



ZIMBABWE

**REMARKS BY HON. SIMBARASHE S.
MUMBENGE GWI, (MP), MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE AND
CHAIR OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

ON THE

**OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
MEETING OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS**

AT

CRESTA LODGE, HARARE, ZIMBABWE

ON

06 MARCH, 2015

- **Honourable Ministers from the SADC Member States and Members of the SADC Council of Ministers;**
- **Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the Republic of Zimbabwe here present;**
- **Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, The Executive Secretary of SADC;**
- **Ambassador Joey Bimha, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials;**

- **Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Deputy Executive Secretaries and Officials from the SADC Secretariat;**
- **Senior Officials from SADC Member States;**
- **Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;**
- **Members of the Media fraternity;**
- **Comrades and Friends;**

It is with profound gratitude that the Government and people of

Zimbabwe welcome you to this very important meeting on our SADC calendar, the SADC Council of Ministers. The Republic of Zimbabwe feels greatly honoured to host this Council of Ministers Meeting which, due to its heavy focus on financial and administrative matters, is an important element of the SADC Policy Organs. We have worked closely with the SADC Secretariat in creating an environment conducive for the successful convening of our meeting. It is our sincere hope that you will find the facilities that we

have put at your disposal both satisfactory and appropriate.

Honourable Ministers; Distinguished Delegates,

We are greatly honoured that you have found time, within your busy schedules, to travel all the way from your respective capitals, to attend this Statutory meeting. This is clear testimony to the level of importance that you attach to the ideals of regional integration in SADC, and to the achievement of SADC goals and objectives as defined in the SADC Treaty and other SADC Protocols.

Suffice to recall that what defines us as a grouping is a common vision and mission to see the prosperity of our peoples. That which binds us together, to continue pulling in one direction as a grouping, is our common history, common challenges, a common culture, common ideals and our common future.

Honourable Ministers,

Let us continue to ensure that whatever decisions we take are fully implemented. In doing that, we remain mindful of the fact that we,

Member States, have an important role to play in this regard, as the bulk of the interventions in our programmes must be implemented at the national level. We made commitments, some of them financial and others non-financial and, we need to honour them. As long as we do not timeously remit the various assessed contributions to the SADC Secretariat, most of the programmes will remain hamstrung.

Honourable Ministers,

Let me, at this juncture, express my deep appreciation and gratitude, on

behalf of His Excellency President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and the Government and People of Zimbabwe, to their Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the SADC Region and the peoples of SADC, for the honour and trust you bestowed on the Government and people of Zimbabwe, and, on President Mugabe, by supporting Zimbabwe's bid for the position of Chairperson of the African Union. We owe this honour to the invaluable support of our regional organisation, SADC, which has remained solidly in support of Zimbabwe even in the

face of sustained efforts, by some Western countries, to discredit the country's leadership and destroy her economy in an effort to achieve an illegal regime change in our country.

During our tenure, we will always put at the forefront, our guiding principle requiring us to provide African solutions to African problems. We also remain committed to working with the region to further regional and continental unity and to advance our common cause on the broader international arena.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

We note, with satisfaction, the important role played by the SADC Secretariat, together with other RECs, in the formulation of the African Blueprint Agenda 2063 which was adopted recently by the 24th AU Assembly in Addis Ababa. We urge the Secretariat to remain engaged with this matter, particularly as the AU moves forward to formulate the first ten year plan of Agenda 2063

which is expected to be adopted by the 25th AU Assembly later this year.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

We are also grateful for your endorsement of Mr. Zondo Sakala, a Zimbabwean National, for the position of the President of the African Development Bank. I am confident that with your continued support, he will land the Presidency of the critical institution.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Though there are still a few pockets of insecurity in SADC, I am very much encouraged by the level of political maturity that the region continues to exhibit. We pay tribute to the people of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Lesotho for the smooth and peaceful elections held in those countries towards the end of last year and at the beginning of this year. The successful conduct of these elections, is a clear testimony that democracy and democratic principles have firmly taken root in our region. It is a development that gives us

great satisfaction as Member States of SADC.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have quite a long and demanding programme over the coming two days as we deliberate on budgetary and administrative issues of our organisation as well as review the implementation of Summit and Council Decisions.

Honourable Ministers,

You may recall that the 34th SADC Summit held in August 2014, in

Victoria Falls, directed the Committee of Ministers of Trade to review the revised RISDP 2015-2020, particularly the sequencing of targeted outputs on Industrial Development and Trade Liberalisation in order to ensure that, at the current stage of integration in SADC, industrialisation is prioritised. Summit further directed the SADC Secretariat to ensure that the 34th Summit Theme was mainstreamed into the finalised RISDP document. I am confident that the revised RISDP shall provide the appropriate guidance and focus to ourselves as

**Member States, the Secretariat,
other Stakeholders and our
International Cooperating Partners.**

***Honourable Ministers, Distinguished
Delegates,***

**Summit also directed the Ministerial
Task Force on Regional Economic
Integration, assisted by a technical
team on industrialisation, to meet,
by February 2015, and agree on a
strategy and roadmap for
industrialization of the region. We
look forward to receiving a report in
that regard.**

The 34th Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government also directed the Secretariat to convene an Extraordinary Summit, by April 2015, to deliberate on the proposals from the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration and take final decisions on the matter. The dates for the Extraordinary Summit have been firmed up and communicated to all Member States. The necessary logistical arrangements are being put in place to ensure the successful hosting of this Extraordinary Summit.

Hon. Ministers, our Agenda today also calls us to pay attention and seek innovative ways of dealing with the problems being occasioned by changes in weather patterns. Climate change poses a significant and complex challenge to social and economic development in the region. Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, will adversely affect key sectors of the regional economy. The region witnessed serious floods which saw loss of lives and destruction of property in a number of countries this rainy

season. While this is not a new phenomenon, it calls into question our readiness to deal with major disasters. Let us come out of this meeting with plausible proposals to provide solutions for the way forward.

Honourable Ministers and Dear colleagues,

We have very high expectations for our Secretariat. The efficiency and efficacy of our Secretariat are key to the success of the implementation of SADC Programmes. This is why, our meeting in August 2014, in Victoria

Falls, established a Task Force to address control weaknesses in the management of programmes, operations and resources by the SADC Secretariat. The Task Force has been engaging the Secretariat and we are hopeful internal audit systems are being strengthened and a robust monitoring mechanism will be put in place as per our directive.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman,

I just touched on a few issues on our agenda; there are still a number of items of critical importance that we

will be receiving updates on. These include, but are not limited to, the establishment of the ad hoc SADC Administrative Tribunal, proposals on the alternative mechanisms to be followed to solve pending cases in the SADC Tribunal, SADC diplomatic immunities and privileges as defined in the SADC Treaty, and issues emanating from the Finance Committee.

Allow me, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests Ladies and gentleman, to express our appreciation to the Senior Officials

and the Secretariat for having worked hard, since our last meeting in Victoria Falls, in preparing for the series of meetings that have been taking place and the Extraordinary Summit scheduled for April.

Let me conclude by reminding you all that Harare has a fair share of attractions that include bird sanctuaries, animal parks, snake parks, balancing rocks, interesting and exotic eating places. Please take full advantage of them.

***Honourable Ministers, Distinguished
Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

**Let me wish Council excellent
deliberations.**

I thank you.