



INTERIM MISSION STATEMENT

SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE LESOTHO 26TH MAY 2012 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) constituted an Election Observation Mission to observe the 26th May 2012 National Assembly Elections in Lesotho. The 22-Member Mission was in the country from 15th to 29th May 2012. It was composed of 10 Members of Parliament, 7 Parliamentary staff from SADC Parliaments and 5 staff from the Forum's Secretariat. The Mission comprised male and female Members of Parliament from both the ruling and opposition political parties from Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This is the third time that the SADC Parliamentary Forum has observed National Assembly Elections in Lesotho, having previously observed the May 2002 and February 2007 Elections.

The Mission Leader for the SADC PF Election Observation Mission was Hon. Mkhululi Dlamini, a Member of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Swaziland and Treasurer of the SADC PF.

The 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Election is the 27th election to be observed by SADC PF since 1999 when the Forum started observing elections in SADC Member States. Previously, the Forum observed the following elections: Mozambique and Namibia (1999); Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Tanzania (2000); Zambia (2001); Zimbabwe and Lesotho (2002); Malawi, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique (2004); Mauritius and Tanzania (2005); Zambia, DRC and Madagascar (2006); Lesotho (2007); Malawi, South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia (2009), Mauritius (2010); and Zambia (2011).

The purpose of this Interim Statement is to share with various electoral stakeholders in Lesotho (the Basotho, the IEC, political parties and candidates, civil society, the Government and National Parliaments of the Region and the international community in general) the Mission's Observations, Findings and Recommendations which are aimed at strengthening democratic electoral practices both in Lesotho and in the Region. A more detailed Final Report will be compiled and published not later than 90 days from the date of this Statement.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

In undertaking its election observation work, the SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission to the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections was guided by the following terms of reference which are premised on the Forum's *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*:

- i) Assess the extent to which the elections are conducted in line with the Lesotho constitutional and legal framework as well as the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*;
- ii) Assess the contextual factors, that is political, economic, social and human rights, that are likely to impinge upon the integrity, transparency, freeness, fairness, credibility and legitimacy of the elections;
- iii) Assess the impartiality, efficiency and effectiveness of the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho in the management of all relevant aspects of the elections;
- iv) Make an honest, independent, impartial and objective assessment of the extent to which conditions existed for the Basotho to freely express their will in the choice of political representatives;
- v) Assess special provisions and facilities put in place to enable imprisoned persons, the disabled, sick, infirm, expecting mothers, citizens living abroad and public servants on duty, to vote;
- vi) Identify some good practices, draw conclusions and make recommendations on the election for purposes of sharing with stakeholders in order to strengthening democratic electoral practices in the SADC Region; and
- vii) Produce a report on the outcome of the election including strengths and possible areas of improvement.

3. TRAINING AND ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

The work of the Mission commenced with a two-day Training and Orientation Workshop for the MPs and staff in Maseru from 16th to 17th May 2012. The main purpose of the Training and Orientation Workshop was to familiarise the Forum's Mission with general issues of democracy, governance and elections as well as the political, constitutional and legal context and the preparedness of the IEC for the 2012 Lesotho elections. It also sought to equip the Members with the skills for election observation including the terms of reference and the methodology for the Mission. The Stakeholders that briefed the Mission included the IEC, representatives of contesting political parties, civil society, the academics and the media.

4. DEPLOYMENT

The Mission deployed a total of five (5) Teams from 21st until 27th May 2012, to cover the ten (10) Districts of Lesotho. The Teams were based in the various District centres namely Maseru, Leribe, Mphahle's Hoek, Qutha's Nek and Mokhotlong. The Mission Leader and his Team covered Maseru and Berea Districts. The Mission's deployment plan was as shown in the table below:

