



REMARKS

BY

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

AT

**THE 21st MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE
ORGAN (MCO) ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY
COOPERATION**

19TH JULY 2019

LUSAKA, REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Honourable Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation;

Honourable Ministers and Members of the MCO;

Distinguished Senior Officials, Chiefs of Security Institutions and Delegates from SADC Member States;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Partners from the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this 21st meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and to thank you for making time for attending. May I express our gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Zambia for the warm welcome and hospitality, and for the excellent facilities put at our disposal. This meeting taking place here at Mulungushi, provides another opportunity to deliberate on critical matters that shape our region in the arena of politics, democracy, peace and security, that require our collective resolve. Mulungushi is a place of historical significance to SADC, which spelt the genesis of our regional organisation when the then Mulungushi Club formed the Frontline States. The Frontline States were the precursor to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), established through the Lusaka Declaration of 1980, which gave life to the Southern African Development

Community, a community with a common future, aspiring to leave no one behind.

Before I proceed, allow me to express our deepest condolences to the governments and peoples of the Republics of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Union of the Comoros, for the loss of lives, disruption of livelihoods, and widespread damage to socio-economic infrastructure, following the devastating impacts of Cyclones Idai and Kenneth earlier this year. SADC stands in solidarity with the affected Member States. Let me thank SADC governments and citizens in diaspora; as well as, national, regional and international organizations and partners that provided, and continue to provide support to the affected Member States, and communities.

As an expression of solidarity, the Chairperson of SADC, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, launched a Regional Humanitarian Appeal to support recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the affected communities. Through the Regional Humanitarian Appeal, combined with the National Humanitarian Appeals, an amount of USD 204 million has been raised for the affected countries. Allow me to express our gratitude to all partners for their continued support.

Honourable Ministers,

Effects of cyclones Idai and Kenneth point to an urgent need to strengthen our preparedness, and respond in a coordinated and timely manner. In this regard, the region has taken the lessons learnt from the devastating impacts of these Cyclones seriously, and measures to operationalize the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism are on ongoing. These measures include, the operationalization of the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund, which goes hand-in-hand with a resource mobilization strategy and sustainability plan; the establishment of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC); the development of Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs) for relief and recovery operations and a Regional Emergency Roster; the operationalization of the Regional Disaster Risk Information Management System; and mapping of disaster prone areas and available resource bases. These tools will be complimented with the activation of SADC Contingency Operations Plan (COP) for early warning under the SADC Standby Force. The Secretariat is also mapping the entire disaster management value chain, with a view to putting in place a comprehensive and well-coordinated response mechanism.

May I therefore, call upon SADC Members States and Partners to support the ongoing activities in operationalizing the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism.

Honourable Ministers

Since the last Summit held in August, 2018, six (6) Member States, namely, the Kingdom of Eswatini, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Madagascar, the Union of Comoros, and the Republics of Malawi and South Africa held elections. Allow me to congratulate the respective Member States and Governments for the credible and peaceful elections, and for upholding SADC democratic principles. For the DRC, the historic and peaceful transfer of power was celebrated in, and outside the region, as it marked a new era for economic prosperity, peace, and political stability in the DRC.

May I thank the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation, H.E. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, supported by Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ, Honourable Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia, for the exemplary leadership in steering the region, during the demanding electoral period. May I also express our gratitude to SADC Member States who contributed observers to the Missions. The Observers displayed a high level of commitment and professionalism, we thank and commend them.

It will be a remorse on my part, not to recognise the Leadership provided by the SADC Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia for ensuring serenity and the observance of principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity in the course of providing SADC support to the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This year, the Republics of Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Namibia will also be going for elections. We count on the goodwill of SADC Member States to send electoral observers as per SADC guiding principles, this will enable the region to remain on its democracy consolidation trajectory.

Honourable Ministers,

A number of decisions to move the SADC Organ agenda forward were made during your last meeting held in June, 2018 in Luanda, Angola. Your meeting today, will receive reports on progress recorded in implementing the decisions. The meeting will also receive progress reports on the implementation of the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) covering the period 2016-2019.

