



STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOKGWEETSI ERIC KEABETSWE MASISI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA, AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY ON THE 12TH AUGUST 2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

On 12th August 2021, the people of the Republic of Zambia will participate in their General Elections to elect the office bearers for the Presidency, Members of Parliament and Local Government. In line with the consolidation of democracy in Zambia, this will be the sixth (6th) time the country will be conducting General Elections since the historic multi-party elections of 1991.

Due to the increased risk and challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, SADC took a decision not to physically deploy the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Zambia. Instead, SADC adopted a virtual approach of consultations with key electoral stakeholders in the furtherance of the consolidation of democracy in the region, in accordance with the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021)*.

In this regard, a diverse range of stakeholders from the government, political parties, academia, faith-based organisations, civil society, and the diplomatic community were engaged for virtual consultations with the joint Organ Troika and SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) Mission, led by **Honourable Dr. Lemogang Kwape**, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

SADC took note of all the invaluable perspectives on the elections expressed by all the key stakeholders, and will continue to monitor the situation during the voting and the post-election phases, accordingly. These perspectives contribute positively to SADC's continued support to all its Member States in the enhancement of democracy. In this respect, SADC expresses gratitude to all the electoral stakeholders who availed themselves for the virtual consultations that have been conducted since 2nd August 2021.

Whilst acknowledging the devastating reality of the pandemic, may I call upon all registered voters to exercise their democratic right to vote, while strictly adhering to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on COVID-19, instituted by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ). I further urge the people of Zambia to vote peacefully on election day, and remain calm in the post-election period while the results are being

processed. SADC further calls upon all stakeholders, particularly political parties, to make use of the established legal institutions in the event of any electoral disputes.

I wish the people of the Republic of Zambia, the Electoral Commission of Zambia, and all contesting candidates, peaceful and successful elections.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Masisi', with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi

**President of the Republic of Botswana, and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on
Politics, Defence and Security**

11th August 2021