



WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE SADC CHAIRPERSON'S VISIT
TO THE SADC SECRETARIAT**

SADC HOUSE, GABORONE, BOTSWANA

19 OCTOBER, 2015

Director of Ceremonies;

Your Excellency Lt. General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana, and Chairperson of SADC;

Honourable Kenneth Matambo, Minister of Finance and Development Planning and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Your Excellencies SADC Heads of Missions accredited to the Republic of Botswana;

Deputy Executive Secretaries of SADC;

Dr. Nyamadzabo, Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials;

Members of the SADC Management Team; and SADC Secretariat Staff;

I am humbled to take this opportunity to welcome you, Your Excellency, to the SADC Secretariat Headquarters not only as President of the Republic of Botswana and the Chairperson of our regional organization, SADC, but also as the Head of Government that has hosted SADC Secretariat over the years.

Your visit, just two months after assuming Chairmanship of SADC attests to your personal commitment to the ideals of this organization, and demonstrates the commitment of the Republic of Botswana to SADC, an organization that Botswana helped to establish in 1980. Your visit also serves as a humbling reminder of the resolve of the SADC Founding Fathers who set the vision for our region. May I at this juncture pay tribute to the Founding Fathers of SADC, and particularly to His Excellency Sir Seretse Khama, the Founding and late President of this great country for his wisdom and foresight that contributed to the formation of our regional organization. We recall that it was in early 1977, at a meeting of the Frontline States in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania, when the late President Khama mooted the idea for the Frontline States to coordinate their economies in order to be self-reliant.

That idea initiated consultations, culminating in a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Gaborone, in May 1979, which called for a meeting of

Ministers responsible for economic development. In July, 1979, who met in Arusha, and produced a blueprint, leading to the birth of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980. On behalf of the citizens of this great region, and indeed on behalf of the Secretariat, I wish to thank the Republic of Botswana for hosting the Secretariat ever since, and for according the Secretariat with immense support and guidance.

Your Excellency, the vision of SADC Founding Fathers is underpinned by the importance that SADC attaches to their legacy – the spirit of solidarity and unity of action and purpose. I take note, with much appreciation, that in honour of H.E. the late President Khama the SADC Summit of August 9th 1985 that took place in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, established the Sir Seretse Khama SADC Medal to honour those who are considered to have made outstanding contributions towards the achievement of the ideals and goals of SADC. Several former and late Heads of State and Government in our region have been honoured with this Medal. There is need, therefore, to revisit this noble initiative. It would also be fitting if the awarding of this prestigious medal becomes an annual fixture on the SADC Calendar, and is included in the programme of the ordinary Summit of SADC.

The Founding Fathers of SADC envisioned self-reliance as a pillar in the promotion of sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development.

The Secretariat is committed, and we will redouble our efforts to enhance and deepen regional cooperation and socio-economic integration that would foster economic development and poverty reduction, while cementing good governance, and sustainable peace and security in the region. In the same vein, while the Secretariat re-engineers itself to become an action and results oriented Secretariat, it is essential for the Secretariat to be accorded with operational and administrative powers, allowing the Council of Ministers, to focus on policy related issues.

Your Excellency,

The 35th Summit of Heads of State and Government in August 2015 under your Chairpersonship, adopted the theme *“Accelerating Industrialisation of SADC Economies through Transformation of Natural Endowment and Improved Human Capital”*. The theme clearly demonstrates the importance

attached to Industrialization by the SADC Members States, and thus to the Industrialisation Strategy 2015-2063 and the revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). It re-invigorates the pace and course of SADC in our region's quest to maximise beneficiation of our natural resources and create a better life for our people, and in doing so, responding to the founding fathers' vision of self-reliance.

Your Excellency,

I am confident that with your continued leadership the Secretariat will realize the objectives of SADC as outlined in the Treaty. The Secretariat is hard at work implementing SADC priorities as identified and approved by Summit.

In this regard, as directed by Summit in August 2015 and discussed in your meeting with the SADC Secretariat management a few minutes ago, the Secretariat will identify and present key milestones for consideration by the Summit in August 2016 or before. The key milestones will enable Member States, in particular, the Summit to closely monitor the implementation and realization of SADC socio-economic integration that will bring about the needed self-reliance.

Speaking in Accra, Ghana in 1997, one of our icons and Founding Father of SADC, the late President Julius Mwalimu Kambarage Nyerere said, *"Unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated. And it will, therefore, increase the effectiveness of the decisions we make and try to implement for our development."* This statement of wisdom is as valid today as it was in 1997. It is important to continue addressing our challenges as a region in unity of purpose and action. We are confident that the Secretariat will continue enjoying support and guidance from Member States, while branding the SADC Secretariat as a professional and credible body in the region and beyond.

Your Excellency,

While concluding, it is my profound honour to take this opportunity to convey the SADC Secretariat's appreciations for the cooperation availed to the Secretariat by officials of the Republic of Botswana, under the leadership of Honourable Kenneth Mathambo, Minister of Finance and Development Planning and Chairperson of the Council of Ministers.

Their invaluable support, cooperation and guidance since Botswana assumed the Chairpersonship of SADC have been exceptional. Please allow me to also make a special recognition to SADC Member States whose commitment has continued to enable SADC to realise its objectives. Through you, Sir, we thank them for their continued support, guidance and provision of resources, which have enabled the Secretariat to implement SADC programmes over the years.

Finally, please allow me, Your Excellency, to thank the Secretariat staff who constitute the heartbeat of the SADC Agenda. They are involved in the day to day running and implementation of the SADC integration and development programmes. As a resource at the disposal of SADC, they are committed to the cause of regional integration and development agenda. Their dedication has enabled SADC to continuously be highly regarded as one of the leading regional bodies facilitating socio-economic development. We remain determined to provide the best possible services to ensure that we discharge our mandate effectively, to the best of our abilities. Allow me, Your Excellency, to also extend my appreciations to the SADC Deputy Executive Secretary, Ms. Emilie Ayaza Mushobekwa, for overseeing the coordination of the preparations of your visit to the Secretariat Headquarters. Thank you DES-FA for the job well done.

Your Excellency,

It now gives me great pleasure to invite you to address this gathering of SADC Secretariat staff.

Your Excellency, the floor is yours Sir

Ke a leboga.