



## INTERIM MISSION STATEMENT

### SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE ANGOLA 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2012 GENERAL ELECTIONS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) of the Republic of Angola, the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), the regional organisation of national Parliaments of SADC Member States, constituted an Election Observation Mission to observe the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012 General Elections in Angola. The 23-Member Mission was in the country from 23<sup>rd</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012. It was composed of Members of Parliament, staff from SADC Parliaments, officials from SADC PF's Secretariat and language officers. The Mission was comprised of male and female Members of Parliament from both the ruling and opposition political parties from, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia and was led by Honourable Patekile S. Holomisa<sup>1</sup>, Member of Parliament from South Africa and Chairperson of the SADC PF's Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Gender Equality. The 31<sup>st</sup> August General Elections were historic in that they marked the first time the SADC PF observed Elections in Angola

The 2012 Angola General Election is the 28<sup>th</sup> election to be observed by SADC PF since 1999 when the Forum started observing elections in SADC Member States. Previously, the SADC PF observed the following elections: Mozambique and Namibia (1999); Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Tanzania (2000); Zambia (2001); Zimbabwe and Lesotho (2002); Malawi, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique (2004); Mauritius and Tanzania (2005); Zambia, DRC and Madagascar (2006); Lesotho (2007); Malawi, South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia (2009), Mauritius (2010), Zambia (2011) and Lesotho (2012).

The purpose of this Interim Statement is to share with various electoral stakeholders in the Republic of Angola, namely the public, the CNE, political parties and candidates, civil society as well as the governments and national Parliaments of the Region and the international community, the Mission's Observations, Findings and Recommendations which are aimed at strengthening the democratic electoral practices in Angola and the SADC Region. A more detailed Final Report will be compiled and published not later than 90 days from the date of this Statement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Mission Leader of the SADC PF's Mission was initially Honourable Max Vuyisile Sisulu, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa who is also a member of SADC PF's Executive Committee but he had to leave before accreditation due to other official commitments back in South Africa.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

In undertaking its election observation work, the SADC PF's Election Observation Mission to the 2012 Angola General Elections was guided by the following terms of reference which are premised on the Forum's *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*:

- i) Assess the extent to which the elections are conducted in line with Angola's constitutional and legal framework and whether the framework is consistent with the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*;
- ii) Assess the contextual factors, that is, political, economic, social and human rights, that are likely to impinge upon the integrity, transparency, freeness and fairness as well as the overall credibility and legitimacy of the elections;
- iii) Assess the impartiality, efficiency and effectiveness of the National Electoral Commission of Angola in the management of all aspects of the elections;
- iv) Make an honest, independent, impartial and objective assessment of the extent to which conditions existed for the Angolans to freely express their will in the choice of political representatives;
- v) Assess special provisions and facilities put in place to enable voting by the disabled, sick, expecting mothers, citizens living abroad and public servants on duty;
- vi) Identify and document some good practices and make recommendations on the electoral process for purposes of sharing with stakeholders in order to improve the management of elections, thereby strengthening democracy in SADC Member States; and
- vii) Produce a comprehensive final report detailing the entire electoral process including strengths and areas of improvement for sharing with stakeholders within and outside the Republic of Angola.

## **3. TRAINING AND ORIENTATION WORKSHOP**

The SADC PF Election Observation Mission to the 2012 Angola General Elections commenced its work with a two-day Training and Orientation Workshop for the MPs and staff in Luanda from 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012. The main purpose of the Training and Orientation Workshop was to familiarise the Forum's Mission with general issues of democracy, governance and elections as well as the political, constitutional and legal context and the preparedness of the CNE for the 2012 Angola General Elections. The Workshop also equipped the Members with the skills for election observation including the terms of reference and the methodology for the Mission. Consultations were also held with various electoral stakeholders including CNE, contesting political parties and the academia during the Training and Orientation Workshop.

