



SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM



VOTER REGISTRATION 2007

ANGOLA



Voter Registration Observation Mission Report

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Voter Registration Observation Mission to Angola

March 2007



SADC Parliamentary Forum

**Private Bag 13361
WINDHOEK
NAMIBIA**

**TEL.: 264 61 287 0000
FAX: 264 61 254642
E-MAIL: info@sadcpf.org
WEBSITE: www.sadcpf.org**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDP:	Botswana Democratic Party
CCM:	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CICA:	Council of Christian Churches of Angola
CIPPE:	Inter-Ministerial Commission for Elections
CPE:	Provincial Election Commission
DTA:	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
EISA:	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
EU:	European Union
FNLA:	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
FRELIMO:	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
IFES:	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI:	International Republican Institute
LDP:	Liberal Democratic Party
MAT:	Ministry of Territorial Administration
MCP:	Malawi Congress Party
MPLA:	Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola
NDI:	National Democratic Institute
NEC:	National Electoral Commission
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
PRS:	Social Renovation Party
RENAMO:	Resistencia Nacional de Mocambique
SADC:	Southern Africa Development Community
Forum:	SADC Parliamentary Forum
UNITA:	Union Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola
UPND:	United Party for National Development
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
VRC:	Voter Registration Center
ZANUPF:	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

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The Mission thanks Dr. Esau Chiviya for compiling this report.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

From the 19th to the 24th of March, 2007, a 21-member delegation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum (Forum) was in the Republic of Angola to observe voter registration in four of the eighteen provinces of the country. The delegation was composed of 10 Members of Parliament and 5 officials from Parliaments of the following SADC Countries:

Country	Member of Parliament	Party	Gender	Staff Member
Botswana	Hon. Gobopang D.Lefokho	BDP	M	
	Hon. Botlogile Tshireletso	BDP	F	
Malawi	Hon. Sitsi J. Sitsi Nkhoma	MCP	M	Mr. Ollium Phiri
Mozambique	Hon. Acucena Duarte	FRELIMO	F	Mr. Jaime E. Numaio
	Hon. Jeronimo Malagueta	RENAMO	M	
Namibia	Hon. McHenry Venaani	DTA	M	
South Africa				Ms. Grace C. Goncalo
Swaziland	Hon. Isabella B. Katamzi		F	Mr. Amos M. Maziya
Tanzania	Hon. Richard Nyaulawa	CCM	M	
Zambia	Hon. David Matongo	UPND	M	
Zimbabwe	Hon. Margaret C. Pote	ZANUPF	F	Mr. Christian Ratsakatika

Key

F: *Female*

M: *Male*

The delegation was led by the immediate past Vice Chairperson of the Forum and Member of Parliament from Botswana, Hon. Gobopang Duke Lefhoko. Also in the delegation was the Secretary General of the Forum, Dr. Kasuka Mutukwa, and four officials from the Windhoek-based Secretariat who formed the Mission's Secretariat.

The deployment of the Observer Mission was in line with the decision of the Plenary Assembly of the Forum and the provisions of the Constitution of the Forum which collectively enjoin the Forum to the promotion of democracy, good governance, gender equality, human rights and the development of conflict mediation through electoral processes, among other strategies. Pursuant to this mandate, the Forum deployed an 8-member Goodwill Mission to Angola from 3rd to 7th March, 2003 to consult stakeholders on the peace process and prospects for holding elections following the signing of the historic Peace Agreement on 4th April, 2002.

The Forum's Voter Registration Observation Mission to the Republic of Angola was in direct response to the commencement of the voter registration process in the country, which commenced on 15th November, 2006 and was expected to end on 15th June, 2007.

The voter registration observation program was developed in consultation with the National Assembly of Angola.

CHAPTER 2:

BACKGROUND TO THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

The Republic of Angola is a former Portuguese colony that gained its independence from Portugal in 1975 after a long period of armed struggle. Its neighbors are Namibia to the south, Zambia to the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the north and to the west is the Atlantic Ocean. Administratively, the country is divided into 18 provinces and 164 municipalities. The country is rich with oil reserves, coming second in Africa after Nigeria. Other important resources include diamonds and fish. It has an estimated population of 14 million. The country has a literacy rate of about 40%.

The political history of Angola has largely been characterized by a war situation. A brief period of peace after independence was followed by 27 years of civil war which ended on 4th April, 2002 after the signing of a Ceasefire Agreement between *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA)* and *Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA)*. This Ceasefire Agreement was preceded by the peace accords signed in Lisbon, Portugal on 31st May, 1991 leading to the first multi-party elections in Angola in 1992 whose results were rejected by UNITA resulting in a continuation of the civil war. The Lusaka Protocol of 20th November, 1994, which was a United Nations mediated peace initiative also, did not hold for long. The 4th April 2002 Ceasefire Agreement between MPLA and UNITA followed the death of the UNITA Leader, Dr. Jonas Savimbi, and was without external mediation.

The Ceasefire Agreement provided for the following:

1. total ceasefire throughout the country,
2. disengagement, 'quartering' and conclusion of the demilitarization of UNITA armed forces as envisaged in the Lusaka Protocol of 1994,
3. incorporation of general and senior staff officers of UNITA into both the FAA and the national Police,
4. demobilization of some FAA and UNITA armed forces,
5. vocational training and reintegration of demobilized personnel into civilian life, and
6. national reconciliation through a general amnesty.

Since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement, the Government of Angola, political parties, civil society organizations, and the people of Angola in general have shown commitment to make this Peace Agreement hold. It was important to note therefore that Angola is a country whose people are learning to live with each other in a peaceful environment following 27 years of war.

The voter registration process was taking place in an environment characterized by numerous challenges including the fact that elections would be held under the old constitution which is yet to be revised. For many years, there has been no national census to give accurate figures on the size of the population prior to the 2008 elections. Further, there has been a need to establish a comprehensive electoral framework as envisaged in the various electoral laws passed so far. Other challenges include the rehabilitation of infrastructure destroyed by many years of war, coping with the return and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons, and clearance of landmines still abundant in the rural areas.



SADC Parliamentary Forum observer Mission Team

CHAPTER 3:

MISSION TERMS OF REFERENCE

In observing the voter registration process in the Republic of Angola, the Observer Mission was guided by the following Terms of Reference (TOR):

1. assessing the registration process with regard to the broad participation of potential voters, adequacy of facilities and time allocated for that purpose;
2. assessing the extent of voter education undertaken before and during the voter registration period to ensure that as many citizens as possible and of both genders are able to register;
3. conducting a gender analysis of the process to determine the level of awareness and relative participation of women and men, both as registrants and registration personnel;
4. observing and verifying the impartiality and the functioning of the authorities responsible for the registration of voters as provided in the laws of the Republic of Angola;
5. assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of mechanisms put in place by the authorities to facilitate an all inclusive and consultative registration process;
6. consulting a representative sample of stakeholders on the conduct of the process. These stakeholders will include ordinary citizens, political parties, relevant government departments, local civil society organizations, faith based organizations, regional and international organizations and the international/diplomatic community; and
7. familiarizing the Mission with the preparations for elections in the Republic of Angola as part of preparations for the observation of elections whenever they are called.