In line with the objectives of SIPO and SADC decisions, the Region remained seized with political and security matters in the region. The SADC Preventive Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL), successfully concluded its mandate in November 2018. Among others, SAPMIL contributed to a stable political and security environment, that is critical to the ongoing reforms and national dialogue in Lesotho. The presence of SAPMIL was also a catalyst towards entrenching the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation. It also facilitated and provided training, which enhanced the capacity of the Lesotho security agencies. I am confident that the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho are committed and determined to sustain these gains, and to take forward the reforms process.

With the support of the SADC Facilitator, a Memorandum of Agreement to move forward the reforms process was signed by all relevant key stakeholders. The establishment of the National Reforms Authority as part of the Agreement marked a landmark in pushing forward the reforms, and the national dialogue processes. May I call upon all stakeholders to remain steadfast and realise the desired outcomes.

Allow me to express our gratitude to the Facilitator, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, the President of Republic of South Africa and his Team for the tireless efforts that have resulted in the progress made thus far. May I also express our gratitude to SADC Member States who contributed personnel, and equipment to deployment of SAPMIL. May I also extend our gratitude to SADC Member States who availed Judges, to support the judicial system in Lesotho. Allow me to also recognise and express our gratitude to the United Nations and European Union for their continued financial support to SADC, and the Kingdom of Lesotho in her efforts towards achieving political stability, and durable peace and security.

Honourable Ministers,

Terrorism is a matter of great concern in the SADC region and beyond. Organised Crime also poses a significant threat to peace and security in our region, as it undermines regional economic integration. The gravity of terrorism, and the sophistication and cross border nature of Transnational Organised Crime, require joint efforts, and strong collaboration between Member States, and other Partners. To address these threats, the Secretariat in collaboration with Member States has developed a SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Strategy and an Action Plan. Specific measures to implement the strategy will be tabled for your consideration. It is very critical that we continue to collaborate, in addressing these alarming threats. It is only through joint and concerted efforts that the region will be able to effectively address these threats. On a positive note, I am pleased to report that the revised SADC-INTERPOL

Cooperation Agreement has been finalised for signature. The Agreement will assist in creating an ideal platform for collaboration between SADC and INTERPOL, and support to law enforcement in fighting Transnational Organised Crime. May I encourage Member State to effectively use this platform.

Honourable Ministers,

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continues to negatively impact on socio-economic development of our Region. In line with the MCO directive of August 2016, the Secretariat conducted a comprehensive study on the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in the Region. The study among others, shows that GBV is a common phenomenon in SADC, prevalence rates vary across Member States. Physical violence ranges between 6% to 34%, sexual violence ranges between 4% to 26%, and emotional violence ranges between 15% to 37%. To mitigate and prevent the incidences of gender-based violence, the study recommends a number of measures, including to strengthen access to justice for victims and survivors of GBV by creating innovative, and providing alternative solutions including, GBV specialized courts.

Allow me to thank all Member States for their cooperation and for providing the needed data and information, which enabled the Secretariat to conclude this important study. May I also call upon Member States to implement the study's recommendations. It is only through concerted efforts, that we can tackle gender-based violence. As committed as we are, together we can, if everyone plays his/her part. **LET US TOGETHER END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, IT BEGINS WITH ALL US!**

Honourable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates,

As I conclude, allow me to once again extend our gratitude to Government of Zambia, and in particular, to Honourable Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Chairperson of the MCO and his Team, for the guidance and for steering the Organ

agenda successfully throughout the year, it was a busy year, but a very successful one. In this regard May I also recognize Ambassador Chalwe Lombe, for his unwavering support, and availability at all times during the year. May I also thank Member States for their commitment and contributions that resulted in the progress attained thus far. Allow me to thank the Senior Officials, the Chiefs of Defence, Security Intelligence, Police, Correctional Services, the Zambia Organizing Committee and the Secretariat Staff for working very hard during the year, and for the excellent preparations for this meeting of Ministers.

Honourable Ministers

Your Secretariat remains committed in supporting your efforts in advancing the objectives set out for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, for the benefit of SADC Citizens, recognizing that a conducive political environment is vital for economic prosperity. May I also welcome the incoming MCO Chairperson, Rtd. Lt. Gen. Hon. Sibusiso Moyo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and assure him of the Secretariat's unwavering support and continued professional services in the execution of the Organ agenda.

I thank you for your attention

Merci beaucoup

Muito Obrigada

Zikomo kwa mbili.