



INTERIM MISSION STATEMENT

**BY THE
SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO
THE 2014 NAMIBIA PRESIDENTIAL & NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
OF 28 NOVEMBER 2014**

**DELIVERED BY
HONOURABLE ADVOCATE JACOB FRANCIS MUDENDA, MISSION
LEADER AND SPEAKER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZIMBABWE, ON
SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2014, AT THE WINDHOEK COUNTRY CLUB,
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

SALUTATIONS

- Commissioners of the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN)
- Fellow Honourable Members of Parliament of the SADC PF Mission;
- The Secretary General of the SADC PF, Dr Esau Chiviya;
- Esteemed Heads and Members of various Election Observation Missions;
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Representatives of Political Parties;
- Parliamentary and SADC PF Secretariat Staff;
- Members of Civil Society Organisations;
- Media Representatives;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome you all to this Press Conference on the presentation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission's Interim Statement on the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections in my capacity as the Mission Leader.

1. INTRODUCTION

In response to an invitation from the ECN, the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF)¹ constituted an Election Observation Mission to observe the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections of 28 November. The 40-Member Mission was in Namibia from 18 November to 2 December 2014 and was composed of Members of Parliament and staff from SADC Parliaments, as well as officials from SADC PF's Secretariat. The Observation Mission comprised male and female Members of Parliament from both the ruling and opposition political parties from Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The SADC PF Election Observation Mission to the 2014 Namibia Elections marks the fourth time the SADC PF has observed elections in Namibia and is the 34th Observation Mission to be deployed by SADC PF since 1999 when the SADC PF started observing elections in SADC Member States.

The purpose of this Interim Statement is to share the Mission's observations, in particular its findings and recommendations, with stakeholders including the ECN, the Government and People of Namibia and other SADC Member States. The recommendations herein are aimed at deepening democracy through strengthening and improving the freeness, fairness and credibility of the electoral processes in Namibia and the entire SADC Region. A more detailed Final Report will be compiled and published within 90 days from the date of this Interim Statement.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

In undertaking its election observation work, the SADC PF's Mission was guided by the Terms of Reference as approved by the SADC PF's policy organs and which are aimed at assessing the following:

¹ The SADC Parliamentary Forum is a Regional inter-parliamentary forum that was established in 1996 and was approved by the SADC Summit as a consultative and deliberative body in accordance with Article 9 (2) of the SADC Treaty. It is composed of 14 National Parliaments, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- i) The constitutional and legal framework within which the elections were conducted;
- ii) The historical, socio-economic and political environment within which elections took place;
- iii) The extent to which the elections were conducted in line with the constitutional and legal framework of the Republic of Namibia and in relation to the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region, Benchmarks for Assessing Elections in Southern Africa, SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections* and other international election instruments;
- iv) The gender trends and voter turnout in comparison to previous elections;
- v) The organisational arrangements of the electoral process by examining the following:
 - a) Independence, impartiality and accountability of the ECN, including stakeholders' confidence in the ECN;
 - b) Secrecy of the ballot and the transparency and legitimacy of the electoral process;
 - c) Voter registration and the state of the voters roll, paying special attention to the inclusiveness and availability of voters roll to stakeholders;
 - d) The campaign process and the conduct of political parties;
 - e) Publication of the election calendar, preparation and distribution of voting materials;
 - f) Civic and voter education including the quality of the education, the role of the Elections Management Body (EMB), political parties/candidates and civil society organisations;
 - g) Role of security forces;
 - h) Gender mainstreaming in political activities and manifestoes, electoral systems, practices and processes, including the management and administration of elections;
 - i) Role of the media with respect to fair and balanced media reporting and coverage on election activities;
 - j) Polling stations with reference to adequacy, location and voters' access to information on polling stations;
 - k) Polling arrangements with reference to opening of polling stations, availability of voting materials, secrecy of the ballot, and related administrative arrangements;
 - l) Counting, reconciliation, verification, tabulation and announcement of results as well as the legitimacy of results in the views of stakeholders;
 - m) Conflict resolution mechanisms in place with reference to the working relationship between the ECN, Government, political parties and other stakeholders; and
 - n) Complaints and Appeals Procedures.
- vi) Overall assessment of the electoral process, drawing some good practices, gaps, conclusions and recommendations.

