



**SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVER MISSION (SEOM)
TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE**

STATEMENT

BY

**HON. MAITE NKOANA - MASHABANE,
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

AND

**HEAD OF SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVER MISSION TO THE
REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE**

17 OCTOBER 2014

- Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (CNE);
- Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited to the Republic of Mozambique;
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Esteemed Leaders of Political Parties;
- Esteemed Members of Observer Missions;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished Guests; and
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome you to this gathering, to share the preliminary findings of the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) on the 2014 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Assemblies Elections. I thank you all for honouring our invitation.

SADC attaches great importance to the holding of credible, peaceful, transparent, free and fair elections in all SADC Member States. In holding such elections, our community is guided by the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

We take cognisance of the fact that elections are not an end in themselves, but rather form part of the process intended to enhance and consolidate democracy in our region.

The aim of SADC Observation Missions is to witness the extent to which elections in our Member States conform to national laws and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. The aim is also to observe the limitations and best practices in the conduct of elections in our Member States, for purposes of improving the quality of our electoral processes.

Following the invitation from the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, His Excellency Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma President of the Republic of South Africa, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, appointed me, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the

Republic of South Africa to head the SEOM to the Republic of Mozambique. I am assisted by other Members of the TROIKA of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, that is Ambassador Julius Metsing representing the Kingdom of Lesotho and Ambassador Kaire Mbuende of the Republic of Namibia, incoming and outgoing Chairperson of the Organ respectively.

In accordance with established practice, the SADC Secretariat dispatched a pre-assessment mission to Mozambique under the auspices of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC). In its report, the SEAC found that the environment in the Republic of Mozambique was conducive to holding general elections.

On 3 October 2014, the SEOM was launched and 145 Observers were deployed to all eleven (11) provinces of the Republic of Mozambique. The SEOM closely followed pre-election events and preparations, including political rallies and media coverage of elections.

In the conduct of its observation, the SEOM consulted various stakeholders to appreciate the electoral processes as well as the legal framework, security and political environment of the Republic of Mozambique.

The stakeholders included amongst others,

1. The National Elections Commission (CNE);
2. Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE);
3. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation;
4. The President of the Constitutional Court;
5. Ambassadors and High Commissioners;
6. The main Political Parties, namely; FRELIMO, MDM and RENAMO;
7. The African Union (AU);
8. Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP); and other electoral observation Missions;

9. Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA);
10. Civil Society and Media organizations;

Consultations with the CNE, in particular, provided the SEOM with a clear understanding of the institution's readiness to organize, manage and deliver credible elections.

Concerns were raised by some stakeholders and clarification was sought with relevant authorities. These concerns include:

- Alleged media bias on the side of State Owned Media in favour of the ruling party;
- Alleged abuse of State resources;
- Intimidation;
- Reported incidents of violence in Gaza, Nampula and Zambezia Provinces;
- Reported arrests of political party agents;
- Inadequate voter education, especially in the rural areas;
- Alleged Police bias in favour of the ruling party; and
- The post-election scenario and acceptance of the outcome of the elections by the political parties.

Most of these concerns were resolved through the joint efforts of the CNE, political parties and relevant stakeholders.

The SEOM further noted that after the loss of boxes of ballot papers *enroute* to voting stations in Zambezia on 3 October 2014, the recovered and remaining ballot papers were destroyed in the presence of political parties and other stakeholders, including election observers. New ballot papers with new numbers were printed and dispatched to the relevant province. We would like to commend the CNE and the political parties' leadership for their swift action in restoring confidence in the electoral process.

It is important to underscore that despite concerns raised, the SEOM's observation is that these concerns were not of such a nature as to affect the overall credibility of the electoral process.

The SEOM observed that voting was conducted in an open and transparent manner. The voting process was observed by, amongst others, party agents, security, electoral management personnel as well as local and international observers in accordance with the Electoral Laws of Mozambique. The SEOM noted the patience of voters in expressing their right to vote.

The SEOM observed both the opening and closure of polling stations, which was done in conformity with the provisions of the Electoral Laws of the Republic of Mozambique. Generally, voting materials were in place at the various polling stations visited.

There is room for improvement in the layout of the polling stations to facilitate the easy flow of voters.

In the main, polling stations opened at 7: 00 and closed at 18:00hrs and voters who were still in queues by the closing time were allowed to cast their votes.

The SEOM further observed that the counting of votes started immediately after the closing of the polling stations. This was done in the presence of political party agents as well as domestic and international observers. Results were read out aloud and/or displayed at the polling stations in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Laws of the Republic of Mozambique.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Based on its observations, the SEOM concludes that the 2014 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Assemblies Elections in the Republic were, generally peaceful;

transparent; free and fair, and credible; thus, reflecting the will of the people of Mozambique in accordance with the National Electoral Laws and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

The SEOM would like to take this opportunity to commend the CNE for managing the electoral process in a transparent and professional manner. There are some best practices which the SEOM noted during the electoral process. In particular, the SEOM congratulates the Republic of Mozambique for providing funding to political parties, as a means of enhancing democratic practices.

The SEOM appreciates the cooperation among all political parties and electoral stakeholders for creating an enabling environment for the delivery of successful elections. This enabled the people of Mozambique to express themselves freely in the exercise of their democratic right.

The SEOM urges all political parties and other stakeholders to respect the will of the people of the Republic of Mozambique.

Finally, on behalf of the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, His Excellency, Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma President of the Republic of South Africa, the SEOM congratulates the people of the Republic of Mozambique for the manner in which they conducted themselves during the electoral process and wish them well.

I THANK YOU ALL