

OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, HON. MARTIN DLAMINI MINISTER FOR
FINANCE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 18TH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE ON REGIONAL ECONOMIC
INTEGRATION
HELD IN EZULWINI, THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND
ON
11TH MARCH, 2017**

Honourable Ministers,

The Executive Secretary of SADC, Your Excellency, Dr Tax

Deputy Executive Secretaries

Chairperson of the SADC Ministerial Task Force for Regional Economic
Integration

Senior Officials from SADC Member States

SADC Secretariat

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, I welcome you Honourable Ministers to Swaziland and to the 18th Meeting of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration. It is an honour for the Kingdom of Swaziland to once again host Ministers and officials from the SADC Region. I trust you will, as always, find your stay not only comfortable but memorable as well.

Honourable Ministers,

We all recall that at the Extra-ordinary SADC Summit of 2015 held in Harare, Zimbabwe, SADC Heads of State and Government adopted and approved the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063). This

Strategy is key in shaping the landscape of SADC and it will go a long way towards developing the Region. At the last Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government we were all directed to finalize the work on the SADC Industrialization Strategy Action Plan and this work is being awaited for in great anticipation by all the people of the region. Its approval will be received with great applause from all corners. This is rightly so as the region's citizens are looking up to us to create the necessary environment for enhanced income earning opportunities and improvement in their general standard of living in line with the vision of SADC Heads of State and Government.

The importance of the Action Plan is that It will help guide implementation of regional integration policies and strategies which are set out in the Action Plan. The Action Plan has clear timeframes and will first focus on the next 15 years of the Strategy. I have been informed that the Action Plan is anchored on the three interdependent strategic Pillars of the Strategy which are Economic and Technological Transformation, Competitiveness and Deeper Regional Integration.

Honourable Ministers,

The task of the Ministerial Task Force is to ensure that the draft Action Plan will leave this particular meeting in a state that will lead the region in the path laid out by our leaders. Our task now as a region is to explore all possible mechanisms for resource mobilisation in order to effectively implement the Action Plan. In order to enable us to recommend a clear Action Plan for adoption by the Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, you need carefully go through all the Pillars. Time is not on our side as the first phase of the Industrialization Strategy is scheduled to end in 2020, hence the need for us to ensure that implementation of the Strategy takes place without further delay. The prioritisation and proper sequencing of activities lined up for the short period up to 2020 in particular.

Honourable Ministers,

There is interdependence between some activities of the Strategy and those of the Infrastructure Development Master Plan to support trade facilitation. Industrial development has always been a cross-sectoral issue so we can never tire to remind ourselves the need for high levels of coordination and collaboration between various agencies and government departments as

well as the Private Sector. In the latter case, the resolution of the hard and soft infrastructure issues raised by the regional private sector as captured by the Esibayeni Declaration will be a good starting point in cementing the collaboration between governments and the business community. In particular, the smooth flow of goods and services between member states is a critical ingredient into the development of value chains, a key anchor in the region's industrialization effort.

Honourable Ministers,

May I conclude my address by thanking those that have prepared the work before us especially the Consultants who have been of assistance since we began this process and their loyalty in always trying to convert our thoughts into concrete industrial development programmes, my sincere thanks go to our Senior Officials, for they always make it easy for us by tackling the more difficult policy issues. I thank the Secretariat for never getting tired of our requests to revise documents in the light of Member states comments.

Honourable Ministers,

Let me end by thanking you for your attention and Please do go out and enjoy the tranquillity and peace of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

I thank you.