This report provides an insight into the Mission's observations, findings, and recommendations on the voter registration process, it being understood that registration of voters is a sine qua non for the organization and conduct of credible elections. The Report also highlights areas in which the Forum and other local, regional and international institutions could support the Government and people of Angola to achieve a comprehensive voter registration exercise as the basis for credible and legitimate elections.

CHAPTER 4:

METHODOLOGY

Preparatory Meetings

Upon arrival in the country on 19th March, 2007, the Mission had a de-briefing session where the Mission Leader, Hon. Duke Lefokho, explained the primary purpose of the Mission as an assessment of the conduct of the voter registration exercise in Angola against guided by the electoral laws of the country and the Forum's Norms and Standards for Conducting Elections in the SADC Region and such other instruments such as the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and the OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa.

Remarks by the Mission Leader

The Mission Leader emphasized to the delegation members that elections were a process that started with the voter registration process, which in some countries largely determined the outcome of elections. He noted that elections are a process and not an event. Included in this process, are aspects such as included voter registration, compilation of voter rolls, nomination of candidates, voting, election observation itself, counting and tallying of results, announcement of results, and post election activities. Hon. Lefhoko observed that, over the years the Forum had developed a credible record of election observation based on objective criteria across the board, a record that should be maintained.

Remarks by the Secretary General

The Secretary General of the Forum, Dr. Kasuka Mutukwa, also made some remarks in the de-briefing session. He reminded delegates that Africans had come of age in election observation as they could observe elections on their own and not as part of non-Africa delegations, which was the practice in the past. He pointed out the various electoral laws the National Assembly had passed to prepare for elections, and noted that the Mission was in Angola to contribute to the peace process and assist the Government and people of Angola attain credible elections. He observed that some of the key issues for the Mission included as assessment of the:

- inclusiveness of the voter registration process;
- pace of the registration process in terms of number of registrants
- role of political parties, civil society organizations, and faith based organizations in the registration process;
- the conduct of voter education;
- participation of women in the voter registration process and how user friendly the process was for women to participate; and
- impartiality of the election management bodies.

Noting that the Forum did not take sides and that its focus was on helping the country deepen democracy, the Secretary General emphasized the need for objectivity in the observation process.

Consultative Meetings

In order to get as much information as possible on the voter registration process, the Mission held several consultative meetings with key stakeholders. The Mission held consultative meetings with among others, the SADC National Group and Parliamentary External Relations

Committee, the Minister of Territorial Administration who was also the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Elections (Portuguese acronym CIPPE) which included the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission and his officials, political party representatives of the ruling *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA)*, *Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA)*, *National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA)*, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and Social Renovation Party (PRS). Furthermore, the Mission held consultations with a grouping of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Council of Christian Churches of Angola (CICA), international organizations, and development/cooperating partners.

In addition to the above consultative meetings, the delegation also paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Roberto de Almeida.

Field Visits

Following meetings with key stakeholders the Mission went on field visits to observe the registration process. On Wednesday 21st March, 2007, and Thursday 22nd March, 2007, the Mission visited Voter Registration Centers (VRC) in the provinces of Luanda, Bengo, Huambo, and Namibe where observer teams consulted with provincial governors, government officials and other stakeholders on the conduct of voter registration. The purpose of these field visits was to have an on-the-spot assessment of how voter registration was being conducted in various VRCs.

CHAPTER 5:

FINDINGS

Summary of Meeting Specific Findings

In all the meetings the Mission Leader, Hon. Duke Lefhoko, started by explaining why the Mission was in Angola, basically to observe the conduct of the voter registration process, to benefit from the observations of various stakeholders, and to acquaint itself with the logistical arrangements being put in place for elections. The Mission Leader would also emphasize the Forum's quest for objectivity in the observation process and that the observation was guided by Terms of Reference drawn from the Forum's Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region and other instruments. The observation was done in accordance with the electoral laws of the country.

Meeting with the SADC National Group and Parliamentary External Relations Committee

The Mission was informed that the national electoral laws in place had taken into account, the Norms and Standards of Conducting Elections in the SADC Region. The forthcoming elections were a new phenomenon in Angola as the country was now at peace unlike the 1992 elections when the country was at war. The SADC National Group and Parliamentary External Relations Committee looked forward to the Mission's report.

Meeting with Ministry of Territorial Administration

The Ministry of Territorial Administration (MAT) is mandated to prepare for and organize elections. It operates within an Inter-Ministerial Commission for Elections which included the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication. The Minister highlighted the difficulties of organising elections in a post-war situation where there were over 1,000 landmines scattered in the rural areas to clear, over 4,000,000 internally displaced persons, Angolan refugees still outside the country, destroyed airports, road network and other infrastructure, 31 years without elections, heavy rains/floods which made movement difficult, educating rural people some of whom are suspicious of elections being a prelude to war as was the case in 1992, and poor communication facilities. In this situation, Government seemed to be the only body with the institutional capacity to organize elections. National Electoral Commission (NEC) was established in 2005 with the main job of supervise electoral processes in the country. MAT and NEC are expected to jointly ensure the stability and success of voter registration in particular and the electoral process in general.

The established target was to register 7.5 million voters. Approximately 3 million voters had been registered by the time of the Forum visit. In recognition of the Women's International Day, which coincided with the registration process and in order to encourage women, who are generally numerically more than men, the month of March, 2007, had been declared a month for campaigning for the registration of women. Low rate of women registrants was accounted for by the fact that the majority of women were illiterate, engaged in low income activities (street vending, domestic work, etc.), and did not have identity cards especially in the rural areas.

The documents that were required for registration included national identity cards, driver's licence, passports (even when expired), military documents, refugee cards, and witnesses such as pastors and traditional leaders to certify one's nationality.

Although voter registration is compulsory, the law did not provide sanctions for those who did not register.

The Mission was informed that the MAT was working hand in hand with Parliament, NEC, political parties (126 political parties with 12 represented in Parliament, 7,300 political party agents had been registered), and both domestic and foreign NGOs. Government had provided a grant of US\$25 million which was disbursed at the rate amounting to US\$200,000.00 per political party whether in Parliament or not to enable them to support their party agents to observe the voter registration exercise. In addition the law allows funding of political parties for their own development activities. The Mission was informed that the diplomatic community was briefed regularly on the progress of the voter registration exercise and that national and foreign observers were allowed to observe the exercise with the aim of ensuring an inclusive exercise that is both transparent and credible.

Meeting with Chairperson of National Electoral Commission

The NEC comprises 11 members out of which 2 are women (approximately 20% which is far below the SADC 50% gender balance threshold). However, many women were engaged at national, provincial, and municipal levels as staff members in the voter registration exercise.

