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AFRICA/ZAMBIA - Opposition leader Michael Sata is the new President of the Country

Lusaka (Agenzia Fides) - "The people of Zambia have expressed themselves and we must all listen to them. This is not the moment for violence and revenge. This is is the moment for unity and to build together the future of Zambia. "Thus, the outgoing President, Rupiah Banda, confirmed the victory of his opponent, Michael Sata, in the presidential elections on 20 September, after the President of the Supreme Court Ernest Sakala had declared Sata as the winner with 1,150,045 votes against 961,796 of his rival . The votes are refered to the counting suffrage in 95.3% of the colleges.
Because of delays in vote counting operations, there was growing tension between supporters of the two candidates. In the clashes in two mining towns in the center-north of the Country (the so-called "copper belt"), Kitwe and Ndola, two people died. In Lusaka, the capital, traders had closed their shops for fear of new fighting, after the ones that occurred in various slums of the city (see Fides 20/9/2011).
Zambia, one of the most important world producers of copper, has registered in recent years a strong increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but has not resulted in an improvement of living conditions of the population. 64% of the inhabitants of the Country, in fact, live below the poverty line. Social disparities and the role of foreign companies in the national economy have been the focus of the electoral campaign. The outgoing President was accused of being too compliant with the foreign multinationals. Banda, however, replied that he invested the funds generated by the export of copper in the improvement of the country's infrastructure (roads, airports and hospitals), creating 100,000 new jobs. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 23/09/2011)

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