

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT KHAMA AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 36TH ORDINARY SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IN LOZITHA, SWAZILAND

## Salutations

Good morning to you all!

1. I feel honoured as I stand here this morning to deliver the official Opening Remarks on the Occasion of the 36th Summit of Heads of State and Government of SADC. Allow me at the outset, to pay tribute to the Government and People of the Kingdom of Swaziland, through you Your Majesty, for the tremendous hospitality, the warm welcome and for the wonderful facilities that have been put at our disposal for this Summit.

2. I also take the liberty to make special recognition of those SADC Heads of State and Government attending for the first time being His Excellency the President of the Republic of Tanzania Mr. John Magufuli.

3. You will recall, that the last Ordinary Summit held in Gaborone, Botswana, in August 2015, was convened under the theme "Accelerating Industrialisation of SADC Economies Through Transformation of Natural Endowment and Improved Human Capital ", whose objective was to bolster the SADC industrialisation drive.

It is encouraging to note that efforts towards the region's new process of industrialisation continues to gain momentum and the work on the preparation of the Industrialisation Action Plan is at an advanced stage. I hope that, with its adoption by Council at its next

meeting in March 2017, the specific actions towards implementation of agreed interventions will accelerate industrialisation in our region, as well as prosperity and welfare of our people.

4. During my tenure as Chairman, I was concerned that the region continued to experience deteriorating access to water and energy supply, food insecurity, inherent poverty and escalation of poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.

The situation was further exacerbated by the severe drought and the El Nino effect during the last season, bringing about major hardships to our people, communities and industrialists. It was against this background, that I convened three key thematic workshops which included High Level Ministerial Workshops on Food Security and Poverty Eradication; Enhanced Access to Energy and Water; and Anti – poaching and the Illegal Trade in Wildlife. The objectives of these workshops were to:

- Raise awareness on the challenges the region is confronted with in these key thematic areas;
- Establish the extent of the challenges and adverse impact on the SADC economic development agenda;
- Engage in a broad based multi-stakeholder discourse in order to analyse and share lessons learnt on these challenges;
- Devise strategies and proposals that the region could implement to address and mitigate challenges of food security, poverty, water and energy crisis as well as illegal trade in wildlife in the short, medium and long term; and

- Develop an Action Plan which the region would consider to adopt, roll out and periodically review as part of its programme implementation.

5. I am pleased to advise that the report on the outcomes of these workshops has been presented to Council and will be presented to Summit for consideration.

6. In relation to regional economic performance, available data provided mainly by Member States indicate that the overall economic performance for the region in 2015 showed marginal growth.

While external factors have largely contributed to the current unsatisfactory performance of the region, internally, many economies of the region remain undiversified and as such they are unable to absorb shocks, including falling commodity prices. The fall in international oil prices and climate change factors including drought and floods have also affected economic performance of Member States to a varying extent.

7. Regional average Real GDP continued to slowdown averaging 2.8 per cent in 2015 compared to 3.3 per cent in 2014. Only DRC and Tanzania recorded real GDP growth rates above the regional target of 7 per cent. Economic growth in the SADC region for 2016 is expected to be at the same level of 2015.

8. Performance of the external sector was unsatisfactory in 2015. This was largely on account of declining commodity prices on the international market. In addition, export volumes declined, generally because of low demand due to weak global economic recovery, whilst import volumes increased marginally.

9. The region's cereal demand and supply analysis shows that the region recorded an overall cereal deficit of 9.3 million tonnes for 2016/17 marketing year and that only one country, Zambia recorded a cereal surplus. Currently, about 40.0 million people in the region are food insecure. It is therefore critical that the region should rise to the occasion and institute the necessary mitigation and recovery measures.

10. In light of the above, I wrote letters to all SADC Heads of State and Government on the declaration of drought. I also launched a Humanitarian Appeal to close a US\$ 2.4 billion gap for the SADC region on 26 July 2016, and I am confident that with the support of our partners, we can overcome this challenge.

I am also pleased to note that the region is united in coordinating the systems and institutional requirements for an effective importation and distribution programme of food and non-food commodities. I therefore wish to call upon our International Cooperating Partners to continue to support SADC in this endeavour and to render the necessary humanitarian and material support to meet the requirements of the region.