The NEC's role is to supervise the voter registration exercise and the electoral process, to ensure that voter registration is conducted correctly and smoothly throughout the country, to encourage people to come to vote and to recommend the necessary corrective measures to remove constraints. In addition, the NEC is responsible for accrediting both local and international observers and political party agents provide information to political parties, the media and NGOs; and receive complaints from stakeholders and recommend to Government the necessary corrective measures. The Mission noted that although the voter registration exercise was progressing well it was unlikely that the target of 7.5 million voters would be achieved by 15th June, 2007. The Mission learned that the NEC was most likely going to propose to Government an extension of the exercise.

As with most SADC countries, the registration age in Angola is 18 years or older. Since no census had been conducted in the country for many years, the NEC was not worried so much about the target of 7.5 million registrants but rather by ensuring that as many potential voters as possible are registered. In trying to ensure that those in rural areas had registered, the NEC was working with NGOs, churches, traditional leaders, and political parties to ensure comprehensive registration. In addition NEC had developed training materials for use by NGOs in voter education.

The Mission was informed that the NEC had offices in all the 18 provinces, 164 municipalities in mainland Angola as well as in the 4 municipalities in Cabinda to enable it to effectively perform its supervisory role. The guiding principles in discharging its role were transparency, free and fair elections, involvement of all political parties, NGOs, Churches, and the media in the electoral process. The NEC's budget was provided for by the Ministry of Finance.

For the first time in the electoral history of the country, a computerized voter registration process had been developed. Notwithstanding the potential benefits of a computerized voter registration process, some political parties had however expressed misgivings on the use of computer technology in voter registration because they did not quite appreciate the benefits and were also suspicious of how the data would be processed.

Meeting with MPLA

The MPLA representatives acknowledged the difficulties of organizing voter registration in a country where civil war lasted for 30 years, landmines scattered all over the countryside, destroyed

infrastructure, rain and floods, and the absence of population census-based estimates. However, political parties, including MPLA, were involved in voter registration observation through their party agents. It was noted that there were 126 registered political parties in Angola. All had been given US\$200,000.00 to enable them to participate in voter registration. By law, the Government was expected to fund political parties during election campaigns. This reduced the likelihood of foreign funding for political parties.

The Mission was informed that the MPLA had produced some training materials for use in civic education. The MPLA had also produced a document called the National Agenda for Consensus which was supposed to guide any political party that won elections in governing the country. The document would be discussed by all stakeholders at a Conference on 02nd April, 2007. The Party expressed its willingness and commitment to maintaining the spirit of the 2002 Peace Accord and would want Angolans to freely decide the political party to lead them.

According to law there were some steps to be undertaken before the date of elections was announced. These were as follows:

- Voter registration exercise,
- Voter registration verification,
- Second phase of voter registration for those turning 18 years during verification,
- NEC communicating completion of the voter registration process to the President,
- President may consult with other stakeholders, e.g. the Republican Council, on suitable date,
- President would announce the date 90 days before the election,
- Legislative elections would be held in 2008 between May and August during dry season. Only the date remained to be known.
- Presidential Election would be held in 2009. What remained was the month and date.

On gender balance within MPLA, the Mission was informed that SADC's previous 30% quota for women was always taken into account. However, the MPLA representatives noted the new SADC 50% quota for women and promised to take it into account in the next election. It was the MPLA's view that a new National Constitution developed after the elections and a period of two years should be set aside to debate the constitution.

MPLA was of the view that the voter registration exercise was going on well.

Meeting with National Council of NGOs (PLATAFOMA)

The meeting was attended by 17 representatives from NGOs who had been observing voter registration for the past 4 months. The main role of NGOs was civic education through pamphlets, committee meetings, mobile shows, churches, demonstrations, etc. Although the NGOs were represented throughout the country, their participation varied from province to province. There were many and strong women organizations in Luanda than in rural areas where there was weak representation.

NGOs were generally pleased with the voter registration exercise despite the numerous challenges. There was transparency in the process as both NGOs and political parties were represented at the voter registration centres. There was good relationship between NGOs and NEC at both the national and provincial levels. However, the NGOs could not understand why out of the 18 provinces in the country, one province (Namibe) had not yet accredited NGOs for observation.

The main concern of NGOs was inadequate funding. Most of them were not funded by Government. They got their funding from international donors. They strongly recommended that Government

should seriously consider funding NGOs so that their observation and other roles were purely an Angolan process without external influence.

The NGOs confirmed that initially computerization had caused some problems but these had since been ironed out.

Meeting with Opposition Political Parties

The Mission consulted with 4 opposition political parties. These were UNITA, FNLA, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and Social Renovation Party (PRS).

UNITA's main concerns were that there was no separation of powers between the state and the ruling party. It was argued for instance that the composition of the NEC was skewed in favor of the ruling party (MPLA), that the Chairperson of NEC was also a Deputy Judge President of the Supreme Court when section 131 of the Constitution prohibited judges of the Supreme Court from holding another post to avoid conflict of interest, and that the NEC itself was not representative enough. UNITA was of the view that this situation did not create a sense of confidence in the voter registration process.

FNLA's concerns were that the composition of NEC was the same as in the 1992 election, that there had been delays in accrediting opposition political parties to observe the voter registration process, that the US\$200,000.00 Government given to each political party was not enough and that FNLA had not received the money yet, and finally that its bank account had been frozen for the past 6 years.

LDP's concerns were that when voter registration started political parties were not accredited to field their agents and that registration officials were still using provisional accreditation cards.

PRS's concerns were that the computerization of voter registration was done without training political parties on how the technology worked, they had some doubts on the transparency of the computerized system, they doubted the impartiality of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Elections, they interference in the work of the Commission by the ruling party, and that opposition political parties were weak in monitoring the voter registration exercise.

Despite their concerns on the voter registration exercise and dissatisfaction with the current political situation where state, government and the party were apparently one and the same, opposition political parties had committed themselves to the 2002 Peace Accord and did not want to revert to the previous war situation.

Meeting with International NGOs

The meeting was attended by National Democratic Institute (NDI), Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), International Republican Institute (IRI) and IFES. The Mission was informed that NDI was supporting the training of civil society organizations, IRI the training of political parties, and IFS the training of NEC officials. The international organizations made the following observations on the voter registration exercise:

1. there was no clear understanding on the supervisory role of NEC,
2. there was different interpretation of the electoral law in different provinces, for example, on the issue of witnesses,
3. there were no domestic observers accredited in Namibe Province,
4. there was lack of adequate financial support for NGOs to enable them to do effective voter education,
5. dual membership in electoral bodies especially at provincial level caused potential for conflict of interest,

6. media not effective in disseminating voter registration information,
7. need to accelerate civic education,
8. need for Government to finance NGOs for effective civic education,
9. the need for observers to have access to the government centre where data captured from voter registration centers was processed to enhance transparency, and
10. need for the establishment of Party Liaison Committees to settle electoral disputes.

On the issue of possible multiple registration, international organizations expressed satisfaction with the use of fingerprints to verify the identity of registrants.

