



**OPENING REMARKS BY HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
AND CHAIR OF THE SADC MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE
ORGAN (MCO)**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF THE
25th ORDINARY MEETING OF THE MCO**

20 JULY 2023

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Honourable Stanley K. Kakubo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia, and Incoming Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ,

Honourable Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Outgoing Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation,

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

Your Excellency Mr. Elias Mpedi Magosi, SADC Executive Secretary,

Chairperson of the Senior Officials,

Distinguished Senior Officials, Chiefs of Defence and Security Institutions, as well as Delegates from SADC Member States,

SADC Secretariat,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to the Opening Ceremony of the 25th Meeting of the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. The Organ is the main body for the promotion and protection of peace, security and stability in the SADC Region.

It is almost one year since Namibia took over the Chairship of the Organ on 18 August 2023. Since then, we have held one Extraordinary Meeting of the MCO in November 2022, and this Meeting constitutes our regular annual Meeting which will consider the Political and Security in the Region, the Consolidation of Democracy in the Region, Public Security, Police, State Security and the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre.

Namibia convened six (6) Extraordinary Meetings of the MCO Troika Plus since September 2022, in particular to consider the security situations in the Eastern DRC and in Northern Mozambique, respectively. Collectively, we have made great

strides towards strengthening the peace, security and stability of the Region, which are critical ingredients for sustainable development.

In this regard, our Region has decided to deploy, by 30 September 2023, a SADC Standby Force Brigade Plus, in support of the DRC to address the insecurity in the eastern part of the country. Details of the SADC Mission in DRC (SAMIDRC) will be finalised over the next few months.

The terrorists that had plagued the Northern Province of the Republic of Mozambique, have been largely neutralised, and the livelihoods of internally displaced persons are being revived, with the support of Friendly Forces and Humanitarian Partners. In order to consolidate the gains made in the fight against terrorism in Cabo Delgado, the SADC Organ Troika Plus Virtual Meeting of 11 July 2023 recommended to the upcoming SADC Summit in August, for SAMIM to be extended for one year, as of 16 July 2023.

Your Excellencies,

Our Meeting will receive an update on Trafficking in Persons in the Region. This phenomenon requires us all to strengthen our legal provisions, enhance our capacity and raise more awareness on trafficking in persons.

Our Senior Officials have also deliberated on the legal instrument establishing the SADC Tourism UNIVISA, which was finalised by the Public Security Sector. Our Meeting is expected to approve this instrument, which will further strengthen our regional integration, in the area of immigration.

Our Ministerial Meeting will further consider the status of ratifications of the Protocol on the Facilitation of the Movement of Persons in the SADC Region (2005), which is not yet in force. Member States that have not yet signed and ratified this Protocol are encouraged to do so, in order to fully realise our regional integrated agenda. The entering into force of the Protocol will further boost intra-regional tourism, and enable people to people exchange, business interactions and investment across the Region.

With these few remarks, I declare the 25th Session of the MCO, officially open.