District/s Covered	Team Headquarters	Team Members	Gender	Country

1. Maseru 2. Berea	Maseru	Team 01 1. Hon. Mkhululi DLAMINI - Mission Leader 2. Hon. Nyeleti B. MONDLANE 3. Lesedi KEEKAEStaff	M F M	Swaziland Mozambique Botswana
1. Leribe 2. Butha Buthe	Leribe	Team 02 1. Hon. Elifas DINGARA - Team Leader 2. Hon. Gabriel NDEBELE 3. Mkhululi MOLO....Staff	M M M	Namibia Zimbabwe South Africa
1. Mafeteng 2. Mohale's Hoek 3. Quthing	Mohale's Hoek	Team 03 1. Hon. Pamela TSHWETE - Team Leader 2. Hon. John Paul LWANJI 3. Anthony MPOKOSO....Staff	F M M	South Africa Tanzania Zambia
1. Qacha's Nek 2. Thaba-Tseka (<i>sharing with Team 05</i>)	Qacha's Neck	Team 04 1. Hon. Vincent MWALE - Team Leader 2. Hon. B. L. Mashile 3. Angumbwike Lameck NGWAVI....Staff 4. Mpendulo NGCAMPHALALA....Staff	M M M M	Zambia South Africa Tanzania Swaziland
1. Mokhotlong 2. Thaba-Tseka (<i>sharing with Team 04</i>)	Mokhotlong	Team 05 1. Hon. Bagalatia ARONE - Team Leader 2. Hon. Waride Bakari JABU 3. David ZIMUNHU	M F M	Botswana Tanzania Zimbabwe

5. METHODOLOGY

The Mission Teams employed several methods to gather information. These included review of the constitutional and legal framework for elections in Lesotho, analysing the various election documents provided by the IEC, attending political campaign rallies, witnessing door to door campaigns, newspapers as well as electronic media and interacting with other Election Observer Missions such as the African Union, SADC Secretariat, SADC Electoral Commissioners Forum, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Electoral Institute of Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) in order to exchange observations and information. These various methods enabled the Mission to gather comprehensive information and to assess the degree to which the 2012 Lesotho electoral processes were managed. The Mission's Teams visited all the 10 Districts in Lesotho, more than 65 constituencies and 99 polling stations during the observation period.

The Mission's observation process was based on the constitution and legal framework as well as the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*, the *SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections*, the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development*, and the *African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa*, the *Benchmarks for Democratic Parliaments in the SADC Region* among other relevant regional and international instruments. The global *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation* and the *Code of Conduct for International Election Observers*, which the Forum is party to, were also useful references for the Mission.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POINTS OF ENQUIRY

In carrying out its observation work, the Mission was guided by the following principles:

- i) impartiality,
- ii) neutrality,
- iii) comprehensiveness,
- iv) transparency,
- v) inclusiveness, and
- vi) objectivity.

The specific points of enquiry for the Mission were:

- i) Constitutional and legal framework;
- ii) Comprehensiveness of Voters Roll;
- iii) Civic and voter education;
- iv) Participation of women and the youth as voters, candidates and election officials;
- v) Preparation and distribution of voting materials;
- vi) Adequacy and location of voting centres;
- vii) Voting arrangements;
- viii) Counting of ballots, tabulation and verification of results;
- ix) Use of ICTs;
- x) Conflict Resolution mechanisms;
- xi) Media coverage of parties, candidates and election-related events;
- xii) Conduct of the campaign process;
- xiii) Role of security forces;
- xiv) Political Party Funding;
- xv) Conduct of political parties and candidates;
- xvi) Good practices from the Lesotho Election;
- xvii) Areas of Improvement; and
- xviii) Overall Mission Assessment of the Electoral Process.

7. MISSION FINDINGS

7.1 The Constitutional and Legal Framework

Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho provides for the protection of citizens' freedoms of movement, expression, assembly and association, among others. Section 20 specifically provides for citizens' right to vote and/or to stand for election at periodic elections under the Constitution through a system of universal and equal suffrage and secret ballot. These freedoms were, in the Mission's view, respected and exercised without undue hindrance.

