



**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION OBSERVER
MISSION TO THE 31 AUGUST 2012 GENERAL ELECTIONS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA**

- 1- In response to the invitation from the Government of the Republic of Angola and of the National Electoral Commission, H.E. Dr. Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission sent an Observer Mission to Angola in order to observe the General Elections scheduled for 31st August 2012.
- 2- The African Union (AU) Observer Mission is led by His Excellency Mr. **Pedro Verona Pires**, former President of the Republic of Cape Verde.
- 3- Members of the Mission come from 24 African Countries, namely: Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, SADR, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and include Pan-African Parliamentarians, managers of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), African Ambassadors accredited to the African Union as well as members of African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- 4- The Observer Mission was assisted by a team of experts from the African Union Commission Headquarters, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), and IFES.
- 5- The Observation Mission to the 31st August 2012 General Elections of the Republic of Angola observed the elections within the spirit and letter of the Durban Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (AHG/Decl.1 (XXXVIII)), as adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in July 2002; the relevant dispositions of the African Charter on Democratic Elections and Governance, that went into force on 15th February 2012; the Guidelines of the African Union election observation missions and election monitoring, as well as the Constitution, laws and regulations of the Republic of Angola.
- 6- The main objective of the mission was, therefore, to make an honest, independent and impartial observation and assessment of the organization and conduct of these elections.

PRE-ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES

- 7- In accordance with the African Union Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring, the Mission met and consulted with various stakeholders involved in the electoral process. These included the

President of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the Constitutional Court, the Ministry of External Relations, Representatives of Political Parties, various Candidates, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), as well as other international observer missions from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC, the Community of Portuguese speaking Countries (CPLP) and the International Conference on the Great Lake Region (ICGLR).

8. More particularly, Members of the AU Observer Mission attended on 28 August 2012 a briefing organized by the National Electoral Commission for national and international observers in order to update them on its preparedness for the polls. This briefing was followed by a guided visit to the National Electoral Commission counting and tallying Center.

9. Members of the African Union Observer Mission also observed the concluding stage of the election campaign.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

10. In the light of these consultations and observations, the African Union Observer Mission to the general Elections in the Republic of Angola, notes that:

- The electoral process was generally peaceful and held in accordance with the Constitution and the electoral law of the Republic of Angola;
- The late approval of the electoral Law gave the NEC only eight (8) months to prepare the elections;
- The relationship between the NEC and Political Parties from the opposition was tense throughout the process as there was an absence of constructive dialogue;
- The voter's roll for the 31 August 2012 general elections was based on the voter's roll used for the 2008 legislative elections which was updated twice;
- The campaign was conducted peacefully as all Political Parties were free to carry out their political rallies across the country;
- There were no significant acts of violence in the run up to the elections;
- There was a fair access of all Political Parties and candidates to the free broadcast time in the public media although there were disparities in the use of public spaces;
- There were claims from the opposition that their Party agents were not timely accredited by the NEC, and that public campaign funds were released late;
- The vote did not include the Angolan diaspora.

DEPLOYMENT OF OBSERVERS

11. In order to carry out its mission, the African Union Mission deployed twelve (12) teams to the following Provinces of the Republic of Angola:

- a) Luanda;
- b) Bengo;
- c) Benguela;
- d) Cabinda;
- e) Huambo;

- f) Huila;
- g) Kuanza Norte;
- h) Kuanza Sul;
- i) Lunda Sul,
- j) Malange.

12. The different teams carried out further consultations with relevant stakeholders in their areas of deployment and identified polling centers and stations where they had to observe the voting and the counting.

THE VOTING AND COUNTING PROCESSES

13. The African Union Mission observed the following on the voting day:

- Most polling stations were established in public buildings, especially schools and colleges. A few were, however, found in open spaces covered by tents.
- Most polling stations opened on time;
- Polling officials were in place and on time for the opening of the polling stations;
- Names of voters registered to vote in each polling station were prominently posted and were visible at each polling station;
- Polling materials were generally delivered in good time and in sufficient quantities;
- Some Political Parties agents were present in the polling stations;
- The use of an electronic device in some places by the PDA operators to assist voters easily identify their polling stations;
- In general, the Polling staff handled the voting process in an efficient and transparent manner;
- The voting process was generally orderly and peaceful;
- There were no acts of intimidation or coercion during the voting;
- Polling booths were generally properly placed within the polling stations guaranteeing the secrecy of the vote;
- The Police presence was visible but unobtrusive;
- Women and youth were well represented as electoral officials;
- Persons with disability, the elderly as well as pregnant and nursing mothers were given preferential treatment, and where necessary, assisted to vote;
- Domestic observers were present in some polling stations;
- The counting at the polling stations was done in accordance with the law and copies of the polling reports subsequently distributed to all Party agents.

14. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the AU Observer mission noted the following negative aspects and irregularities:

- Campaign materials, especially posters, billboards and flags, were still visible within a 250 meters radius of many polling stations;
- There was a lack of uniformity in deciding about the closing time of the polling stations
- There was insufficient voter education; and
- There were insufficient instructions to voters by polling station officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Based on observations and findings made by its different teams, the African Union Election Observer Mission to the 2012 General Elections in Angola would like to recommend the following:

- To improve the process of accreditation of Party agents;
- To improve the process of accreditation of both national and international Observers;
- To improve the release of funding to Political Parties for a greater participation in the electoral process;
- To improve civic and voter education;
- To improve participation of and dialogue among all election stakeholders;
- To improve coverage and access to public media by all parties and candidates.

CONCLUSION:

16. In view of the aforementioned the AU Observer Mission would like to declare that the general elections in the Republic of Angola were conducted in accordance with the Durban Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, as adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in July 2002.

The AU Observer Mission, therefore, states that the General Elections in Angola were Free, Fair, Transparent and Credible.

The African Union Mission wishes to acclaim and congratulate the people of the Republic of Angola, Political Parties and Candidates for their political maturity, as well as National Electoral Commission, the Security Agencies and all the stakeholders involved in the current electoral process, for the peaceful conduct of the 31st August 2012 General Elections and urges all Political Parties and their respective Candidates to work together for the consolidation of peace and democracy in Angola.

Luanda
02 September 2012