## **4. DEPLOYMENT PLAN**

The Mission deployed a total of four (4) Teams from 26<sup>th</sup> August until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012. The SADC PF Election Observation Teams were deployed to the provinces of Luanda, Uige, Huambo and Benguela. The Mission's deployment plan is as shown in the table below:

Province Covered	Team Members	Country
Luanda	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Team 01</b></p> 1. Hon. Patekile S. HOLOMISA – Mission Leader 2. Theresa Philemon ....Staff 3. <i>Sebastiao M Soares- Interpreter</i>	South Africa Namibia Angola
Uige	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Team 02</b></p> 1. Hon. Agnes LIMBO -Team Leader 2. Hon. David E SILINDE 3. Simon Mtambo....Staff 4. <i>Rodolfo KiKolo- Interpreter</i>	Namibia Tanzania Zambia Angola
Huambo	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Team 03</b></p> 1. Hon. Billy MWANINGANGE- Team Leader 2. Hon. Lolesia J. BUKWIMBA 3. <i>Mr. Sthembisio Tembe.....Staff</i> 4. <i>Edmilson Pinto- Interpreter</i>	Namibia Tanzania South Africa Angola
Benguela	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Team 04</b></p> 1. Hon. Mwimba MALAMA- Team Leader 2. Hon. Beauty DLULANE 3. <i>Neema R. Kiula .....Staff</i> 4. <i>Domingos Daniel- Interpreter</i>	Zambia South Africa Tanzania Angola

## 5. OBSERVATION METHODOLOGY

The Mission Teams employed a multi-pronged information gathering strategy which included review of the constitutional and legal framework for elections in Angola, analysis of the various election documents provided by the CNE, attending political campaign rallies, witnessing door-to-door campaigns by political parties and candidates and regular perusal of the mass media. The Mission also interacted with other Election Observation Missions such as the Angolan Electoral Observation Organisation (OBEA), SADC Observer Mission, African Union, and the SADC Electoral Commissioners Forum (ECF), in order to exchange information and observations. The Mission also met with SADC and European Ambassadors based in Angola. These various methods enabled the Mission to gather comprehensive information and to critically assess the manner in which the 2012 Angola Electoral Processes were managed. During their deployment in four of the country's provinces, the Mission's Teams visited 14 municipalities and 45 polling stations prior and during the voting.

The Mission's observation process was anchored on the constitution and legal framework of the Republic of Angola as well as various regional and international electoral instruments notably the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region*; the *SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections*; the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development*; the *African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance*; and the *Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures in Southern Africa*. The global *Declaration of Principles for International Election*

*Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers*, to which SADC PF is a party, were also useful references for the Mission.

## **6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POINTS OF ENQUIRY**

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

The specific points of enquiry for the Mission were:

- i) Constitutional and legal framework;
- ii) Comprehensiveness of Voters Roll;
- iii) Civic and voter education;
- iv) Participation of women and youths as voters, candidates and election officials;
- v) Preparation and distribution of voting materials;
- vi) Adequacy and location of polling stations;
- vii) Polling arrangements;
- viii) Counting of ballots, tabulation and verification of results;
- ix) Use of information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- x) Conflict resolution mechanisms;
- xi) Media coverage of political parties, candidates and election-related events;
- xii) Conduct of the campaign process;
- xiii) Role of security forces;
- xiv) Political party funding;
- xv) Conduct of political parties and candidates;
- xvi) Good practices from the Angola General Election;
- xvii) Areas of improvement; and
- xviii) Overall Mission Assessment of the entire electoral process.

## **7. MISSION FINDINGS**

### **7.1 The Constitutional and Legal Framework**

The Mission found out that the constitutional and legal framework governing elections in the Republic of Angola is based on the following legal instruments (reorder by years):

- i) Nationality Law of 1 June 2005;
- ii) Media Law of 15 May 2006;
- iii) The Constitution of the Republic of Angola (2010);
- iv) Law on Political Parties of 3 December 2010;
- v) Organic Law on General Elections of 21 December 2011;
- vi) Law on Financing of Political Parties of 22 March 2012;
- vii) Electoral Observation Law of 22 March 2012;
- viii) Electoral Code of Conduct of 23 March 2012; and
- ix) Law about the Organisation and Functioning of the National Electoral Commission of 13 April 2012.

