



REMARKS

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

TO THE

**24th MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE ORGAN
(MCO) ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION**

19TH JULY 2022

Hon. Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Co-operation of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Hon. Dr Lemogang Kwape, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Botswana and Outgoing Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Hon. Frans Kapofi Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs of the Republic of Namibia and Incoming Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers from SADC Member States;

Distinguished Senior Officials, Chiefs of Security Institutions and Delegates from SADC Member States;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this 24th meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

Honourable Ministers,

This meeting will receive progress reports on the implementation of the decisions made at the last MCO, as well as deliberate on strategic issues in defence, peace and security cooperation. Overall, the security and political situation in the region remains stable. However, there are still pockets of security challenges in some of our Member States and this meeting will, among others, discuss the situation in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the updates in the Kingdom of Lesotho, and northern parts of the Republic of Mozambique which SADC remains seized with.

In the area of the consolidation of democracy, the meeting will receive a report on the elections that were held in August, 2021, in the Republic of Zambia under a very dire public health situation posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the failure to deploy the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM), the Secretariat supported SEOM to maintain daily consultations with electoral stakeholders in Zambia during the polls leading to peaceful elections. This year, the Secretariat will support SEOM to the Republic of Angola and the Kingdom of Lesotho to hold their national elections. The Secretariat looks forward to the Member States providing the appropriate personnel, particularly those already trained by the Secretariat in ICT-based election observation, to be deployed to the two Member States for election observation purposes.

Honourable Ministers,

The SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) plays an important function in the consolidation of democracy in the Region. As an advisory structure on electoral matters, it is critical that the SEAC is composed of well-qualified and experienced citizens from the region.

It is in this respect that your meeting is expected to consider a number of issues that will make the operations of the SEAC more effective. At present, the SEAC has vacancies on the structure, and the Secretariat pleads with Member States that have not provided nominations for membership to the SEAC to do so.

Honourable Ministers,

The prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts remains the most sustainable method for the enhancement of peace and security in the Region. At the apex, the SADC Mediation, Conflict Prevention and Preventative Diplomacy Structure is led by H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Panel of Elders (PoE). The Panel of Elders is supported by the Mediation Reference Group (MRG) which provides the requisite technical input. It is imperative that we make efficient use of these structures and benefit from the wisdom of the

eminent persons of the region in preventing and resolving significant inter and intra-State conflicts.

Honourable Ministers,

Since 2014, the region as a collective, has played a significant role in assisting the Kingdom of Lesotho to find lasting solutions to her political and security challenges. These efforts led to the stabilisation of the security sector, and admirably parts of that sector, notably, the Lesotho Defence Force are also contributing to regional peace and security initiatives in the Republic of Mozambique as part of the SADC Standby Force deployment in Cabo Delgado Province.

- This meeting will be briefed on developments in Lesotho regarding the implementation of the SADC Decisions on the political and security situation in the Kingdom. Allow me to express the Region's gratitude to all stakeholders and the SADC Facilitator for the progress that has been made so far.

Honourable Ministers,

In our efforts to recognise and document our struggles for liberation, SADC embarked on an intensive process of producing the Hashim Mbita Publication in English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili languages. I am pleased to inform your meeting that the publication is ready in the first three languages, and the Secretariat has begun the process of publishing this important history in Kiswahili. The delivery of the publication has also begun, and for the benefit of the entire region, it is expected that all Member States will receive copies thereof by the end of October, 2022. In this regard, I urge all our citizens, be they academics, students, or artists to make full use of this publication in all their endeavours.

Honourable Ministers,

The significance of owning our peace and security infrastructure cannot be over emphasised in the achievement of our regional development objectives. In this respect, the SADC Regional Logistic Depot (RLD) is a

key aspect of this over-arching regional security architecture. Work must now begin for the construction of the RLD in order to attain its Initial Operating Capability by 2024.

- This meeting will be updated on progress and challenges, particularly in the mobilisation of the required resources, including proposals that will enable the region to raise the required resources to fill the gap in a phased approach, and achieve the 2024 – time frame.

Honourable Ministers,

The implementation of the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Strategy and its Action Plan continues. In this context, the SADC Regional Counter Terrorism Centre (SADC-RCTC) was officially launched on 28 February 2022, in the United Republic of Tanzania, marking the beginning of phase one of its establishment. This meeting will be briefed on the progress that has been made in making the centre operational.

Preventing and combating transnational organised crime in the region remains one of the priorities because money laundering, drug trafficking, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and terrorism financing, have negative impact on peace, security development and regional integration.

- In this regard, this meeting will be briefed on the progress made so far in rolling out the Regional Strategy for combating Transnational organized crimes which was adopted last year.

Honourable Ministers,

Achieving regional convergence in the modalities for the movement of natural persons remains an incomplete exercise which is critical for the attainment of our socio-economic integration objectives.

- The meeting will be updated on the developments on the Protocol on Facilitation of Movement of Persons which is yet to come into force, as well as the status on concluding bilateral Visa Exemption

Agreements for SADC citizens in line with the principle of reciprocity. It is important that we achieve the objective of the facilitation of the movement of persons within our own region as this will buttress our trade and development goals, in accordance with the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.

- The meeting will also be briefed on the developments on the Protocol against corruption as well as consider a number of regional frameworks that have been developed to enhance the objectives of the protocol against corruption, enhance the regional response to wildlife crime and management of migration.

Honourable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates,

As I conclude, allow me to extend our gratitude to the Government of South Africa, and in particular to Honourable Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Co-operation of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the MCO and her Team, for her guidance and for steering the Organ agenda successfully throughout the year.

I also wish to commend Member States for their commitment and contributions that resulted in the progress attained thus far. May I also thank the Senior Officials, the Chiefs of Defence, Security Intelligence, Police, Correctional Services, and the Secretariat Staff for working very hard during the year, dealing with multiple challenges and emergencies diligently.

Further, allow me to bid farewell to the Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs (Organ), Mr Jorge Cardoso, a citizen of the Republic of Angola whose tenure comes to an end in November 2022; and to Brig. General Emmanuel Kaputa, the Chief of Staff of the SADC Standby Force, a citizen of the Democratic Republic of Congo whose tenure ended on 30th June 2022. I am deeply grateful to them for their immense contribution to SADC's noble cause to achieve peace and security in the region.

I wish to assure you that your Secretariat remains committed to supporting your efforts in advancing the objectives set out for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, for the benefit of SADC citizens. May I also welcome and assure the incoming MCO Chairperson, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Namibia, Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of the Secretariat's unwavering support, commitment, and continued professionalism in the execution of the Organ mandate.

With these remarks, it is now my honour to invite Honourable Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Co-operation of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the MCO to deliver the opening remarks.

I thank you for your attention!

Merci beaucoup!

Muito Obrigado!

Asante Sana!