



WELCOME REMARKS

BY

**HER EXCELLENCY DR STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO THE SADC
SECRETARIAT BY HIS MAJESTY, KING MSWATI III OF THE
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND AND CHAIRPERSON OF SADC**

**9TH MAY 2017
GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

Bayethe Wena wa Phakati

Your Majesty, King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland and the current Chairperson of SADC,

Your Royal Highness Prince Hlangusemphi, Minister of Economic Planning and Development of the Kingdom of Swaziland and Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers,

Chief Gamedze Mgwagwa, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Kingdom of Swaziland,

Hon. Shaw Kgathi Minister of Defence, Justice and Security for the Republic of Botswana.

Hon. Senator Edgar E Hillary, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs from the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Your Lordship Lakhvinder Singh Walia, Acting Chief Justice,

Your Excellences High Commissioners and Ambassadors,

Deputy Executive Secretaries,

Government Officials,

SADC Secretariat Staff,

Representatives of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with a great sense of humility that I stand before you, Your Majesty. Allow me, on behalf of the SADC Secretariat and indeed on my own behalf, to welcome you to the SADC Secretariat. We are extremely honoured and privileged by this historic visit. Your visit today signals a high level of commitment and importance that Your Majesty and Your Majesty's Government attach to SADC regional integration and development agenda. We warmly welcome you, Your Majesty, and Your

Majesty's entire team to the SADC Secretariat, and to Gaborone, the Headquarters of SADC.

Your Majesty

Whilst this is Your Majesty's occasion to address the SADC Secretariat staff, allow me, to express our profound appreciation for the sterling leadership that you have demonstrated, and the guidance and wisdom that you have given to me and my team, since you assumed office as the Chairperson of SADC in August 2016. You set the agenda for your tenure of office and I am delighted that positive outcomes are manifesting. Since you took over the reigns as Chairperson, SADC has registered a number of milestones. Among others:

- a) SADC finalized the Costed Industrialisation Action Plan for the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063, which was approved by the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit in March 2017, in Lozitha Swaziland. This is a great milestone for the SADC region that will facilitate effective implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy, which is set to bring about technology and socio-economic transformation to the SADC region. Focus is now on rolling-out the Action Plan and assisting Member States in order to facilitate its effective implementation, and the development of value chains that will ensure the effective realisation of industrialisation. The Industrialisation path has been set, and the success of what will follow depends on the domestication, as well as commitment and deliberate actions towards implementation at the national level.
- b) Under your guidance, SADC successfully convened a Ministerial Retreat whose objective was to take stock of what SADC has achieved since its establishment in 1980, the challenges it is facing, and what needs to be done to accelerate the pace and level of the SADC integration agenda. Following the approval by the March 2017 Extra-Ordinary Summit of the Conclusions of the SADC Strategic Ministerial Retreat on "*The SADC We Want*", we are in the process of developing an Implementation Plan and Roadmap, which will be presented to Council and Summit in August 2017. We take the Conclusions of the Retreat as the defining moment for the future of SADC. Nonetheless, the successful implementation and operationalisation of the conclusions will require serious thoughts and

reorganization around our prioritization, institutional arrangements and legal frameworks. This is critical as we also embark on the development of a successor to the Revised RISDP, which expires in 2020. This will require a lot of consultations with the Member States, the private sector and the general population whose lives are impacted by the various SADC initiatives. With your leadership, we are confident that all players will rally behind to ensure the success of these noble endeavours.

- c) To operationalize the 2016 SADC theme: ***“Resource Mobilisation for Investment in Sustainable Energy Infrastructure for an Inclusive SADC Industrialisation and for the Prosperity of the Region”***, the Secretariat under your leadership is organizing the Energy Investors Forum that will contribute to efforts geared towards addressing the energy deficit, while ensuring availability of sustainable and affordable energy in the region. The Forum is expected to attract Regional and Global Investors, participants from SADC Member States, and International Cooperating Partners. It is anticipated that some tangible commitments will be made on energy and other infrastructure projects during, or following the Forum. Through Your Majesty’s leadership, we call upon all stakeholders and investors to come and take up the available opportunities, and in doing so, support the region in this initiative and thus facilitate industrialisation and the socio-economic development of the region.
- d) SADC has also placed attention and dedication on finalizing the SADC Regional Resource Mobilisation Framework, which is intended to develop alternative sources of funding, to finance regional integration programmes and projects including; the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063; the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan; the Regional Agriculture Investment Plan; and the Strategic Plan for the Organ (SIPO). The process is at an advanced stage. Through the guidance from SADC leaders, and commitment from SADC Member States, we expect to finalise the draft SADC Regional Resource Mobilization Framework and submit it for consideration by Council and Summit in August 2017. It is only with sustainable financing that we can accelerate the requisite SADC integration and Development, and attain the SADC we want. Your Majesty, deliberate efforts and decisions will be required in order to acquire the necessary

alternative funding for SADC through the adoption and implementation of the Regional Resource Mobilisation Framework.

