



ADDRESS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. OLIVIER MWENZE
MUKALENG, MINISTER OF HYDRAULIC
RESOURCES AND ELECTRICITY OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AT THE
41ST JOINT MEETING OF MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR ENERGY AND WATER OF
THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY (SADC)**

4TH NOVEMBER 2022

Your Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Head of State and current Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community;

Your Excellency the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Head of Government;

Presidents of the National Assembly and Senate of the Democratic Republic of Congo;

**Distinguished Ministers in charge of Energy and Water of SADC,
Dear Colleagues;**

Your Excellencies, Ministers of the Government, Dear Colleagues;

The Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community;

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Senior Officials;**

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen in your own right, all protocol observed.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo welcomes the responsibility it has today of organising the 41st Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers in charge of Energy and Water, following the one held last December in Lilongwe, Malawi.

First of all, I would like to extend my country's heartfelt thanks to all the Member States for the confidence placed in my country by electing it as the current Chair of SADC.

It is also an opportunity for me to express my gratitude to His Excellency Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and current Chairperson of SADC, who has made energy and water issues a priority for the sub-region, by focusing on:

- Governance and integration;
- Infrastructure development;
- Management of water and energy resources;
- Promotion of women's rights.

This is also the point at which it is appropriate to commend the efforts of His Excellency the Prime Minister Jean Michel SAMA LUKONDE, Head of Government, for his wide-ranging support necessary for the smooth running of these meetings.

I would also like to express my thanks to Mr MPEDI MAGOSI, SADC Executive Secretary, for choosing the Democratic Republic of Congo as the host country for this 41st meeting.

At the same time, I would like to thank you, Ministers and colleagues, for your availability to participate in this meeting. This bears witness to your personal and collective commitment and dedication to improving the quality of life of our populations through access to energy and water.

Your Excellencies;

The present meeting, whose theme is: "**Promoting industrialisation through agro-processing, mineral beneficiation and regional value chains for inclusive and resilient economic growth**", should guide us to resolutions and decisions that are best suited to the problems in our various countries in this area.

According to the World Bank estimates, the world's agricultural production will need to grow by 50 to 70% by 2050 to cope with the expected population explosion. This compelling observation makes agriculture and agro-industry indispensable vectors, not only to respond to the problems of food security or the fight against poverty, particularly in rural areas, but also to serve as levers for more sustainable development in the SADC Member States.

A significant amount of investment is needed to meet these challenges.

Private projects in the agricultural and agro-industrial sectors at all stages of the value chain require active support from the respective governments. Upstream, this means, for example, enabling smallholders to have access to the finance and inputs needed to conduct their activities, improve yields and better secure their income. Downstream, the aim is to improve processing and storage activities, but also to invest in infrastructure in order to reduce losses and speed

up the distribution of products on local, regional and international markets.

Supporting secure access to energy in all its forms and to water in private activities requires a strict framework for the environmental and social risks involved. Indeed, the issue of deforestation is fundamental, since it causes greenhouse gas emissions and irreversible losses of biodiversity, not to mention the risks of pollution and land issues. On the social level, particular attention should be paid to working conditions and the sharing of the value created, which is a necessary condition for fighting poverty.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the low rate of access to energy accelerates deforestation and the low rate of access to water leads to water-borne diseases and keeps the population in poverty, even though the country has 52 percent of Africa's fresh surface water reserves, i.e. 10 percent of the world's total, and 23 percent of renewable water resources.

Your Excellencies;

The second part of our theme, which focuses on mineral beneficiation and the development of regional value chains with a view to achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, should lead us to take into account the economic realities of our States in this post-Covid-19 period.

Indeed, African countries are facing many challenges in their quest for development, among which is first and foremost the issue of energy for mineral processing necessary for the growth of their economies. There is no need to recall the vulnerability and fragility facing the various

economies of the continent, and those of SADC in particular, due to the lack of transformation of our structurally rentier economic models.

This transformation of economic models, albeit to varying degrees, presents itself as a "collective action problem".

Among the major issues at the core of this problem in the 21st century is, on the one hand, not only the capacity of economic actors in the sub-region to revive intra-regional trade, but also to carve out a better place for themselves in world trade; and, on the other hand, the need to create manufacturing value-added and jobs through global or regional value chains, in order to respond to the development concerns of the sub-region.