The electoral process in Lesotho is governed principally by the Constitution of the Kingdom and the Lesotho National Assembly Electoral Act (2011). Section 56 and Section 57 of the Constitution make provision for, among other issues, elections for Members of the National Assembly and the electoral system. Section 66 of the Constitution provides for the establishment, functions and powers of the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho, while Section 67 of the Constitution provides for the delimitation of constituencies. Section 87 of the Constitution provides for the appointment of the Executive by the King, which Executive

is led by a Prime Minister who is a Member of the National Assembly and leader of the majority party or coalition of parties in the National Assembly.

The Lesotho Constitution allows for the Prime Minister and Members of the Cabinet to continue exercising their functions and duties even after the dissolution of Parliament until the new Prime Minister and Members of Cabinet are sworn-in.

The Mission noted the existence of an Electoral Code of Conduct which is embedded in the Lesotho National Assembly Electoral Act (2011), regulating the conduct of political parties, candidates and general membership. The Mission further noted that the Code, which has a legal enforcement mechanism including fines and penalties, gives power to the IEC to reprimand and/or punish political parties and candidates violating the Code of Conduct.

The Mission, however, observed that the Code of Conduct doesn't bind other important electoral stakeholders such as the police and the media who play important roles in the electoral process and therefore have a duty to conduct themselves ethically in order to protect the credibility of elections.

The Mission is of the view that the constitutional and legal framework governing elections in the Kingdom of Lesotho generally augurs well for the conduct of free and fair elections.

7.2 The Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho

Section 66 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho establishes the IEC as an autonomous body with the sole mandate of registering voters, supervising the preparation, publication and maintenance of a general register of electors, registration of political parties, demarcation of constituency boundaries and conducting elections in terms of the Constitution and the National Assembly Electoral Act (2011).

The Constitution provides that the IEC comprises a Chairperson and two other members appointed by the King on the advice of the Council of State. For one to qualify as a member of the IEC, one should be of a high moral character, proven integrity and should either qualify to hold a high judicial office or should possess considerable experience and demonstrated competence in the administration of public affairs. The powers, functions and duties of the Commission are further articulated in the National Assembly Electoral Act (2011). The power and authority to appoint the Director and staff of the Commission rests solely with the Commission, to which such staff are accountable.

Recognising the notable exceptions relating to multiple voter registrations and concerns regarding delimitation of constituencies, electoral stakeholders generally expressed confidence in the independence, impartiality, openness, transparency and capacity of the IEC to organise and conduct credible elections.

The Mission noted that the legal framework within which the IEC is established and operates generally augurs well for the independence and autonomous functioning of the Commission. This is in line with the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region* and the *SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections*.

The Mission observed that the IEC was evidently prepared for the 2012 National Assembly Elections. The IEC ensured the printing of ballot papers in time under the observation of stakeholders including representatives of political parties, carried out voter education programmes in collaboration with civil society organisations, and distributed both sensitive and non sensitive voting materials to Constituency Voting Centres in the Districts according to the electoral calendar. It also trained electoral staff and engaged stakeholders throughout the process.

Overall, the Mission commends the IEC for the professional work in preparing for and conducting the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections.

Voter Registration

The Mission noted that the voting age in Lesotho in terms of the law is 18 years. The Mission further noted that the law provides for continuous voter registration which process is periodically suspended on the 8th day after the commencement of an official election period and resumes 90 days after the end of the election period. The Mission further noted that the official elections period for the 2012 National Assembly Elections commenced on 15th March 2012.

The Mission observed that there are no personal national identity cards for citizens in Lesotho and the passport is the widely used identification document. There was growing suspicion that the use of passports during voter registration could create a loophole allowing for under-aged voters to be illegally included on the Voters' Register. Stakeholders consulted informed the Mission that the introduction of personal identity cards had the potential to curtail growing cases of multiple registrants and under-age voters.

Stakeholders consulted further informed the Mission that the practice in Lesotho is that, in the event of death, relatives of the deceased are obliged to notify the Chief, who in turn notifies the relevant authorities in Government and that failure by the respective Chiefs to notify Government regarding deaths in their jurisdictions was the main reason for the inflated Electors' Register which has a total of 1,127,960 registered voters out of a population of 1,902,707, depicting an unusually inverted demographic pyramid for Lesotho.

