention of members of EMBs; in addition to assessing the composition, status, independence, impartiality, professionalism and preparedness of the EMB for the election.
- (iv) the SEOM shall ensure that the delimitation of election boundaries was done in a manner acceptable to stakeholders, and whether the factors that prompted delimitation were in accordance with the laws of the land.
- (v) Whether the delimitation process was undertaken in accordance with the national law and without undue exclusion of particular groups or political interests.
- (vi) The procedures for nomination and provision of reasonable time frames to allow political parties and candidates to comply with the requirements of the registration process.
- (vii) The existence of a Code of Conduct governing all political parties and candidates.
- (viii) The neutrality of the security forces in providing election security and the existence of requisite special voting facilities for security forces to enable them cast their votes.
- (ix) The requirements and practices regarding direct and indirect access to the mass media for political parties, candidates, supporters and the general public;
- (x) The requirements and practices concerning reporting by state controlled, public and private media about political parties, candidates and supporters or opponents.

- (xi) The capacity and quality of civic and voter education programmes to afford all prospective voters accurate, comprehensible and adequate information upon which to make electoral choices.
- (xii) The extent to which the process enjoys the electorate's trust, including inclusiveness, accuracy, and transparency, and whether the electorate can own and identify with the process.
- (xiii) The appropriateness of locations of polling stations, and adequacy and accessibility of their facilities;
- (xiv) The production and distribution to polling stations and storage of ballots and other sensitive election materials;
- (xv) The conduct of voting, including assistance to voters, counting, tabulation and announcement of results; the transparency of procedures and adequacy of safeguards against inaccuracies; and
- (xvi) The conduct of procedures and processes concerning electoral complaints and challenges by citizens, prospective voters, and those seeking election, including providing effective remedies for violations of electoral related rights.

In order to obtain an objective and impartial bases from which to draw its findings, the SEOM necessarily requires to consult a broad, diverse, and unrestricted range of stakeholders in each Member State holding elections.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to inform you that the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2023 First Round of Presidential Elections in the Republic of Madagascar consists of 55 personnel. They are from

seven (7) SADC Member States: the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republics of Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Our observers have been deployed to all **the six provinces of Madagascar, namely: Antananarivo, Antsiranana, Fianarantsoa, Mahajanga, Toamasina, and Toliara.** The SEOM observations will focus on the pre-election, election and post-election periods, including the campaigns, the voting day and the process of counting the ballot papers.

SADC urges all registered voters to exercise their civic and political rights by going out to vote on 16 November 2023. We encourage all stakeholders to ensure that these elections are conducted in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible. We look forward to an electoral process that adheres to democratic values and principles envisioned in the SADC Treaty, the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation; and the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

The consolidation of democracy in our region can be enhanced if all Member States also focus on the implementation of the various recommendations of the SEOMs, in particular, where such recommendations seek to close gaps and address specific challenges in the electoral systems of our Member States.

May I also take this opportunity to invite you all to attend the release of our Preliminary Statement regarding our observations of the 2023 First Round Presidential Elections, on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023, at this very venue.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my honour and privilege, on behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security



Cooperation, His Excellency, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, to formally launch the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2023 First Round Presidential Elections in the Republic of Madagascar.

***Thank You Very Much***

***Merci Beaucoup***

***Muito Obrigada***

***Asante Sana***

***Misaotra Tompoko!***