



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL TASK
FORCE ON REGIONAL ECONOMIC
INTEGRATION**

13 March 2016

GABORONE - BOTSWANA

Honourable Vincent Seretse, Minister of Trade and Industry of the Government of Botswana and Chairperson of the SADC Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration;

Honourable Ministers;

Senior Officials of the Taskforce;

Deputy Executive Secretaries;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Friends from the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 16th meeting of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration. I do hope that you travelled well. May I take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Republic of Botswana for hosting this meeting.

Since your last meeting in April 2015, an Extraordinary Summit was held in Harare on 29th April 2015 and, amongst others, approved the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 and the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020. Following the approval of the Industrialization Strategy, the Secretariat was directed to develop a costed action plan, with a view to effectively drive Industrialization in the SADC region. Progress made in this regard will be presented in the course of this meeting.

Honourable Ministers,

The Ministerial Task Force on regional Integration, during its 13th Meeting held in July 2013 in Maputo, Mozambique, directed the Secretariat to finalize the development of the draft SADC Trade Facilitation Programme, as one of the targeted outputs in the Revised RISDP (2015-2020), I am happy to report that the draft SADC Trade Facilitation Programme has been finalized and will be tabled for your consideration during your meeting. The Programme has identified trade facilitation activities that are essential in facilitating ease

movement of goods, while reducing the cost of doing business in the region.

Honourable Chairperson,

The SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap prioritizes three mutually compatible paths; namely - agro-processing, mineral beneficiation and downstream processing. It strives to enhance participation in value chains at the national, regional and global levels. Implementation of the Strategy is expected to create an environment that is conducive for trade and industrialization by addressing, among others, macroeconomic challenges, promoting deeper regional integration, and addressing the binding constraints of infrastructure, skills and finance. The achievement of the objectives of the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063, therefore requires the support of cross-cutting sectors, such as projects related to energy, regional connectivity, efficient transport corridors, efficient borders, and close public-private collaboration. All these require reliable and sustainable financing mechanisms.

Furthermore, both the Revised RISDP (2015 – 2020) and the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) recognize that major commitments of both financial and human resources are required for effective implementation and thus, the realization of the objectives and milestones therein. The Council, at its meeting in March 2015, directed the Secretariat to develop SADC Resource Mobilization Framework, ie. alternative ways of mobilizing resources to sustainably fund SADC work programmes. This work is currently underway and a comprehensive proposal on the SADC Regional Resource Mobilization Framework will be submitted to the Ministers of Finance for consideration and recommendation to Council in August 2016.

May I take this opportunity to inform you that the development of the SADC Regional Resources Mobilization Framework has been going hand in hand with the development of SADC Development Fund. I am delighted to inform you that the Committee of Ministers of Finance, in their meeting that was held yesterday, the 12th March, 2016, finalized discussions on the operationalization of the SADC Regional Development Fund, with Member States agreeing on a two

phased approach: Phase 1 focusing on project preparation and development; and Phase 2 focusing on infrastructure development, industrial development, integration and economic adjustment and social development windows. The recommendations will be presented to the August 2016 meeting of Council. This development will greatly contribute to the enhancement of SADC regional integration. I wish to sincerely thank and applaud all those who have contributed to this noble work.

Honourable Chairperson

In conclusion, let me recognize the important role played by the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration in spearheading SADC Development and Integration Agenda. SADC objectives, as enshrined in the Treaty, specifically, *"the promotion of sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty reduction, and enhance standard of quality of life of the people of Southern Africa"* will only be achieved through deepened socio-economic integration. The Secretariat remain committed and dedicated to the realization of SADC Development and Integration Agenda. With your guidance and collective resolve, Industrialization will be realized, enabling SADC to prosper to higher heights.

With these few remarks, let me seize this opportunity to thank the Senior Officials who, along with the Secretariat, worked tirelessly to ensure that your meeting is a success. Please allow me to invite the Chairperson to deliver his remarks and to officially open this meeting. I thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful deliberations and a happy stay in Gaborone.

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THANK YOU!