REMARKS

BY

HER EXCELLENCY DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO THE SADC
SECRETARIAT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AND
CHAIRPERSON OF SADC

1ST FEBRUARY 2019
GABORONE, BOTSWANA
Your Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and Chairperson of SADC;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia, and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

SADC Deputy Executive Secretaries;

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners;

Government Officials;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Representatives of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel greatly honoured to stand before you, Your Excellency, to welcome you on behalf of the SADC Secretariat, on your visit to SADC Headquarters. We are very excited to receive Your Excellency. Your visit is testimony of your commitment towards the advancement of the SADC’s regional development and integration agenda. It is also a sign of the dedication to attain the vision and aspirations of the SADC founders, as espoused in the Declaration and Treaty of SADC, that was adopted in August 1992, in Windhoek, Namibia, which is to promote regional economic welfare, collective self-reliance and integration in the spirit of equity and partnership. We welcome Your Excellency, and your entire delegation to Gaborone, Botswana, a country that has hosted your Secretariat since 1980.
Your Excellency.

Our region continues to make progress towards achieving peace and security, and sustainable economic growth and development to alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, through regional integration.

Youth empowerment remains a critical issue requiring deliberate measures by the region to ensure youth participation in socio-economic development of the region. In recognition of this, Summit at its meeting held in August 2018, under your chairmanship, adopted the 2018/2019 theme “Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development”. Among others, the theme aims to empower the Youth, while contributing to sustainable development. The Secretariat in collaboration with Member States has implemented a number of activities to operationalise the theme. Key amongst these, was the development of multimedia messages, and SADC Youth-talks to engage youths in the region. Furthermore, a youth forum was held in Namibia in December 2018, where the youth had active interactions and engagements and deliberated on how they will be engaging on the theme in their respective countries.

A number of youth events were also conducted, including the Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum (SAIGF-18) hosted in Durban, South Africa, and the SADC Youth in Fisheries and Aquaculture Event hosted in Lilongwe, Malawi. These offered the youth an opportunity to discuss technological themes such as fostering incubator activities for the disadvantaged groups in the digital economy, and the regional fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The SADC Youth Forum, was also created as an official structure.
May I on behalf of the region, and particularly on behalf of the youth, thank Your Excellency, for coming up with the theme and overseeing its implementation. Efforts initiated towards implementation of the theme have created an environment that will afford youth’s genuine and effective opportunities for broad-based participation in socio-economic development processes. I wish to assure Your Excellency that the Secretariat remain seized to ensure consolidation of efforts towards youth empowerment.

May I call upon SADC Member States and all stakeholders to take deliberate efforts to continue mainstreaming the interests of youth in development plans, so as to ensure that the youth play their rightful role in the growth and development of the region.

Your Excellency,

On the Socio-Economic front, the region continues to prioritise implementation of the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015 -2063), as an inclusive long-term trajectory for modernization and economic transformation, which aims to raise the standards of living, intensify structural change, and engender a rapid catch-up of SADC countries with industrialized and developed countries. In line with the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap, the Secretariat is assisting Member States to improve their industrial competitiveness through the identification of capacity gaps, and required interventions in implementing the industrialization strategy, a process that is expected to be completed by May 2019.
For industrialisation to bring out the intended results, which is the improved wellbeing and prosperity of the SADC citizens, concrete projects have to be implemented, accompanied with the needed investments. To this effect, the Secretariat has been working closely with Member States and project promoters to compile a database of investment projects to be promoted both regionally and globally. These investment projects focus on six priority value chain clusters namely; Agro-processing, Mineral Beneficiation, Pharmaceuticals, Capital goods, Consumer goods, and Services, that are envisaged to ensure sustained growth and industrialisation of the SADC economies. The development of an Action Plan to support regional mineral beneficiation projects with the objective to maximize the developmental impact of mineral resources extraction is also in progress. This is being done within the overarching context of the African Mining Vision (AMV) and the SADC industrialisation Strategy. The action plan is expected to be finalised by August 2019.