The Constitution of the Republic of Angola provides for the protection of citizens' fundamental rights and liberties which include political rights such as freedom of expression and information, freedom of conscience and religious belief and practice, freedom of the press and broadcasting, freedoms of movement, assembly, demonstration and association, as well as freedom to participate in public life and to form political organisations.

Articles 52 to 53 of the Angolan Constitution expressly provide for citizens' right to take part in political life and public affairs of Angola, either directly or through freely elected representatives as well as the right of Angolan citizens to stand for public office. Articles 54 and 55 provide for the citizens' right to vote for political representatives of their choice and form political associations and/or parties.

These freedoms were, in the Mission's view, generally respected and exercised without undue hindrance.

Article 106 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola stipulates that the President of the Republic and Members of the National Assembly shall be elected by universal, direct, secret and *periodic* suffrage in terms of the constitution and the law of Angola. Article 38 of the Organic Law on General Elections provides for the nomination of the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates as the individuals on the first and second positions within the respective political party lists.

Article 107 (1) of the Constitution provides for the administration of elections in Angola by independent electoral administrative bodies whose structure, functions, composition and powers shall be defined by law.

Further, Articles 109 to 111 of the Constitution provide for the election of the individual heading the national list of the political party or coalition of political parties which receives the most votes in general elections as the President of the Republic and Head of the Executive while Articles 142 to 146 of the same constitution provide for the election of members of the National Assembly through a system of proportional representation.

In addition to the Constitution, the Organic Law on General Elections of 21 December 2011 is the main legislation governing the specific details of the electoral process in the country. The Law on Organisation and Functioning of the National Electoral Commission of 13 April 2012 establishes the principles and standards for the structure, organisation and functioning of the National Electoral Commission, as well as the specific powers of its structures and its membership in accordance with the principle of electoral administration independence established by Article 107 of the Constitution.

The country's Constitution states that the tenure of office of the President and Vice President ends with the swearing in of the President and Vice President-elect respectively, while that of

Members of the National Assembly ends with the convening of the first session of the new parliament.

In addition, the Mission noted the existence of a comprehensive and legally enforceable Electoral Code of Conduct which establishes the principle and disciplinary rules of conduct for electoral stakeholders namely political parties or political party coalitions, candidates, activists, supporters of political parties, members of electoral administrative bodies, polling station officials, public order forces, voters, electoral observers, the mass media, religious entities, traditional authorities and civil society organisations.

The Mission is of the view that the constitutional and legal framework governing elections in the Republic of Angola generally augurs well for the conduct of free and fair elections.

## **7.2 The National Electoral Commission of Angola (CNE)**

The National Electoral Commission is established in terms of Article 107 of the Constitution of the Republic and the Law on Organisation and Functioning of the National Electoral Commission of 13 April 2012, as the independent body responsible for the organisation, implementation, coordination and conducting of elections in Angola.

In accordance with the law, the duties and powers of the National Electoral Commission, includes the following:

- i) to organize, execute, coordinate and conduct elections and publish the results;
- ii) to raise awareness of citizens about purpose of the electoral operations and to promote through the media, civic education of citizens on the voting process;
- iii) to maintain and manage the data of voters obtained from the civil identification database and from information provided by voters and prepare voters' rolls based on that information;
- iv) to adjudicate the complaints of citizens and political parties;
- v) to develop and approve the constitution and operation of polling stations and recruit, select, train and deploy members of polling stations;
- vi) to allocate broadcasting time on radio and television for parties and coalitions; and
- vii) to accredit election observers and allocate their areas of operation, as well as accredited agents of political parties and coalitions.

As is stipulated by law, the CNE is composed of 17 members with its chairperson being a judge chosen on the basis of curricular examination and appointed by the Superior Council of the Judiciary. The Judge appointed as president of the Commission is obliged to suspend all judicial functions during his/her tenure with the Commission. The other 16 members of the Commission are appointed by the National Assembly, on the basis of proposals by the parties and coalition of political parties represented in Parliament in line with the principles of majority rule and respect for minorities.

The Mission is of the view that in addition to appointing the Chairperson of the CNE, it will be in line with the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region* if the Supreme Council of the Judiciary is mandated to appoint all other commissioners of the CNE before ratification by the National Assembly in order to guarantee greater independence of the Commission.

Members of the Commission are appointed on the basis of civic and moral responsibility as well as technical competence. CNE commissioners must not be members of the management structures of political parties. The above principles of selection apply to the appointment of provincial and municipal members of the CNE. Members of the National Electoral Commission are appointed for up to two terms of five years.

The Mission observed that the CNE has three main structures at national, provincial and municipal levels namely, the Plenary of the National Electoral Commission, Provincial Electoral Commissions and Municipal Electoral Commissions respectively. In addition to the above, the National Electoral Commission has technical Directorates at the various levels to give operational effect to the decisions and policies of the commission.

Most of electoral stakeholders who interacted with the Mission's observation Teams generally expressed confidence in the independence, impartiality, openness, transparency and capacity of the CNE to organise and conduct credible elections. However, the Mission noted the concerns raised by some electoral stakeholders regarding delays in availing the voters' roll for inspection by the public and the accreditation of list representatives (political party agents).

Notwithstanding observed shortcomings in the selection process for CNE Commissioners, the Mission is of the overall view that the legal framework within which the CNE is established and operates generally augurs well for the independence and autonomous functioning of the Commission in line with the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region* and the *SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections*.

The Mission observed that the CNE was evidently prepared for the 2012 General Elections. The CNE ensured the printing of ballot papers and procured election materials in time, carried out voter education programmes in collaboration with civil society organisations, and distributed both sensitive and non-sensitive voting materials to Municipal Centres and polling stations in the 163 Municipalities of Angola. The CNE also trained electoral staff in time and was constantly consulting and communicating with electoral stakeholders throughout the process. The Mission further noted complaints from political parties regarding delays by the CNE in accrediting their election agents, a development which they said negatively affected the deployment of these agents to some areas.

On the whole, the Mission commends the CNE for the professional manner in which it prepared for and conducted the 2012 Angola General Elections.

### **7.3 Voter Registration**

The Mission noted that the voting age in Angola in terms of the law is 18 years and above. The Mission further noted that the conduct of voter registration is undertaken by state officials at local level under the supervision of the CNE.

The Mission observed that two voter registration drives were conducted for the 2012 Angola General Elections, one from July to December 2011 and a second one from January to June 2012. Between July 2011 and February 2012 about 7 million voters updated their registration records and 1 million new voters were added to the voters' roll. In May 2012, the Ministry for Territorial Administration handed over to the CNE an Electoral Register Central Database of more than 9.7 million voters that it had compiled. In line with the requirements of the law, an independent audit was carried out on the Voters' Roll to verify the authenticity of the voters' database received from Government.

The Mission observed that 9,757,671 Angolans were registered to vote in the 2012 General Elections out of a total population estimated by the UNDP to be 19.6 million. The Voters' Roll is divided into 10,349 polling stations and 25,359 polling boards or tables (voting streams), with a maximum of 500 voters per board. In the provinces visited by the SADC PF's Election Observation Teams, copies of the Voters' Roll were displayed at most of the polling stations and voters were freely inspecting them in line with good practice. The Mission's Teams also witnessed CNE officials conducting door to door electronic voter verification exercise.

#### **7.4 Voters' Roll**

The Mission noted that copies of the Voters' Roll were available to the public and stakeholders in hard copies and were freely displayed at polling stations visited by the Mission's Teams. Besides the complaint relating to the non-availability of copies of the list of registered voters in some rural voting stations visited by the Mission's teams, no significant complaints were raised by the contesting political parties, candidates and other stakeholders, relating to the Voters' Roll.

#### **7.5 Voter Education**

The Mission found out that for the 2012 Angola General Elections, the CNE conducted voter education through the mass media and reportedly trained and deployed 3,278 civic and voter educators. In addition, the Mission noted that the civil society also trained and deployed about 371 civic and voter educators who undertook civic and voter education in various communities. Political parties also reported that they had conducted voter education for their supporters.

#### **7.6 Role of Security Forces**

The Mission noted the role played by the Police in providing security to the electoral process prior, during and after the voting day. The Mission is of the view that the security forces carried out their election related duties without interfering with the electoral processes. The Mission further observed that the Police were adequately prepared to perform their duties during the 2012 Angola General Elections as evidenced by the presence of police officers at all the polling



stations visited by the Mission's Election Observation Teams. This also contributed to the general peaceful environment that existed in the country during the electoral process.

### **7.7 Participation of Youths**

The Mission noted the involvement of the youths as the political party agents, electoral officials and in the mobilisation of support for their respective political parties.

### **7.8 Role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**

The Mission appreciated the civil society organisations for playing an important role in civic and voter education, thereby improving voters' awareness and knowledge of the electoral process. In addition, the Mission noted the role of CSOs in promoting the credibility of the election process through the training and deployment of approximately 500 local election observers to observe the 2012 Angola Elections.

### **7.9 Role of Traditional Authorities**

Article 25 of the Electoral Code of Conduct entitles traditional authorities in Angola to provide voter education to their communities in a balanced and apolitical manner. The Mission's Teams in the provinces observed that traditional authorities were involved in mobilising their communities to participate in the elections.

### **7.10 Media Coverage of the Electoral Process**

The Mission noted that Article 73 of the Organic Law on General Election of 21 December 2011 confers upon political parties and candidates for the General Election the right to use public radio and television services during the official campaign period. The law provides for 10 minutes per day for radio and 5 minutes per day for television at prescribed times during the official campaign period.

The Mission is of the view that the provision in the law, of equal access to the public media by all contesting political parties and candidates, is a good practice that ensures the levelling of the playing field and enhances the credibility of the electoral process. Further, the Mission noted complaints from some stakeholders that the public media's news and current affairs programmes gave unfair coverage to the ruling party at the expense of other contesting parties during the 2012 Angola General Elections.

### **7.11 The Political Environment**

The Mission was encouraged by the demonstrated commitment by all political parties to the cause of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the country prior, during and after the elections. The political environment was generally peaceful as evidenced by unimpeded political rallies, campaigns, and a generally high degree of tolerance among political party supporters. The Mission noted the positive trend by most of the political parties and candidates to base their campaign messages on substantive policy issues as opposed to targeting personalities which tends to polarise society.

The SADC PF commends the Angolans for the generally peaceful and friendly manner in which they conducted themselves during the campaign, voting and counting of ballots.

### **7.12 Political Campaigns**

The Mission noted that Article 62 of the Organic Law on General Elections of 21 December 2012 states that the electoral campaign in Angola opens 30 days before polling date and ends at midnight on the day preceding the polling date. For the 2012 Angola General Elections, therefore, the official campaign period stretched from 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012. The Mission's Teams did not encounter any cases of electoral stakeholders violating the Electoral Code of Conduct which governs the behaviour of stakeholders during campaigns in Angola.

The Mission observed that apart from the isolated reports of election related disputes, the election campaign was carried out in a calm and orderly manner with a relative degree of tolerance among contesting political parties and candidates. The 2012 Angola General Election campaign expressed itself in the form of political rallies, door-to-door campaigns, billboards, posters, radio and television advertisements as well as live interactive programmes on the electronic media. However, the Mission observed the predominance of campaign materials from MPLA followed by UNITA and CASA-CE.

### **7.13 Funding of Political Parties**

The Mission observed the existence of provisions within the Law on Financing of Political Parties of 22 March 2012 which provide for the public funding of political parties with seats in the National Assembly on an annual basis. In addition to public funding, the law provides for the allocation of campaign funds to all registered political parties participating in general elections. The Mission further observed that for the 2012 Angola General Elections, all the nine (9) contesting political parties received public funding worth approximately US\$800,000.00 for purposes of financing their campaign activities.

Notwithstanding views expressed by some of the competing political parties regarding the inadequacy of campaign funding availed during the 2012 Angola General Election, the Mission commends the public funding of campaigns as the practice strengthens democracy by levelling the political field.

### **7.14 Polling Stations**

The Mission found out that the CNE established a total of approximately 10,349 polling stations and 25,359 voting boards (voting tables/streams) in the 18 provinces of Angola. The CNE set up polling stations mainly in schools, universities and other politically neutral public places. The Mission further noted that the Voters' Roll was also customised up to a specific polling station, with a register for each polling board (table/stream). The Mission also observed that most polling stations visited by its Teams in the provinces were well staffed, with each polling board (table/stream) manned by an average of five officers. Furthermore, the voting officers generally demonstrated good knowledge of the requisite voting procedures. The Mission is of the general

view that the number of polling stations was adequate and generally accessible enough to allow as many eligible voters as possible to cast their vote.

### **7.15 The Vote and the Count**

Although cases of late opening of some polling stations were noted by the Mission's teams, the Mission observed that most polling stations opened and closed at legislated times of 0700 and 1800 respectively. At all polling stations observed by the Mission's Teams, voters that were still in the voting queue by 1800 hrs were allowed to cast their votes in line with the law. Voting materials were generally available in adequate quantities and this allowed voting to proceed smoothly throughout the day at most polling stations. The Mission also noted the presence of political party agents and the police at all polling stations. The use of indelible ink to avoid multiple voting contributed to enhancing the transparency of the voting process.

The Mission further observed that the voting process was conducted peacefully across the country with no significant cases of disturbances. The Furthermore the Mission observed that the counting of ballots took place at the respective polling stations at the end of the voting process and was generally conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner in the presence of political party agents or list representatives and in some cases in the presence of observers and monitors. The Chairpersons of polling boards (tables/streams) and party agents signed the electoral minutes produced after counting (results sheet) and each party agent or list representative was given signed copies of the electoral minutes/results sheets of the respective polling boards (tables/streams).

### **7.16 Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Place**

The Mission observed that conflict resolution mechanisms were in place to deal with any election related disputes starting with the Municipal Electoral Commissions, followed by the Provincial Electoral Commissions and at national level the Plenary of the National Electoral Commission. The Constitutional Court is the final court of appeal on electoral disputes. The Mission is of the view that this was adequate.

The Mission further noted the existence of a legally enforceable Electoral Code of Conduct governing the behaviour of electoral stakeholders in Angola. The Mission furthermore noted that in terms of Angola's Organic Law on General Elections, any irregularities verified during the voting or the partial or national collation of the results may be contested at the Constitutional Court provided that the complainant would have raised the irregularity at the time of occurrence. The appeal has to be submitted to the Constitutional Court within 48 hours of the date of notification of the decision of the National Electoral Commission. The Constitutional Court is obliged to order the notification of opposing parties to submit, if they choose to do so, a counter claim within 48 hours and the plenary of the Constitutional Court is given 72 hours from submission of the counterclaim to issue its final decision. The Mission commends the provision within the law for the speedy resolution of electoral disputes and petitions.

### **7.17 Provision of Special Arrangements**

The Mission noted that although the law provides for the right of Angolans leaving abroad to cast their vote, there were no arrangements to enable Angolans abroad to vote during the 2012 General Elections. The Mission further noted that there were no early voting arrangements in place for the 2012 Angola General Elections to enable election officials, police officers and other civil servants on duty during polling day to cast their votes in advance although the law provides for such an arrangement. The Mission also noted that Angolan electoral legislation provides for Chairpersons of polling boards to prioritise voting by special groups namely the disabled, the elderly, the sick and the pregnant to cast their vote.

### **7.18 Gender Representation**

The Mission appreciated the role played by women in the management of the 2012 Angola General Election as a significant proportion of the CNE electoral officials were women despite the fact that most of the Chairpersons of polling stations were men. The Mission, however, observed with concern that the presidential candidates were all men as this does not augur well for the attainment of the principle of 50/50 women and men representation in both political and decision making positions in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

## **8. GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE 2012 ANGOLA GENERAL ELECTIONS**

The Mission observed the following as good practices from the 2012 Angola General Elections:

- i) A comprehensive array of laws governing all aspects of the electoral process including the role of all stakeholders which leaves no room for guesswork on what to do;
- ii) Demonstrated commitment by all stakeholders particularly political parties, to the cause of peace which contributed to peaceful and orderly campaigns and a generally amicable atmosphere during voting;
- iii) Existence of a comprehensive and legally enforceable Electoral Code of Conduct stipulating the principles and rules of disciplinary conduct governing electoral stakeholders including political parties, activists, candidates and the general membership of political parties, religious groups, civic society, traditional authorities and security forces;
- iv) Presence of CNE offices at municipal and provincial levels, which enhances the proximity of the Commission to the voters who are the most important stakeholders in any election;
- v) Use of ICTs including SMS-based technology and swiping of voters' cards to verify the voters' presence on the roll and their voting boards (tables/streams);
- vi) Professionalism and commitment to duty demonstrated by the electoral staff;
- vii) The establishment of multiple polling boards (tables/streams) and limiting the number of voters to approximately 500 per polling board which speeded up the voting process;
- viii) The provision within electoral legislation for the speedy resolution of electoral appeals by the Constitutional Court within 72 hours after receipt of requisite documentation from the relevant parties;

- ix) The levelling of the electoral playing field through provision of public funding for political parties and allocation of campaign funds to all registered political parties participating in elections;
- x) The provision for continuous Voter Registration in the law;
- xi) The use of transparent and translucent ballot boxes;
- xii) Role of religious organisations such as the Council of Christian Churches in Angola in fostering harmony and political tolerance among political parties and the general public;
- xiii) The conducting of an independent audit of the Voters' Roll to ensure accuracy, transparency and credibility of the electoral process;
- xiv) Counting of ballots at each of the polling stations in the presence of party agents and observers, the signing of polling station minutes/results sheets by electoral officials, and party agents and the availing of such signed copies to political party agents in order to increase transparency; and
- xv) Provision in the law for equal access by all contesting political parties to the public media during the official campaign period, specifically the allocation of 10 minutes radio time and 5 minutes television time to each political party.

## **9. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- i) The Mission is of the view that in addition to appointing the Chairperson of the CNE, it will be in line with the *Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region* if the Supreme Council of the Judiciary is mandated to appoint all other commissioners of the CNE before ratification by the National Assembly in order to guarantee greater independence of the Commission;
- ii) Need for consensus among all stakeholders on an agreed frameworks to allow Angolans living abroad to cast their vote and to allow the early voting as provided for by the law;
- iii) The need to avail the report produced by independent auditors on the Voters' Roll to all electoral stakeholders in order to improve stakeholders' confidence in the electoral process;
- iv) The need to review the legally permissible period within which the Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission is obliged to announce the final results from the current 15 days in order to reduce the possibility of anxiety and suspicion on electoral outcome;
- v) and
- vi) The need to avail the voters roll in good time for the Angolans to verify their information in line with the law.

## **10. MISSION'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE 2012 ANGOLA GENERAL ELECTIONS**

Based on its overall findings, the Mission is of the view that there existed a substantially conducive and peaceful environment in which elections were conducted. The Angolans were accorded the opportunity to freely express their will in voting for political parties and candidates of their choice.

The SADC PF Election Observation Mission to the 2012 Angola General Elections is, therefore, of the view that the 2012 Angola General Elections were, on the whole, a credible reflection of the will of the people of Angola and accordingly, free and fair.

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