

PRESIDENT MBEKI'S COMMENTS ON ZIMBABWE DELIVERED DURING SA-DRC BNC

Presidential Guesthouse, Pretoria

Question:

President Mbeki, are you and your Facilitation team involved with talks with Zimbabwean parties about the way forward following the elections and how do you see this process unfolding?

Answer:

Maybe you should have started by asking whether we discussed the matter.

Yes off course, naturally, the DRC and South Africa are both members of SADC and naturally we did indeed discuss the issue.

Now, let me say: you know that in March 2007 SADC asked South Africa to facilitate discussions between the Zanu-PF, the government of South Africa and the MDC on political questions which happened, again, as you know.

Those discussions produced a whole set of agreements affecting the legislation, constitution, institutions and all of that and the general determination that was expressed by the Zimbabwean parties and ourselves was that one of the outcomes that we must aim to achieve would be elections this year, those that have just been concluded, with results that would not be contested. I think you are familiar with that.

So, as off now, at least the last time I received a report, which was a few hours ago, the overwhelming majority of results with regard to the House of Assembly had been announced and fortunately, what we had intended in the course of negotiations that I have just indicated, there has not been any contest. No queries have been raised by any of the parties about the results that have been announced.

So we have to await the announcement of the results, unless it was announced while we have been meeting here, of the Senate, the municipal elections and off course, the Presidential elections.

We would continue to hope that again, with regard to those, we will achieve this outcome of nobody contesting the results as would be announced by the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission.

You know that Morgan Tsvangirai, well not him, Secretary-General of the MDC announced yesterday that from their own calculations they believe that Morgan Tsvangirai has won the Presidential elections and gave whatever percentages.

However, we all of us, as indeed Morgan Tsvangirai had said, must await the announcement by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission with regard to that matter and again, as I was saying, we would hope that whatever it the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission would announce will again be responded to by the Zimbabwean parties, in a manner in which they have responded to the results as they have been announced up to now with regard to the House of Assembly results.

I had a discussion yesterday with Morgan Tsvangirai who called me to say, firstly to report that he had held his press conference where it was announced that he had won. He told me that in the event that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission came to a different conclusion, they were quite ready for a second round of elections, a run-off, between the two principle candidates that would have emerged from the electoral process thus far.

So, we await the announcement of the results by the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission and off course, as I was saying, we would hope that everybody would accept those results, as they have accepted the results thus far and that the legal constitutional processes of Zimbabwe would then proceed. If indeed Morgan Tsvangirai is elected in terms of the electoral law than that would be fine. If there is to be a run off then that is fine. So, this is a matter we must await.

**Issued by Department of Foreign Affairs
Private Bag X152
Pretoria
0001**

3 April 2008