



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

SPEECH

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

DR LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

AND CHAIRPERSON OF

THE SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

AT THE SADC HEADQUARTERS



GABORONE, BOTSWANA

MONDAY, 13TH DECEMBER 2021

- **Honourable Eisenhower Nduwa Mkaka, Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi**
- **Your Excellency, Executive Secretary of SADC, Mr Elias Magosi,**
- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Your Excellences, Ambassadors, High Commissioners present,**
- **Deputy Executive Secretary responsible for Corporate Affairs, His Excellency, Joseph Nourice,**
- **Deputy Executive Secretary responsible for Regional Integration, Dr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo,**
- **Members of Staff of the SADC Secretariat, Invited Guests,**
- **Members of the Press,**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the people of Botswana under the leadership of my brother, His Excellency, Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to me and my delegation since our arrival yesterday.

I am also grateful to the SADC Executive Secretary, His Excellency Mr Elias Magosi, and the entire team at the Secretariat, for making this visit a reality. Though I have been looking forward to visit the SADC Headquarters since the time I assumed its Chairship, to actually be standing here before you like this is an honour.

Even so, we have come here to work. Our work is inspired by the significant progress made thus far in advancing regional cooperation in line with the Lusaka Declaration. Much work remains in order for us to fulfil the vision our founding fathers cast in 1979 under the theme “Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation”.

Now that our 16-member bloc has a population of over 350 million, it has evolved from being a coordinating conference to being an active regional community focused on development and unity.

I know that making progress on multilateral matters is no easy task these days, as we continue to contend with the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, a complex and ever-shifting enemy. But the complexity and longevity of the pandemic has also highlighted our interconnectedness and our need to work together more, not less. That is why the chosen theme of the 41st Summit was “Bolstering Productive Capacities in the Face of COVID 19 Pandemic for Inclusive, Sustainable Economic and Industrial Transformation”.

This theme is meant to take forward the implementation of the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063, with a specific focus on enhancing regional productive capacities and building on the solid foundation already laid within the framework of the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

The RISDP envisions a peaceful, middle to high income industrialised region, a bastion of prosperity and liberty for all its citizens. We must produce tangible results in pursuit of that vision. This means our efforts must focus on consolidating the community by leveraging areas of excellence and implementing priorities to achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development; removing all barriers to deeper integration and good governance; and promoting durable peace and security as guided by the principles of the SADC Treaty and Agenda.

In short, our task is simple, but not easy. Our task is to increase regional integration and development. Our task is to become a united front against the common enemies of poverty, cross-border crime, terrorism, civil conflict, climate change, natural disasters, unemployment, and pandemic. Our task is to strengthen regional ties between member states to withstand and diffuse new and emerging threats against our security, prosperity, liberty, and dignity. Our task is to insist to all our partners that the SADC we want is a SADC that is at once safe, rich, free, and good.

When I speak of partners, I include non-state actors and institutions that do the critical work of complementing our efforts in identifying threats, strengthening community resilience and assisting vulnerable groups. I include entities whose work is broadening political participation, improving accountability, and increasing governance capacity.

I will therefore count on you, Executive Secretary, to continue leading your team's efforts and energies towards programmes and projects that respond to these challenges. I will count on you to ensure that our regional programmes are not just strategically aligned with national policies and strategies, but also with continental and global development processes such as the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. I will count on you to lead a strong, responsive, and efficient Secretariat that embodies stewardship, creativity and innovation. I will count on you to be vigilant against the injudicious use of the limited resources coming from member States.

For my part, I pledge to support and work with you closely in addressing any institutional and political obstacles in the path of our journey towards economic integration. I pledge to push for the implementation of the RISDP 2020-30. I pledge to rally support for our economic integration agenda from our International Cooperating Partners. I pledge to lend my voice to the cause of diversifying our funding sources and explore collaboration opportunities with non-traditional partners. And finally, I pledge to promote our regional cohesion among Africa's emerging young leaders so that the next generation of hands into which we must pass on the baton of economic integration efforts are prepared. Toward that end, I am pleased to announce the establishment of the Chakwera Prize for Public Speaking, which will invite recorded submissions of college students across Africa articulating their innovative ideas for strengthening Pan-African unity.

Let me conclude by saying that on behalf of Member States, I am grateful for you, Executive Secretary and your entire staff here for your professionalism, dedication, and commitment to the successful

implementation of all SADC programmes. I say to you, continue to execute your duties with integrity; continue to work with common purpose; continue to implement SADC Summit Decisions with expedition; continue to make SADC the best region in Africa to live, to work, to visit, and to trade.

Together, we can. Together, we will. Together, we must.

I thank you.

Merci beaucoup.

Muito obrigado.

Asante Sana Re a leboga.