

# Global Electoral Organization (GEO)

## Gaborone Declaration 2011



We as members of election management bodies, regional and international organizations and institutions, donors, practitioners, specialists and representatives from the academic and diplomatic community – all working in the field of elections, meeting in Gaborone, Botswana from 7-9 March 2011 for the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Electoral Organization Conference.

Appreciating the opening address by His Excellency, S.K.I. Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and his assertion that although there is still a democracy deficit in parts of the world, it remains a vital aspiration of millions and a much sought after universal value.

Affirming the strong conviction of former President Ernesto Zedillo from Mexico and current deputy chair of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security that free, fair and credible elections are essential for democracy, security and development.

Recognizing recent events in parts of Africa and the Middle East, the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of International Women's Day, the launch of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security that seeks to place elections and democracy at the centre of the international agenda and promote and protect the integrity of electoral processes in order to achieve a more secure, prosperous and stable world.

Acknowledging the intention of fostering an exchange of ideas and experiences among the elections community to address issues related to elections and its role within the democratic framework, including electoral reform, elections and conflict and engaging electoral stakeholders.

We therefore:

Affirm that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine through participation their own political, economic, social and cultural systems;

Emphasize that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing;

Recognize that elections exist as a cornerstone of democracy that empowers people to participate in the selection of their political representatives;

Note that an increasing number of countries around the globe conduct elections as a peaceful means of discerning the will of the people, but also observe increasing instances of election-related violence;

Highlight the importance of establishing and strengthening the professionalism of credible electoral institutions;

Acknowledge the need to address the root causes of, and reduce the potential for election-related violence, which is a form of political violence;

Call greater attention to the importance of promoting gender equality in all economic, political and social contexts and empowering women in the conduct and administration of elections;

And in consideration hereof, we call upon participants of the conference, individuals and organizations, in cooperation with us, to bring the experiences and outcomes of this conference to the attention of electoral authorities, political parties, civil society the media and others across the globe, to endeavor to ensure more credible and inclusive electoral processes and undertake to reconvene to regularly assess progress made and chart a course for future improvements.

Dated: 9 March 2011