Tuesday 2 November 2010

Chief Observer David Martin Speech

Habari za asubuhi

Thank you all for coming. It's nice to see so many familiar faces. I feel like I've got to know some of you quite well since early October

You already know the nature of the mission but let me just remind you

The EU EOM is headed by myself and includes a Core Team of six analysts based in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar who arrived in the country on 29 September. A group of 22 Long Term Observers (LTOs) joined the Mission on 7 October and were deployed to cover all the 26 regions of the country. They were reinforced by a group of 42 Short Term Observers (STOs) who arrived in Tanzania on 25 October. A group of 26 Local Short Term Observers (LSTOs) joined the Mission on election day.

The EU EOM was also joined by a six-member delegation from the European Parliament, led by Mariya Nedelcheva, Member of the European Parliament. On election day, the Mission deployed 102 observers from all 27 EU member states, as well as Canada, Norway and Switzerland, who visited 549 polling stations throughout the country to observe voting and counting.

- The fourth general electoral process since the implementation of the multi-party system in the country has so far been held in a peaceful and generally orderly environment.

- Election day unfolded in a calm manner and, overall, the EU EOM observers rated the process as either 'good' or 'satisfactory' in 95 percent of the polling stations observed in the mainland and in Zanzibar. In general, polling station procedures were applied evenly across the country, despite some shortcomings like election materials missing, including ballot papers, electoral forms and voter lists.

- Overall, the NEC and ZEC administered the elections in a professional manner and largely guaranteed the universal suffrage, notwithstanding the logistical challenges and the number of simultaneous elections. The EU EOM observers assessed the performance of the election administration at local level to be generally efficient, organized and well prepared. The ZEC generally conducted the elections in a professional manner and was on track with election preparations.

- Candidates campaigned intensively on the mainland under a generally free and peaceful environment despite some localized cases of violence. The islands of Zanzibar replicated the experience of last July's referendum with a remarkably peaceful campaign environment.

In this context, we would like to make the following observations

- The requirement that candidates must be members of and proposed by a political party to stand for the general elections is not in conformity with international principles. This requirement restricts the effective right and opportunity to stand for elections of individuals who aim to contest as independent candidates and, consequently, limits the voter's choice of candidates.

- Freedom of speech in the media was generally respected. However, a leading newspaper in Swahili, Mwananchi, was threatened with closure and deregistration accused of allegedly offering a negative coverage of the administration and of tarnishing the government's image. As the situation stands now, the EU EOM considers such threats against the media as an attempt to limit the freedom of expression. Generally, both the state-owned and private media offered a broad coverage of the electoral process despite some bias reporting in favor of the ruling party.

- In the mainland, the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) enjoyed the advantages of the incumbency and also what seemed a broad financial base allowing it to carry out campaigns with an overwhelming visibility compared to other parties. Overall, the lack of sufficient financial resources undermined the campaigning capacity of the parties. The situation was worsened by an extremely long campaign period.

- The ruling party benefited from an historical control of the administrative structure that was sometimes indistinct from the well organized CCM party structure. In that context, the large number of election-related key positions directly or indirectly appointed by the Union president, who was also a candidate for reelection, raised concerns about the independence of state organs towards the incumbent party.
- We are concerned by any delays in the announcement of the results as this creates both uncertainty and suspicion among the electorate and we have concerns about the transparency of the aggregation process.

The EU EOM will remain in the country to observe the aggregation process, announcement of results and post-election developments. This statement is preliminary; the EU EOM will not draw final conclusions until the completion of the process including the announcement of results and the swearing-in of elected candidates. A final report will be published between two and three months after the completion of the electoral process.

Finally we call on all citizens to respect the outcome of the election and to continue to build a peaceful Tanzania.

I wish Tanzania well. Assante sana!