Meeting with Council of Christian Churches of Angola (CICA)

The Secretary General of CICA informed the Mission that Angola was a Christian country for the past 5 centuries and that 90% of the people of Angola were Christians. CICA was involved among others in humanitarian assistance, giving support to women, providing health services, ensuring justice and peace, working with civil society on human rights and elections, embarking on rehabilitation and literacy programs for women and mobilizing women for voter registration.

The involvement of the church in voter registration included mobilizing and sensitizing the people on the process, campaigning for voter registration in a neutral manner without political affiliation and playing the role of witness for those without identity cards. The church operated at the provincial, municipal and community levels. It was the best conduit for transmitting information to the rural people.

CICA was concerned that although Government recognized the role of the church in the voter registration exercise, the Government did not give financial support to the Church. Consequently, the Church was doing all this work with meagre resources given by international organizations. The feeling was that the Church deserved Government funding in the voter registration campaign.

Meeting with the Media

The Mission was informed that the media was involved in disseminating voter education information and its members had been trained in that area. Representatives of the media present argued that they had received adequate voter education and information from MAT and NEC. However, the Mission observed that the media in Angola was still in its infancy phase and that investigative journalism was missing. In some rural areas there were no newspapers, no television, and no radio. A UNDP study in September 2004 estimated that about 30% of Angolans did not have access to either the electronic media (Radio and TV) or newspapers. The lack of access to information was higher in some provinces such as Lunda Norte (54%) and Malange (53%).

Meeting with International Cooperating Partners

The Forum Mission Leader informed the cooperating partners that despite the challenges of conducting voter registration after 30 years of civil war; on the whole stakeholders had given thumbs up to the registration exercise. In the ensuing discussion several issues came up.

- It was pointed out that some people were reluctant to go register because of the 1992 memories when after voting civil war broke out.
- Government had issued instructions that voter education information was to come from Government to avoid confusion and that Government was funding voter education.
- USAID had a long term relationship with the Forum as it had funded some of its election observation missions in the past. USAID had some small grants to support

- provincial voter education teams.
- European Union had not been invited to observe the voter registration exercise, NEC and MAT had not requested electoral assistance from EU despite offers of such assistance from EU.
- Norway was supporting several NGOs in civic education.
- The Forum's concern about lack of investigative journalism to get information from the grassroots and lack of news papers in the countryside was equally shared by the cooperating partners.
- CICA and NGOs needed external support for the work they were doing in voter registration and civic education as they did not get Government funding.
- Landmine Mapping had produced good maps that showed where communities were settled.

The meeting identified the following as good practices in the voter registration process:

- Keeping registration centers open during weekends to enable those who work during the week to register,
- Extending registration hours,
- Providing mobile teams to bring registration centers closer to the people,
- Computerization of the voter registration exercise, and
- Use of witnesses for those with no identity cards to give more people a chance to register.

Field Visits to Registration Centers

On Wednesday 21st March, 2007, and Thursday 22nd March, 2007, the Mission's teams visited VRC's in the provinces of Luanda, Bengo, Huambo, and Namibe for an on-the-spot observation of how voter registration was being conducted. The deployment of the Mission members was as follows:

Luanda Province Team

Hon. Richard Nyaulawa (Tanzania)
Hon. Jeronimo Malagueta (Mozambique)
Mr. Jaime Numaio (Secretary)

Bengo Province Team

Hon. Sitsi J. Nkhoma (Malawi)
Hon. Margaret C. Pote (Zimbabwe)
Mr. Amos Maziya (Secretary)

Huambo Province Team

Hon. Botlogile Tshireletso (Botswana)
Hon. David Matongo (Zambia)
Mr. Christian Ratsakatika (Secretary)

Namibe Province Team

Hon. Acucena Duarte (Mozambique)
Hon. McHenry Venaani (Namibia)
Ms. Grace Goncalo (Secretary)

Mission Leader's Team/Luanda Province

Hon. Duke Lefhoko (Botswana)

Hon. Bella Katamzi (Swaziland)

Mr. Ollium Phiri (Secretary)

All the Observation Teams were accompanied by interpreters. In observing the registration exercise at the VRCs, the teams used the Forum's Registration Day Checklist as the instrument to guide their observation. On the whole the teams observed that voter registration centers were run by both men and women officials although men were in the majority. They were quite young. The registration process was computerized. The registration officials had been trained in the computer technology. Despite some minor problems with computers that could only take a certain number of cards per day, the registration process was progressing well. It took approximately 5 to 10 minutes for a registrant to go through the registration process. The registration process appeared transparent. There was no intimidation of registrants. There was large turn out at some registration centers especially those in Luanda Province. Some political parties had their agents at the registration centers. The agents confirmed that the process was going on well. Electricity generators were provided where there were no reliable sources of power especially in rural areas. The youth turned up in large numbers to register as voters. However, there appeared to be no special attention given to the elderly, the disabled and pregnant women. The teams noticed an absence of posters on voter registration. Electronic and the print media were not effectively used to disseminate voter registration information especially in the rural areas.

CHAPTER 6:

CONSOLIDATED FINDINGS

Current Electoral Legal Framework for Conducting Elections

The Mission observed that the voter registration process was based on the 1992 Constitution, Electoral Law Number 6/05, Law on International Electoral Observation Number 4/05, the Law on Political Parties Number 2/05, the Law on Financing Political Parties, the Law on Voter Registration Number 3/05 and the Electoral Code of Conduct. In addition two more laws on Right of Access to the Media focusing on Time Allocation, and National Code of Broadcasting Services were expected to be passed before the 2008 Parliamentary Elections.

The Parliamentary Elections to be held between May and August 2008 would also be conducted under the 1992 Constitution. The Mission got the impression that in passing these laws Angolans could have benefited from their participation in observing elections in other SADC countries under the auspices of the Forum as they had been active members in all of the Forum's activities. The Mission was of the view that there was a reasonable legal basis for conducting the November 15, 2006, to June 15, 2007, voter registration exercise and for holding the 2008 and 2009 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections.

Electoral Management Bodies

The Mission observed that there were three key institutions managing the electoral process in general and voter registration at the national level in particular. These were the MAT that was the Government organ in charge of all the logistics for the preparation and organization of elections. The Ministry was working in conjunction with CIPPE whose members were MAT itself, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, and the NEC that played a supervisory role to ensure that the voter registration exercise was smoothly and correctly done throughout the country and took the necessary corrective measures where there were constraints. In addition MAT had set up a Task Force for Logistics to effectively support the voter registration exercise. It is worth pointing out that these bodies were duplicated at the provincial and municipal levels.

The NEC deserves special mention as this was the central body in most SADC countries that was responsible for organizing and managing the entire electoral process. The NEC comprises 11 members, namely:

- 6 members nominated by the National Assembly as follows: 3 from the ruling party, 2 from the largest opposition party and 1 from the second largest,
- 2 members nominated by the President of the Republic,
- 1 member who is the Chairperson, in the current situation a Deputy Judge for the Supreme Court, nominated by the Supreme Court,
- 1 member from the Ministry of Social Communication, and
- 1 member from the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

The fact that 6 of the 11 NEC members were nominees of political parties, raised questions on the extent to which the NEC could be viewed as impartial in managing the electoral process and in this case voter registration. This also raised questions on the extent to which other stakeholders, especially political parties, could trust the voter registration exercise to be free from interference by the key player.

