



OPENING REMARKS BY

AMBASSADOR JAMES MANZOU
SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CHAIRPERSON OF SENIOR
OFFICIALS

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

22ND MEETING OF MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE
ORGAN (MCO) ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY
CO-OPERATION

MEIKLES HOTEL, HARARE

25 JUNE 2020

Esteemed Colleagues;

Permanent Secretaries;

Director Generals;

Generals and Commissioner Generals and

Other Senior Officials here present virtually;

The Executive Secretary of SADC here represented by the Director of the SADC

Organ Dr. Jorge Cardoso;

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all!

You will recall that at our meeting in the beautiful city of Lusaka (Zambia) in July 2019, I took the opportunity to invite you, Colleague Senior Officials, to Harare for the

MCO Senior Officials Meeting.

At that time, we as your hosts had the best of plans for you. Besides the hard work that we Senior Officials always do, we had plans to hold a sumptuous reception for you to once again sample our well renowned traditional cuisines. To cap it all we had also planned a tour of Harare by night, compliments of Zimbabwe Tourist Organisation.

Little did we know that the COVID-19 pandemic was going to strike and that you were going to visit Harare virtually as indeed you are doing today. We of course miss you

physically but we have to accept the new normal under COVID-19. We do hope that in spite of the cold in Harare you will feel the warmth of the Zimbabwean people radiating from Harare to wherever you are during the next two days.

That having been said, I warmly welcome you to this meeting of Senior Officials of the MCO. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for availing yourselves despite the pressures imposed on all of us by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Let me also express my sincere gratitude to

the Executive Secretary and her team for the preparation of documents and for making our meetings possible.

Dear Colleagues,

We have a long agenda in front of us and our task as Senior Officials is to prepare the groundwork and make appropriate recommendations that will assist our Ministers in their deliberations tomorrow. We will, among other important issues, consider the progress made in the implementation of MCO and Summit decisions since our last meeting in Lusaka in July 2019.

We will also examine new and emerging security threats to our region and recommend concrete decisions aimed at dealing with these issues. Equally important on our agenda is the consideration of the consolidation of democracy and the review of the political and security in the region.

As you can see, Colleagues our Agenda is very long and therefore it is imperative that we manage our work properly so that we can finish on time. I therefore count on you to be precise and focused in your interventions and to ensure that we present programmatic

measurable and time bound decisions to our Ministers with view to strengthening peace and security in our region.

It remains for me to wish us all fruitful deliberations.

With these few remarks, I declare the meeting of Senior Officials of Ministerial Committee of the Organ duly opened

I thank you.