The SADC PF Election Observation Mission found out that for the 2012 National Assembly Elections, the IEC introduced 600 mobile registration units which produced instant voters' cards, a development which enhanced the efficiency of the process.

The Mission took note of the challenges faced by the IEC relating to the synchronization of the previously existing voters' data base with the newly acquired Mobile Registration Units (MRUs) which led to multiple registrants and appearances of deceased persons on the Voters' Roll. This has remained an issue of concern to most of the stakeholders, especially the political parties.

The Mission noted that the Electors' Register showed a total of 1,127,960 voters as being registered for the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections out of the Country's approximately 1,153,218 eligible voters and a population estimated at 1,902,707. This puts Lesotho at around 98 per cent voter registration, which is far higher than the regional average of 77 percent.

7.3 Electors' Register (Voters' Roll)

The Mission noted that copies of the Electors' Register were available to the public and stakeholders in hard copies. Besides cases of multiple registrants and appearance of deceased persons on the electors' register, no significant complaints were raised by the contesting political parties, candidates and other stakeholders, relating to anomalies, shortcomings and inaccuracies on the Register.

7.4 Voter Education

The Mission found out that for the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections, the IEC partnered with the civil society umbrella body, the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), to train and deploy a total of approximately 700 voter educators across the country. The voter education exercise started on 1st April 2012 and ended on 15th May 2012. This period, however, was considered by some stakeholders as being inadequate.

The Mission observed that the Lesotho National Assembly Electoral Act provides for the IEC as the sole custodian of voter education with other partners such as civic society only coming in to assist the Commission. The IEC decides on the budget, curriculum and period during which voter education takes place in Lesotho.

The Mission further observed that voter education involved the IEC training trainers in critical stakeholder groups such as political parties, chiefs, women and youth groups, the police, teachers and church groups, with the civil society partners filling the gap where the IEC could not reach. In addition, the Mission observed that the voter education curriculum for the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections was focused on the code of conduct, nomination process and voting steps.

7.5 Role of Security Forces

The Mission noted the preliminary worries expressed by some stakeholders on the role of the security forces during the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections. The Mission, however, observed that other than a statement reportedly issued by the military prior to the Mission's arrival in Lesotho, no incidents of the security forces' undue interference with the electoral processes were confirmed by the Mission's Election Observation Teams that were based in the 10 districts of Lesotho.

The Mission further observed that the Police were adequately prepared to perform their duties during the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections as evidenced by the presence of police officers in all the polling centres visited by the Mission's Election Observation Teams. This also contributed to the general peaceful environment that existed in the country during the electoral process.

7.6 Participation of Youths

The Mission noted that in spite of the youth constituting the majority of the voters, their participation was generally marginalised to mobilising support for their parties' candidates without having a clearly defined agenda of their own in the electoral process.

7.7 Role of Civil Society Organisations

The Mission appreciated the civil society organisations for playing an important role in civic and voter education and working with the IEC. In addition, the Mission noted the role of CSOs in promoting the credibility of the election process through the training and deployment of approximately 300 Local Election Observers to observe the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections.

7.8 Role of Traditional Leaders

The Mission noted the roles played by chiefs during the 2012 National Assembly Elections, which roles included witnessing for their subjects who did not have identity documents during voter registration and actual voting as well as clearing the holding of rallies and political gatherings in their jurisdictions.

7.9 Media Coverage of the Electoral Process

The Mission noted the vibrancy, plurality and diversity of the media landscape in Lesotho which includes public and private newspapers, community radio stations and the public broadcaster that gave extensive coverage to political parties, candidates and the general electoral process. The diversity of the media allowed for the levelling of the playing field to all contesting parties and candidates with regards to media coverage. The Mission further noted the efforts by the IEC to afford all participating political parties equitable coverage by the state media through securing time slots for airing campaign messages on the state broadcaster.

