



PRESS RELEASE

SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2023 General Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe

11 August 2023, Gaborone, Botswana: In line with the five-year electoral cycle of the Republic of Zimbabwe on 22 June 2023, the Government invited the Secretariat of Southern African Development Community (SADC) to observe the country's General Elections scheduled for 23 August 2023. This is in line with Article 3 of the *revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021)*, which provides that SADC shall observe all general elections held in its Member States. Following the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines*, and upon receipt of such invitation from the Member State, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation nominates the Head of Mission (HoM) and deploys a SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM), and mandates the SADC Executive Secretary to coordinate the SEOM.

To this end, the SADC Secretariat team arrived in Harare on 10 August 2023 to prepare logistics for the launch of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) at the Rainbow Towers Hotel in Harare, and its concomitant full deployment on 18 August 2023. The SEOM will be deployed to all ten (10) Provinces of Zimbabwe to observe the pre- and post-election phases and the polling day. Before the Launch, the Head of Mission (HoM), the Republic of Zambia (the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs) for SEOM Zimbabwe shall undertake a Courtesy Call to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The HoM will also conduct meetings with the leadership of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) as well as the SADC Ambassadors and High Commissioners Accredited to the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The 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 of (2021)* which include, amongst full participation of the citizens in the democratic and development processes, measures to prevent political violence, intimidation and intolerance, equal opportunity for all political parties to access the State Media as well as access to information by all citizens, and acceptance of and respect for the election results by all political parties.

To promote electoral integrity, electoral justice, good governance, peace and stability in the SADC region, and to give effect to the commitment contained in the *SADC Principles and*

Guidelines, the Launch of the SEOM on 18 August 2023 will include various election awareness activities for the electoral stakeholder to learn and appreciate the work of the SEOM.

Given the above, the SADC Secretariat has the honour to invite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Zimbabwe, ZEC, , Zimbabwe Republic Police, Attorney General, political parties, voters and citizens, traditional leaders, faith based groups, civil society, members of the media, Diplomatic Missions/Corps, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zimbabwe, European Union Delegation in Zimbabwe, other International Cooperating Partners, and the Heads of Delegations of International Electoral Observation Missions, to attend the Launch of SEOM Zimbabwe on **18 August 2023**, at the Rainbow Towers Hotel, Harare, from 10H30 – 13H00.

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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.

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