3. DEPLOYMENT PLAN

The Mission deployed a total of eight (8) Teams, with two teams in Khomas Region, one team covering Oshana and Omusati Regions, in addition to a team in each of the following regions: Erongo, Hardap, Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Zambezi. The teams were in the field from 21 to 29 November 2014.

4. OBSERVATION METHODOLOGY

The Mission teams employed a range of information gathering methods, including the review of the constitutional and legal framework governing elections in Namibia, consultations with key electoral stakeholders such as the ECN, political parties and candidates, civil society organisations, media, academia, faith-based groups and the general electorate. The Mission also observed political campaign rallies and meetings and monitored the media including newspapers, radios, televisions and the social media.

Furthermore, the Mission interacted with other Election Observation Missions such as the SADC Election Observation Mission, the African Union, the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC and the Commonwealth, among others, in order to exchange observations.

These methods enabled the Mission to gather comprehensive information to critically assess the manner in which the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections were conducted.

During their deployment in the Regions, the Mission's teams visited 64 constituencies and 170 polling stations prior to and during the elections.

The Mission's overall observation process was mainly anchored on the constitution and legal framework governing elections in Namibia, the *Benchmarks for Assessing Democratic Elections in Southern Africa*, *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*, and the *SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections*. The global *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation*, to which SADC PF is party, was also a useful reference for the Mission.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In carrying out its observation work, the Mission was guided by the principles of impartiality, neutrality, comprehensiveness, transparency, inclusiveness, and objectivity.

6. MISSION FINDINGS

6.1 Political Background

The SADC PF Mission took note of the key milestones of Namibia's long political evolutionary process stretching from being colonised in the late 19th century, the attainment of independence on 21 March 1990, to the major political and socio-economic developments that have shaped the democratic development of post independence Namibia.

The Mission particularly noted the progressive road Namibia has travelled in building and consolidating its growing democracy as evidenced by the smooth transition from white minority rule to majority rule between 1989 and 1990, the regular holding of credible and peaceful elections in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009, among other achievements. Furthermore, the Mission noted with appreciation Namibia's consistent development and strengthening of key democratic institutions such as an independent electoral commission, functional judiciary, a vibrant Parliament directly and democratically elected by its own citizens, and uninhibited formation and participation of political parties in the politics of the country.

6.2 The Constitutional and Legal Framework

The Mission noted that the constitutional and legal framework governing elections in Namibia is primarily based on the Constitution of the Republic incorporating the Third Constitutional Amendment of 2014 and the Electoral Act, Act 5 of 2014.

Chapter 3 of the Namibian Constitution (Articles 5-25) provides for the fundamental rights and freedoms of Namibians, including protection of liberty, respect for human dignity, equality and freedom from discrimination and right to participate in peaceful political activity. The Constitution in Article 17(2) further guarantees the voting rights of all Namibians aged at least 18 as well as rights of Namibian

citizens aged at least 21 years to be elected to public office other than the office of President of the Republic. The law in Namibia requires one to be above the age of 35 to qualify as a candidate for the office of President of the Republic.

Article 21 of the Namibian Constitution specifically guarantees the Namibians' right to freedoms of speech and expression, which includes freedoms of the press and the media, freedom of thought, conscience and belief, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of movement among other fundamental freedoms.

The Mission is satisfied that the Constitution of Namibia guarantees fundamental human and political rights of the citizens and these were respected and exercised without undue hindrance during the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly elections.

The SADC PF Mission noted that the constitutional and legal framework in Namibia provides for a proportional representation electoral system for the National Assembly Elections and a First-Past-the-Post system for Presidential Elections.

