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**African Union Election Observation Mission to the  
Harmonised Election of 31 July 2013 in the Republic of  
Zimbabwe**

**Arrival Statement and Presentation of Long Term  
Observers Pre-Election Findings**

**Rainbow Towers, Harare, Zimbabwe**

**25 July 2013**



**AFRICAN UNION OBSERVER MISSION TO THE HARMONIZED ELECTIONS OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE 31 JULY 2013**

**Arrival Statement And Pre Election Findings**

In line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma deployed the African Union Long Term Observers (LTOs) on 15 June 2013. The LTOs were subsequently joined by sixty Short Term Observers for the Harmonized Election of 31 July 2013 of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The African Union Election Observation Mission (AU-EOM) has a mandate to observe the 31 July 2013 Harmonised Elections in line with the relevant provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which is intended to enhance electoral processes in Africa, strengthen electoral institutions and the conduct of fair, free, and transparent elections; the AU/OAU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (AHG/Decl.1 (XXXVIII)), adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in July 2002 ; the African Union Guidelines for Elections Observation and Monitoring Missions; the AU Long Term Observation Framework (2013) and other relevant international instruments governing election observation; and the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The AUEOM is led by H.E Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and supported by the Deputy Head of Mission, Her Excellency Dr Aisha Abdullahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission. The mission is drawn from the Pan-African Parliament, African Ambassadors to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Election Management Bodies and Civil Society Organizations from various African countries.

As part of its activities, the Mission Leadership has started its meeting and dialogue with relevant authorities and various electoral stakeholders including political parties and civil society groups.

After the arrival on 15 June, the LTOs met several stakeholders including senior government officials, representatives of political parties, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission, senior officers of Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), civil society organizations, the media, and members of the Diplomatic Corps at both national, provincial and district levels. The LTOs have also observed several components of the electoral process including voter registration, candidates' nomination, campaigning, voter education, the training of election officials, Special Voting, and other aspects of the pre-election phase.

The following is a summary of the interim findings of the AU LTOs based on direct observation of the process and interactions with stakeholders:

1. In general, the AU LTOs observed a largely peaceful and calm political environment.
2. The enactment of the new Constitution in May 2013 has greatly improved the political climate since the last election in 2008.
3. The institutionalization of an independent electoral management body, which is in line with AU principles for democratic elections, has engendered confidence in the integrity and professionalism of ZEC to manage credible elections.
4. While acknowledging the increased number of registered voters from 5.2 million to 6.4 million, the LTO Mission noted that thousands more were unable to register due to the limited timeframe to regularize their citizenship status and insufficient voter education.
5. From the Mission's observation of the Special Vote, it has been generally noted that the process was characterised by logistical and management challenges, which denied several thousand applicants the opportunity to cast their ballots on the allotted days.
6. The lack of adequate space for participation of civil society in the electoral process, particularly in voter education exercise despite the existence of legislative provisions that enables ZEC and other Civil Society Organisations to conduct voter education. The Mission is of the view that the registration process could have benefitted from greater cross-sectoral collaboration between ZEC and civil society.
7. The Mission notes the polarisation of the media and the concerns by stakeholders about certain provisions of the Access to Information and Protection Act (AIPPA), the Interception of Communication Act, the Criminal Law and Codification Act, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Broadcasting Services Act, and their impact on communication freedoms.

The LTO Mission, while noting some challenges to the process, acknowledges the progress made so far in preparation for the 31 July 2013 Harmonised Elections especially when viewed from historical perspective and reflection on the 2008 elections. The Mission therefore seeks to underline the following for the remainder of the process:

1. Political stakeholders should continue to communicate messages of peace and non-violence to sustain the reigning peaceful political environment.
2. Given the introduction of Electoral Court for the resolution of election-related disputes, the African Union Commission urges all political stakeholders to abide by the established mechanism should electoral dispute arise.

The African Union Election Observation Mission will continue to observe the Harmonised Elections after which it will present its assessment of the election and recommendations for improvement. Observations and recommendations of the Mission will be based on the credibility, transparency, fairness and the effective organization of the elections as contained in the relevant African Union instruments. The Mission will release its preliminary statement in a press conference in Harare within 48 hours after the closing of the polls and will thereafter produce a more detailed report with recommendations that will be shared with the Zimbabwe authorities and also made available to the Zimbabwe people through the African Union website within 2 months of the election.

The AU Mission wishes to express its hope for a successful election and encourages Zimbabweans to continue in a peaceful electoral atmosphere as they have done so far.

The Secretariat of the Mission is at Rainbow Towers Hotel. For further information contact the Mission Coordinators: Mr Chika Charles Aniekwe; [Aniekwec@Africa-Union.org](mailto:Aniekwec@Africa-Union.org) +236771699101 or Mr Idrissa Kamara; [Kamarai@Africa-Union.org](mailto:Kamarai@Africa-Union.org); +263775529200

**Harare 25 July 2013**