



**ZIMBABWE**

**STATEMENT BY  
THE GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE MEETING OF THE  
MINISTERIAL TASKFORCE ON REGIONAL ECONOMIC  
INTEGRATION**

**05 MARCH 2015  
HARARE, ZIMBABWE**

**Chairperson of the Ministerial Taskforce on Regional Economic Integration , Hon. M. Bimha,**

**Honourable Ministers, here present,**

**The SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax,**

**The Chairperson of Senior Officials of the Taskforce on Regional Economic Integration, Secretary for Industry and Commerce, Mrs Abigail Shonhiwa,**

**Permanent Secretaries here present,**

**SADC Deputy Executive Secretaries,**

**Senior Government Officials,**

**Members of the SADC Secretariat,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe and indeed on my own behalf, to address this August gathering of the Ministerial Taskforce on Regional Economic Integration meeting. Allow me to welcome all delegates to Zimbabwe, in particular Harare. Let me also invite you to experience the warm hospitality of the Zimbabwean people and the ambience that the city has to offer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my hope that you will find your stay here, as comfortable and enjoyable as you wish it to be. After all, as part of the integration agenda, we would like to make you feel at home away from home.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Whilst I am aware that the task before you is a daunting one, I am also equally convinced the resilience you have exhibited during the long road on negotiations is equally present to manage and resolve the challenges before you.

This meeting, like all the other meetings before, is testimony to that meaningful determination which the region continues to exhibit in its engagement with the other Regional Economic Communities.

I am humbled and gratified to see that the oneness amongst ourselves is providing a stable basis for continued and meaningful engagement, a replication of

the same atmosphere and character that has always prevailed at meetings such as this.

### Distinguished Delegates

Turning to the agenda of this meeting, and as you might be aware, this meeting is arising from the Summit Decision which mandated this Ministerial Taskforce on Regional Economic Integration to urgently meet and agree on a Strategy and Roadmap to frontload Industrialization. This is in preparation for the Extraordinary Summit to be held in April 2015.

Our leaders in their great wisdom at the August 2014 Victoria Falls Summit noted the need to produce first in order to trade, hence the decision to frontload industrialization, 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, industrialization is accorded centre stage.

I could not agree more with this Summit decision, as we are all aware of the importance of an Industrialization Strategy in the region, and this cannot be over emphasized given the problems faced by SADC as a region.

I also believe that the decision emanated from the theme of the Summit which was aptly named, '*SADC Strategy for Economic Transformation: Leveraging the Region's Diverse Resources for Sustainable, Economic and Social Development through Beneficiation and Value Addition*'.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a fact that the SADC region is abundantly endowed with natural resources, including many minerals and agricultural resources. However these resources remain

‘dead resources’ if they are not exploited and maximum value is derived from them through value addition and beneficiation.

The region remains poor largely due to the fact that these resources are exploited and exported mainly in primary form, with little or no local value addition undertaken. Dependence on primary products has exposed many resource-rich African countries to the vagaries of global markets, and associated with increased frequency cycles of commodity booms and busts.

The challenge facing SADC is to transform the economies of the region from resource dependent ones to dynamic, diversified industrial economies not only based on the ‘catch up’ technology but critically encompassing both public and private innovation through enhanced research and development.

**Mr Chairman,**

The natural resource richness of the SADC region does, therefore, provide a foundation for its accelerated industrialization. The Summit theme is, therefore, intended to maximize revenue derivable from the exploitation of the region's natural resources, enhance investment required for industrial development, and increase local processing and value addition of natural resources. Furthermore there is need to increase local inputs into production and integrate the region's enterprises into relevant global value chains.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In conclusion let me re-emphasize that you need to respond to the Summit decisions in your deliberations so that you remain focused on frontloading industrialization and properly sequencing industrial development vis-à-vis market integration as mandated by the August 2014 Victoria Falls Summit .



I wish you fruitful discussions and once again invite you to enjoy Zimbabwe's hospitality.

I declare the meeting officially open.

**I thank you.**