



**REMARKS BY THE SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, H.E. DR.  
STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE CLOSURE OF THE SADC OBSERVATION  
MISSION TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO (SOMILES)**

**31 MARCH 2015**

**MASERU, THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**His Majesty King Letsie III  
The Right Honorable, the Prime Minister, Dr Pakalitha Mosilili  
Your Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy President of the Republic  
of South Africa and SADC Facilitator to the Kingdom of Lesotho,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers of His Majesty's Government  
Hon. Fannie Mfana Phakola, Head of the SADC Mission to the  
Kingdom of Lesotho,  
Ambassador Ngiwete, Deputy Head of Mission  
Distinguished Representatives of SADC Member States,  
Members of the SADC Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Allow me to humbly welcome you all to this noble event when we are closing the SADC Observer Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho, (SOMILES) which has been on the ground since 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 to date. The SADC Observer Mission will occupy an indelible chapter in the history of SADC for its successfulness and good memories.

### **Excellencies,**

The challenging political situation in the Kingdom was brought to my attention in May 2014, and I immediately consulted the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, by then President Hifikepunye Pohamba, who in turn consulted the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, by then Dr. Thomas Thabane. A Troika Ministerial Fact Finding Mission was sent immediately, followed by the mission of His Excellency President Pohamba on 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014, during which he engaged with a number of key stakeholders, especially the Coalition Leaders, urging them to come together and expeditiously address the political tensions in the Kingdom.

The Coalition Leaders thereafter, met the Chair of the Organ on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014, and the Windhoek Declaration was signed. In the Declaration, the leaders of the Coalition Government, among others, committed to remove the Parliament Prorogation by 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014, and to undertake key and urgent institutional reforms. Unfortunately the set timelines met some challenges. On 18th August 2014, the matter was brought to the attention of the SADC Summit, and H.E. President Jacob Zuma as the new Chair of

the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation took over the mediation process.

### **Excellencies,**

On 15th September, H.E. President Jacob Zuma, as the Chair of the Organ convened a Double Troika Summit which, among others, approved the deployment of the Assessment Mission, and the appointment of H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa as the Facilitator to the Kingdom of Lesotho. As we have all witnessed, the Facilitator conducted a number of facilitation sessions and undertook various activities, thorough focused; dedicated and tireless efforts, geared towards the restoration of political and security stability in the Kingdom.

Your Excellency, Mr. Vice President, we greatly thank you Sir. Under your facilitation a number of milestones have been achieved including:

- (i) Signing of the Maseru Facilitation Declaration
- (ii) Opening of Parliament
- (iii) The signing of the Maseru Security Accord
- (iv) The signing of the Electoral Pledge in Maseru
- (v) The conclusion of the MOU on Joint Cooperation between the LDF and LMPS

All these efforts culminated in the peaceful, democratic and credible elections that were held on 28th February 2015, thus restoring the political and constitutional normalcy in this country.

As I have outlined in these remarks, it is evident that the process has been lengthy and challenging. However, through the determination of SADC and the Kingdom of Lesotho; we have been able to overcome the challenges peacefully, and amicably. Indeed it has been a long journey but a successful one. In this journey, Stakeholders in Lesotho recognized the need to bring stability in the Kingdom, and as such diligently worked for a common course for the benefit of the people of Lesotho. We applaud and appreciate their efforts.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the former Coalition Government led by Former Prime minister, Dr. Thomas Thabane, for their cooperation and commitment to address and to find solutions to the political and security

tensions that emerged in the Kingdom of Lesotho, and to finding solutions to the political and security challenges.

### **Excellencies,**

Allow me to also humbly express our gratitude to H.E. President Hifikepunye Pohamba, the Former Chairperson of the Organ, and H.E. Jacob Zuma, the current Chair of the Organ, for their tireless effort, wisdom and guidance throughout the process.

I would also like, on behalf of SADC, to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, Vice President of Republic of South Africa and the Facilitator to the Kingdom of Lesotho for his commitment, tireless efforts and exemplary facilitation which has enabled SADC to proudly come forward to the entire world and say “together we stand united as a SADC family”.

### **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The success of this mission would not have been possible without the hard work and discipline by our mission staff (Members of the SOMILES). We thank you immensely for the job well done. SADC will always remember your work with pride. At this juncture, let me also recognize and commend efforts by all Member States who contributed in one way or the other to this process, and especially who deployed SOMILES and contributed financially, in particular, the Republics of South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi, and United Republic of Tanzania.

I would also like to humbly extend our gratitude to His Majesty King Letsie III for his guidance throughout the process; and to commend all Stakeholders in the Kingdom of Lesotho who have tirelessly supported the process, including the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Christian Council of Lesotho, the Independent National Electoral Commission, the leaders and members of the security forces (the LDF and the LMPS), and the ordinary Basotho people who demonstrated a great sense of civic maturity during this process.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the SADC Heads of State and Government who remained seized with the political and security situation,

and for the leadership they have provided in ensuring that the political stability in this country remained on their agenda.

Finally, I would like to assure the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho that SADC will always be there to support SADC Member States, including our brothers and sisters in this very beautiful and great Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. **We are confident that the milestones achieved will be safeguarded by Basotho people.**

I thank you all for the kind attention.