Furthermore, the Mission received concerns on the appointment of a Deputy Judge of the Supreme Court as Chairperson of the NEC. Some stakeholders expressed fears of possible conflict of interest. This matter required further clarification from the Government authorities in order to enhance stakeholder confidence in the NEC.

The Mission further noted the dual roles of provincial and municipal administrators who were elected officials. They were election administrators on the one hand and electoral supervisors on the other hand. There was bound to be conflict of interest when it came to settling electoral disputes.

Gender Participation and Representation

The Mission was informed that thus far 60% of the registered voters were men. Population wise, however, women were assumed to be more than men (although there was no statistical evidence to this assumption). The reasons given for the low rate of women registrants included low literacy levels among women, high poverty levels, women preoccupied with eking out a living for their families and the location of VRCs far away from women's places of work. This was despite the commendable civic education efforts by some civil society organizations and the Churches to educate not only the women but men as well on the ongoing voter registration exercise and the need to exercise their democratic right to vote.

Concerned about the low rate of women registrants and in recognition of International Women's Day, the MAT had declared March, 2007 a special month to campaigning for women registration. As a result of this initiative 60,000 women were registered in 4 days in Luanda alone. The Ministry had also introduced mobile voter registration teams in order to bring voter registration centers closer to the people especially in rural areas where population was dispersed. In addition, Saturdays had also been designated as voter registration days. These efforts were highly commendable.

During field visits to Voter Registration Centers, the Mission observed that there were more men in registration teams (brigades) than women. The explanation behind this disparity could be the low levels of literacy and high levels of poverty among women which militates against their active involvement/participation in politics.

Regarding women representation in decision making positions and in party political structures, the situation left a lot of room for improvement. In interacting with both Government and political parties the Mission found out that they were talking about the 30% SADC threshold of 1997 which had been replaced by the 50% SADC requirement of 2005. The Mission was of the view that there was a lot of room for sensitization in both Government and political structures in order to attain gender balance. Political parties should be the target of this sensitization so that they included more women candidates for the 2008 Parliamentary Elections.

Stakeholder Involvement and Participation in the Voter Registration Process

From its interactions with MAT, NEC, the SADC National Group of Parliamentarians, and Platform for NGOs, National Council of Churches, Provincial Governors and Administrators, and visits to Voter Registration Centers, the Mission was of the view that the Government of Angola was doing the best it could to have an inclusive electoral and voter registration exercise. The majority of the stakeholders seemed to give a thumb up on the manner voter registration was progressing. Despite existing challenges and constraints (destroyed road network, landmines littered all over in the rural areas, inadequate electronic and print media especially in rural areas, poorly funded civic organizations and church groups), the stakeholders felt that they were adequately involved in the process. This sense of involvement by all stakeholders was essential for the process of peace building and an inclusive voter registration process. The stakeholders were looking forward to a proper voter registration process as the basis for a fair, credible and legitimate electoral process. The stakeholders were all committed to making the 2002 Peace Accord a permanent feature of the Angolan people.

The Media

The Mission observed that the Media was able to access voter registration information from MAT for dissemination to the people. There were no complaints from the Media about getting information from the MAT, NEC and other stakeholders. However, the Mission noted that the majority of Media houses were Government owned. Private Media was still at an infancy stage and needed to be nurtured. Investigative journalism was still missing. The rural areas were covered in terms of both the print (newspapers) and the electronic media (television and radio) news but the coverage was inadequate.

Timetable for Elections

Unlike in some of the SADC countries where election dates were fixed, Angola was still in the group of those countries where the election date was announced by the Head of State at a convenient time. This was not in line with the Forum's **Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region**. Keeping the date of elections a secret was not a good practice. It was a disappearing practice as it was viewed as disadvantaging opposition political parties. Although the specific date for the 2008 Parliamentary Elections was not known, the Mission was informed that elections would be held between May and August 2008.

The Youth

During its visits to Voter Registration Centers in the Provinces of Luanda, Bengo, Huambo and Namibe the Mission observed a large number of youths in queues waiting for their turn to register. Large numbers of youths were more visible at Voter Registration Centers visited by the Mission in Luanda. This could be explained by the fact that there was more voter education publicity through radio, television and newspaper adverts in Luanda compared to the other Provinces. This could also be an indication of the youths wanting to determine their political future. On the whole the Mission appreciated this active involvement of the youths in enhancing a democratic process in the country.

Political Maturity

The Mission was informed that there were 126 political parties in the country. This was a sign of a growing democracy whereby there were numerous political parties at the beginning of the process which were bound to decrease as democracy matured. The large number of political parties could also be a sign of the process of changing from a one party rule to a multiparty democracy. The Mission was of the view that the current political environment needed careful management for democratic culture to take root.

Voter Registration Publicity

The Mission did not come across any visible voter registration publicity materials such as posters wherever they went in Luanda and the other provinces yet posters were an important instrument for publicizing both voter registration and elections related information.

Statistics

The Mission observed that the current voter registration process was taking place in a situation where there was very little authentic statistics. There had been no census in the last 30 years. The figure of 14 million assumed to be the population of Angola and the 7.5 million potential voters was therefore a guesstimate. For an accurate voter registration process there was need for accurate information on the population of a country as a whole and in specific provinces and municipalities.

Challenges to the Voter Registration Process

Both Government and other stakeholders looked forward to a successful voter registration process as a basis for a free and fair credible and legitimate election process. They were all committed to achieving this. However, there were numerous challenges in organizing voter registration and elections in a post war situation. These included a road network, bridges and provincial airports that were destroyed making movement of people difficult, over 1,000 landmines scattered in the countryside, an estimated 4 million internally displaced people, refugees, and 15 years without electoral experience. There was no credible statistical information on the population size of the country. Civil society and church organizations were financially under resourced to carry out effective civic education and voter registration campaign programs. It is in this context that the Government saw itself as the only capable body to organize and prepare the ongoing voter registration exercise and the 2008/2009 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections and ensure stability in this process.

Good Practices

The Mission noted the following from observing the Angolan voter registration exercise as good practices in an electoral process:

- i. compulsory voter registration which was not a punishable offence but motivated individuals to go and register if they were to exercise their democratic human right to vote,
- ii. application of computerization technology which shortened the registration process to five minutes per voter despite the initial problems experience in its application,
- iii. use of mobile voter registration teams to make registration centers easily accessible to people in remote rural areas and women working in markets who could not leave their businesses unattended for a long time while they went to register,
- iv. allocation of public funding of US\$200,000.00 to each political party to support their party agents in observing voter registration,
- v. public funding of political parties to enable them to participate in the electoral process,
- vi. involvement of several stakeholders in the voter registration process as a way of making it a more inclusive, credible and legitimate process,
- vii. the openness of the MAT to stakeholders,
- viii. voter registration on Saturdays to make it possible for those working during the week to register,
- ix. the use of witnesses (traditional authorities, pastors, and elders) to support the candidature of those without identity documents to enable more people to register,
- x. mounting a special campaign for women to register, and
- xi. a separate budget for the NEC as opposed to the practice in other countries where the budget for the Electoral Commissions was part of the budget of either the Ministry of Home Affairs or such other ministry.

