



OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS

BY

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-REGIONAL INTEGRATION

DR THEMBINKOSI MHLONGO

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE JOINT MEETING OF
MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENERGY AND WATER**

ON

27 JUNE 2018

***SANDTON CONVENTIONS CENTER,
JOHANNESBURG SOUTH AFRICA***

- Honourable Minister responsible for Energy, and Chairperson of the Sectoral Committee of Ministers Responsible for Energy, Honourable Jeff Radebe, Our Gracious Host;
- Honourable Ministers responsible for Water and Sanitation, and Chairperson of the Sectoral Committee of Ministers responsible for Water, Honorable Gugile Nkwinti, Our Gracious Host;
- Honourable Ministers Responsible for Energy and Water and Sanitation from the SADC Member States, Here present;
- Excellency Member of the Diplomatic Corps, here Present;
- Senior Officials Responsible for Energy and Water from SADC Member States;
- Chief Executives of SADC from Subsidiary Organisation Energy and Water Sectors
- Representatives from International Cooperating Partners, Regional, Continental, International Organizations and other Implementing Agencies;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished delegates, ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure and indeed, it is an honour for me to give these brief remarks on behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, who would have loved to be at this meeting with you in person, if it were not for a number of equally pressing issue she had to deal with during this time. She sends her best wishes to you all. I would like to thanks the Government and People of South Africa through you honourable Ministers for hosting this very important Joint Meeting of Ministers responsible for Energy

and Water. This is a clear indication of the importance and priority that the Government of South Africa, through you honourable Ministers, attaches to these two critical sectors of economies.

This meeting is taking place at a time when we are at the halfway line in the implementation of our regional development Strategy, The Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and we have just completed the Short Term Action Plan implementation of the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP). A number of valuable lessons have been learned from the implementation of these two strategies and progress has been registered in the implementation of specific interventions in both Energy and Water. Some of these will be presented by the Secretariat and it is my hope that we will receive the much needed guidance and support to improve further make the region a better place for development and regional integration, peace and stability.

A number other very strategic and important regional development imperatives have been adopted by heads of State and Government Summit in the last few years to which these two sectors in particular need to contribute meaningfully to the success of these initiatives. These include the Regional Industrial Strategy and its Road Map, the Regional Agricultural Policy with its associated Regional Agricultural Investment Plan. All these will require coordinated and integrated approaches where maximization of synergies and improved cooperation is central. The Water-Energy-Food Security Nexus is an approach that promises to address these important considerations.

Water, energy and food security are key priority areas for SADC. Integrated planning of water, food and energy sectors and promoting regional cooperation has been considered as a strategy to meet water, energy and food security targets, and to improve natural resource use efficiencies in the region.

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

This meeting will consider and discuss progress and challenges that were faced in the implementation of the energy and water Programmes including progress in the implementation of the decisions of Summit, Council and Sector Ministers at their previous meetings. Emerging issues in the energy sector such as the process of promotion of natural gas and its contribution in the regional energy mix will also form part of your discussions. The meeting will also discuss the signing of Intergovernmental Memoranda of Understanding (IGMOUs) for regional interconnector projects enhancing regional integration;

We will indeed await and appreciate the guidance of honorable Ministers to ensure successful implementation of these programmes. The outcomes of your discussions will be presented to the coming Council and Summit meetings to inform and contribute to the current Summit theme of ***“Partnering with the Private Sector in Developing Industry and Regional Value Chains”***.

I would like to end my remarks by once again thanking the Government and the People of the Republic of South Africa for putting these very good facilities our disposal, to facilitate your meeting. I would also like to express our gratitude for such a good turn up and participation to this important meeting and I wish you all very fruitful deliberation in this Joint Meeting and wish you the best stay in Sandton, Johannesburg.