The SADC PF Mission further took note of the constitutional provisions for the election of the President through direct universal and equal suffrage and a run-off within 60 days in the event that no presidential candidate garners more than 50 percent of votes cast in the first ballot.

The SADC PF Mission also took note of the constitutional provision of the term of office for President which is two terms only of five years each which has been duly complied with.

The SADC PF Mission is satisfied with the constitutional and legislative framework governing elections in Namibia which augurs well for the election of political representatives in a transparent manner in line with the SADC PF's *Benchmarks for Assessing Democratic Elections in Southern Africa*.

The SADC PF Mission, however, took note of the concerns raised by some stakeholders regarding the coming into effect of the new Electoral Act (2014) on 17 October 2014, just one and a half months before the holding of the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly Elections, which they felt left ECN without adequate time to fully operationalise and publicise the new legal provisions among stakeholders.

The Mission is of the view that this had potential to dent stakeholder confidence and, therefore, urges the Namibian Authorities to provide ample time for operationalisation and publicity of new electoral legislation in the future.

6.3 The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and Election Administration

The SADC PF Mission noted that the ECN is established by Article 94B of the Constitution as the exclusive body to direct, supervise, manage, and control the conduct of elections and referenda in Namibia. Namibian law provides for the ECN as an independent, transparent and impartial body consisting of five Commissioners, including the Chairperson, appointed by the President with the approval of the National Assembly.

The Commissioners serve for a five year term, renewable only once. The Electoral Act (2014) stipulates the criteria for appointment as a member of the Commission, further providing that at least two of the commissioners should be women.

The Electoral Act (2014) provides for the organisation of the ECN, including the provision for mandatory permanent structures at national and regional levels, as well as optional structures at constituency level to ensure that the Commission fully interfaces with electoral stakeholders at all levels. The law also provides for the financing of the Commission by Government through appropriations by Parliament.

Most of the electoral stakeholders who interacted with the Mission expressed confidence in the independence, impartiality, openness, transparency and capacity of the ECN to organise and conduct credible elections in Namibia.

Overall, the Mission is satisfied that the legal framework within which the ECN is established and operates, generally augurs well for the independence and autonomous functioning of the Commission in line with the *Benchmarks for Assessing Democratic Elections in Southern Africa* and the *SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections*.

The SADC PF Mission observed that the ECN was evidently prepared to conduct the 2014 elections as demonstrated by the procurement of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and other election materials in time. The ECN also carried out voter education programmes and timely distributed both sensitive and non-sensitive voting materials to the 14 Regions of Namibia in time and in accordance with the electoral calendar.

The SADC PF Mission particularly commends the ECN for carrying out a robust voter education campaign, especially as it related to the use and functionality of the EVMs which were introduced on a national scale in Namibia for the first time during the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections.

The ECN also trained electoral staff in time and was constantly consulting and communicating with electoral stakeholders, including the police, political parties and candidates as well as the media throughout the process.

On the whole, the Mission commends the ECN for the professional and efficient manner in which it prepared for and conducted the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections in compliance with the country's Constitution, electoral laws and in line with international best practice.

6.4 The Role of Security Forces

The Mission noted the positive role played by the Namibian Police in providing security to the entire electoral process including the Election Day. The Police provided security to the transportation of election materials to fixed and mobile polling stations across Namibia which enhanced the integrity of the electoral process. The police were present at all the polling stations visited by the Mission's teams on voting day and generally conducted themselves professionally. The Mission, however, observed that at some polling stations, the police assisted voters on the use of the EVMs instead of the Presiding Officers. The SADC PF Mission, on the whole, commends the Namibian Police for having carried out their election-related duties without unduly interfering with the electoral process.

6.5 Voter Registration

The Electoral Act (2014) provides for continuous voter registration as well as the conduct of a General Registration of Voters every decade by the ECN within and outside Namibia. The Mission observed that for the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly Elections, the ECN completed a successful General Registration of Voters from 15 January to 2 March 2014, which was conducted in terms of the law.

