



**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE ELECTORAL  
COMMISSIONS FORUM OF SADC COUNTRIES (ECF-SADC)  
ON THE PRESIDENTIAL, PARLIAMENTARY & PROVINCIAL  
15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2019**



## **Introduction and background**

1. On the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC) received an invitation from the National Electoral Commission (CNE) of Mozambique to observe the Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Elections scheduled for the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in the Republic of Mozambique. In line with its mandate of strengthening co-operation amongst Electoral Commissions in the SADC region, the ECF-SADC deployed an observer mission for these elections.
2. The ECF-SADC Election Observer Mission was led by Justice Andre da Silva Neto, Chairperson of the National Electoral Commissioner of Angola. The Deputy Mission Leader was Dr Njabuliso Dlamini, a Commissioner of the Elections and Boundaries Commission of Eswatini.
3. This is the third occasion that the ECF – SADC has observed elections in the Republic of Mozambique, the last being the 2014 Tripartite Elections held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014.
4. The Mission comprised fifteen (15) observers drawn from Electoral Commissions of Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe. The mission period was 8<sup>th</sup> – 18 October 2019.

## **Guiding Election Observation Instruments and Values**

5. ECF-SADC election observation missions are guided by the Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation in the SADC Region (PEMMO, 2003), the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines for Governing Democratic Elections in the SADC Region (2015) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2004).



6. Furthermore, ECF-SADC Election Observer Missions are guided by the values of impartiality, neutrality, transparency, and objectivity. These are consistent with the above-mentioned instruments.

### **Observation Methodology and Activities undertaken**

7. The observation mission employed complementary data collection methods including (i) documentary review (ii) electronic and print media (iii) paying courtesy visits to the host Commission (iv) conducting refresher training for the members of the Mission (v) observing campaign rallies (vi) hosting a seminar with local stakeholders (vii) the polling and (viii) counting processes.
8. The Mission also interacted with both domestic and international observer missions in order to exchange information. The various activities undertaken enabled the Mission to gather strategic and comprehensive information so as to assess the administration and management of the 2019 Tripartite Elections of the Republic of Mozambique.

### **Deployment**

9. The deployment period of the Mission was 12-16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Ground deployment commenced from 12 October 2019. Due to its limited size, the Mission took a decision to deploy only in Maputo city and Maputo Provinces, covering Boane, Marracuene, Matola and Machava.
10. The Mission was able to attend final political rallies held in Maputo. The Mission found these rallies to be peaceful. It should be noted that campaigning ceased (two days before polling) on 12 October 2019 midnight as provided for by law.
11. The Mission noted the use of security personnel in the dispatch and guarding of electoral materials ahead of polling.



## **Pre-Election Phase**

### **i. Pre-Election Assessment Mission**

12. The ECF-SADC undertook a pre-election visit to Mozambique on 25-28 August 2019 , the purpose of which was assess preparedness of its member CNE-Mozambique to hold credible elections, Uptake and degree of implementation of 2014 Election Observation Recommendations, assess the role of other electoral stakeholders in the electoral processes and to assess the conduciveness of political environment to conduct elections.

### **ii. State of Preparedness by the CNE – Mozambique**

13. The Mission interacted with the National Electoral Commission (CNE) of Mozambique to gather information related to the 2019 Presidential, Legislative and Provincial elections and assessed its state of readiness. The Commission confirmed its readiness to conduct these elections, highlighting challenges they faced in the build up to elections, including;

- The effects of the Cyclone disaster that took place and caused consequent delays in the electoral processes.
- The Challenges as experienced by CNE included limited time frame to conclude the preparations in addition to the financial and human resources constraints.
- On legal Framework, CNE confirmed that it was faced with the mandate of conducting elections of Provisional Governors following amendment of the Law that governs Provisional and Local Government.



### **iii. Consultation with Stakeholders**

14. The Mission held a seminar on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019 with electoral stakeholders representing different sectors of society. These included representatives from Civil Society, academia, the media, and two of the political parties. This accorded the Mission an opportunity to understand the conditions in which the elections would take place.

### **iv. Issues raised by stakeholders**

15. The stakeholders raised a number of cross cutting issues, which they believed have an effect on the conduct of this year's elections. These concerns included the following:

- While the voter registration exercise was seen as having been conducted satisfactorily in almost 10 of the 11 provinces of Mozambique, the elections took place in a context of concerns by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and opposition political parties on the accuracy of the voter's roll arising from contested voter registration statistics in Gaza province.
- Alleged impediment of participation and intimidation of civil society organizations.
- Alleged delays with accreditation of domestic observers.
- Security situation in the country;  
The security situation and electoral violence as reported in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Gaza remained a concern to all and seen as having a potential to affect the conduct of elections.



- Access to media and State Resources;  
Some stakeholders highlighted challenges in terms of the use of state resources and media coverage of contesting parties. It was noted however that in general there was some space for political participation.
- The lack of trust and confidence in CNE – Mozambique by some political parties;  
This is despite the fact that the CNE members are drawn from political parties.
- The low participation of women as electoral candidates remains a concern.