11. Climate change as we all know is a reality that we need to face. In a strategic context, the region has developed the "SADC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan" which I wish to encourage Member States to adopt and domesticate for collective implementation. The region also associates itself with the outcomes of the "Paris Agreement" adopted in 2015, as a successor to the Kyoto Protocol. It is encouraging that following the adoption, some Member States have proceeded to sign the Paris Agreement.

I therefore wish to call upon all Member States to ratify this statute, so that our collective efforts to protect the planet can bear fruit and

sustain the generations to come. However, there still remains a critical period of 2020 which is the deadline for the global mechanism for operationalisation of the Agreement.

12. The regional and national programmes to address the HIV and AIDS scourge continue to yield positive results. I therefore appeal to all Member States to remain steadfast with the implementation of the Action Plan attendant to the Maseru Declaration on HIV and AIDS. The region has overwhelmingly benefited from the ongoing interventions supported by the Global Fund in this area.

13. On the political, defence and security cooperation side, the peoples of the Republic of Seychelles, and the United Republic of Tanzania, held successful elections since the last Summit held in August, 2015. May I take this opportunity, to congratulate the people of the Republic of Seychelles and President James Michel, as well as the people of the United Republic of Tanzania, and President John Magufuli, for the credible elections and their victories.

Related to elections I opened the Electoral Commissions Forum for SADC countries whose mandate is to ensure the management of elections is improved. I am encouraged by their mandate and will to enhance democracy through the conduct of credible elections in the region.

14. Whilst in the most part the general elections in SADC countries were free and fair, there were however incidents of pre-elections violence that even resulted in loss of life. T

herefore there is still need to build on tolerance in the political arena. In the same vein, elsewhere in the SADC region we also recorded unrest and protests about postponement of elections, and others involving concerns about economic hardships.

We also noted with great concern continuing hostilities by rebels. So we should as SADC take heed of some of these events as early warning of potential instability and take steps to offer our services in an attempt to ward off any deterioration of these situations.

15. SADC has continued with mediation efforts in the Kingdom of Lesotho. I convened the Double Troika Summit twice in January and June 2016 to assess progress made since the August 2015 Summit in Gaborone, Botswana.

The Double Troika Summit on Lesotho decided on the need for the country to prepare a time-bound roadmap and implement SADC Decisions expeditiously. The Double Troika further approved the operationalisation of the Oversight Committee. A progress report will be presented to this Summit meeting.

16. SADC, through the Republic of South Africa also hosted Amani Africa II Field Training Exercise between October and November 2015. This Exercise, which brought together all Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms contributed to the consolidation of Africa's and SADC capacity to conduct and deploy Peace Support Operations. I commend and thank all Member States that contributed graciously and participated in this exercise.

17. On the continental front, although the process of electing the new Chairperson of the African Union was not concluded in July 2016, we applaud the region for uniting around the candidature of Hon. Dr. Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana. I wish to recognise your continued support for our candidate until the next round of elections set for January 2017, in Addis Ababa.

18. Let me commend the Executive Secretary and her team, for the good work they did in coordinating and supporting the SADC

Chair and the Chair of the Organ, in moving our agenda forward, against a backdrop of many challenges they also faced, which include capacity and an ever growing agenda.

For me it was a pleasure to work with Dr Tax and her team, people who are very committed and dedicated to our organisation and always conducted themselves in a very professional manner.

19. As I conclude my remarks, let me express my gratitude on behalf of the Government and People of Botswana for having been honoured and trusted in leading this body for the last 12 months. In discharging our mandate, we were humbled by your overwhelming support, which made our task an easy one.

As we handover the baton to the Kingdom of Swaziland I urge all our Member States to accord the Kingdom of Swaziland your usual and undoubted support. Moving forward, there is no doubt that collectivity in implementation of our programmes is the only option as it brings a win win situation to all of us and that the vestiges of individuality can no longer further our interests.

20. It is therefore my honour and privilege to officially declare the 36th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government officially open. Allow me to take the liberty to handover the baton to His Majesty, King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland. I wish to take this opportunity to wish him all the very best.

I thank you for your attention.