CHAPTER 7:

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mission made these recommendations with a view to further enhance the effective implementation of the voter registration exercise and the electoral process as a whole:

1. The Government and development partners should work together to provide adequate financial support to civil society organizations (domestic NGOs and churches) to enable them to reach all parts of the country and all sections of the society;
2. The MAT should ensure that the public was informed through the mass media and on a regular basis about the location and movements of registration brigades. There was also an urgent need for the MAT to establish public relations/information desks at national, provincial and municipal levels to ensure that members of the public, observers and political parties had easy access to information on the voter registration process;
3. The transparency and public confidence in the voter registration process could be enhanced if observers and the media were allowed access to all the stages in the electoral process, including the final compilation of registration data by the MAT;
4. In order to enhance transparency and accountability, the CIPPE and the NEC should ensure that none of their officials performed both registration and supervisory functions. This recommendation stemmed from the concern raised by some stakeholders of instances where CIPPE officials at provincial level (CPE) also worked for the NEC;
5. The role of the media in informing and educating the public on election-related processes could not be overemphasized. In this regard, the media should play a more proactive role in processing civic and voter education information in a more user-friendly form and in the different languages with a view to disseminating such information to the public especially the rural population;
6. The NEC should facilitate the establishment of party liaison and conflict management committees to facilitate a more formal and systematic platform for the exchange of views and mitigation of election-related disputes;
7. The Government should seriously consider publishing an election calendar including the period within which elections would be held to enable electoral stakeholders to adequately prepare themselves for the elections;
8. Government should seriously consider separation of powers between the state, government and the party to avoid conflict of interest in resolving electoral disputes;
9. In its efforts to attain gender in both decision making positions and appointments to political positions in all parties both Government and opposition political parties should use the current SADC 50% threshold as opposed to the 1997 SADC 30% threshold. In this vein training in gender balance for all political parties could contribute to attaining the 50% threshold;
10. For future voter registration and elections management, Government should seriously consider using a single independent electoral management body to avoid confusion and to enhance transparency and credibility as opposed to the current arrangement where both the MAT and the NEC were involved in the process;
11. Government and cooperating partners should seriously consider the development of a private media and training all media practitioners in investigative journalism in order to strengthen the media to play an effective role as a watchdog not only on the development of a democratic culture but in other areas of national development; and
12. Government should seriously consider conducting a national census soon after the 2008/2009 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in order to establish accurate and valid information on population size and distribution not only for elections but other development initiatives.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

**SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM VOTER REGISTRATION MISSION TO THE REPUBLIC
OF ANGOLA
19TH – 24TH MARCH, 2007
INTERIM STATEMENT**

A. INTRODUCTION

The 21-member delegation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum (Forum), which arrived in Luanda on Monday 19th March, 2007 observed the registration of voters in four of the eighteen provinces in the Republic of Angola. The delegation was led by the immediate past Vice Chairperson of the Forum and Member of Parliament from Botswana, Honourable Gobopang Duke Lefhoko. The other members of the delegation were drawn from the parliaments of Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also in the delegation was the Secretary General of the Forum, Dr. Kasuka Mutukwa and officials from member parliaments as well as the Windhoek-based Secretariat¹.

The deployment of the observer Mission is in line with the decisions of the Plenary Assembly of the Forum and the provisions of the Constitution of the Forum which collectively enjoin the Forum to the promotion of democracy, good governance, gender equality, human rights and the development of conflict mediation through electoral processes, among other strategies. Pursuant to this mandate, in March, 2003, the Forum deployed an 8-member goodwill mission to consult stakeholders on the peace process and prospects for holding elections following the signing of the historic peace agreement on 4th April, 2002. The just-ended observation process was in direct response to the commencement of the registration of voters in the Republic of Angola, which commenced on 15th November, 2006 and is expected to end on 15th June, 2007.

B. MISSION TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Mission's terms of reference were as follows:

1. Assessing the registration process with regard to the broad participation of potential voters, adequacy of facilities and the time allocated for that purpose;
2. Assessing the extent of voter education undertaken before and during the voter registration period to ensure that as many citizens as possible and of both genders are able to register;
3. Conducting a gender analysis of the process to determine the levels of awareness and relative participation of women and men, both as registrants and registration personnel;
4. Observing and verify the impartiality and the functioning of the authorities responsible for the registration of voters as provided in the laws of Republic of Angola;
5. Assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of mechanisms put in place by the authorities to facilitate an all inclusive and consultative registration process;
6. Consulting a representative sample of stakeholders on the conduct of the process. These stakeholders will include ordinary citizens, political parties, relevant government departments, local civil society organisations, faith based organisations, regional and international organisations and the international/diplomatic community; and

¹A full list of the delegation is attached as Annex 1

7. Familiarising the Mission with the preparations for elections in the Republic of Angola as part of preparations for the observation of elections whenever they are called.

The Mission will compile a detailed report on its observations, findings, and recommendations on the on going voter registration process as sine qua non for the organisation and conduct of credible elections. The report will also highlight areas in which the Forum and other local, regional and international institutions would support the government and people of Angola fulfil this objective.

C. METHODOLOGY

Upon arrival in the country, the Mission held consultative meetings with among others, the SADC National Group and Parliamentary External Relations Committee, the Minister of Territorial Administration (MAT), who is also the Chairperson of the Inter-ministerial Commission for Elections (Portuguese acronym CIPPE), the National Electoral Commission (NEC), representatives of the ruling *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA)*, *Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA)*, PRS, National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Consultations were also held with non-governmental organisations, international organisations and development partners, representatives of media organisations. On Wednesday 21st March, 2007 and Thursday 22nd March, 2007, the Mission visited voter registration centres (VRC) in the provinces of Luanda, Huambo, Bengo and Namibe where they also consulted with other electoral stakeholders and government authorities in those provinces.

The delegation also paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Roberto de Almeida.

D. FINDINGS

1. Current Electoral Legal Framework for Conducting Elections

The Mission observed that the current Voter Registration is based on the 1992 Constitution, Electoral Law Number 6/05, Law on International Electoral Observation Number 4/05, the Law on Political Parties Number 2/05, Law on Financing Political Parties, the Law on Voter Registration Number 3/05 and the Electoral Code of Conduct. In addition two more laws on (1) Right of Access to the Media focusing on Time Allocation, and (2) National Code of Broadcasting Services are expected to be passed before the 2008 Parliamentary Elections. The Parliamentary Elections to be held between May and August 2008 will also be conducted under the 1992 Constitution. The Mission got the impression that Angolans could have benefited from their participation in observing elections in other SADC countries under the auspices of the Forum as they have been active members in all of the Forum's activities. The Mission is of the view that there is a reasonable legal basis for conducting the current voter registration exercise and for holding the 2008 and 2009 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections.

