



**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THE SADC ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
TO THE HARMONISED ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
HELD ON 31 JULY, 2013**

1. Close to 600 Observers from SADC member countries monitored the harmonized elections that took place on the 31st of July, 2013. The SADC election monitoring contingent had a huge network that managed to cover the all 210 Constituencies from 15 July to the Election Day. I delivered the preliminary report to government and people of Zimbabwe on 02nd August, 2013 and to the SADC Troika and SADC Summit in Lilongwe on the 17th and 18th August respectively. As you may recall, the main message in the preliminary report was that the elections in Zimbabwe were free and peaceful. However, we had reserved the two issues of *"fairness and credibility"* deliberately waiting for the compilation of the reports from our Observers in the covered constituencies. Therefore, that is what I am going to do today.
2. Despite the shortcomings that have been annotated in the grand report, we said and we want to reiterate. That the elections that took place on 31st July, 2013 were free. Free in the sense that our Observers noted

that the candidates were free to campaign, free to associate, free to express their views and the voters were free to cast their votes. Because of that we therefore concluded without hesitation that the harmonized elections were free and expressed the will of the people.

3. The SEOM also in the preliminary report observed that the elections were peaceful. It was so said because the electoral process in the majority of Polling Stations and constituencies were characterized by an atmosphere of peace and political tolerance. When compared to 2008 electoral process, this year's election has neither bloodshed nor massive arrests. Political parties and candidates were able to freely undertake their political activities unhindered and without noticeable intimidation. That is why we were quick to say it was peaceful.

4. In trying to gauge fairness of this election, SEOM focused its attention among others on state media, pirate radio stations and voters roll. SEOM noted that media (*state and pirate*) were highly polarized and for the most part biased along the political party lines. In this regard, SEOM received accusations and counter accusations from the contesting parties and saw merit on them. To that end, SEOM recommends that ZEC implements the letter and spirit of chapter 12 part 5, section 248 of the Constitution on media reform to be read together with the electoral act section 160(E) to 160(H) which states *inta alia* that "*..public broadcasters shall afford all political parties and independent candidates contesting on election such free access to their broadcasting serviced as*

may be prescribed.” Either, SEOM recommends that pirate media should end their operation forthwith.

5. The provision of Voters roll in time goes to the very heart of fairness in the election process. If the voters roll is not made available on time, the fairness of the election is brought into question. This is because Voters rolls are public documents and it is the duty of Electoral Commission to abide by Section 21, Sub-Section 1 of 6 of the electoral act. We are saying so because, our Observers on the ground reported complaints related to the delay in issuing the voters roll on time. And even in those areas where voters roll was issued few days before, people had no access to it until the day of voting. SEOM urges the government to make the funds available so that the printing of voters roll is done on time and made available in timely manner for people to inspect it in making the elections fair.
6. On credibility of the election process, a lot has been said to the negative. SEOM however, while agreeing that issues such as the delay of voters roll and media polarization. There were so many other elements that when put together elevated the election to a credible status; The free election environment, the peaceful environment in which the election took place, unhindered and non-intimidation to candidates and votes, free expression and campaigns, transparency and free voting constitutes the credibility under the prevailing circumstances particularly when compared to 2008 elections. Therefore, this election was generally credible.

7. On behalf of the outgoing Chairperson of the Organ of Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and on behalf of the entire SADC family, SEOM congratulates ZEC and the people of Zimbabwe for holding a free, peaceful and generally credible harmonized elections of July 2013 in which the will of the people was expressed.