

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE  
ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
MR GLEN MASHININI  
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
THE NATIONAL RESULTS  
OPERATIONS CENTRE**

TSHWANE EVENTS CENTRE

30 APRIL 2019



**YOUR X IS YOUR SAY**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Thank you programme director
- Vice Chairperson Ms Janet Love
- Commissioner Dr Nomsa Masuku
- Commissioner Judge Dhaya Pillay
- Commissioner Mr Mosotho Moepya
- • Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present including the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs Dr Siyabonga Cwele and Minister of International Relations Ms Lindiwe Sisulu
- •Honourable Leaders and representatives of political parties present
- •Chairpersons and members of fellow Chapter Nine institutions
- •High Commissioners, Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps
- •The Chief Electoral Officer Mr Sy Mamabolo and members of staff of the Electoral Commission
- •Directors-General and senior members of government
- •Former Commissioners and executives of the Electoral Commission including our former Chief Electoral Officer Professor Mandla Mchunu
- •Members of domestic and international observer missions
- •Representatives of civil society including faith-based organisations, NGOs, traditional leaders, business and labour organisations
- •Members of the media
- •Distinguished guests



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# WELCOME

- Ladies and gentlemen,
- On behalf of the Electoral Commission it is my great privilege and honour to welcome you to the opening of the National Results Operations Centre for the 2019 National and Provincial Elections
- The opening of the "ROC" signals the start of the final leg of our journey for these elections
- This is the arena where these elections will be concluded and the final results announced
- For many of us here this is a return to a familiar place filled with great memories and great excitement
- It is the place where once every few years our electoral democracy comes to life before our eyes and before the world, and where we celebrate our electoral democracy and Constitution in action.



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# FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

- Distinguished guests
- South Africa's elections are founded on our Constitution which commits us to:
  - -"Universal adult suffrage, a national common voters' roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness"
- The core principles underpinning a modern democracy are set out by the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance to which South Africa is a signatory
- Without being exhaustive, these principles include that elections should be:
  - 1. Regular
  - 2. Inclusive
  - 3. Transparent
  - 4. And credible
- South Africa has embraced these principles in every aspect of our electoral democracy and this Results Centre is an integral part of this architecture, designed to ensure free and fair elections



# 1. REGULAR ELECTIONS

- This past weekend South Africa celebrated our twenty fifth anniversary of our first inclusive, regular, credible, transparent, free and fair elections
- Next week South Africans from every corner of our country and from every walk of life will return to the polls for the sixth time since 1994 to elect their chosen representatives for the national assembly and provincial legislatures
- We are returning to this venue for the ninth time since the birth of our democracy: over the past 20 years we have announced the results of the four previous national and provincial elections and the four previous municipal elections here
- From this very stage we have declared each of those previous elections free and fair, and each of these results have been accepted by the contestants, observers and the people of South Africa as a fair reflection of the will of the people.
- And from this stage we will again announce the results of these elections next weekend.



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# 2. INCLUSIVITY

- Distinguished guests
- This venue brings together all the stakeholders of our electoral democracy under one roof:
  - -The Electoral Commission is here coordinating electoral operations and resolving all objections and other legal processes before finalising the results
  - -From next week it will be home to the forty eight political parties contesting these elections
  - -It will also be a base for domestic and international observers to oversee the conduct of elections and the transmission and finalisation of results
  - -And it is the media centre for the elections from where reports will be broadcast to South Africans and to the rest of the world



# 3. TRANSPARENCY

- Ladies and gentlemen
- Transparency is the single most important factor in a credible election
- According to the Open Election Data Initiative:
  - “the need for transparency and up-to-date information is paramount to the credibility of any election”
- The National Democratic Institute notes that:
  - "a transparent election is one in which each step is open to scrutiny by stakeholders who are able to independently verify that the process is conducted according to procedures and no irregularities have occurred"
- Providing transparency in an election helps establish trust and public confidence in the process as it gives all stakeholders the ability to verify the results for themselves



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# 3. TRANSPARENCY

- Transparency is built into each part of electoral process:
  - - It is built into the political party liaison committee system which operates at national, provincial and local level in the preparations and planning of every election as well as during the critical election and results phase
  - - It is built into the voting and counting process at every voting station where party agents and observers can witness and monitor every aspect
  - - It is built into the results system - including the signing of each result slip by party agents and the ability to compare the results captured on the system against the results on each result slip
  - - And it is built into by the watchdog role of the fourth estate in holding all stakeholders to uphold their obligations and responsibilities in terms of the law



# 4. CREDIBILITY OF RESULTS

- The credibility of our elections is also protected and secured through a variety of checks and balances through each stage of the process
- Critically, it is the inclusivity and transparency of our counting and results system which provides all stakeholders with the necessary confidence that the results cannot be rigged
- This is achieved through, amongst others:
  - 1. The verification of the results system by independent auditors and political party representatives to ensure the accuracy of the results capture process and system
  - 2. It is ensured through the process of capturing the results at each voting station where party agents sign the results slip which is then posted on the door of the voting station.
  - A copy of the results slip is then captured onto the results system - through a double capture process to eliminate any errors.



# 4. CREDIBILITY OF RESULTS

- 3. It is ensured by making the results simultaneously available to all stakeholders - including the Commission, political parties, observers and the media. This means that should any discrepancy arise any stakeholder can raise this with the Commission for a rapid response.
- This is not about "catching each other out". It is about working together to ensure we have an election result of integrity and that we leave a legacy of an "unriggable election architecture" to future generations



# CONCLUSION

- Distinguished guests
- Providing everyone with the results as they are captured is one of the key factors underpinning the transparency, inclusivity and credibility of our elections
- But it comes with a responsibility
- Only the Electoral Commission can proclaim and announce the results of the elections and we appeal to all stakeholders to respect this
- This is not to say that stakeholders cannot and should not report and comment on the unfolding results as they are captured
- But we urge circumspection in making definitive announcements of final outcomes until the Commission has announced the final results.
- We hope to announce the final results here on Saturday 11 May



# CONCLUSION

- Ladies and gentlemen
- The Commission will have failed in its duty if at this juncture it did not make a clarion call to all South Africans to come out in their millions next Wednesday to cast their votes
- At the same time we call on those who have been organising and participating in civic demonstrations as part of their Constitutional rights to respect the election process
- The right to protest and demonstrate is a right protected by our Constitution and has its roots in our democracy and the conduct of peaceful elections
- Compatriots, as a nation we all have a patriotic duty to protect and defend our elections and our democracy for this and future generations
- As we open the ROC today we appeal to all South Africans to ensure that the conditions under which the elections are held once again bear witness to the world that South Africa remains a shining example of a Constitutional democracy in action.
- I thank you



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