



REMARKS

BY

**H.E. MR. ELIAS M. MAGOSI
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SADC**

AT

THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE SADC ORGAN TROIKA

ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR

15TH AUGUST 2025

Honourable Ambassador Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Honourable Nancy Gladys Tembo, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi, and Incoming Chairperson of the MCO;

Honourable Mulambo Haimbe, S.C., MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia, and Outgoing Chairperson of the MCO;

All Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;

Ambassador Dr. Samwel William Shelukindo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Chairperson of the Senior Officials of the MCO;

Distinguished Senior Officials;

Professor Kula Ishmael Theletsane, Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs and SADC Secretariat Staff;

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence and Security Institutions;

Delegates from SADC Organ Troika Member States;

Members of the Media;

Good afternoon.

It is an honour and a privilege to welcome you to this important meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ Troika. Your presence is a testament to our collective resolve to ensure sustained peace and political stability in our region.

Allow me to begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Madagascar for graciously hosting us here in Antananarivo. I also express our gratitude to you, Honourable Ministers, for your steadfast leadership and unwavering dedication to advancing the objectives of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation.

At the heart of SADC's vision for regional integration and sustainable development lies an unwavering commitment to peace, security, and democratic governance. As a SADC structure entrusted with guiding the political and security agenda of our Community, we are gathered here today not only to assess progress on key initiatives we committed to implement, but also to reaffirm our resolve to safeguard stability, strengthen democratic institutions, and enhance the resilience of our Member States. More importantly, your

Committee plays a pivotal role in shaping the strategic direction of the Organ, ensuring that interventions are timely, coordinated, and responsive to the evolving challenges confronting our region.

Honourable Ministers, this Committee will consider the Report of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation to the Organ Troika Summit. The report provides a comprehensive overview of key developments and strategic interventions undertaken over the past year in pursuit of peace, stability, and democratic governance across the SADC region.

Over the reporting period, the Secretariat continued to facilitate the missions of the Panel of Elders and the Mediation Reference Group, with particular emphasis on the Kingdom of Lesotho. The progress made in advancing constitutional reforms and fostering national dialogue will be presented for your consideration, as we collectively assess the milestones achieved and the work that remains ahead.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, while troops have been withdrawn from the SADC Mission (SAMIDRC) as mandated by Summit in March this year, our commitment to fostering sustainable peace in eastern DRC remains unequivocal. On 13 August, the Joint Summit of the East African Community (EAC) and SADC, convened to consolidate regional and continental efforts in response to the security challenges in the region. A key outcome of this engagement was the merger of the EAC-SADC and African Union (AU) mediation structures into a unified, AU-led process, alongside the consolidation of technical secretariats under the leadership of the AU Commission. This strategic alignment marks a significant milestone in harmonising regional peace initiatives as well as facilitating leadership by the continental body. Substantive progress is anticipated as the integrated structures work collaboratively to fulfil their mandate and contribute meaningfully to lasting peace and stability in eastern DRC.

Honourable Ministers, while absolute perfection in electoral systems may remain an aspirational goal, the pursuit of continuous and targeted improvements is both achievable and essential to enhancing the quality and credibility of our democracies. This guiding principle informs the work of the SADC Electoral Observation Missions (SEOM), whose findings and recommendations serve as valuable tools to support Member States in strengthening their electoral frameworks.

The Secretariat, through the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC), continues to facilitate post-election review missions and actively promotes annual self-reporting at the level of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ. These mechanisms are designed to foster dialogue, learning, and mutual support among Member States.

However, to fully realise the benefits of SEOM recommendations, it is important that they are not only acknowledged, but also systematically implemented. While progress has been made, there remains an opportunity to deepen our collective commitment to this process. Identifying appropriate support mechanisms to assist Member States in this endeavour will be key to ensuring consistency and accountability.

By working together to reinforce these practices, we can advance democratic governance, strengthen public confidence in electoral processes, and uphold the shared values that unite us as a region.

As part of our continued efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in defence and security, the construction of the Regional Logistics Depot (RLD) in the Republic of Botswana remains a critical undertaking. As reported previously, construction of phase 1 of the depot aimed at attaining initial operational capability of the depot commenced in November 2024 and will be completed in November 2026. Phase 1 costs USD 15 million, fully funded by SADC member States. While commendable progress has been made, the project still faces a significant challenge to raise a USD 30 million needed to construct the depot to attain Full Operational Capability. In this regard, your Secretariat is actively exploring alternative funding sources to ensure the timely completion of the RLD and its transition to full operational readiness. The actualisation of this project is essentially to enhance our collective preparedness and response capacity within the region. I therefore urge Member States and partners to continue supporting this strategic project.

Honourable Ministers, as I conclude, allow me to express my deepest appreciation to Honourable Ambassador Mahmoud Thabit Kombo for his exemplary and focused leadership during his tenure as Chair of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ. Your stewardship has been instrumental in guiding the Committee through a range of complex peace and security matters, enabling the Organ Troika Summit to take informed and strategic, and at times difficult decisions in pursuit of lasting peace and stability across the SADC region.

To Honourable Mulambo Haimbe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia, we extend our sincere gratitude for your distinguished leadership and invaluable contributions as Outgoing Chairperson of the MCO. Your dedication to the Organ's mandate has significantly advanced our collective efforts in addressing regional challenges.

To the Incoming Chairperson, Honourable Nancy Gladys Tembo, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi, we pledge the full support of the SADC Secretariat to ensure a successful and impactful tenure. I wish to assure you of our unwavering cooperation and commitment to advancing the objectives of the Organ and promoting peace, security, and democratic governance throughout the region.

I also wish to thank the Senior Officials of the MCO, led by Ambassador Dr. Samwel Shelukindo, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, for their tireless efforts in tackling complex peace and security challenges. Their excellent preparatory work and thoughtful deliberations have laid a strong foundation not only for this Ministerial Meeting, but for many before it.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour to invite Honourable Ambassador Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, Chairperson of the MCO, to officially open this meeting.

Thank you for your attention!

Merci beaucoup! Muito obrigado! Asante Sana!