2. Electoral Management Bodies

The Mission observed that there are three key institutions managing the electoral process in general and voter registration at the national level in particular. These are the MAT that is the Government organ in charge of all the logistics for the preparation and organization of elections. MAT has set up a Task Force for Logistics to effectively support the Voter Registration exercise. The Ministry is working in conjunction with the CIPPE whose members are MAT itself, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication, and the NEC that plays a supervisory role to ensure that the voter registration exercise is smoothly and correctly done throughout the country and take the necessary corrective measures where there are constraints. It is worth noting that these bodies are duplicated at the provincial and municipal levels.

The NEC deserves special mention as this is the central body in most SADC countries that organizes elections and manages the entire electoral process. The NEC comprises 11 members namely:

- 6 members nominated by the National Assembly as follows: 3 from the ruling party, 2 from the largest opposition party and 1 from the second largest,
- 2 members nominated by the President of the Republic,
- 1 member who is the Chairperson, in the current situation a Deputy Judge for the Supreme Court, nominated by the Supreme Court,
- 1 member from the Ministry of Social Communication, and
- 1 member from the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

The fact that 6 of the 11 NEC members are nominees of political parties, raises questions on the extent to which the NEC can be viewed as impartial in managing the electoral process and in this case voter registration. This also raises questions on the extent to which other stakeholders, especially political parties, can trust the voter registration process to be free from interference by the key player.

Furthermore, the Mission received concerns on the appointment of a Deputy Judge of the Supreme Court as Chairman of the NEC. Some stakeholders expressed fears of possible conflict of interest. This matter requires further clarification from the government authorities to enhance stakeholder confidence in the NEC.

The Mission further noted that provincial and municipal administrators who are elected officials have dual roles. They are election administrators on the one hand and electoral supervisors on the other hand. There is bound to be conflict of interest when it comes to settling electoral disputes.

3. Gender Participation and Representation

The Mission was informed that so far 60% of the registered voters are men. Population wise however, women are assumed to be more than men (although there is no statistical evidence to this assumption). The reasons given for the low rate of women registrants include low literacy levels among women, high poverty levels, women preoccupied with eking a living for their families and the location of VCRs far away from women's places of work. This is despite the commendable civic education efforts by some civil society organizations and the Churches to educate not only the women but men as well on the ongoing voter registration exercise and the need to exercise their democratic right to vote.

Concerned about the low rate of women registrants and in recognition of Women's Day, the MAT has declared March, 2007 a special month to campaign for women registration. As a result of this initiative 60,000 women were registered in 4 days in Luanda alone. The Ministry has also introduced mobile voter registration teams in order to bring voter registration centres closer to the people especially in rural areas where population is dispersed. In addition, Saturdays have also been designated as voter registration days. These efforts are highly commendable.

On visits to VCRs, the Mission observed that there were more men in registration teams (brigades) than women. The explanation behind this could be the low levels of literacy among women and high levels of poverty among women which militates against their active involvement/participation in politics.

Regarding women representation in decision making positions and in party political structures, the situation leaves a lot of room for improvement. In interacting with both Government and political parties the Mission found out that they are still talking about the 30% SADC threshold of 1997 which has been replaced by the 50% SADC requirement of 2005. The Mission is of the view that there is a lot of room for sensitization in both Government and political structures in order to attain gender balance. Political parties should be the target of this sensitization so that they include more women candidates for the 2008 Parliamentary Elections.

4. Stakeholder Involvement and Participation in the Voter Registration Process

From its interactions with MAT, NEC, the SADC National Group of Parliamentarians, Platform for NGO, National Council of Churches, Provincial Governors and Administrators, and visits to VCRs, the Mission is of the view that Government is doing the best it could to have an inclusive electoral and voter registration process. The majority of the stakeholders seem to give a thumb up on the manner voter registration is progressing. Despite existing constraints and challenges (destroyed road network, landmines, inadequate electronic and print media especially in rural areas, poorly funded civic organizations and church groups), the stakeholders feel that they are adequately involved in the process. This sense of involvement by all stakeholders is essential for the process of peace building and an inclusive voter registration process. The stakeholders are looking forward to a proper voter registration process as the basis for a fair, credible and legitimate electoral process. The stakeholders are all committed to making the 2002 Peace Accord a permanent feature of the Angolan people.

5. The Media

The Mission observed that the Media is able to access voter registration information from MAT for dissemination to the people. There are no complaints from the media about getting information from the MAT, NEC and other stakeholders. However, the Mission noted that the majority of media houses are Government owned. Private media is still at an infancy stage and needs to be nurtured. Investigative journalism is still missing. The rural areas are poorly covered in terms of newspapers, television and radio news.

6. Timetable for Elections

Unlike in some of the other SADC countries where election dates are fixed, Angola is still in the group of those countries where the election date is announced by the head of state at a convenient time. This is not in line with the Forum Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC region. Keeping the date of elections a secret is not a good practice and one that is disappearing practice as it is viewed as disadvantaging opposition political parties. Although the specific date for the 2008 Parliamentary Elections is not known, the Mission was informed that elections will be held between May and August 2008. This recommendation was subsequently amended at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Democratization, Governance and Gender Equality held in Windhoek, Namibia on 3rd June, 2007 following advice that "that there is indeed a framework for final announcement of the date of elections upon advice of the National Electoral Commission (NEC). It was noted therefore that the existing electoral legislation of Angola is in compliance with electoral norms and standards with regard to the date of elections."^[1]

7. The Youth

During its visits to VRCs both in Luanda and the provinces of Bengo Huambo and Namibe the Mission observed a large number of youths in queues waiting for their turn to register. Large numbers of youth were more visible at voter registration centres visited by the Mission in Luanda. This could be explained by the fact that there is more voter education publicity through radio, television and newspaper adverts in Luanda compared to other areas. This could be an indication of the youths wanting to determine their political future. On the whole the Mission appreciated this active involvement of the youth in enhancing a democratic process in the country.

8. Political Maturity

The Mission was informed that there are 126 political parties in the country. This is a sign of a growing democracy whereby there are numerous parties at the beginning of the process which are bound to

¹Extract from page 3 of the Report of the Standing Committee on Democratization, Governance and Gender Equality which was presented to the 22nd Plenary Assembly session in Windhoek, Namibia on 7th June, 2007.

decrease as democracy matures. The large numbers of political parties could also be a sign of the process of changing from a one party rule to a multiparty democracy. The Mission is of the view that the current political environment needs careful management for a democratic culture to take root.

9. Voter Registration Publicity

The Mission did not come across any visible voter publicity materials such as posters where ever they went in Luanda and in the provinces yet posters are an important instrument for publicizing both voter registration and elections.