In a bid to enhance the level of industrial development, both nationally and regionally, and in pursuit of ensuring the attainment of unified goals and cohesion among Member States’ industrialization policies and strategies, the development of a Protocol on Industry is ongoing, to be completed by August 2019. The Protocol will be a binding instrument that will entrench and give legal effect to the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063), and give legal mandate to the SADC Secretariat to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate implementation of regional industrial development measures, and in doing so enable Member States to take timely interventions.
Your Excellency,

Sustainable financing is one of the major bottlenecks to the region’s drive to industrialize. To ensure sustainable financing of the SADC regional programmes, the development of a SADC Regional Resources Mobilisation Framework is at an advanced stage, and innovative instruments for mobilising resources have been identified. Furthermore, as part of ensuring sustainable financing of SADC programmes, the Region agreed to develop the SADC Regional Development Fund, where notable progress has been made, including signature of the Agreement to operationalize the Fund by nine Member States. These processes need to be finalised expeditiously, so as to enable the region to move at an accelerated pace, and realize the much desired economic transformation. May I request Your Excellency to encourage all Member States to make a frank determination on the proposed innovative instruments for mobilising resources, and sign and ratify the Regional Development Fund Agreement so that both the Resource Mobilisation Framework and the Regional Development Fund can be operationalised.

Your Excellency,

The private sector and other non-state actors are critical partners towards attaining inclusive and sustainable economic development as acknowledged in the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap. Recognizing that the involvement of Private Sector is critical for the successful implementation of the Industrialisation Strategy, the Secretariat in collaboration with Private Sector apex bodies in the region are working towards establishing a SADC Business Council. The Business Council is expected to strengthen the engagement of private sector in the SADC integration and development agenda, at the regional level, and national level. In this regard, a Plan of Action, which includes
the development of a founding document and rules of engagement for both the private sector itself, and for interactions between the private and the public sectors has been developed. The expectation is to have the SADC Business Council established by September 2019.

Your Excellency,

The political and security situation in the Region remains stable, calm and peaceful. With SADC collective efforts, commendable strides were made in bringing peace and political stability within the region. In Madagascar, SADC efforts through the deployment of the SADC Special Envoy contributed towards the holding of the November 2018 presidential and legislative elections, and the second round of presidential elections in December 2018, and in resolving the political challenges peacefully.

In DRC, SADC efforts, among others, brought together parties to agree on the development and implementation of an electoral calendar and the electoral roadmap, which facilitated the holding of national elections in December 2018, that has seen a peaceful and historical transfer of power, and the ushering in of the current Government. SADC efforts also contributed towards ensuring that issues are resolved peacefully while observing the principles of subsidiarity, national sovereignty and respecting the constitution, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC in accordance with the AU Constitutive Act, and the SADC Treaty.

I would like to express our gratitude to Your Excellency, the SADC Chairperson and all SADC Leaders for being steadfast in ensuring that peace and tranquillity prevails in the region, and particularly the exemplary leadership that Your Excellency provided to ensure the successful holding of elections and peaceful transition of power in the DRC and Madagascar.
Overall, allow me to express our profound gratitude for the guidance and wisdom that you have generously provided to me and my team since Your Excellency assumed the role as Chairperson of SADC at the 38th Summit in Windhoek in August 2018. May I also congratulate you for the great achievements you have made in Namibia; and at the regional, continental and international levels. These among others, include the leadership in the development of the SADC Common Position in the AU Institutional Reforms and the Post Cotonou Partnership Agreement negotiations, which you clearly and eloquently presented on behalf of SADC during the AU Assembly meetings, and in so doing, contributed towards shaping the direction of the regional and continental integration.

Your Excellency,

As was presented during your briefing meeting with the Management Team, progress made by the SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with the Member States, in the implementation of the 2018/19 Operational Plan, SADC programmes and Summit and Council Decisions is very encouraging. We are confident, Your Excellency, that through your leadership, we will continue to realize tangible milestones in our quest for deeper SADC Integration and Development for the prosperity of SADC citizens.

Your Secretariat, remain committed to deliver on their assigned responsibilities. Please allow me to thank the staff for their professionalism, commitment, and dedication in serving the region. Their commitment has enabled SADC to continue to be highly regarded as one of the leading Regional Economic Communities across the continent. I wish to assure your Excellency that we remain committed and determined
to provide the best possible service to ensure that we discharge beyond expectations, and make our leaders proud. At this juncture, please allow me to extend my appreciation to my two Deputy Executive Secretaries, not only for being instrumental in facilitating the activities of the Secretariat, but more importantly for supporting me and enabling the Secretariat to deliver. May I also extend my appreciation to the Head of Public Relations Unit and the team, for the excellent coordination of preparations for your visit to the SADC Secretariat Headquarters.

With these remarks, it is now my humble honour to invite Your Excellency, to address this gathering.

I thank you.