



**WELCOME REMARKS**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ELIAS M MAGOSI  
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO THE SADC  
SECRETARIAT BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI, AND CHAIRPERSON  
OF SADC**

**13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

**Your Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, and Chairperson of SADC;**

**Honourable Eisenhower Mkaka, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi, and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;**

**Honourable Dr. Lemogang Kwape, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana, and Outgoing Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;**

**Permanent Secretaries;**

**Deputy Executive Secretaries of SADC, Directors and all Secretariat Staff;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Representatives of the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is a great pleasure for me and honour to receive Your Excellency and your delegation this morning at the SADC Headquarters here in Gaborone, the Republic of Botswana. Your Excellency's visit, in the midst of the current challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, signifies your strong commitment to the SADC ideals and aspirations, as attested by the theme proposed by Your Excellency, for the 41<sup>st</sup> SADC Summit: ***“Bolstering Productive Capacities in the Face of COVID 19 Pandemic for Inclusive, Sustainable Economic and Industrial Transformation”***.

Let me take this opportunity, Your Excellency, on behalf of the Secretariat, to convey our sincere gratitude and appreciation to you, for making time out of your busy schedule to visit the Secretariat. We also thank you for your outstanding leadership and guidance since assuming the Chairpersonship of SADC this August.

It is also my profound honour to take this opportunity to convey, through you, Your Excellency, the SADC Secretariat's appreciation of the cordial working relations with the officials of the Republic of Malawi, under the leadership of Honourable Eisenhower Nduwa Mkaka, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of Council. Their exceptional support has been instrumental in the success of all events that Malawi has hosted to date, and in support of the implementation of the SADC agenda during the year.

**Your Excellency**, the SADC Secretariat is the principal executive institution of SADC. It is committed to coordinating the SADC regional integration and development agenda, and to support Member States' efforts towards the achievement of the region's ideals and development objectives as outlined in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020 – 2030. The Secretariat therefore remains seized with strategic planning and management of the programmes of SADC; implementation of Summit and Council decisions; provision of advice on integration of the region; as well as cooperation with all our cooperating partners. With the ultimate objective of sustaining peace and security, and accelerating socio-economic development through deeper integration of SADC Member States, a number of programs have been and continue to be implemented. A detailed progress update will be shared in the course of this morning's programme, including on the Implementation of the 41<sup>st</sup> SADC Summit Theme of ***“Bolstering Productive Capacities in the Face of COVID 19 Pandemic for Inclusive, Sustainable Economic and Industrial Transformation”***.

The Secretariat is therefore appreciative of your visit, Your Excellency, as it provides an opportunity for us to listen to you and to benefit from your wisdom and guidance in the delivery of the Secretariat's mandate. Your visit also provides an opportunity for us to present issues that need to be brought to Your Excellency's attention, which are aimed at contributing to our quest to accelerate regional integration for the benefit of SADC citizens, and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat. We greatly value this interaction between the SADC Chairperson and staff

of the Secretariat, and consider it an integral part of strengthening development, evolution and relevance of this institution.

Let me also assure you, Your Excellency, of the Secretariat's commitment to deliver on its responsibilities. We are cognizant that the image of SADC as a regional organization, the high level recognition and acclamation as a credible organisation, need to be sustained and nurtured. In this regard, I would like to thank all staff of the Secretariat for their professionalism, commitment, and dedication in serving the region and in delivering on the Integration Agenda, even during these challenging times. Theirs is a genuine and true sacrifice of themselves, their families and social lives, just to serve the region to the best of their abilities. I stand here proudly, Your Excellency, and want to commend the staff from the bottom of my heart for the hard work. With all the successes and acclamations received so far from the various quarters, these very employees have been the main actors that have created this wonderful movie. This is not to suggest in any way that we have arrived and there is no room for improvement, far from it. There is no doubt that we must certainly improve our procedures and processes that, though well intended, do not enable the Secretariat to be agile, flexible and responsive to Member States, our clients, suppliers, and our cooperating partners. We are committed, Your Excellency, to bring these changes much sooner into your institution.

Your Excellency, I want to recognize the support and collaboration we have had in the forty-one years with Member States, in the execution of our functions. They remain our compass from which we get direction on all programmes, policies, agreements and various protocols, and our voice of reason in many occasions. We want to enhance this partnership even further with the support to the Secretariat through supportive initiatives including seconding of staff, filling of flexi positions and enhanced talent acquisition. We also want to assist Member States to revive and strengthen the SADC National Committees, to give impetus to the region to implement the integration agenda. All of us, Your Excellency, have a critical role to play and must be accountable for the resources we use, and the results we produce. All of us!

I also recognize the support provided by Regional and International Cooperating Partners in our development journey. They have remained an important anchor to our programming design and execution. The success we have realized to date would not be possible without this high degree of collaboration and meaningful engagement. Equally, these partnerships will be protected and nurtured, especially now as we pursue our lofty aspirations in the RISDP.

It is befitting that we also extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Botswana, not only for hosting the Secretariat headquarters, but also for the continued support to the organisation and staff. For us to have performed and delivered consistently over the last forty-one years, is testimony to the peace and safety we have enjoyed all this time, and the warm reception of the people of Botswana. We certainly do not take these gestures for granted and wish to express our sincere thanks to the Government.

With these few remarks, Your Excellency, you are once more warmly welcome to the Secretariat, and to Gaborone. We are at your service and remain committed to work with and support you, Your Excellency, during your tenure as the SADC Chairperson. We have no doubt that, under your leadership and stewardship, the region will accelerate and deepen regional integration and economic development, and particularly the industrialisation drive.

Once more, a hearty welcome to you Sir. I thank you.

**ZIKOMO! OBRIGADO! MERCI! ASANTE! KEALEBOGA!**