

**SECRETARIAT
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION**



**SECRETARIAT
CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE
SUR LA RÉGION DES GRANDS LACS**

**THE ZAMBIAN ELECTION OBSERVER MISSION PRELIMINARY
STATEMENT PRESENTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY AGOSTINHO
TAVARES DA SILVA NETO AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA IN THE
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, 14TH AUGUST, 2021, NEELKANTH
SAROVAR PREMIERE HOTEL, LUSAKA**

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,
FELLOW HEADS OF MISSION,
MEMBERS OF THE ELECTION OBSERVATION GROUPS,
THE MEDIA,
ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ALLOW ME TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA FOR THEIR HOSPITALITY AND KINDNESS SHOWN TO ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION SINCE OUR ARRIVAL IN THE COUNTRY ON 27TH JULY, 2021. IN ADDITION, ALLOW ME TO THANK THE PRESENTERS BEFORE ME AND TO STATE THAT WE ARE IN

AGREEMENT WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HEADS OF MISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION AND COMESA.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION WILL DISTRIBUTE A FULL STATEMENT AT THE END OF THIS JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE. I WILL, NEVERTHELESS, HIGHLIGHT A FEW PRELIMINARY FINDINGS WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTIONS, THE ZAMBIA PEOPLE WENT TO THE POLLS ON 12TH AUGUST 2021 TO VOTE FOR THEIR PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES. THESE GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD WITHIN A CONTEXT CHARACTERISED BY POLARISED POLITICAL COMPETITION.
2. WE NOTE THAT POLITICAL POLARISATION DISTURBINGLY MANIFESTED ITSELF IN REPORTED SPORADIC AND LOCALISED INCIDENTS OF POLITICAL AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF CAMPAIGN MATERIALS.
3. WE STRONGLY CONDEMN THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE, THE UNFORTUNATE DEATH OF PF SUPPORTERS AND LEADERS IN KANYAMA AS WELL AS THE PHYSICAL ATTACKS ON UPND WHO WAS CRITICALLY INJURED IN CHILANGA.
4. COVID-19 AND ENSUING MEASURES IMPACTED THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT AND SPACE WITH REPORTED RESTRICTIONS ON

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND ASSEMBLY OF CERTAIN OPPOSITION CANDIDATES.

5. THE VOTE WAS LARGELY MARKED BY HIGH VOTER TURNOUT, OF WOMEN AND YOUTH ESPECIALLY, WITH LONG QUEUES OBSERVED THROUGHOUT THE DAY IN STATIONS OBSERVED. THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE INSIDE AND AROUND POLLING CENTRES VISITED WAS PEACEFUL AT THE OPENING AND REMAINED CALM THROUGHOUT THE VOTING OPERATIONS.
6. A PROFESSIONAL AND DISCREET SECURITY PRESENCE WAS RECORDED ACROSS ALL THE STATIONS VISITED.
7. ALL ESSENTIAL ELECTION MATERIALS WERE REPORTED IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY AT ALL THE POLLING STATIONS VISITED AT THE TIME OF OPENING AND VOTING.
8. THE PRESENCE OF POLLING OFFICIALS EASILY IDENTIFIED WAS NOTED IN THE POLLING STATIONS. OBSERVER TEAMS NOTED THAT THE VOTING PROCESS WAS VERY SLOW AT STATIONS VISITED.
9. SYSTEMATIC POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATION WAS NOTED AT THE STATIONS VISITED. THE PF AND UPND WERE THE MOST REPRESENTED IN THESE STATIONS. SEVERAL PARTY AGENTS HAD A COPY OF THE VOTERS' LIST USED FOR VOTER

IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES. THIS BUILDS CONFIDENCE IN THE PROCESS.

10. A VISIBLE PRESENCE OF VARIOUS LOCAL OBSERVER GROUPS AT POLLING STATIONS VISITED WAS REPORTED BY THE MISSION.
11. COVID-19 PROTOCOLS WERE NOT STRICTLY APPLIED AND ENFORCED IN ALL THE POLLING STATIONS VISITED. THE ENFORCEMENT OF HAND SANITIZING AT THE ENTRANCE OF ALL STATIONS VISITED WAS REPORTED. SOCIAL DISTANCING OUTSIDE ALL THE POLLING STATIONS VISITED WAS NOT ADHERED TO.
12. MOST STATIONS VISITED CLOSED AFTER SCHEDULED TIME OWING TO PEOPLE WHO WERE STILL IN THE QUEUE AND ALLOWED TO CAST THEIR VOTE.
13. BASED ON ITS PRELIMINARY FINDINGS MADE UP TO THE CONCLUSION OF VOTE COUNTING AT POLLING STATIONS OBSERVED, THE ICGLR EOM CONCLUDES THAT HIGH NUMBERS OF ZAMBIANS USED THE OPPORTUNITY THEY WERE GIVEN TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE IN A PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE NOTWITHSTANDING SPORADIC AND LOCALISED INCIDENTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND THE UNLEVELLED POLITICAL PLAYING FIELD.

14. ALLOW ME TO COMMEND THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE AND ALL THE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. WE CALL ON ALL THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA, POLITICAL LEADERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS TO REMAIN CALM AS THE COUNTRY AWAITS THE DECLARATION OF THE RESULTS BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA (ECZ).

I THANK YOU.