



**STATEMENT**

**OF**

**THE SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**H.E. DR STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF  
MINISTERS**

**MARCH 2015,  
HARARE  
ZIMBABWE.**

**Honourable Simbarashe Mumbengegwi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers,**  
**Honourable Ministers,**  
**Distinguished Permanent Secretaries**  
**Senior Officials,**  
**SADC Secretariat Staff,**  
**Invited Guests,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me, to thank the Government and people of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the warm welcome, hospitality, and the excellent facilities accorded to all of us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Harare. It is my humble honour to welcome you, Honourable Ministers, to this session of the Council.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our sympathies and condolences to the Governments and people of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe for the loss of lives and destruction of properties as a result of the recent floods in these member states.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

This meeting provides an opportunity to receive progress report on the implementation of plans for 2014/2015, implementation of Council Decisions, and to deliberate on priorities and plans for 2015/2016.

Since August 2014 SADC observed general and Presidential elections in the Republics of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Mauritius, Lesotho and the Presidential By-elections in Zambia. I wish to congratulate the Governments and peoples of these Member States for holding peaceful, credible and free and fair elections through which the will of the people was democratically expressed.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

At the last Council meeting held in Victoria Falls, the Secretariat was directed to prepare an Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap, and present it to the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Integration in February, 2015, and thereafter to the Extra-Ordinary Summit in April 2015. In this regards, the Executive Secretary was also directed to mobilise resources for this very important undertaking.

May I report to this August Council, that the Secretariat expeditiously mobilized the required resources, in terms of strategic partners, in particular UNECA, and financial resources from UNECA and GIZ. The interim report on Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap will be presented to this meeting. We highly appreciate and thank the member States for their support and commitment to this noble course, and for their timely responses. Member States have designated national experts who are working with regional experts. I wish to take this opportunity to also thank the national and regional experts and Secretariat staff for their hard work. I also wish to thank UNECA and GIZ for their support. Special gratitude goes to UNECA, for its expeditious response and willingness to partner with SADC in the realization of the Summit Decision.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Within the framework of the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan, the Project Preparation Development Fund (PPDF) has been operationalised during the year, with one project being approved for Grant financing, namely the Mozambique-Zimbabwe-South Africa Transmission Interconnector, and seven more projects admitted in the pipeline and are being appraised. In addition, water supply and sanitation projects have been prepared, and the Zambezi Basin Commission was launched, hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe.

In the area of ICT, commendable progress has been made with the roll out of Digital Terrestrial Migration equipment given the looming ITU switch-over deadline of 17 June, 2015.

The key focus in terms of energy has been to coordinate implementation of power projects within the RIDMP framework to ensure that the Region attains self-sufficiency in power generation by 2017/2018 given that power demand currently surpasses available capacity.

In terms of transport, the key focus has been on operationalization of interim arrangements for the SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (SASO) to be hosted by the Kingdom of Swaziland, coordination of the on-going feasibility which include the Navigability of Shire-Zambezi Waterways, Nacala Corridor Project as well as the Tripartite Transport and Trade Facilitation Programme.

In the area of Water, focus has been completion of the Lomahasha-Namaacha and the Kunene Transboundary Water Supply projects.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

During the period under review, significant progress has also been recorded in the area of trade, industry, finance and investment. Notable progress was realized in the area of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), the EPA was initialed between the EU and the SADC EPA Group. The text is currently undergoing legal vetting leading to eventual signature, ratification and implementation. In the area of finance and investment, progress has been realized in connecting the national payments and settlements systems to the regional system, that is, the SADC Integrated Regional Electronic Settlement System (SIRESS).

With regard to the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Secretariat continued to develop, promote, coordinate and facilitate harmonisation of policies and programmes aimed at increasing agricultural and natural resources production, productivity and competitiveness, in order to support

industrialisation, trade and food security and sustainable economic development in the region. The major focus was on the development of the Regional Agricultural Policy and the SADC Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy. In addition, the Secretariat continued to operationalize the implementation of the harmonized Seed Regulations in the SADC Region. The SADC Variety release system was launched on 26 November 2014.

The food security situation in the region is expected to be less than satisfactory during the 2015/16 marketing year as a result of poor rains in most parts of the Region, dry spells in some areas, and floods in other areas. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation and support early warning for food security and vulnerability assessments in the Member States.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Pursuant to the Council directive that cooperation with the Russian Federation as a strategic partner, the Secretariat has finalized the revision of the MoU. Furthermore, the Secretariat undertook a mission to Russia and agreed on a roadmap. The Draft Revised MOU has been circulated to Member States for their inputs, and is presented to this meeting for your consideration. Details on the progress made during the year in other areas are as contained in the report before you.

***Honourable Chairperson,***

The Secretariat has also taken measures to enhance result based planning and budgeting, to address low absorption capacity, to strengthen performance management, strengthening management system through the operationalization of risk management policy and has finalized the review of administration rules and procedures. Details are presented in the report before you.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

During the financial year 2015/16, the focus will be placed on, among others, consolidation of peace and democracy, finalization of the Review of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and its implementation plan, and development of an organization Structure needed to operationalize the reviewed RISDP and SIPO; finalization and operationalization of the Industrialisation Strategy, Infrastructure development to leverage Industrial development, and in support of regional integration. Other priorities, include facilitation of the operationalization of Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP); implementing Tripartite initiatives; continental FTA negotiations; enhancing trade facilitation; and monitoring implementation of obligations in the trade protocol.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Karl Marx once said: **'All Things Solid Melt into the Air'** Thus the Secretariat will remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of Member states. We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided. Regional integration will be realized out of dedicated efforts and a result of hard work,. I wish to assure you that the Secretariat will continue to implement decisions of Council and Summit diligently so as to ensure sustainable regional development and deep-rooted regional integration.

It will be amiss on my part not to thank and commend the senior officials and the Secretariat Staff for the job well done in preparing the working documents to be used by the Ministers at this meeting.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity and for your attention.

**Thank you!!!**

**Obrigada!!!**

**Merci Beucoup!!!**

**Ndatenda!!!**

**Asante sana!!!**