7.10 The Political Environment

The Mission found out that the political environment was generally peaceful as demonstrated by unimpeded political rallies, campaigns, and a generally high degree of tolerance among political party supporters although the Mission learnt of isolated cases of election-related violence that reportedly occurred prior to the Mission's arrival in Lesotho. The Mission noted the positive trend by most of the political parties and candidates to base their campaign messages on substantive policy issues as opposed to targeting personalities which tends to polarise society.

The SADC PF commends the Basotho for the generally peaceful and friendly manner in which they conducted themselves during the campaign, voting and counting of ballots.

7.11 Political Campaigns

The Mission noted that the official campaign period for the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections stretched from 15th March 2012 following dissolution of Parliament and ended on to 25th May 2012, which is 24 hours before voting in line with the regulations. The Mission further noted that the conduct of political parties and other stakeholders during campaigns is governed by the Code of Conduct as provided for in the Lesotho National Assembly Electoral Act (2011).

The Mission observed that apart from the isolated reports of election related disputes, the election campaign was carried out in a calm and orderly manner with a relative degree of tolerance among contesting political parties and candidates. The 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Election campaign expressed itself in the form of political rallies, door-to-door campaigns, billboards, posters, radio and television adverts as well as live interactive programmes on the electronic media.

7.12 Funding of Political Parties

The Mission observed the existence of provisions within the National Assembly Electoral Act (2011) that provide for the public funding of political parties with seats in the National Assembly on an annual basis. In addition to public funding, the law provides for the allocation of campaign funds to all registered political parties participating in elections. This strengthens democracy by levelling the political field as resources are a major factor in political campaign.

7.13 Voting Centres

The Mission found out that the IEC established a total of 2,748 polling stations within voting centres, with each polling centre catering for up to approximately 600 voters. The IEC designated various places as voting centres including schools, halls, churches and chiefs' residences in villages. The Mission further noted that the voter registers were also customised up to a specific polling station, with a register for each station. The Mission also observed that most voting stations visited by its Teams in the districts were well staffed, with each voting station manned by an average of four officers other than security officers and ushers. Furthermore, the voting officers generally demonstrated good knowledge of the requisite voting procedures. The Mission is of the general view that the number of polling stations was adequate and generally accessible enough to allow as many eligible voters as possible to cast their vote.

7.14 The Vote and the Count

The Mission observed that most voting stations opened and closed at legislated times of 0700 and 1700 respectively. At all polling stations observed by the Mission's Teams, voters that were still in the voting queue by 1700 hrs were allowed to cast their votes in line with the regulations. Voting materials were generally available in adequate quantities and this allowed voting to proceed smoothly throughout the day at most voting stations. The Mission also noted

that the presence of political party agents, election monitors and the police at all voting stations together with the use of indelible ink to avoid multiple voters contributed to enhancing the transparency of the voting process.

The Mission observed that the voting process was conducted peacefully across the country with no significant cases of disturbances.

The Mission further observed that counting of ballots took place at the respective polling stations at the end of the voting process and was generally conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner in the presence of candidate representatives, and in some cases observers. The presiding officers and party agents signed the results before posting a copy on the outside of the voting station while each of the candidates' representatives were given signed copies of the same.

7.15 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Place

The Mission noted the existence, across the country, of District Dispute Resolution Committees comprising representatives of different political parties. At national level, the Mission noted the existence of the Panel responsible for dealing with complaints relating to abuse of State resources during campaigns and the Tribunal charged with resolving disputes relating to violation of the Code of Conduct at national level. The Mission further noted that the Tribunal is provided for under the Lesotho National Assembly Electoral Act (2011) and is a critical structure through which the IEC administers the Code of Conduct.

The Mission observed that at least three cases of election related disputes were brought before the Tribunal during the run-up to the Lesotho 2012 National Assembly Elections.

The Mission also noted that in the event of disputes relating to the outcome of elections in Lesotho, the aggrieved party has access to legal recourse through the High Court which is the only court conferred with jurisdiction to preside over post electoral disputes.