The General Registration of Voters resulted in a turnout of 93 percent of the Namibian electorate. This puts Namibia above the SADC Region average of around 85 percent. A Provisional Voters' Register was produced and was followed by the objection period which allowed stakeholders and the general public to scrutinise the register for the possible inclusion of names in terms of the law. The objection period was followed by a Supplementary Registration of Voters (SRV) which was conducted from 8 to 20 September 2014 and culminated in a total registered voter population of 1,241,194. The SADC PF Mission commends the ECN for conducting a very successful voter registration exercise which accorded many eligible citizens an opportunity to register.

6.6 Voters' Register

As already stated, the law in Namibia provides for continuous voter registration as well as the systematic revision of the Voters' Register through the conduct of General Registration of Voters every 10 years to ensure the continued accuracy and credibility of the Voters' Register. Most electoral stakeholders who interacted with the Mission confirmed the accessibility of the voter registration and objection processes. The stakeholders, on the whole, expressed confidence in the inclusiveness of the voter registration process and the comprehensiveness of the Voters' Register. Both hard and electronic copies of the Voters' Register were observed to be available in all polling stations visited by the Mission's Teams on Election Day.

The SADC PF Mission, however, noted complaints from some contesting political parties regarding delays by the ECN in availing the final official Voters' Register to the political parties. Some of the political parties informed the Mission that they had received the Voters' Register within a week before voting day.

6.7 Civic and Voter Education

In terms of the law, the ECN is responsible for civic and voter education in Namibia. The Mission noted with commendation that for the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly elections, the ECN officially commenced training and voter education on the EVMs in July 2013 and stepped up the campaigns as the elections drew closer.

The SADC PF Mission also observed that prior to the 2014 Elections, the ECN conducted an extensive and multi-channel voter education campaign in the forms of adverts in the print and electronic media, including social media platforms, as well as physical voter education sessions in various communities across the 14 Regions of Namibia. The majority of the electorate that interacted with the Mission confirmed having received civic and voter education from the ECN or other stakeholders such as political parties and civil society players.

However, the Mission urges the ECN to continue engaging stakeholders and the general public on the functionality of the EVMs with a view to further strengthen their knowledge, trust and confidence in the new voting system.

6.8 Use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) during the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections

The SADC PF Mission was briefed on the long consultative process among Namibian political stakeholders that culminated in the introduction of EVMs in the Namibian electoral process. The Mission noted that Parliament, as the supreme representative organ of the Namibian people, was involved in the political and legal discourse leading to the adoption of EVMs for use in the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections.

The Mission also noted that prior to the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly Elections, EVMs were used without any significant problems in five by-elections. This enabled the ECN to practically test their readiness for use during the 2014 general elections and also afforded some members of the electorate an opportunity to get a feel of how EVMs work. The Mission observed that backup EVMs, biometric Voter Verification Devices and manual Voters' Registers were in place in case of breakdowns.

The SADC PF Mission is, however, of the view that as is the case with any introduction of new technology, more so in sensitive and high-stakes domains such as elections, it takes time to secure public confidence. There is, therefore, need for the ECN to continue engaging all stakeholders on the functionality and use of EVMs in elections.

The SADC PF Mission also observed that the ECN also applied ICTs in other aspects of the electoral process, including the use of electronic Voter Verification Devices which were used throughout the country during the electoral process, including on Election Day. The Voter Verification Devices helped to verify voter eligibility on voting day and this improved the credibility of the electoral process.

Overall, the SADC PF Mission is of the view that with experience and continuous training, the use of EVMs, Voter Verification Devices and other ICT based equipment has potential to improve the efficiency of the electoral processes in areas such as voter registration, polling, counting and tabulation of results.

