



WELCOME REMARKS

BY

THE SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

H.E. DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE OPENING OF THE MEETING OF THE INTER-STATE POLITICS
AND DIPLOMACY COMMITTEE OF THE ORGAN ON POLITICS,
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION**

24TH FEBRUARY 2017

DAR ES SALAAM, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

- Honourable Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, Minister of Foreign Affairs, East Africa, Regional and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Chair of the Inter State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC);
- Honourable Ministers;
- Distinguished Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officials;
- Director of the Organ and Secretariat staff;
- Friends and Partners from the media.

It is my humble honour and privilege to welcome you to this important Meeting of the Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. This is an annual event that provides strategic direction on politics diplomacy and democracy in our Region.

Allow me at the onset to thank the Honourable Minister Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania for hosting us, and for the facilities put at our disposal, which has enabled us to conduct the meeting effectively, since we started on Tuesday 21st February 2017.

Honourable Ministers,

This occasion will allow the Committee to, among other things, deliberate on some of the advances your distinguished Committee has made to entrench democracy and good governance, and promote the rule of law. SADC through the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) has continued to monitor elections in Member States, demonstrating the regional commitment to consolidate democracy and good governance. During 2017 elections are expected to take place in Angola and the DRC, and SADC is prepared to support these sister countries in various ways, including deploying SEOM to these Member States.

In 2015, your Committee played an instrumental role in facilitating the successful adoption of the revised *SADC Principles and Guidelines*

Governing Democratic Elections. Today, this electoral policy has been instrumental in guiding SADC Electoral Observation Missions.

Strides have also been taken to strengthen regional conflict resolution, prevention, and management mechanisms that promote peace and stability. In this regard, the established structures such as the Panel of Elders (PoE) and the Mediation Reference Group (MRG) are playing a key role to support SADC's efforts to resolve emerging disputes in Member States.

Honourable Ministers,

Your meeting today will, among others, review progress on the implementation of the Decisions of the meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ held in June 2016, and those of the SADC Council of Ministers and the SADC Summit of Heads of State of August 2016. The meeting will receive an update on political and security situations in the region; in particular the Kingdom of Lesotho and DRC. In the report it is noted that there has been progress, where the Kingdom of Lesotho has implemented some of the SADC decisions, and some of the activities contained in the Reforms Roadmap. With regards to the implementation of the December 2016 Political Agreement reached by DRC Stakeholders, progress has been recorded, and pending issues will be presented for your update. The meeting will also consider proposals on operationalisation of the mechanism to honour Founding Fathers of SADC, and will review and consider a number of SADC policy instruments that will further strengthen SADC's capacity to resolve conflicts, and consolidate democracy.

Honourable Ministers,

With these few introductory remarks, allow me to welcome the Chairperson and our host, Honourable Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, Minister of Foreign Affairs, East Africa, Regional and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Chair of the Inter-State Committee on Politics and Diplomacy to deliver his remarks.

Thank you,

Asante Sana.