

Tlakula calls for robust, effective electoral bodies

Robust and effective electoral institutions that are capable of promoting credible elections on a continuous and sustainable basis, need to be built, says President of the Electoral Commissions' Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC) Advocate Pansy Tlakula.

Tlakula, who is also Chairperson of the IEC South Africa, was speaking at the Professional Development Workshop for new chairpersons, commissioners and chief electoral officers in the SADC Region in Centurion, Pretoria on Wednesday.

As the leadership of the Electoral Management Bodies (EMB) change, it was important to ensure continuous EMB capacity development so that the new leadership was able to capitalise on the success of its predecessors, she noted.

In recent years at least 10 of the 15 countries in the SADC region have experienced changes to their leadership of EMBs due to the end of the term of office for electoral chairpersons, commissioners and chief electoral officers.

"There is a need to ensure that new chairpersons, commission members and chief electoral officers maintain the high standards set within the region through continuous learning and peer-networking," Tlakula pointed out.

It was for this purpose that the workshop was convened in partnership with ECF-SADC, the United Nations Development Programme and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

More than 50 delegates from various EMBs as well as the ECF-SADC Secretariat are attending the event.

The workshop is expected to facilitate engagements by newly appointed EMBs members and senior staff on the mechanics, principles and good practices in the electoral field and provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their new responsibilities, she said.

The workshop will also enhance peer learning and networking with the overall goal of the training to boost the credibility and capacity of SADC EMBs to promote transparent, credible and peaceful elections.

The timing of the workshop is particularly relevant with elections, at various levels, scheduled in a number of countries in the region over the next two years.

"It is our hope that through this workshop will help individual EMBs and ECF-SADC to foster credible, peaceful and transparent elections which are capable of contributing to the democratic consolidation and sustainable development in our region and beyond," she said.

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