6.9 Overseas Voting and Voting by Sea—Going Personnel

On 14 November 2014, the ECN provided Namibians residing abroad and sea-going personnel the opportunity to vote in advance as provided for by law. The SADC PF Mission was informed that, save for delays in opening the polling station in Moscow, Russia, due to customs procedures, voting at all polling stations established abroad went smoothly. The Mission was furthermore informed that sea-going personnel voted in Walvis Bay and Luderitz with no serious challenges faced.

6.10 Election Campaign

Campaigns for the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections were characterised by high levels of tolerance among the various contesting political parties and candidates, resulting in a peaceful and conducive atmosphere that prevailed across Namibia during the election period.

The campaigns took the form of rallies, advertisements in the mass media, live political debates on the electronic media, postings on the social media, as well as the displaying of campaign posters and political party flags in various places accessible to the public.

The SADC PF Mission is of the view that the adherence by the contesting political parties, candidates and their supporters to the Electoral Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Electoral Act (2014), in particular Chapter 6 on electoral offences and penalties, contributed immensely to the generally

incident-free electioneering, voting and post-election period of the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections.

The SADC PF Mission further, noted that the practice of issue-based electioneering in Namibia contributed to the calm political environment that was observed during the entire election period.

In view of the above, the SADC PF Mission unreservedly commends Namibians and the contesting political parties and candidates for the calm and tolerant manner in which they conducted themselves during the election period.

6.11 Campaign Funding

Part 3 of Chapter 4 of the Electoral Act (2014) provides for the funding of political parties on the basis of proportional representation in the National Assembly. This serves to contribute to the levelling of the financial playing field. In addition, there are legal mechanisms in place to ensure that political parties account for the funds they receive from the tax-payer in line with good practice. Furthermore, the law requires political parties, organisations and other persons to disclose all foreign and domestic funding as well as other donations in kind accessed for political reasons. This is consistent with the principles of accountability and transparency in line with democratic practices of good governance.

6.12 Media Coverage of the Elections

The Mission observed the plurality and diversity characterising the media terrain in Namibia, which includes public and private electronic and print media. The Mission further observed the linguistic diversity and geographical reach of the various media players in Namibia, including the use of community radio stations. The media played a critical role in providing information on the electoral process and contesting political parties and candidates. The media covered electoral processes, including voter registration, civic and voter education, candidate nominations, the polling process and post-election developments. This went a long way in promoting public interest and encouraging public participation in elections as witnessed by huge voter turnout at polling stations.

The Mission noted the absence of a binding Code of Conduct governing the media's coverage of elections in Namibia. That notwithstanding, the SADC PF Mission commends the decision by the state broadcaster, the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), to allocate equal and free campaign slots of five minutes and 15 minutes to all contesting political parties on television and radio respectively.

6.13 Participation of Women in the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly Elections

The SADC PF Mission welcomed efforts by the contesting political parties to balance the proportions of men and women on their candidates' party lists. This is set to immensely enhance gender balance in the National Assembly in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which obligates SADC Member States to ensure gender parity in political and decision-making positions by 2015.

Furthermore, the Mission took note of the fact that out of the 1,241,194 registered voters, 657,751 or 53 percent, were women and that women were also significantly represented among the polling staff and the ECN leadership where two of the five Commissioners, including the Chairperson are women.

6.14 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Place

The SADC PF Mission noted that the law in Namibia mandates the ECN to issue a Code of Conduct to govern political parties in Namibia. Furthermore, the ECN is mandated to establish and maintain liaison

with political parties during elections. For the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly Elections, ECN established Political Party Liaison Committees as platforms for amicable resolution of disputes among political parties. The Mission also noted that political stakeholders were free to approach the Electoral Tribunals provided for in the law to adjudicate upon all matters of dispute arising before polling day.

The law obliges Presiding Officers of the Electoral Tribunals to conclusively determine all pre-election matters for which the Tribunal is seized with before the polling day concerned. For hearings seeking urgent relief, the Presiding Officer of an Electoral Tribunal is obliged by law to give a written or oral decision and reason for such decision at the conclusion of the hearing or not later than 48 hours from the conclusion of the hearing depending on the complexity of the matter.

