



STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR ELIAS M. MAGOSI

SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE SADC REGIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM
CENTRE**

28 FEBRUARY 2022

DAR ES SALAAM, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Hon. Machana Ronald Shamukuni, Minister for Employment, Labour Productivity, and Skills Development of the Republic of Botswana, and Representative of the Outgoing Chairperson of the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Hon. Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Minister of Defence of the United Republic of Tanzania;

Ms Candith Mashego Dlamini, Hon. Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Representative of the Chairperson of the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Hon. Jennelly Matundu, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia, and Representative of the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers, here present

Your Excellencies, SADC Ambassadors Accredited to the United Republic of Tanzania;

Your Excellencies, Representatives of International Cooperating Partners;

Heads of National Counter Terrorism/Coordination Centres of SADC Member States here present;

Acting Coordinator of the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism and staff;

Senior Officials;

Chiefs of Defence and Security Sectors;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to this important occasion, to witness the launch of the SADC Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre (SADC RCTC) here in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. I wish to express my humble appreciation for your presence at this historic event, which exemplifies the inherent spirit of strengthened partnerships and commitment by the SADC Member States in dealing with security challenges, especially the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in the SADC Region.

During the August 2015 Summit, held in Gaborone, Botswana, the SADC Heads of State and Government adopted the Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its Plan of Action as a comprehensive, integrated and operational framework geared towards preventing and countering terrorism, as well as enhancing cooperation and coordination. The Summit also noted that there was need for a regional counter-terrorism coordinating body to facilitate regional, continental and international co-operation in combatting terrorism.

Your Excellences, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is a reality now that the Centre (RCTC) is established, and this is in accordance with the provisions of the SADC Treaty; the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation of 2001; and the SADC Mutual Defence Pact of 2003, all which are geared towards the preservation of peace, security and stability in the SADC region. The Centre was created to ensure enhanced coordination, strengthened partnerships, as well as to foster timely response to terrorism and violent extremism within the region.

It is important to highlight the major roles and responsibilities of the Centre, which are to:

- i. Advise SADC on Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) policies, programmes and deployments within the SADC Region;
- ii. Coordinate the implementation of the SADC Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and lead the review process of the strategies, including related implementation plans; and
- iii. Research, assess, analyse and timely disseminate information to National Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism agencies and other relevant national stakeholders, as well as to regional, the African Union, and international partners, as guide by the relevant bilateral agreements. This is the most important of all because failure to disseminate information timely could have unintended catastrophic results for the Member States and region.

As a specialised institution, the Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre will work with the SADC Secretariat to complement existing efforts, and collaborate on programmes aimed at conflict prevention, de-radicalisation and other aspects in the fight against terrorism.

Your Excellences, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our partners have been instrumental in supporting the development and revision of the 2015 Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its Action Plan. I wish to add the Secretariat's voice in commending their continued and sustained support at regional and national levels, in the development of national counter terrorism strategies; strengthening of the Rule of Law-based Criminal Justice Responses for Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism;

and capacity building interventions including in strategic threat assessments, and protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks.

While significant progress has been made in the implementation of the SADC Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy, there is still a need for the adoption of counter terrorism measures, taking into consideration the current security landscape and emerging threats. These measures include comprehensive legislation and policies; accelerated formulation of National Counter-Terrorism Strategies and Plans of Action; strengthening of National Counter-Terrorism Centres (NCTCs) and especially Financial Intelligence Units; strengthening of criminal justice system through capacity building and training to effectively detect, prevent, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism-related offences; and building of capacity to curb the spread of radicalism through social media and the internet.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is quite evident that overcoming terrorism and violent extremism will only be achieved if we work together, in unison to fight all forms and manifestations of this real threat. As terrorist groups adapt, we must also adapt our tools and actions to ensure that we counter their efforts and stop them in their tracks. The fight against terrorism and violent extremism, therefore, calls for a united front and robust response from all SADC Member States.

In conclusion, let me express our deep appreciation to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for offering to host the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Centre. I also want to thank the Government and the people of this beautiful country for the facilities and hospitality accorded me and my team since our arrival here in Dar es Salam. ***Asante sana! Thank you very much!***

May I also extend my thanks and appreciation to the SADC Member States for supporting this process to its successful conclusion, including seconding officers to operationalise the Centre. This again is testimony of Member States' commitment to deal with the eminent threat of terrorism, by committing the required resources.

Last, but not least, I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to my predecessor at the helm of the SADC Secretariat, Honourable Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, the former Executive Secretary of SADC, and now Minister of Defence of the United Republic of Tanzania, for initiating the whole process of establishing the Regional Counter Terrorism Centre. We look forward to partnering with you and this great Republic to ensure this Centre delivers its mandate, and that its impact is felt far and wide within the SADC region. The Secretariat remains committed and supportive to ensure that the Centre succeeds.

Once more, welcome **Honourable Ministers, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.**

I thank you for your attention!

Merci beaucoup!

Muito obrigado!

Asante sana!