



SPEECH

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

AND CHAIRPERSON OF SADC,

COMRADE R. G. MUGABE,

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE FAMILIARISATION TOUR OF

THE SADC HEADQUARTERS,

GABORONE, BOTSWANA, 20TH MAY, 2015.

Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax,
Zimbabwe's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of the
SADC Council of Ministers, Honourable Simbarashe
Mumbengegwi,
Zimbabwe's Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of
the Standing Committee of Senior Officials,
Ambassador Joey Bimha,
SADC Deputy Executive Secretary of Finance and
Administration, Emily Mushobekwa,
SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration,
Dr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo,
Senior Management at the SADC Secretariat,
Staff of the SADC Secretariat,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Comrades and Friends.

I feel greatly honoured to be at the SADC Headquarters. Allow me, at the outset, to express my profound gratitude to our host, the Government and people of Botswana, and the SADC Secretariat, for the affectionate welcome and hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival.

SADC prides itself in being the most stable Region within our Continent, and has built this reputation through working together, with a common resolve. Our strength lies in that, as a grouping, we have a common history, common challenges, a common culture, shared ideals, and a common future. The fact that several countries have expressed their intention to join our group is a clear indication of the reputation that SADC has built over the years.

Madam Executive Secretary,

The task of building a successful community, such as ours, is not the domain of Member States alone. The SADC Secretariat, represented by all of you here today, has a crucial role to play. The success of SADC programmes and projects very much depends on the capacity of the Secretariat to coordinate the implementation of agreed decisions. Your work is of profound and personal significance to every citizen throughout our

Community. You should therefore feel proud of the achievements you have attained thus far, and the immense contribution you are making everyday, for the betterment of our people and Region.

On behalf of all SADC Member States, I would like to pay tribute to you, Madam Executive Secretary, and through you to the entire staff of the SADC Secretariat, including those who tirelessly work behind the scenes; for your devotion to duty, without which, SADC as an organisation, would not realise its collective objectives. I am confident that you will redouble your efforts, so that, in terms of regional cooperation, integration and prosperity, SADC remains a reference point.

Madam Executive Secretary,

We are alive to the fact that, for us to achieve the development goals SADC has set for itself, we need an efficient, well-managed and well-resourced Secretariat. We will, therefore, on

our part, always endeavour to ensure that the needs of our staff are well-taken care of, within the limits of available resources. Challenges will always persist, but I am convinced that through consultation, we will be able to narrow our differences for the benefit of our region.

The relevant SADC structures, including the Council of Ministers, will remain ready and at your disposal in whatever challenges and concerns you may have as employees. It is not a coincidence that we mandated such an important institution as the Council of Ministers to deal with human resource and administrative matters and the need to maintain fairness and gender balance in our Organisation. At the same time, we should also ensure that good corporate governance, transparency and accountability, internal controls in the management of programmes, operations and projects, remain key guiding principles of our Secretariat.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My visit to the SADC Headquarters comes at a historic moment when SADC has decided to realign its strategic direction, to ensure that we effectively respond to the changing needs of our region. It is therefore our expectation that the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2015-2020), the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO II), as well as the recently adopted Strategy and Road Map for Industrialisation of the Region, will be matched with a reorientation of the structure and functions of the Secretariat. The success of these frameworks is hinged on the capacity of the Secretariat to learn from its experiences, as well as its ability to rally Member States' efforts towards our common destiny. This is no easy task, but all the same, not insurmountable.

The Secretariat continues to play a pivotal role in coordinating all efforts, at Member State and the regional level, to promote peace and security in our region. Your role in coordinating SADC Election Observer Missions (SEOMs) remains vital in protecting the integrity of democratic processes and insustaining

political stability in our Region. There is no doubt that with your able leadership, Executive Secretary, we shall achieve our objectives towards a common future for our fifteen nations. We are mindful that a prosperous future for SADC lies at the nexus of economic development and good governance.

As we forge ahead, let us all work towards the fulfilment of our vision by building a region in which there will be a high degree of integration and harmonisation. This is not an option, but an imperative, if we are to meet the genuine expectations of our people.

Madam Executive Secretary,

The diligence and dedication demonstrated by your team, thus far, leaves no doubt in me, as Chair, as well as other Heads of State and Government, that our interests are well taken care of. Let me, in that regard, applaud you and your entire staff, for the manner in which you have handled SADC affairs over the

course of my term as Chair. I am also confident that you will extend the same level of support to the incoming Chair.

Madam Executive Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, allow me to extend sincere appreciation to President Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama and the Government and people of the Republic of Botswana for facilitating the work of the Secretariat as host of our Regional Organisation.

I thank you.

RGM/gm