The Mission is satisfied that the conflict resolution mechanisms in place provided for the inclusive and speedy resolution of electoral disputes in line with good electoral practices. This contributed to the peaceful electoral environment nationally throughout the election period.

6.15 Appeal Mechanisms in Place for the Elections

The Mission welcomed the provision in the new Electoral Act, for the establishment of the Electoral Court within the High Court of Namibia consisting of the Judge President of the High Court and two other judges assigned by the Judge President. The Electoral Court is mandated to hear and determine appeals against decisions of electoral tribunals and adjudicate on any matters concerning contravention of the Electoral Act, including interpretation of any other law relating to electoral issues.

The Mission further noted that the law obliges the Electoral Court to conclude all appeals from the Electoral Tribunals before polling day and to pass their verdict on urgent cases within 72 hours from the conclusion of the hearing. The law further obliges the Electoral Court to conclude post-election matters within seven days before the swearing-in of the office bearer concerned.

In addition, the SADC PF Mission observed that Presidential electoral challenges in Namibia are by law a preserve of the Supreme Court of Namibia which is mandated to hear such cases as both the court of first instance and final recourse. The law obliges the Supreme Court of Namibia to hear all Presidential electoral challenges on an urgent basis and to make public its ruling and the reasons thereof as soon as possible within 14 days from the conclusion of the hearing.

On the whole, the Mission is satisfied that the appeal mechanisms in place for elections in Namibia affords all stakeholders an opportunity to be heard and for such appeals to be resolved on time.

6.16 Election Day and Voting Process

The Mission observed that most polling stations opened and closed at legislated times of 0700 hours and 2100 hours, respectively. The Mission, however, noted delays in opening experienced at a number of polling stations due to challenges with the Voter Verification Devices (VVDs) during the pre-polling procedures which the ECN attributed to human error. The SADC PF Teams also observed that the opening and closing procedures prescribed by law were duly followed in most of the polling stations visited on Election Day.

The Mission also observed a high voter turnout at most of the polling stations visited. In addition, the Mission's Teams observed that voters who were still in the voting queue by 2100 hours were allowed to cast their votes in line with the law. Voting materials, including EVMs, Voter Verification Devices, copies

of the Voters' Register and indelible ink were observed to be generally available and this allowed voting to proceed smoothly throughout the day notwithstanding the few observed technological glitches.

The Mission, however, noted complaints by some voters about the slow pace of some of the voting queues at some polling stations. Overall, the voting process was observed to have improved in pace as the day progressed and to have been conducted in a generally peaceful environment across the country.

The SADC PF Mission also noted with appreciation that all the 170 polling stations visited by the Mission's Teams across eight of the country's Regions were adequately manned. However, the Mission observed some of the polling officials were unacquainted with the polling procedures, especially the use of the EVMs and hand-held Voter Verification Devices. This also slowed the pace of voting at most polling stations. Other challenges observed by the Mission included limited signage and poor lighting on some polling stations which negatively affected the voting process.

Furthermore, the Mission observed inefficiencies experienced in the operations of mobile polling stations where, due to high voter turnout and the slow pace of voting, resulted in some of them failing to abide by the official timetables. This had potential to prejudice some voters.

The SADC PF Mission observed that no separate voting arrangements were made for members of the Namibian Police and other officials on duty on Election Day, resulting in these officials being accorded preference in voting queues, which frustrated ordinary voters already in the queue.

On the whole, the SADC PF Mission commends the electorate for their enduring patience with which they queued peacefully for long hours before they could cast their votes.

6.17 Poll Closure and Counting of Votes

At close of voting, EVMs were transparently sealed and results print-outs were produced and counter-signed by all party and candidates' agents and electoral officers present at the respective polling stations in accordance with the law. The Mission observed that poll concluding procedures up to and including the declaration of results were conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner in the presence of observers, and party agents.

7. GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE 2014 NAMIBIA PRESIDENTIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The Mission observed the following as good practices from the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections:

- i) Involvement of Parliament, as the supreme representative body in Namibia in the appointment and removal from office of Commissioners of the ECN, which enhances the credibility of the Commission;
- ii) Provisions in the law, for continuous registration of voters in Namibia which promotes comprehensiveness of the Voters' Register in line with good electoral practice;
- iii) The provision for General Registration of Voters every 10 years which underpins the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the Voters Register;
- iv) Provisions in the law allowing members of the public reasonable time to scrutinise the Voters' Register and raise objections before the conducting of a Supplementary Registration of Voters which boosts public confidence in the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the Voters' Register;
- v) Use of biometric and other ICT based techniques to buttress the accuracy, comprehensiveness and credibility of the Voters' Register;

- vi) Extensive coverage of election issues by the media which extolled public interest in the elections;
- vii) Allocation of equal and free campaign time slots on the public electronic media by the national broadcaster which helped to level the electoral playing field;
- viii) Commitment to gender parity by most contesting political parties through the inclusion of equal numbers of men and women on their Party lists for the 2014 National Assembly Elections;
- ix) The provision of voter education materials and some political campaign messages in local languages which enhanced accessibility by the majority of the population;
- x) Provision of braille facilities on EVMs which allowed visually impaired voters to cast their vote in secrecy;
- xi) Fast-tracking of persons living with disabilities, the elderly and pregnant women during voting in order to ensure that they exercise their right to vote;
- xii) The adequate number of polling stations provided by the ECN;
- xiii) Professionalism and commitment to duty demonstrated by ECN in managing all aspects of the electoral process;
- xiv) The gazettement of the polling day, 28 November 2014, as a public holiday to enable as many Namibians as possible to exercise their democratic right to vote;
- xv) The ECN's openness to engage stakeholders throughout the electoral process;
- xvi) The establishment of Electoral Tribunals and the Electoral Court to enhance speedy resolution of election related disputes at all levels;
- xvii) Instant printing of election results sheets at every polling station in the presence of party agents, and observers in line with good and transparent electoral practice; and
- xviii) Establishment of polling stations in places readily accessible to the public, including by persons living with disabilities.

8. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- i) The need for express provisions in the law regarding the period during which the ECN is obliged to officially publish Presidential and National Assembly results in order to guard against the possibility of conflict and public anxiety;
- ii) The need to come up with a binding Code of Conduct to govern the media's coverage of elections;
- iii) The need for adequate time to fully operationalise and publicise, including through voter education, any new legal provisions among stakeholders in particular the electorate, before elections in order to enhance trust and credibility of the electoral process;
- iv) The need to streamline the voting steps to make process simpler and faster;
- v) The need for advanced voting to be extended to Electoral Officials and pre-selected individuals offering essential services to the electoral process on Voting Day;
- vi) The need to ensure that only Presiding Officers are tasked with assisting voters; and
- vii) Need for adequate lighting in polling stations.

9. MISSION'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE 2014 NAMIBIA PRESIDENTIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The SADC PF Election Observation Mission is, therefore, of the view that the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections were, on the whole, a credible reflection of the will of the majority of the people of Namibia. The SADC PF Mission, therefore, declares the 2014 Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections as having been free, fair, credible, transparent, peaceful and democratic

In Conclusion, the SADC PF Election Observation Mission to the Namibia Presidential and National Assembly Elections of 2014 commends the contesting political parties and candidates, the electorate

and all electoral stakeholders in Namibia for the peaceful manner in which they conducted themselves during the entire electoral process and urge all stakeholders to maintain this spirit during the post-election period.

Namibia must be congratulated, notwithstanding some glitches, for having pioneered the use of EVMs during the 2014 elections. Namibia's lead can be emulated by other countries in Africa and beyond.