



Electoral Commission of Namibia

VOTE OF THANKS

BY

HON.JUSTICE PRISCILLA MAKANYARA CHIGUMBA

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 24th ECF-SADC ANNUAL GENERAL
CONFERENCE**

25 OCTOBER 2022

Programme Director

Honourable Minister of Urban and Rural Development Mr Erastus Uutoni

Hon Neville Andre – Governor of Erongo Region

*Our host the Electoral Commission of Namibia under the leadership of
Chairperson Ms Elsie Nghikembua*

*Honourable Judge Barnabas Nyamadzabo President of the ECF-SADC &
Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana*

*Chairpersons, Commissioners, CEOs and Senior Representatives of the Electoral
Commissions of SADC.*

The Executive Secretary and esteemed team at ECF-SADC Secretariat

*Esteemed partners – International IDEA and European Centre for Electoral
Support*

Our distinguished International organizations and guests here present

Our distinguished resource persons and Facilitators

Leaders and representatives of Political parties

Members of Civil Society Organizations

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I deem it a great privilege to stand before you and give a vote of thanks on this occasion. The presence of the Minister of Urban and Rural Development Honourable Erastus Uutoni, in today's programme notwithstanding his busy schedule, is enough testimony of the importance attached by the Namibian Government to the Electoral Commission of Namibia and other EMBs in the SADC region. We are all inspired by your gracious presence at this important occasion Sir.

2. My name is Justice Priscilla Makanyara Chigumba, Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the Vice Chairperson of Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries Executive Committee.

3. Let me also thank our ECF-SADC President who is the Chairperson of Independent Electoral Commission of Botswana, Hon Justice Barnabas Nyamadzabo for the welcoming remarks delivered on behalf of all of us.

We are very grateful Sir and also welcome you to our esteemed family of EMBs in the SADC region.

4. Programme Director, allow me on behalf of the ECF-SADC to express our sincere gratitude to Electoral Commission of Namibia for agreeing to host the 24th Annual General Conference of the Forum. We are pleased to be back here at Swakopmund since the 12th AGC hosted by Namibia in this same place in 2012. Our appreciation goes to the Electoral Commission of Namibia under the leadership of Chairperson Ms Elsie Nghikembua and her team, the AGC coordination team and the ECF-SADC Secretariat for the excellent organisation and coordination and giving us the opportunity to be here today.

5. An event like this does not happen overnight. The preparations started months ago, and it required a lot of planning including internal consultations that extended to the region. We have been fortunate to have a dedicated and motivated team and I thank everyone for the commitment to make the 24th Annual

General Conference a success, more so that it is the first physical annual conference to take place after the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns.

6. My appreciation goes to our esteemed partners (ECES and International IDEA) who both supported the seminar component of this conference. We all appreciate how our local, participants, resource persons, facilitators were generously supported to be part of this important conference and to network with all EMBs in the SADC region. This event would have been impossible without your great support. We are very grateful for your participation at this conference.

7. Allow me to thank all the fourteen (14) electoral Commissions gathered here today for their commitment shown through the participation and promotion of the Forum's mandate. We have all noted that all members are represented by their Chairpersons, Commissioners, and senior officials. We look forward to very fruitful exchanges that enhance

the delivery of our work back in our respective countries.

8. On behalf of the ECF-SADC and on my own behalf, let me acknowledge all esteemed speakers who will present to us on the theme of this year's conference, which is "**Stakeholder Engagement and Accountability to Promote Public Trust in Electoral Processes in the SADC Region**". We are looking forward to their contributions and to tap on their skill and expertise in these particular areas. Appreciation also goes to their organizations for allowing them to be present at this occasion.

9. Let me conclude by thanking all the people who work behind the scenes to ensure that everything is seamless, especially for the delegates. These include the drivers, the interpreters and the hotel staff. All of them are worthy of our collective commendation for their effort to make our stay in Namibia comfortable.

10. A round of applause goes to the ECN and ECF-SADC coordination team for the excellent logistics put in place to make possible the hosting the 24th Annual General Conference. **Can the team please stand.**

11. Finally, our 24th Annual General Conference itself will be held tomorrow 26 October and it will be a closed session for the electoral commissions to discuss policy issues and taking the Forum forward. A special arrangement has been made to afford our international guests an opportunity to address us briefly on their work.

Thank you