7.16 Provision of Special Arrangements

The Mission noted that there were arrangements for prisoners to cast their votes although there were no such voting arrangements for special groups such as the sick, the pregnant, the disabled and those citizens living abroad.

7.17 Gender Representation

The Mission observed that there were very few women candidates contesting constituency based National Assembly seats during the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections.

The Mission, however, noted and welcomed the requirement in the National Assembly Electoral Act (2011) stipulating that when nominating candidates for proportional representation seats, each male or female candidate's name should be followed by that of a candidate of the opposite sex and that the party lists should have equal numbers of male and

female candidates. This augurs well for the attainment of 50/50 women and men representation in both political and decision making positions in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The Mission noted the urgent need for Political Parties in Lesotho to incorporate gender equity in their constitutions, policies and manifestos.

The Mission was however, encouraged by Women's representation within the IEC structures where two of the three Commissioners are women. While gender was not a criterion for the recruitment of electoral officials, the Mission observed that most of the IEC officials manning the polling centres were women.

8. GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE 2012 LESOTHO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The Mission observed the following as good practices from the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections:

- i) High degree of tolerance which contributed to peaceful and orderly campaigns and generally amicable atmosphere during voting;
- ii) Existence of enforceable Electoral Code of Conduct which is embedded within the Lesotho National Assembly Electoral Act (2011), stipulating how political parties, candidates and the general membership should conduct themselves during elections;
- iii) Efforts by the IEC in opening up the electoral process by engaging and communicating with stakeholders on a regular basis, encouraging voters' interest and participation through voter education and enhancing the transparency of the electoral process and speedy tabulation of results;
- iv) Professionalism and commitment to duty demonstrated by the electoral staff;
- v) The establishment of multiple polling stations at voting centres and limiting the number of voters to 600 per voting station which speeded up the voting process;
- vi) The establishment of Dispute Management Committees involving the contesting political parties to handle election-related disputes;
- vii) The levelling of the electoral playing field through provision of public funding for political parties and allocation of campaign funds to all registered political parties participating in elections;
- viii) The provision for continuous Voter Registration in the law;
- ix) The use of transparent and translucent ballot boxes;
- x) The prohibition of political campaigning 24 hours prior to the election date which helps to create a calm and tranquil environment during the period leading to and on the voting day;
- xi) The role played by political party leaders in committing themselves to peace and tolerance prior, during and post the voting process;
- xii) Role of religious organisations in fostering harmony and political tolerance among political parties and the general public;

- xiii) Counting of ballots at each of the voting stations in the presence of party agents and observers and the signing of voting station result sheets by electoral officials, and party agents before they are posted at each voting station; and
- xiv) The existence of a vibrant, diverse and pluralistic media which balanced media coverage of the elections.

9. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- i) Lack of provisions in the National Assembly Electoral Act on the facilitation of voting by special groups such as the sick, the disabled, the pregnant and citizens abroad;
- ii) The absence of personal identity cards for citizens which has potential to curtail growing cases of multiple registrants and under-age voters.
- iii) Absence of an efficient process and legal framework to facilitate timely removal of details of deceased persons from the Elector's Register in order to maintain a clean and credible Electors' Register.
- iv) The need for the establishment of a special Electoral Court to expedite the resolution of election related disputes in keeping with good practices; and
- v) The need to expand the Code of Conduct to include responsibilities for other critical electoral stakeholders such as the police and the media so as to harmonise stakeholder collaboration in the management of elections.

10. MISSION'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE 2012 LESOTHO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Based on its overall findings, the Mission is of the view that there existed a substantially conducive and peaceful environment in which elections were conducted. The Basotho were accorded the opportunity to freely express their will in voting for political parties and candidates of their choice.

Having duly noted that the 2012 Lesotho National Assembly Elections were, on the whole, a credible reflection of the will of the people of Lesotho, the SADC Parliamentary Forum, therefore, declares the 2012 Lesotho Elections as having been free and fair.

-End-