16. The Mission participated in the Heads of International Observation Missions meeting organised by SADC Election Observer Mission ( SEOM ) and the African Union (AU) Election Observation Mission on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 respectively. Missions were able to share their observations on the pre-polling, polling, and post-polling phases.

17. Key Mission observations during the pre-polling phase

- The electoral period was generally peaceful, save for isolated incidents of violence reported ahead of elections.
- The accreditation process for international observers has significantly improved.
- The election of provincial governors;  
For the first time provincial voters would elect governors through the ballot. This is a positive development that strengthens decentralization initiatives.



- Timeous Training of polling officials;  
More than 100 000 polling officials were already trained and ready for deployment in the 20,162 voting stations nationally, including the 480 stations in the diaspora.
- Funding of political party campaigns;  
The government set aside 180 million Metical (equivalent to 3 million USD) for funding of political party campaigns. This amount was distributed proportionally to political parties represented in Parliament . There were however concerns that CNE delayed the distribution of such funds to political parties.
- Management of complaints;  
In the past, election related complaints could only be made at station level. Legislation was amended to provide that complaints be made at the Constitutional court and that the court should reach a determination within 48 hours.
- Confidence in the country's legal, financial and technical framework for the running of elections;  
Generally, there was expressions of confidence in the ability of the CNE to conduct elections within the existing framework, however concerns were made on CNE's lack of willingness to make decisions on key electoral matters.
- The signing of a Peace Agreement ahead of elections was seen as a good tool for reducing potential electoral conflict.
- Voting by citizens living abroad (diapora voting) is a positive development that is in line with the recommendations by the revised SADC principles on governing democratic elections in the SADC region



## **Election Phase**

### **i. Polling Day**

18. The Mission made the following general observations on polling day;

- Generally, polling stations opened on time and opening procedures were followed in a transparent manner.
- Both local and international observers were present at most polling stations visited.
- Party agents were present at most polling stations visited and predominantly represented Frelimo and Renamo.
- Some polling stations visited had long queues in the morning. These were managed adequately by the polling staff.
- Some polling stations visited were considered to be small. However, the layout of the polling stations did not compromise the secrecy of the ballot.
- Voters needing assistance were given priority to vote including the elderly, infirm, pregnant and women with children.
- The polling staff seemed adequately trained to perform their duties, and the voters roll was managed effectively in most polling stations visited.
- At most polling stations visited, women formed the majority of the staff component.



- Youth were visible in large numbers as voters, polling staff and party agents.
- Security personnel were visibly present and did not interfere with the polling process. In some polling stations, few security personnel were armed.
- Voters were given voting education on the handling of the three ballots at the voting station, this resulted in slowed voting process.
- At the polling stations visited, voting took place in a calm and an orderly environment.

## **ii. Counting and Management of Results**

19. The Mission observed the closing and counting processes and noted that polling stations closed on time in most polling stations visited.

- Closing procedures were followed in the presence of political party agents and observers.
- Voters already in queues at closing were allowed to vote.
- Generally, the closing and counting process were running slow.

## **LESSONS LEARNT**

20. The following lessons drawn from the Presidential , Legislative and Provincial Elections of the Republic of Mozambique stand out as good practices in the SADC region:

- The forty-eight (48) hour cooling off period for campaigns ahead of the elections.
- Direct elections of Provisional Governors.



- The forty-eight (48) hour time-frame given to the Constitutional Court to address electoral related complaints.
- The emphasis on transparency of voting and counting.
- Use of women and the youth as electoral staff was positive.
- The consistency of the voting process observed from station to station, with few exceptions, overall showed a high level of training and experience of the electoral staff.
- The Time frame for holding elections within 18 months following proclamation by the President allows for adequate time for preparations to conduct elections.

#### **AREAS THAT MAY REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT**

21. The Mission notes the recommendations it made following the 2014 elections and advises that they remain relevant especially on areas relating to; consideration for application of indelible ink through use of indelible marker as opposed to dipping.
22. There should be timeous information and signage on the location of polling stations.

#### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

23. The ECF – SADC Mission makes the following key recommendations:

- There is a need to strengthen voter education programmes.
- Encourage collaboration between CNE & STAE to avoid disseminating conflicting information to electoral staff.



- Accelerate accreditation of domestic observers.
- Consider expediting the official announcement of election results

## **CONCLUSION**

24. The Mission congratulates the people of the Republic of Mozambique, political parties and all other stakeholders for conducting and participating peacefully in elections.

25. The ECF- SADC acknowledges that the CNE has discharged its mandate to organize the Presidential, Legislative and Provincial elections in a transparent manner.

26. As the electoral process is not yet concluded, the ECF-SADC encourages the people of the Republic of Mozambique to remain calm, tolerant and peaceful.

27. ECF-SADC encourages CNE to conclude the electoral process in accordance with the law.

Signed on this 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in **Maputo, Republic of Mozambique**

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**Justice Andre da Silva Neto**

**Mission leader**

**Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries, Republic of Mozambique**