



## **REMARKS**

**BY**

**HER EXCELLENCY DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX  
THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE SADC  
SECRETARIAT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
THE SADC QUALITY AWARDS 2019**

**Windhoek, Namibia**

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Honourable Lucia lipumbu, Deputy Minister of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development in the Republic of Namibia;

Ms Chie Wasserfall, Chief Executive Officer of the Namibian Standards Institute and 2019 Chair of the SADC Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Expert Group;

Mr. Simasiku Matali, Chairperson of SADC Cooperation Structure on Measurement Traceability, Technical Committee 4 (SADCMET TC 4);

Chairpersons and regional coordinators of the SADC Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) structures;

International Cooperating Partners;

Senior Government Officials and Members of the SADC Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) structures;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Representatives of the Media Houses;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentleman

Good Evening!

I am honoured to join the Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) fraternity in this Gala Dinner tonight, as we celebrate the winners of the 2019 SADC Quality Awards. Allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to our Guest of Honour, Honourable Lucia lipumbu, Deputy Minister of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development of the Republic of Namibia for gracing this Award Ceremony. I wish to also thank the Namibian Standards Institute for the excellent preparations and facilitation of the SADC Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Week, including this event.

The application of basic Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) principles cannot be overemphasised, as they ensure safety and protection of consumers, while contributing to the enhancement of competitiveness, in order to

realise SADC aspirations to industrialise and transform our economies. These awards are to be therefore, taken as part of SADC initiatives to promote the use of standards and quality principles by companies (both private and public) in Member States, to ensure that systems, products and services meet the requirements of national, regional and international standards.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

SADC adopted the Regional Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015 - 2063 in April 2015. The Strategy is anchored on three pillars; Industrialization, Competitiveness and Regional Integration, and the work of the SADC TBT structures falls under the Competitiveness pillar. Since the approval of the Strategy, a number of regional value chains have been developed. Coordination of the implementation of these value chains will require synergies in the production and trade systems, of SADC Member States. Key to this is the harmonisation of the technical infrastructure of SADC Member States. Effective implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Agenda will entail harmonisation, approximation and full effectiveness of the SADC Infrastructure to ensure the production of quality goods and services.

With industrialisation at the centre stage of the regional integration agenda, the application of SQAM principles in promoting competitiveness is essential, as it makes businesses efficient, competitive in terms of price, time to market, safety and environmental compliance. SQAM principles are also critical in reducing barriers to trade, regionally and internationally through the harmonization of standards and approximation of technical regulations, which ease the flow of goods from one economy to the other.

The mutual recognition of the equivalence of the National Infrastructure for quality between Member States, makes Member States amenable to receiving commodities from each other. Commodities that are produced in Member States whose institutions for quality assurance (laboratories, inspection bodies, and metrology institutions) are not accredited, miss an opportunity of accessing the international markets. As we all agree, if the SQAM infrastructure in the region and in SADC Member States would be

brought up to international standards, and regionally harmonised, the possibility and frequency of TBTs would be sustainably reduced.

May I therefore encourage SADC Member States to invest in the upgrade and accreditation of their national infrastructure for quality (SQAM institutions) in order to reduce, and/ or eliminate technical barriers to trade especially, as we steadily progress towards the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area, as well as the African Continental Free Trade Area.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

To ensure the advancement of Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology, and to therefore, enable the region to competitively trade in goods and services, Member States are encouraged to provide the legal and institutional framework for SQAM, such as, the National Quality Policy; the Standards Act; the Metrology Act; and the Conformity Assessment Policy. There is also a need to establish the necessary institutions, such as, the National Standards Bodies, the Technical Regulations Authority, the Metrology Institute, and the Testing and Calibration Centers. Such national bodies could be recognised and utilised as Regional Centers of Excellence in providing SQAM services.

The private sector is also called upon to participate in the development and adoption of internationally recognised national standards, implement standard and quality principles in their daily operations, get certified for systems and product quality. Entities offering conformity assessment services have to be accredited for competence, and for international acceptability of their work. In light of the SADC Quality Awards, the private sector is encouraged to continue participating in quality competitions of this nature, so as to serve as national and regional role models.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

We are gathered here this evening to recognise and award the winners of the 2019 SADC Quality Awards, in the five categories, each with two sub-categories (Large Enterprise and Small, and Medium Enterprises - SMEs), namely: Company of the Year; Product of the Year; Service of the

Year; Exporter of the Year; as well as the Individual's Award for recognition for the contribution in SADC SQAM initiatives. Over the years, sectors that have been represented in the race for the SADC Annual Quality Awards include, the chemicals, agriculture, medical, transport, food processing (catering, breweries, meat and fisheries), security, energy, ICT, property and construction sectors.

It is very pleasing to note that, the number of Member States and enterprises participating has been growing steadily, with the highest number of forty-three (43) entries from seven (7) Member States received in the 2017/2018 Financial year. In this financial year, 21 entries were received from five (5) Member States, namely Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The first awards were held in 2011 and this year, we are witnessing the 9th cycle of the awards.

As we move forward, may I call upon Member States to run national quality awards and to motivate the private sector to participate in both national and regional quality awards. As a region, we also need to define a clear strategy on how the SADC TBT Cooperation Structures will position themselves to support our trade endeavours at both the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area and the African Continental Free Trade Area. How will the SADC TBT Cooperation structures support "Factory SADC" as we seek to participate in the greater African Market.

As I conclude, allow me to congratulate the five (5) winners of this 9th cycle of the Awards. These are the organizations that are contributing to quality advancement in various sectors of regional integration, by having measurement and quality systems, procedures and processes that are in line with local, regional and international practices. These entities use quality advancement to support national and regional economic development. I wish to encourage them to continue to serve as regional role models, and motivate other corporates (large and small), and mentor them to strive for new heights, in the adoption and implementation of quality and standards principles through the deployment of SQAM in their daily operations. May I also thank all the (7) Member States that have entered the regional competition in the past and encourage those that have not, to do so in future competitions.

Let me also commend the judges for their professional work. We thank the Member States that nominated these judges to serve on this highly esteemed regional competition. Allow me to also thank our cooperating partner, the German Cooperation Agency, PTB, (Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt) for sponsoring the Trophies and Certificates.

Let me once again express our heartfelt appreciation to the Namibian Standards Institute for hosting this wonderful Gala event. Let me also commend the Secretariat for the hard work in ensuring the successful conduct of this event.

In conclusion, allow me to wish you fruitful deliberations during the remainder of the TBT Week as we look forward to the SADC TBT meetings and Quality Awards of 2020.

**I thank you.**