



OPENING REMARKS

BY

**HER EXCELLENCY DR STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX,
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

ON

26TH AUGUST 2016

MBABANE, SWAZILAND

Our Guest of Honour, His Excellency, The Right Honourable Dr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland;

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

His Royal Highness Prince Hlangusemphi, Minister of Economic Planning and Development of the Kingdom of Swaziland and the Incoming Chairperson of SADC;

Honourable Ministers;

Mr. Bertram Stuart, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development of Swaziland and Chairperson of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials;

Permanent Secretaries and Director Generals Present;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of Regional and International Cooperating Partners;

Senior Officials from the SADC Member States and SADC Secretariat staff;

Representatives of the Media;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured and privileged to welcome you, Your Excellency, to this August 2016 Council of Ministers Meeting. Allow me to express our appreciation and gratitude to Your Excellency, for sparing time amid your busy schedule to come and officiate at the meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers being held here in Ezulwini Valley, Kingdom of Swaziland. Allow me also to thank the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland, for the hospitality extended to us since our arrival. We are very grateful for the excellent and extensive support extended to the Secretariat during the preparations for this Council that will be followed by the 36th Summit. We also thank the Government and people of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the facilities put at our disposal for the SADC Council and Summit meetings. This is a big undertaking and a clear testimony of the commitment to the SADC Regional Integration and Development Agenda.

Your Excellency and Honourable Ministers,

Our region has made significant progress in enhancing development and facilitating the transformation of the quality of the lives of our people. The interests and wellbeing of our people have been at the centre of the SADC Regional Integration and Development Agenda. The Region is peaceful and stable and Member States have continued to adhere to the principles of democracy, good governance and increased levels of socio-economic integration in our quest for sustainable socio-economic development, and poverty eradication.

In the area of Infrastructure, the roll-out of regional projects elaborated in the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP), especially in the Energy, Transport and Water sectors is on course. The need to scale-up access to infrastructure was re-emphasized following the High-Level Workshop on Water and Energy Crisis, convened by the Chair of SADC in June 2016. During the year, the region commissioned about 1700 Mega-Watts in new generation. In the coming year, it is envisaged that new power generation amounting to about 4000 Mega-Watts will be commissioned. I am pleased to inform you that this generation will be the highest ever new generation in the region and will contribute significantly towards alleviating the current power deficit in the Region.

Industrialisation continued to gain momentum, as the region is on the verge of adopting a costed Action Plan for the Industrialisation Strategy. To drive the industrialisation agenda, among others, studies to profile the priority mineral and pharmaceutical sectors to identify potential for value chain development, value addition and beneficiation have been undertaken. These studies indicated greater potential for domestic, regional and global value chains and a high potential for manufacturing. These studies will be used to develop strategies and interventions for fostering regional value chains, beneficiation and value addition as important enablers of SADC industrialisation.

A 5-year Investment Plan for implementation of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) 2014 was finalised during the year. The Investment Plan seeks to ensure long term food security and the reduction of social and economic vulnerability of the region's population by enhancing sustainable agricultural production in the changing socio-economic and climatic conditions. The Investment plan is also expected to support and incentivise agriculture production with a view to catalyse the transformation of the sector and its contribution to SADC industrialisation.

Your Excellency,

The critical need for resources to drive the RISDP and accerelate industrialisation cannot be overemphasized. The Secretariat continues to work hand-in-hand with the Member States to finalise the SADC Resource Mobilisation Framework and to unlock the potential for resource mobilisation at national, regional and international levels from both the private and public sectors. The theme of this 36th Summit: ***“Resource Mobilisation for Investment in Sustainable Energy Infrastructure for an Inclusive SADC Industrialisation and for the Prosperity of the Region”*** is a continued resolve to push forward our collective efforts to mobilise resources sustainably and drive our regional integration agenda for socio-economic transformation and development.

Your Excellency,

Allow me Your Excellency to thank the outgoing Chair of SADC, the Republic of Botswana for convening three Ministerial workshops on Poverty and Food Security, Water and Energy Crisis, and illegal trade in wildlife. These workshops came at a time when the region is facing critical challenges

relating to food insecurity, water and energy shortages as a result of the El Niño induced drought; and the escalating problem of illegal wildlife poaching, perpetrated by global wildlife crime syndicates. These workshops were aimed at facilitating the exchange of ideas and forging practical, innovative and sustainable solutions towards addressing these challenges. Among others, the workshops identified the following as major challenges: insufficient and unsustainable financing; insufficient progress in the implementation of the Regional Strategies and Frameworks as well as the slow pace of domestication and implementation of regional instruments by Member States; poor coordination and harmonization of efforts and networking; the competing demands in the water-energy nexus and the devastating impacts of climate change. The workshops created awareness and made a number of resolutions and recommendations to effectively deal with these challenges. The outcomes and recommendations of these workshops will be presented to this Council of Ministers and to the subsequent Summit.

I also wish to thank the SADC Chairperson, for the prompt intervention in facilitating the development of a Statement of Humanitarian Appeal for Assistance and for launching this Humanitarian Appeal on 26th July 2016. Following the launch of the Humanitarian Appeal, the Region has received assistance and pledges from among others, the European Union, the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Japan.

Your Excellency,

In closing, I wish to thank the Chairperson of Council, Honourable Kenneth Matambo supported by the Chair of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials, Dr. Taufila Nyamadzabo, for their guidance and support to the Secretariat throughout the year, which facilitated the achievement of the milestones set by the SADC Region. I also wish to extend our gratitude to all the Member States for their support and commitment towards implementing the regional programmes.

I am also grateful for the support accorded to me by the dedicated professionals and experts at the Secretariat. Going forward, I am confident that under the leadership of the incoming Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers, His Royal Highness Prince Hlangusemphi, Minister of Economic Planning and Development of the Kingdom of Swaziland and his team, we are set for yet another successful year.

Finally, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in inviting Our Guest of Honour, His Excellency, The Right Honourable Dr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland to officially open the Meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers.

Your Excellency