



STATEMENT BY

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**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION AND CHAIR OF THE SADC
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

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

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

15 MARCH 2019

Honourable Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia and Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation

Honourable Ministers

Your Excellency, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, SADC Executive Secretary

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Delegates

Media fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to warmly welcome you all to Namibia, especially to our capital city Windhoek, in the traditional spirit of SADC family.

I would like take this opportunity to thank you Honourable Ministers and your delegations for finding time to come here and participate in this important SADC Council of Ministers Meeting.

Before I continue with the issues about today's Meeting, let me take this opportunity to say congratulations to all the women present in this room, following the celebrations of International Women's Day on 8 March 2019. March is Women's Month, it is our month. Thus, I wish to stress that SADC has made great and recognisable strides towards women empowerment in the region.

Women representation in various positions of influence and decision making has improved in all SADC Member States. Obviously, more still needs to be done to empower women.

Let me also draw our attention to the climatic situations in the region. Some parts of the region experience flooding other parts, there is drought. I wish to take this opportunity to extend condolences to the people of Malawi and Mozambique where lives were lost due to floods and the effects of the cyclone, respectively.

Honourable Ministers

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Council of Ministers is convening to deliberate on pertinent issues that are vital to SADC in our pursuit of economic growth and development, peace and security, and regional integration.

Among the issues for discussion are, Status of Finances; Status of Comoros Accession to SADC; SADC Solidarity Conference with Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)/Western Sahara; Implementation of Agenda 2063 in SADC; Status of Implementation of the 38th SADC Summit Theme; African Union Institutional Reforms; Formulation of the SADC Post-2020 Agenda; and Post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the ACP Group of States and the European Union.

I am confident that our discussions on these important issues of mutual interest to our region would result in effective implementation, which is in line with Summit decisions and lead to tangible outcomes. It is the outcomes that matter because they would have a positive impact on the people in the region and improve their standards of living.

Honourable Ministers

Ladies and Gentlemen

Two of our member states namely, Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo held elections. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo, for having conducted successful elections in line with the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. I wish the two countries continued peace and stability, and economic development.

I should emphasise that the maintenance of peace and security in the region is of great importance. As H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and Chair of SADC has stressed before that, following recent developments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho and Madagascar, the region is on course to enter an era of sustained peace and stability. The recent political developments are indeed positive and encouraging.

We all know that where there is no peace, there is no development. Therefore, by ensuring peace and stability, SADC countries would pave the way for the consolidation of regional economic development and integration.

Honourable Ministers

Ladies and Gentlemen

Industrialisation remains a key priority among other priorities, hence as SADC we will continue to establish mechanisms through which industrial development is realised. The review of our flagship strategy, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) is one of the ways through which the region would promote new and better ways of accomplishing our goals and objectives.

Since industrialisation is a key priority, it is of great essence to reiterate the significance of implementing the 38th SADC Summit theme ***“Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development”***. Implementation of the theme will contribute immensely to the efforts of ensuring infrastructure development in the region in order to ensure regional connectivity, and the empowerment of the youth, who are the future generation. It is the youth who will take over the role of SADC integration and contribute to the development of the region.

In this regard, I would like to thank the Secretariat, in collaboration with Member States, for making progress in the implementation of the 38th SADC Summit theme. Notably, the convening of the SADC Industrial Week in Windhoek, Namibia; SADC Youth Forum in Windhoek; SADC Youth in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Malawi; and the Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum, in South Africa.

I would like to encourage the Youth, to take advantage of SADC programmes and projects in order to improve their living conditions.

In our efforts to realise our industrialisation goals, I wish to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the support we receive from our development partners, who have been assisting SADC with the implementation of essential programmes and projects, which will benefit the citizens of SADC.

With these few remarks, I wish you fruitful deliberations and declare the Council of Ministers Meeting officially opened.

I thank you

Muito Obrigado

Merci Beaucoup