



## **WELCOMING REMARKS**

**BY**

**H.E. DR STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX  
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE SADC CHAIRPERSON'S  
MEETING WITH ALL STAFF AT THE SADC SECRETARIAT**

**SADC HOUSE, GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

**20<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2015**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**Your Excellency Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of SADC and the African Union;**

**Dr Simbarashe Mumbengegwi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;**

**Deputy Executive Secretaries of SADC;**

**Ambassador Joey Bimha, Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials;**

**Members of the SADC Management Team; and SADC Secretariat Staff;**

I feel greatly honoured this morning, to have this opportunity to welcome you Your Excellency to SADC House on the occasion of your historic visit to the Secretariat. It is a great privilege for us all at the Secretariat, to receive you, and we appreciate the honour bestowed on us by your visit, notwithstanding your busy schedule. This attests to your personal commitment to the ideals of this organization, an organization you not only nurtured, but helped its establishment in 1980, albeit as SADCC at the time. Your visit is a great reminder of the resolve of our Founding Fathers, who set the vision for our region, which vision has guided us over the years enabling us to reach where we are today. We thank you greatly, Your Excellency, as we are sure that we can continue to count on your support and leadership in furthering and deepening our regional integration and development agenda, and on all issues that we need to implement to make SADC a better place for its citizens.

**Your Excellency,**

We have gathered here this morning under this roof as Management and Staff of the Secretariat, and we salute you as our committed and visionary leader, we equally thank the Republic of Zimbabwe for her contribution over

the years.

The organization continues to grow from strength to strength, thanks to our principals who have made it possible, and who have resolved to implement the SADC Programme of Action. Through your leadership and guidance, SADC is regionally and international recognized as a credible organization.

Allow me this opportunity, on behalf of the Secretariat, to also convey our sincerest gratitude and appreciations to you, Your Excellency, for your steadfast guidance during your tenure of office as Chairperson of SADC. Under your guidance SADC has developed an Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap, which will bring about socio-economic and technological transformation and thus enable SADC citizens to benefit from our enormous natural resources. We are grateful and inspired by your assurance that the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap will be accorded priority in the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. In this regard, I wish to assure Your Excellency, that the Secretariat is committed and already making progress in finalising the action plan and an effective coordination mechanism for the implementation of the strategy.

It is also during your tenure of office that the Hashim Mbita Research Publication on the Southern African Liberation Struggle was finalized, presented and launched at the 34<sup>th</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Victoria Falls in August 2014. The importance of the struggle for national liberation in our region cannot be over-emphasised. Suffice it to say that SADC was conceived from the trenches of the liberation struggle. It is therefore fitting that all efforts are made by SADC Member States to preserve and disseminate the history of the liberation of Southern Africa for the benefit of the future generation.

### **Your Excellency,**

It is also my profound honour to take this opportunity to convey, through you Your Excellency, the SADC Secretariat's appreciations for the cooperation availed to the Secretariat by officials of the Republic of Zimbabwe, under the leadership of Honourable Simbarashe Mumbengegwi, Minister of

Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of the Council of Ministers.

Their invaluable support and cooperation since Zimbabwe assumed the Chairpersonship of SADC have been exceptional in providing guidance and leadership to the Secretariat.

Please allow me to also make a special recognition to SADC Member States whose commitment has continued to enable SADC to realise its objectives. Through you, Sir, we thank them for their continued support, guidance and provision of resources, which have enabled the Secretariat to implement SADC programmes and to prosper. The Secretariat staff constitute the heartbeat of the SADC Agenda, they are involved in the day to day running of SADC integration and development agenda, and in the implementation of SADC programmes. As a resource at the disposal of SADC, they are committed to the cause of regional integration and development agenda. The organization continues to make good progress in implementation of the regional programmes portfolio, and SADC has remained highly regarded as one of the leading regional bodies facilitating socio-economic development.

The Secretariat's staff have put together issues that need to be brought to your attention, which are aimed at contributing to our quest to accelerate regional integration for the benefit of SADC citizens; improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat, and the welfare of staff. We greatly value this face to face occasion between the Chair and staff, as we consider it an integral part of strengthening, development and evolution of our institution.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to assure you, Your Excellency and Chairperson of SADC that as the Executive Secretary, I and my management team, we are determined to provide the best possible services to our staff to ensure that they discharge their mandate effectively to the best of their abilities, and we can confidently assure you that the staff are committed to deliver on regional integration and development agenda.

We are also cognizant of the fact that the image of SADC as a regional organization that is highly recognized, and performing outstandingly needs continuous branding. We recognize the efforts by member States in exploring ways and means of rewarding our staff competitively and appropriately in line with approved policies. We continue to draw comfort from the fact that Council attends to this issue with the sensitivity it deserves, and the ongoing consideration on the Secretariat's submission on implementing the remuneration policy will be concluded timeously to maintain staff morale. The management is working with the Council, while also recognizing that an empty stomach is not a dependable strategic adviser, and a hungry lion is always angry.

**Your Excellency,**

We have converged here today to listen to you and benefit from your wisdom as one of the greatest icons of Africa. We are proud to have you in our midst as the SADC Chairperson, and the elected representative of our Heads of State and Government who collectively constitute the Summit.

It now gives me great pleasure to invite you, Your Excellency, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Chairperson of SADC and of the African Union, to address this gathering of SADC Management and staff this morning.

***Your Excellency, the floor is yours Sir***

Thank You, Obrigado, Merci, Ndatenda.