- e) In order to ensure effective operationalisation of the SADC Regional Integration Agenda, Your Majesty made a deliberate move to link the theme of the 36th SADC Summit to human resource and skills development in the Region by announcing the readiness of the Kingdom of Swaziland to host the SADC University of Transformation, whose objective is to promote specific skills, especially among the youth and women in the changing globalised world. Work is ongoing on the regional skills assessment and Road Map for the operationalisation of the SADC University of Transformation in line with the decisions of the March 2017 Extra-Ordinary Summit. Once operational, the University will contribute greatly to the SADC technological and socio-economic transformation agenda.

Your Majesty

Allow me, to thank the Government of the Republic of Botswana for hosting the SADC Climate Services Centre, which provides regional climate monitoring services and disseminate meteorological, environmental and hydro-meteorological information. The Centre contributes to improved early warning and disaster risk management, particularly in sensitive economic sectors such as agriculture, health, energy, water resources and transport in the region. As part of Your Majesty's visit, you will visit the Centre, and get first-hand information regarding its functions and contribution to the SADC development and integration agenda.

Your Majesty

On institutional matters, the Secretariat is undergoing a transitional phase following the revised structure, which was approved during your Extra-Ordinary Summit in March 2017. The revised structure aims to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency, and enable the Secretariat to deliver on the revised Indicative Regional Indicative Development Plan 2015-2020, the SIPO and the Industrialisation Strategy. I would like to assure Your Majesty that the Management is committed to operationalize these reforms diligently and professionally in order to ensure that the transition does not have adverse effects on the delivery of Secretariat, and welfare of staff.

The Staff Association of the SADC Secretariat, which was established in August 2016, is now fully operational. The Association supports the Secretariat in the enhancement of productivity and staff welfare. The process is underway to operationalize the SADC Administrative Tribunal. We have today witnessed the swearing in of the SADC Tribunal Judges, which is a major milestone towards the operationalisation of the Tribunal. The swearing in of the SADC Administrative Tribunal, and its commencement will provide staff with the required appeal mechanisms. We thank the Government of Botswana for facilitating the swearing in, and in particular Hon. Shaw Kgathi, Minister of Defence, Justice and Security, for spearheading the swearing in process, and Acting Chief Justice, Your Lordship Lakhvinder Singh Walia for according your time to preside over this important activity. It is my sincere hope that both the Staff Association and the Tribunal will contribute positively to the productivity, tranquillity and welfare of staff of our organisation.

Your Majesty

I am supported by a team of professional, selfless and hardworking staff, who constitutes the heart and nerves of the SADC Agenda, and propels SADC into being rated as one of the successful Regional Economic Communities capable of facilitating socio-economic development for the benefit of the peoples of the Region. I wish therefore to take this opportunity to thank each one of them for delivering excellent services to ensure that we achieve the vision and mission of our organization. We collectively commit to continue working professionally to the best of our abilities.

Your Majesty

Before I conclude, allow me to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for the guidance, support and cooperation that we continue to receive from Your Majesty, and Your Majesty's Government. It has been an enjoyable and fulfilling journey working with His Royal Highness Prince Hlangusemphi, Minister of Economic Planning and Development of the Kingdom of Swaziland and Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers and his entire technical team led by Mr. Bertram Stewart, Permanent Secretary for Economic Planning and Development and the Chairperson of the

Standing Committee of Senior Officials. We are indeed grateful to Your Majesty.

Allow me to conclude my remarks, Your Majesty by a quote from the Hema tribe of the DRC, which says and I quote, “Wisdom is like fire. People take it from others”. We are grateful for your great vision and excellent leadership. This will go a long way in expediting the Secretariat’s endeavors to take the regional integration agenda to even greater heights. We have taken the fire from Your Majesty, and will keep passing on the fire.

With these remarks, it is now my pleasure to invite Your Majesty, King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland, and Chairperson of SADC, to address this gathering.

Bayethe, Wena wa Phakati.