



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

REMARKS BY

**HONOURABLE DR. GEORGE T. CHAPONDA, M.P.,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF MALAWI AND CHAIR OF SADC COUNCIL**

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

**TO BE HELD AT THE ELEPHANTS HILL RESORT
HOTEL CONFERENCE CENTRE**

IN VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

14th AUGUST, 2014

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation,
July, 2014**

- **Honourable Simbarashe S. Mumbengegwi,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Zimbabwe and Incoming Chair of SADC Council;**
- **Honourable Ministers from the SADC Member
States;**
- **Your Excellency, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax,
Executive Secretary of SADC;**
- **Your Excellencies and Members of the
Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Your Excellencies, Deputy Executive Secretaries
of SADC, and Officials from the SADC
Secretariat;**
- **Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is a great honour and immense pleasure for me to attend this very important meeting of the SADC Policy Organ of the Council of Ministers here at the Majestic Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

At the outset, allow me, to express our profound gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the legendary hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. I must commend that this is indeed one of the wonders of the world.

**Honourable Ministers, Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Before we embark on discussions with respect to the substance of this meeting, allow me to say a few words before I handle the mantle of leadership to the Incoming SADC Chairperson of Council.

Let me take this opportunity to express my tremendous appreciation for the extraordinary support and assistance which you collectively rendered to the Government of the Republic of Malawi during the tenure of office. Our performance during our tenure could have been futile had it not been for the unreserved and generous support we received from the SADC family.

In turn, my Government pledges its commitment to provide our unwavering support to the Incoming Chairperson to ensure that SADC delivers on its mandate.

**Honourable Ministers, Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

As you may know, Malawi's theme during our tenure as the SADC Chairperson was entitled **“Agriculture Development and Agro-Industries: Key to Economic Growth and Poverty Eradication in the SADC**

Region.” This theme focussed on the empowerment of women and the youth and has been operationalised, through the development of a SADC Regional Strategy on Food and Nutrition Security for 2015-2025.

I am pleased to report that the SADC Regional Strategy on Food and Nutrition Security was considered and approved by a Joint Meeting of the SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security and the SADC Ministers of Health and HIV/AIDS held in Lilongwe, in July, 2014. This Strategy will be presented to Council for your endorsement at this meeting.

In summary, the Strategy will serve as a regional mechanism to facilitate the attainment of universal physical, social and economic access to safe, health and nutritious food, to ensure the wellbeing of the people of Southern Africa.

**Honourable Ministers, Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me also take this opportunity to state that there are a number of important issues that were addressed during our tenure at the helm of SADC. These include the finalisation of the SADC Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan for 2015-2020; the SADC

Regional Development Fund; the new Protocol on the SADC Tribunal; and the appointment of the SADC Executive Secretary responsible for Finance and Administration.

The other issues concern the ongoing implementation of the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan; the SADC Industrialisation Work Programme; the COMESA/SADC/EAC Tripartite Trade Negotiations; among others. We will receive progress reports on these issues during the course of the Council meeting.

At this juncture, permit me to sincerely thank the SADC Executive Secretary and her effective Secretariat Staff for work tirelessly in coordinating the implementation of the resolutions of Council and Summit. I have no doubt that this coordination will absolutely assist in furthering the implementation of the SADC Integration Agenda.

**Honourable Ministers, Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

I will be failing in my duties not to acknowledge the tremendous support we also received from several partners during our first-ever Tripartite elections that took place in my country in May, 2014.

My Government is deeply pleased to note that regional, continental and international organisations, such as SADC, COMESA, African Union, Commonwealth and the European Union described the outcome of the elections as free, fair, credible and transparent.

I, therefore, wish to commend the SADC Electoral Observation Mission for playing a key role in the whole electoral process in my country. I am firmly convinced that this body will play a similar role in the upcoming elections in the SADC region.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of South Africa for holding peaceful, inclusive and credible elections in April, 2014. This illustrates a fundamental fact that SADC is making tremendous headway on the path of consolidating and sustenance of the democratisation process in the region.

In the same vein, I wish to congratulate Honourable Maite Nkoana-Mashabane for your re-appointment as Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa. I wholeheartedly pledge to work more closely with your office at both bilateral and regional levels for our mutual benefit.

**Honourable Ministers, Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

In as far as the region is concern in terms of peace and stability, I am pleased to report that the Region is relatively peaceful and stable except very few pockets of intra-state tensions which have been peacefully resolved.

We have witnessed successful mediation processes in Madagascar that resulted in transparent, fair and credible elections and smooth transfer of power in 2013. SADC remains ready to render a helping hand in supporting the new Madagascar Government consolidate your democratic process, rule of law, and bold efforts in rebuilding your economy.

SADC in collaboration with the Government of the DRC and UN worked tremendously to pacify the armed destabilisation in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We take this opportunity to applaud the Member States that actively participate in the UN Brigade peace keeping process.

**Honourable Ministers, Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate my Government's commitment to render our full support to the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe in your tenure of office for the economic and political advancement of the SADC region.

I also wish to reaffirm our undivided support for the implementation of your theme to be adopted at this meeting on the key topic, **“SADC Strategy for Economic Transformation: Leveraging the Region's Diverse Resources for Sustainable Economic and Social Development through Beneficiation and Value Addition.”** I surmise that the SADC Industrial Development Policy Framework and the Regional Agricultural Policy among others will be relevant in implementing this theme.

With these few remarks, I wish to hand over the floor to the Incoming Chair to continue with today's proceedings.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you all fruitful deliberations

God Bless Us All

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