



YOUR X IS YOUR SAY

**CODE OF CONDUCT SIGNING CEREMONY AND BALLOT PAPER
DRAW**

**ELECTION READINESS REMARKS BY
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
MR SY MAMABOLO**

GALLAGHER CONVENTION CENTRE

20 MARCH 2019

WELCOME

- Thank you Programme Director
- Your Excellency President of the Republic, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa
- Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Commissioners of the Electoral Commission
- Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present
- Your Excellences Leaders of Political Parties
- Heads of Chapter 9 Institutions
- Members of the judiciary
- High Commissioners, Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps

- Representatives of civil society including faith-based organisations, NGOs, traditional leaders, business and labour organisations and other interest groups
- Members of the media
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and gentlemen
- Fellow compatriots

ELECTION TIMETABLE

We are a third of the way into the election timetable and just 49 days remain before South Africans vote in our country's sixth national and provincial democratic elections.

Already many of the key milestones for these elections have passed:

- **The voters' roll**

The voters' roll has been certified and the final roll published.

It contains 26 756 898 voters of whom 55 percent are women and 45 percent are men. This voter's roll represents 74.6 of the total voting age population. Since the first universal voters roll was compiled in 1999, the roll has grown by 47 per cent.

Inspired by the X'se campaign, young voters under the age of 29 constitute 20 per cent of the total voters roll.

- **Voting stations**

The 22 924 voting stations which will host voting and counting on 8 May have been secured and published – along with the routes and stopping times for our 32 mobile stations

- **Voting abroad**

Applications by voters to vote abroad have been finalized and will see 29 334 voters permitted to cast their ballots on 27 April 2019 at South Africa's 121 foreign missions around the world.

This is a 10 percent increase over the 26 716 permitted to vote abroad in 2014.

Foreign missions with the highest number of voters intending to vote are:

- London with 9 084
- Dubai 1 542
- The Hague 1 355
- Canberra 1 195
- And Abu Dhabi 1 061

- **Candidate lists and parties**

The deadline for the submission of party candidate lists and payment of election deposits has come and gone, resulting in a record 48 parties which will contest the national elections.

This is 19 parties more than contested the national elections in 2014.

A record number of political parties will also contest provincial legislatures in all provinces with the largest number of parties in Gauteng (36) and the smallest number in the Northern Cape (21).

Later this morning we will conduct a draw to determine the sequential configuration of parties on the national and provincial ballot papers.

We are currently awaiting the correction of non-compliance in relation to candidates who have not fully complied with nomination requirements. Political parties have until the 25th of March 2019 to ensure that such non-compliance is rectified. This rectification will pave the way for us to publish the lists of candidates on 23 April.

- **Special votes**

That only leaves one remaining process in terms of the electoral timetable – namely applications for special votes by the physically infirm, disabled or pregnant and those South Africans who are unable to cast their ballots on voting day.

These include election officials, security personnel, party agents and candidates, the media and others likely to be deployed on Election Day.

These voters have from the 4th to the 18th of April to apply for special votes. Applications for special votes can be lodged with the Commission via physical delivery at the local offices, the website or SMS. However SMS may only be used in respect of applications for special votes at voting stations.

Special votes will be cast at places of confinement and at voting stations on 6 and 7 May.

LOGISTICS

Fellow Compatriots, our logistical preparations for the elections are equally well advanced and on track.

Following today's ballot paper draw we will be ready to commence the ballot production process. In tandem with the number of registered voters and applying a universally accepted buffer threshold, we will be printing over 50 million ballot papers using over 40 tons of paper. The ballot production process will take about 14 days to complete.

The significant increase in the number of parties contesting both the national and provincial ballots has considerable logistical and cost implications for this year's elections. Longer ballot papers and the need for additional ballot boxes have placed a perverse cost burden on the Electoral Commission.

Most of our bulk logistical items are already distributed to provincial warehouses where they await dispatch to their final voting stations destinations on the eve of special voting.

Among the materials delivered to warehouses so far include:

- Over 220 000 ballot boxes

- 44 529 voting compartments
- 24 974 voting station arrow signs
- And 56 255 stationery packs

Work will also soon begin on building the national and provincial results centres from where we will collate and finalize the results. As usual the national results centre will be based at the Tshwane Events Centre (known more commonly as the Pretoria Showgrounds).

We look forward to hosting all of you there for the final 7 days of the elections.

SYSTEM UPGRADES

Distinguished guests

Our systems are also in the final stages of upgrade for the elections.

We have completed the enhancements to the results system and the audit of this system by independent external auditors is almost complete.

Our Online Candidate Nomination System was also upgraded and performed admirably in handling the record number of candidate nominations over the last few weeks.

We have also completed the upgrading of internet bandwidth to all our local offices to ensure expeditious transaction on the wide area network of the Commission.

We further are planning a roll-out of new hardware including new servers and PCs to give us the speed and power to manage elections more efficiently.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

We are also progressing well with the recruitment and training of approximately 220 000 election officials who will conduct the voting and counting on Election Day.

The list of Presiding Officers and Deputy Presiding Officers will soon be submitted to political parties via the Municipal Party Liaison Committees for any objections based on non-conformance with the agreed recruitment criteria.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MITIGATION

Since 2016 the Electoral Commission has been working with the European Centre for Electoral Support on a Project to Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence.

We have managed to train over 1000 individuals in leadership and conflict management in electoral processes. This is a vast and valuable network across South Africa who will be able to contribute to the prevention, mitigation and management of conflict at grassroots level.

OBSERVERS

Applications for accreditation as observers are currently being processed by the Commission. To date the Commission has accredited 35 institutions.

ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Ladies and gentlemen

The Commission is nearing the end of an intense process of engagement with key stakeholders. This has included meetings with:

- Leaders of represented political parties
- Provincial legislatures
- Government departments and members of the security cluster
- Traditional leaders
- Representatives of the disabled community
- The agriculture sector
- The business sector
- Labour representatives
- Members of the diplomatic corps
- Civil society and faith-based organisations
- And members of the media

These engagements will continue both formally and informally throughout the next 49 days right up to the announcement of results to ensure we work together to ensuring South Africa hosts yet another free and fair election.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished guests

The Electoral Commission is on track and will deliver elections on the 8th of May.

Now it is over to the political parties and candidates contesting these elections to take the baton and play their important part in encouraging participation by voters and ensuring we have successful, peaceful, tolerant, free, fair and credible elections.

In fact, it is paramount that our political leaders have a deep realization that the Electoral Code of Conduct is not a panacea to the creation of a climate conducive to free and fair election. Indeed, the Code of Conduct as a legal instrument has its place within a confluence of factors yet the code of conduct must be complimented with political rhetoric that fosters cross sectional behavior consistent with the values that underpin our constitution.

In this regard, we dare not fail! On behalf of the Electoral Commission we wish you all well.

I thank you