



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION
OBSERVER MISSION TO NAMIBIA'S PRESIDENTIAL AND
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 27 & 28 NOVEMBER
2009

In response to an invitation by the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN), H.E Jean Ping, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union appointed and dispatched an Observer Mission to Namibia to observe the Presidential and National Assembly Elections held on the 27th & 28th November 2009.

The AU Observer Mission is led by Honorable (Retired) Justice Lewis M. Makame, Chair of the National Electoral Commission of Tanzania. Other members of the Mission include Ambassadors, Members of National Parliaments, Pan-African Parliamentarians, high-ranking Officials of Election Management Bodies, prominent individuals and members of Civil Society drawn from various African countries. The Observer Mission arrived in Namibia on 23rd November 2009.

In accordance with the African Union Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring, the Mission proceeded to meet and consult with various stakeholders of the election process inter alia two political analysts from the University of Namibia Mr Phaniel Kaapama and Professor Bill Lindeke, the Director of IPPR Dr Graham Hopwood, representatives of the following political parties: Deputy Secretary General of NUDO (National Unity Democratic Organisation) Mr UM Tjijenda, the President of SWANU Mr Usutuaije Maamberua.

The AU Mission also met the Chairperson of Electoral Commission of Namibia Mr Victor Tonchi and Mr Nyoka, an independent political analyst.

The AU Observer Mission was deployed in teams to the following regions:

- Khomas, Erongo, Karas, Hardap, Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Oshikoto , Oshana.

Each Team met with relevant stakeholders for introduction and briefing on the regional preparedness for the elections.

The AU Observer Mission observed that the atmosphere in most electoral centers and polling stations on election-days was calm and peaceful.

The voting stations which the Mission members observed opened generally on time and in accordance with the prescribed procedures with the exception of a few stations which opened late. There was good turnout as people voted through-out the regions.

The polling centers across the country were closed at 21.00hours. There were no reported incidents of violence anywhere.

There were some minor logistical problems as well as irregularities here and there, but none of these have adversely affected the conduct of the process significantly.

Comments and Observations:

- Voters showed their enthusiasm with long queues forming early, before polling started.
- There was good turnout of voters.
- Voters lined up patiently and in an orderly manner awaiting their turn to cast their votes.
- In general, assisted voters were very well taken care of by the officials of the polling stations.
- The polling officials displayed very good knowledge of the appropriate procedures that they should follow and hence discharged their responsibilities efficiently. They were generally cooperative to all the observers (international, regional and national).
- The polling stations were properly set up and most of them had sufficient voting material in place.
- The fact that there was one list of voters for each constituency and not for each polling station created a tedious task when the list had to be consulted for the verification of the registration of the voter both by electronic means and manually.
- The counting process was painstakingly slow, long and extremely tiresome.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- Polling centers should accommodate more polling stations so as to shorten the waiting time of the voters in the queues.
- Each polling station should have its own voter register.
- The method for speedier verification of the voters card should be looked into.
- The system of the ballot counting should be revisited.
- Voter education should be a continuous process.

Conclusions:

The African Union Observer Mission wishes to conclude that:

- It is impressive to have noticed the determination of the Namibian people to express their will in governance as they turned out in good numbers at the time when the polling started.
- The organization and conduct of the Presidential and National Assembly Elections were carried out in accordance with the electoral laws of Namibia. Even though minor problems were encountered they did not affect the smooth running of the process.
- Voters who carried valid registration cards, but whose names were missing from the electronic and the manual voter list were not deprived of their constitutional right as they were allowed to cast their votes through the completion of a form (ELECT 27) by polling officials, for cross referencing.
- The extensive and continuous civic and voter education by the ECN on the procedures and methods on voting seemed to be fully understood by the people and this brought about the success achieved in the good turnout of voters and the general conduct of the elections.
- The ECN staff should be commended for their dedication, for encouraging all the registered voters to vote from wherever they are i.e “Tendered voting method and the use of Mobile polling stations in hospitals, Old Peoples Homes, prisons, Army barracks and Naval Bases.
- The availability of Braille-printed ballot papers was impressive and commendable. This practice should be maintained.
- The elections were free, fair, transparent, peaceful and credible as the Namibian people were given the opportunity to express freely their will in governance.

We congratulate the people of the Republic of Namibia and all the stakeholders for their evident efforts in enhancing the democratic process and the consolidation of democracy in Namibia.

We wish to express our gratitude to all the stake-holders and the people of Republic of Namibia generally for being so helpful and kind to the AU Observer Mission

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