



The SADC Lawyers' Association

SADC lawyers congratulate the people and Government of Zambia for holding free and fair elections

The SADC Lawyers Association is inspired by the people and leaders of Zambia following their successful holding of free and fair elections on 20 September 2011. Despite some disturbances before, during and after the election period, including the flaring of violence in some parts of the country, it is noteworthy that the people and political parties in Zambia showed maturity by accepting a result that was declared by election observers and monitors, including the SADC Lawyers' Association election observer team as generally free and fair.

This successful election was held barely a month after the SADC Lawyers Association Annual General Meeting and Conference which was held in Maputo, Mozambique under the theme "towards democratic elections and the peaceful transfer of power in the SADC region". A communiqué that was issued by the lawyers following the 3 day conference encouraged SADC countries to hold free and fair elections, for governments to respect the will of the people and for defeated election candidates to be magnanimous in defeat and accept the will of the people. In this regard the Association is humbled by the magnanimity that was shown by the outgoing President His Excellency Mr Rupiah Banda by accepting defeat and handing over power peacefully. The example set by Mr Rupiah Banda is worth emulating and it is hoped that other sitting presidents in the SADC region will act similarly in future elections if defeated at the polls.

One of the principles for conducting democratic elections as stated in the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, 2004 is the need for "*Acceptance and respect of the election results by political parties proclaimed to have been free and fair by the competent National Electoral Authorities in accordance with the law of the land*" (Article 2.1.9). It is therefore encouraging, not only to the lawyers in SADC but to the whole SADC citizenry when leaders show commitment to the observance of national and regional rules and laws that help in shaping our future and democracy as individual countries and as a region.

Issued for and on behalf of the SADC Lawyers' Association
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President