



REMARKS

BY

THE SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE SADC LIASON OFFICE IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

SADC SECRETARIAT

16TH APRIL 2018

Mr. Kambilo John Peter, Deputy Chief of Cabinet in the Presidential Office,

Representatives of the Government of the DRC

Excellencies SADC Ambassadors accredited to the DRC

Representatives of Political Parties

Representatives of Religions Organisations

Continental and International Cooperating Partners

Representatives of Non-State Actors

Partners from the various media houses

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for honouring our invitation to this official launch of the SADC Liaison office to the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC).

As you are aware, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The main objectives of SADC are to achieve economic growth and development, peace and security, and alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and

support the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration. In this regards, among others, SADC Member States cooperate in the consolidation of democracy, and sustenance of peace and security, as enshrined in the SADC Treaty and SADC Protocol on Peace and Security. Over the years, SADC has continued to cooperate and support the DRC in these areas.

Allow me to take this opportunity to commend the DRC government, political parties, the Electoral Commission (CENI), religions Organizations, Non-State Actors, and other stakeholders for efforts and progress made in ensuring peace and tranquillity in the DRC, specifically in the implementation of the 31st December, 2016 Political Agreement, and rolling out the electoral calendar towards holding elections in December, 2018. We equally thank and commend Regional, Continental, and International Cooperating Partners for the continued support.

In recognising the efforts undertaken by the Democratic Republic of Congo, and with a view to enhance our support to the DRC, SADC decided to be closer to stakeholders in the DRC by among others, setting up a Liaison Office in the DRC. Today's event marks the opening of the SADC Liaison Office in the DRC, which will ensure SADC's presence on the ground, and thus continued support and engagement with stakeholders. The Office is located on 30 June, Boulevard in Gombe, Kinshasa. Let me take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for availing the office to SADC. Among others, the Office will facilitate:

- (i) Consultations with the DRC government, political and other key stakeholders in the DRC;

- (ii) Consultations with the Government of the DRC to identify specific areas where SADC support is required in order to enhance political stability and sustained peace and security in the DRC;
- (iii) Consultations with the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), and other electoral stakeholders with a view to providing technical and logistical support as will be required in the preparations and conduct of the forthcoming elections; and
- (iv) Liaison with Regional, Continental and International Cooperating Partners in our efforts to consolidate initiatives in supporting the DRC.

While cooperating in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law as guided by the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, SADC recognizes the supremacy of national constitutions and electoral legislation of respective Member States, and respects the independence of National Electoral Commissions.

The SADC welcomes all stakeholders in the DRC and the international community to continue supporting the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and people of Congo in the continued efforts geared towards the attainment of sustained peace, security and political stability.

It is our belief that the SADC Liaison Office will reinforce SADC support to the DRC, and our efforts in bringing out lasting peace and political stability in the DRC.

As part of this mission, we visited CENI and received a progress report on the roll out of the electoral calendar, and are encouraged by the progress made which is in line with the published electoral calendar, signifying readiness for the 23rd December elections. I wish to encourage

stakeholders to support the process in order to ensure that elections take place as planned.

May I take this opportunity to once again thank you for attending this official launch of the SADC Liaison Office to the DRC, and to call upon all stakeholders to continue supporting the people of the DRC.

Let me also take this opportunity to call upon all stakeholders in the DRC to refrain from any form of violence, and find amicable ways of resolving differences, if any, and create a conducive environment for peaceful, free and credible elections in December 2018.

I thank you!