In fact, successful insertion into the Regional Value Chains (RVCs) within SADC, knowing that its comparative advantages remain pronounced, mainly, in natural resources (agricultural and mining sectors), would thus make it possible to blur the erosion of manufacturing value that has been rampant in this sub-region for nearly three decades.

The region's exports are dominated by unprocessed or insufficiently processed products, mainly from the agricultural and mining sectors, with very low value yields. SADC continues to export unprocessed agricultural products, which bring in about 10% of their potential value.

Yet our countries can fit well into these value chains, on the one hand, through our significant comparative advantages, i.e. (large global reserves of energy, water, mineral resources, ...), on the other hand, through the production of a Regional Public Good (RPG), namely the coordination of their industrial policies based on the promotion of energy and water sector policies.

Indeed, based on our inter-state cooperation, there is a need to pool our resources and act collectively and effectively to tackle a common problem, namely the economic transformation of the sub-region.

Your Excellencies;

Energy is an important part of the economy and a fundamental factor of production. In general, its consumption increases in line with the growth of economic activities.

This reality should inspire us and force us to take into account the various projects planned within the framework of the 40th Joint Meeting of the SADC Ministers in charge of Energy and Water, notably on:

- The production of electricity by Hydroelectric Power Stations and New and Renewable Energies;
- Energy Interconnection Lines;
- Energy efficiency;
- Norms and Standards and technical regulations;
- Stakeholder capacity building;
- Improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation;
- Hydrocarbon upgrading.

Ensuring access to reliable, sustainable, modern and affordable energy services for all is one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) endorsed in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. To achieve this, it is recommended to accelerate the energy transition.

To this end, it should be recognised that all sectors are developing at the same pace as the general economy and that the energy sector should therefore behave in the same way. Therefore, energy and

development in our economies must raise important questions and reflections. The current and future energy needs of our populations are not being met and the economic development we are advocating will probably lead to an increase in energy demand.

Let me reiterate that the SADC region has abundant fossil fuel resources and the technologies to exploit them are improving, which is both good and bad news.

The bad news is that the consumption of these fuels most certainly leads to local air pollution problems with global and regional consequences, as well as greenhouse gas accumulation and climate disruption. We tend to think of the environment as a luxury that the poorest can hardly afford, which is a misconception. Indeed, damage to the environment can affect our basic needs such as food, water and child development.

This is where we need to recognise that the links between energy, water, oil, gas, politics and economics are subtle and complex. It is important, through this meeting of the SADC Ministers in charge of Energy and Water, to study these relationships in depth so that well-intentioned policies do not exacerbate the situation instead of improving it, and so that the efforts made can take advantage of potential synergies in energy and environmental solutions.

Indeed, in the wake of the 42nd Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government held in Kinshasa, DRC, whose theme is that of the present meeting, it is worth recalling that the implementation of the Strategy and Roadmap for the Industrialisation of our region remains dependent on the promotion of water and energy infrastructure in all its forms in our respective States.

It is well known that, at present, the overall rate of access to electricity and water remains low. And yet, the supply of energy and water is one

of the sine qua non conditions for industrial activity. This is a kind of challenge for us, the government authorities in charge of energy and water management.

Your Excellencies;

We are therefore invited to support industrialisation by promoting energy development programmes adapted to industrialisation policies and strategies.

In the case of the DRC, the Master Plan for Industrialisation, which is in the process of being implemented, requires connectivity and electricity and water distribution programmes.

We are aware of this and are working on it because industrialisation is a cross-cutting area. And, there are many opportunities for economic operators in the SADC region to invest in these sectors.

Before concluding, allow me to say that it is its ecosystem, its soil and subsoil, its hydroelectric and mining potential. The Democratic Republic of Congo, a solution country in the fight against climate change, remains an important link in the development of our SADC zone.

I am convinced that these meetings will facilitate the achievement of the ambitious programme to promote industrialisation that we have set for our region.

Your Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Head of State and current Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community;

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of Congo, Head of Government;

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Ladies and Gentlemen in your own right, all protocol observed.

In conclusion, I hope that this meeting will provide another opportunity to take stock of our sub-regional efforts in the field of energy and water, and in so doing, consolidate the gains made, identify the challenges and propose appropriate solutions.

In closing, I reiterate my gratitude to all the delegations from SADC Member States and wish us fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention.