

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON ZAMBIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP TO THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICAL, DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Mr Malanji): Mr Speaker, since the Zambia assumed the chairmanship of the SADC organ on politics defence and security cooperation in august 2018, the country has Led two SADC initiatives aimed at bringing stability to the kingdom of Lesotho following the political instability that has characterised the kingdom since 2014. These initiatives include deployment of SADC Preventive Mission In The Kingdom Of Lesotho (SAPMIL) and the oversight committee.

Mr Speaker, the SADC preventive mission in the kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL), whose mandate lasted from 20th November 2017 to 20th November 2018, was comprised of police, military and civilian personnel and was responsible for assisting the kingdom of Lesotho to implement security sector reforms .The mission (SAPMIL) ceased its operations after successfully its mandate in November 2018, which resulted in the significant improvement of the security situation in Lesotho.

Mr Speaker, on the other hand the SADC oversight committee remains on course as an early warning mechanism mandated to assist the kingdom of Lesotho to implement security ,judicial , Parliamentary, public sector and constitutional reforms. Under Zambia's Leadership the oversight committee has achieved the following milestones on the reforms and dialogue processes in Lesotho.

- (i) The Convening of the first and Second National Leaders Forum, at which various stakeholders indicated the type of reforms that were needed. The fora also paved way for the formation of the National Dialogue Planning Committee (NDPC) which is mandated to plan the dialogue process in Lesotho.
- (ii) The NDPC successfully organised the multi-stakeholder national dialogue meeting from the 26th to the 28th November 2018. The purpose of the dialogue

was to discuss option for national reconciliation and the way forward for the reforms in the various sectors. Further, on the 21st February 2019, the NDPC organised the multi – plenary first extension, where the in-district consultation guidelines were presented.

Mr Speaker, as Chair of the organ, Zambia was privileged to lead the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the long awaited Presidential, Legislative and Provincial Elections in the Democratic Republic Of Congo (DRC), held on the 30th of December 2018. During the mission, Zambia Lead the SEOM Consultative meeting with the three main presidential candidates , Mr Felix Tshisekedi, Leader of the Union and Democracy and social Progress party , UDPS and CACH Coalition , Mr Martin Fayulu , Leader of the LAMUKA and Mr Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, Leader Of The Peoples Party For Reconstruction And Democracy (PPRD), as well as other stakeholder including the Archbishop of Kinshasa , Mounscos, the Attorney General of the Constitutional Court and the media .

Mr Speaker, the purpose of these meetings was to re-affirm the country's readiness for the elections as well as understanding the various challenges and facilitate confidence building ahead of the election.

Mr Speaker, as a confidence building measure, SEOM convened a tripartite meeting for the three main political parties and the president of Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI). The meeting provided a viable platform for the main stakeholders to discuss and address the outstanding challenges and contentious issues. The meeting sought to conclude with three main candidates committing to sign a declaration of commitment. The declaration called for among other, the need stakeholders to abide by democratic principles and to encourage their supporters to refrain from action that would undermine the holding of peaceful, transparent and credible elections. The declaration also committed all stakeholders to channel all electoral grievances and disputes through the established legal avenues. Unfortunately, the said declaration was not signed by two of the three of the political parties.

Mr Speaker, SADC also hosted the meeting of the heads of the mission which afforded an opportunity to exchange views on the pre-elections observation. The meeting also addressed the delicate situation in the striking a balance between the fragile political situation in a peacekeeping context and the applicable principles governing elections. Further, the meeting recognised that wider world was expecting the African union and its regional Economic Communities (REC) to provide an African solution to an African problem.

Mr Speaker, considering the range of challenges around the elections the SADC Mission observed that the 2018 Presidential Legislative and Provincial elections were comparatively of well managed. The voting process proceeded relatively smoothly and enabled the majority of the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to exercise their right to vote. The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) released the Parliamentary and final results on 6th and 15th January, 2019 respectively where President Felix Tshisekedi was declared winner having received 38.5 per cent of the vote, Mr Martin Fayulu attained 34.8 per cent while Mr Emmanuel Shadary came in third with 23.8 per cent of the vote.

Mr Speaker, following petition filed by Mr Fayulu to contest the results in the Constitutional Court, the court threw out the petition and ruled that Mr Tshisekedi was the final winner of the 30th December, 2018 election and he was inaugurated on 24th January, 2019.

Mr Speaker, earlier Zambia led the SADC Elections Observer Mission (SEOM) to the re-run of the Presidential Election in Madagascar held between Mr Andy Rajoelina of MAPAR and Mr Marc Ravalomanana of the I Love Madagascar Party (TIM) on 19th December, 2018. The first round of the election was held on 7th November, 2018. The High Constitution Court (HCC) declared Mr Rajoelina the winner of the run-off election on 8th January, 2019. His Excellence the President of the Republic of Zambia Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu attended the inauguration ceremony on 19th January, 2019.

Mr Speaker, Zambia also led the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) to the general election to elect Members of Parliament in the Kingdom of eSwatini held on the 21st September, 2018. In conformity with the Kingdom of the eSwatini Constitution, Secondary Elections take

place every five-year to elect representatives in the House of Assembly from fifty-nine from Constituencies. The mission observed the Pre-election and Election phases from 17th September, to 24th September, 2018. Despite some minor logistical challenges, the elections proceeded in a successful peaceful, transparent, orderly and incident free manner. In addition there was a high voter turnout. The total number of registered voters was approximately 540,000, and a total of 305 candidates, 253 male and fifty-two female participated in the Secondary Election. Out of the total number of Fifty-nine Constituencies, two female candidates managed to win seats in the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, In conclusion, I wish to state that as Chair of the SDAC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation, Zambia has led the region in promoting peace, security, and stability as well as the consolidation of democracy. Zambia will, therefore, continue to contribute to the effectiveness of our region and continental organisation in order to accelerate political and social-economic development.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the custodian of Zambia's Foreign Policy which, among other things, is premised on safe guiding the country's security interests, will endeavour to ensure that the Head of State. His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, continues to represent the country at various regional, continental and international fora aimed at promoting peace, security, and stability.

I thank you, Sir.