10. Statistics

The Mission observed that the current voter registration process is taking place in a situation where there is very little authentic statistics. There has been no census in the last 30 years. The figure of 14 million assumed to be the total population of Angola and the 7.5 million potential voters is therefore a guesstimate. For an accurate voter registration process there is need for accurate information on the population of a country as a whole and in specific provinces and municipalities.

11. Challenges to the Voter Registration Process

Both Government and other stakeholders look forward to a successful voter registration process as a basis for a free and fair credible and legitimate election process. They are all committed to achieving this. However, there are numerous challenges to organize voter education and elections in a post war situation. These include a road network, bridges and airports that were destroyed, over 1000 landmines, an estimated 4 million internally displaced people, refugees, and 15 years without election experience. There is no credible statistical information on the population of the country, and where civil society organizations are financially under resourced to carry out effective civic education and voter registration programmes. It is in this context that the Government saw itself as the only capable body to organize and prepare the ongoing voter registration exercise and the 2008/2009 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections and ensure stability in this process.

12. Good Practices

The Mission noted the following from observing the Angolan voter registration process as good practices in an electoral process:

- i. Compulsory voter registration which is not a punishable offence but motivates individuals to go and register if they are to exercise their democratic human right to vote,
- ii. Application of computerization technology which shortened the registration process to five minutes per voter despite the problems experienced in its application,
- iii. Use of mobile voter registration teams to make registration centres easily accessible to people in remote rural areas and women working in markets who cannot afford to leave their businesses unattended for a long time while they go to register,
- iv. Allocation of public funding of US\$200 000 to each political party to support their party agents in observing voter registration,
- v. Public funding of political parties to enable them to participate in the electoral process,
- vi. Involvement of several stakeholders in the voter registration process as a way of making it a more inclusive, credible and legitimate process,
- vii. The openness of the MAT to stakeholders,
- viii. Voter registration on Saturdays to make it possible for those working during the week to register,
- ix. The use of witnesses (traditional authorities, churches, and elders) to support the candidature of those without identity documents to enable more people to register,
- x. Mounting a special campaign for women to register, and

- xi. A separate budget for the NEC as opposed to the practice in other countries where the budget for the Electoral Commissions is part of the budget of either the Ministry of Home Affairs or such other ministry.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are being made with the view to further enhance the effective implementation of the voter registration exercise and the electoral process as a whole:

1. The Government and development partners should work together to provide adequate financial support to civil society organizations (domestic NGOs and churches) to enable them to reach all parts of the country and all sections of the society;
2. The MAT should ensure that the public is informed through the mass media and on a regular basis about the location and movements of registration brigades. There is also an urgent need for the MAT to establish public relations/information desks at national, provincial and district levels to ensure that members of the public, observers and political parties have easy access to information on the voter registration process;
3. The transparency and public confidence in the voter registration process could be enhanced if observers and the media are allowed access to all the stages in the electoral process, including the final compilation of registration data by the MAT;
4. In order to enhance transparency and accountability, the CIPPE and the CNE should ensure that none of their officials perform both registration and supervisory functions. This recommendation stems from the concern raised by some stakeholders of instances where CIPPE officials at provincial level (CPE) also work for the CNE;
5. The role of the media in informing and educating the public on election-related process cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, the media should play a more proactive role in processing civic and voter education information in a more user-friendly form and in the different languages with a view to disseminating such information to the public especially the rural population;
6. The CNE should facilitate the establish party liaison and conflict management committees to facilitate a more formal and systematic platform for the exchange of views and mitigation of election-related disputes;
7. The Government should seriously consider publishing an election calendar including the period within which elections will be held to enable electoral stakeholders to adequately prepare themselves for the elections;
8. Government should serious consider separation of powers between the state, government and the party to avoid conflict of interest in resolving electoral disputes. The case in point relates to the appointment of Deputy Judge of the Supreme Court to the position of Chairman of National Electoral Commission;
9. In its efforts to attain gender balance in both decision making positions and appointment to political positions in all parties both government and opposition political parties should use the current SADC 50% threshold as apposed to the 1977 SADC 30% threshold. In this vein training in gender balance for political parties could contribute to attaining the 50% threshold
10. For future voter registration and elections management, government should seriously consider using a single independent electoral management body to avoid confusion and to enhance transparency and credibility as opposed to the current arrangement where both the MAT and NEC are evolved in the process;
11. Government and cooperating partners should seriously consider the development of a private media and training all media practitioner investigative journalism in order to strengthen the media to play an effective role as a watchdog not only on the development of a democratic culture but in other areas of national development.
12. Government should seriously consider conducting a national census soon after the 2008/2009 parliamentary and presidential in order to establish accurate and valid information on population size and distribution essential not only for elections but other development initiatives.

The Mission expresses its appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Angola, political parties, civil society and faith based organisations, international organisations and development partners for the assistance and hospitality given.

Done at Luanda this 24th Day of March, 2007

Hon. Gobopang Duke Lefhoko (Mission Leader)
Botswana

Hon. Botlogile Tshireletso, MP
Botswana

Hon. Sitsi J. Sitsi Nkhoma, MP
Malawi

Hon. Acucena Duarte, MP
Mozambique

Hon. Jeronimo Malagueta, MP
Mozambique

Hon. McHenry Venaani, MP
Namibia

Hon. Isabella B. Katamzi, MP
Swaziland

Hon. Richard Nyaulawa, MP
Tanzania

Hon. David Matongo, MP
Zambia

Hon. Margaret Celine Pote, MP
Zimbabwe

DELEGATION

- 1) Hon. Gobopang Duke Lefhoko, National Assembly of Botswana, (Mission Leader)
- 2) Hon. Botlogile Tshireletso, National Assembly of Botswana
- 3) Hon. Situsi J. Situsi Nkhoma, National Assembly of Malawi
- 4) Hon. Acucena Duarte, National Assembly of Mozambique
- 5) Hon. Jeronimo Malagueta, National Assembly of Mozambique
- 6) Hon. McHenry Venaani, National Assembly of Namibia
- 7) Hon. Isabella B. Katamzi, Parliament of Swaziland
- 8) Hon. Richard Nyaulawa, National Assembly of Tanzania
- 9) Hon. David Matongo, National Assembly of Zambia
- 10) Hon. Margaret Celine Pote, Parliament of Zimbabwe
- 11) Dr. Kasuka Mutukwa, Secretary General
- 12) Mr. Takawira Musavengana, Democracy and Governance Officer
- 13) Ms. Angela Martins, Training Officer
- 14) Mr. Unaro Mungendje, Accountant
- 15) Ms. Agnes Lilungwe, Secretary
- 16) Mr. Ollium Phiri, Parliament Official, Malawi
- 17) Mr. Jaime Ezequiel Numaio, Parliament Official, Mozambique
- 18) Ms. Grace Constable Goncalo, Parliament Official, South Africa
- 19) Mr. Amos Msindisi Maziya, Parliament Official, Swaziland
- 20) Mr. Christian Ratsakatika, Parliament Official, Zimbabwe
- 21) Dr. Esau Chiviya, Rapporteur

