



**LAUNCH STATEMENT BY H.E JUSTICE FLORENCE  
MUMBA OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA AND HEAD OF  
THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION (SEOM)  
TO THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF  
MADAGASCAR**

**NOVOTEL HOTEL, ANTANANARIVO**

**22 MAY 2024**

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

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

**Mr. Terry Rose, Senior Officer for Politics and Diplomacy in the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, and Representative of His Excellency, Mr. Elias Magosi, the SADC Executive Secretary;**

**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 gives me great pleasure to welcome you, 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, to this official launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Madagascar's Legislative Elections scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

You may wish to note that SADC observes elections in its Member States based on the *Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021)*. All SADC Member States have in this regard, affirmed their commitment to implementing these *SADC Principles and Guidelines*. Notably The *Principles and Guidelines* provide an objective and scientific methodology for the observation of elections in Member States to contribute to the consolidation of democracy in the Region. The Guidelines and Principles are in this respect, 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 United Nations (UN) Conventions.

### **Distinguished Guests**

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

You would recall that SADC deployed the SEOM to the Republic of Madagascar's Presidential Elections which took place on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The SEOM report of the November elections have been presented to the Malagasy Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and is now available as a public document.

We note with much appreciation, the SEOM observation that the Election Day and immediate post-election period were peaceful and calm. This indeed is applauded by the SADC family with a fervent wish that the Malagasy people will further consolidate on this peace through what we hope will be the holding of peaceful Legislative Elections on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. Peaceful elections undoubtedly form an integral component of good governance for the consolidation of Democracy as articulated within the *SADC Principles and Guidelines*.

### **Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Legislative elections has been in Madagascar since 14 May 2024 and is expected to be in the country until 04 June 2024 to conduct the Short-Term Observation of the Legislative Elections. Similar to last year's Presidential Elections, the SEOM has 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 - on the General Regime for Elections and Referenda; Act No 2015-020 on the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI); and the Decisions of the High Constitutional Court.

SEOM will therefore, assess the conduct of the elections within the ambit of these national legal instruments and also against a set of central principles stipulated in the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, which include, but are not limited to the:

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,**

As we undertake this official launch of the SEOM, I am obliged to articulate this SEOM's mandate, which is to determine the adherence of the Republic of Madagascar's as the Member State holding elections, to the relevant provisions of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. In this regard, to fulfil its mandate towards the Legislative elections, the SEOM will assess and evaluate 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 basis from which to draw its findings, this SEOM will be required to consult a broad, diverse, and unrestricted range of stakeholders in Madagascar.

Understanding our mandate and methodology is instrumental as we engage all stakeholders, and as our observers undertake their duties across the Malagasy territory for this Observation Mission.

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the Republic of Madagascar's 2024 Legislative Elections consists of 58 personnel from 10 SADC Member States, namely: Republics of Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Kingdom of Eswatini and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Our observers are being 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. As per the standard practice for SEOM deployment, the SADC observers undertook a four-day SEOM refresher course from 18 to 21 May 2024, to familiarize and better contextualize their initial training to the context of the SADC Member State.

At this juncture, allow me to echo the SADC call for all registered voters in the Republic of Madagascar to exercise their civic and political rights by going to vote on 29 May 2024. We encourage all stakeholders to ensure that these elections are conducted in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible manner, as 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*.

I wish to also take this opportunity to invite you to the release of our Preliminary Statement regarding our observations of the 2024 Legislative Elections, on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024, at this very venue.

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

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, I am honoured to formally launch the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2024 Legislative Elections in the Republic of Madagascar.

***I Thank You***

***Misaotra Tompoko!***

***Merci Beaucoup***

***Muito Obrigada***

***Asante Sana***