

Acceptance Speech by His Excellency João Lourenço,
President of the Republic of Angola and Chairperson of the
Southern African Development Community, at the 43rd
Ordinary SADC Summit
Luanda, 17th August 2023

- Your Majesty, King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Eswatini;

H.E Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the
Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Chairperson of
Southern African Development Community

- H.E. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the
Republic of South Africa;

- H.E. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the
Republic of Botswana;

- H.E. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the
Republic of Malawi;

- H.E. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of
Mozambique;

- H.E. Hage Gottfried Geingob, President of the Republic of
Namibia;

- H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of
Zambia;

- H.E. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the
Republic of Zimbabwe;

-Your Excellencies Representatives of Heads of State and
Government;

H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;

- Your Excellences the Holders of Angolan Sovereign Bodies;

- H.E. Elias Mpedi Magosi, Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community SADC;

- H.E. António Pedro, Acting Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;

- H.E. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank;

- Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Angola;

-Excellences;

- Distinguished ladies, gentlemen;

Allow me first of all to thank His Excellency Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, for the wise way in which he led our organisation during this last year, always working towards the implementation of the SADC Development and Regional Integration Agenda.

Excellency, you leave us a great legacy, and it is our responsibility to work to enhance and maximise the work you have done, so I am counting on the support and

experience of the President and the other Heads of State of our regional organisation.

The Republic of Angola will seek to develop a Chairmanship that meets the expectations of the citizens of our Community and helps to add another pillar to the organisation's socio-economic and political development project, with a view to the future realisation of SADC's Vision 2050, which envisages a region with political and social stability, peace and economic development, justice and freedom for its citizens.

Excellencies,
Distinguished ladies, gentlemen;

The theme of this conference: *“Human and financial capital: the key levers for sustainable industrialization of the SADC Region”*, based on Pillar 1 of the SADC Indicative Strategic Regional Development Plan, ¹will create opportunities to advance the agenda of a region geared towards technological and industrial transformation, through skills development, financial capacity building and the deepening of regional integration and the social growth of our populations.

In this year of presidency, we will try to work diligently and with a sense of responsibility, in order to face the great present and future challenges facing our organisation in a united manner.

¹Industrial Development and Market Integration

The issue of women and their role in the integral development of our region, with a view to building a society with greater social justice, will be one of the important points of our work.

As we know, although in recent years we have made important progress in the region in terms of materialising gender parity in prominent positions in our societies, the results still fall short of what has been established by SADC.

We intend to work with the Member States to create mechanisms and incentives at regional level that will make it easier for women to find a place in a wide variety of sectors where the numbers are still worrying, especially in the fields of engineering and technology, which will be our main challenge.

I would like to note with some satisfaction the launch of the SADC Gender and Development Monitor in the DRC in 2022, through which the member states commit to gender parity and the empowerment of women, thereby promoting female participation in all sectors, whether in politics, economic and business activity, science, sport, the defence and security sector, associations and other areas of life in our countries.

In Angola, we are committed to giving women an important role in all sectors of national life. The country recognises and values the active and positive role played by Angolan women within the framework of the complex responsibilities that have been entrusted to them.

During the year of our presidency we will make a strong commitment to human capital as one of the main pillars of the economic and social development of our Regional Community.

In this context, our main challenge will be focused on the training and technical-vocational qualification of our young people, with a view to obtaining skills that facilitate access to employment and ensure that we are prepared to face the challenges of the 4th Industrial Revolution and the digitalisation of our economies.

We will work on the need to diversify the sources of funding for the implementation of projects and programmes at Member State and Regional level, with a view to reducing the level of dependence on the always helpful and remarkable solidarity of our International Cooperation Partners.

We will pay particular attention to the need to operationalise the Regional Development Fund (FDR) and other existing investment attracting mechanisms.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge Member States to speed up the approval and ratification of the Agreement on the Operationalisation of the SADC Regional Development Fund, an essential tool for attracting financial resources that are essential for the pursuit of the ambitious Regional Industrialisation Programme and, consequently, for the fulfilment of the SADC Regional Integration Agenda.

In addition to investing in human capital, in order to industrialise our countries and consequently our southern African region, we need to seriously invest in electrification, in a considerable increase in energy production and sharing through the interconnection of our transmission network systems.

But we also need to expand and interconnect our road and rail networks, to guarantee greater maritime and air links between our countries, so that there is a greater flow of trade and movement of people and goods, so that there is real regional integration.

Angola is making a great effort to restore and build infrastructure such as the Lobito Corridor, which will facilitate the interconnection and movement of people and goods between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, as well as placing our export products on international markets under more favourable conditions.

We are also investing seriously in increasing energy production from non-polluting sources and in transmission networks.

In the field of telecommunications, Angola has invested in a fiber optic cable that already connects us to the DRC and Zambia, with the prospect of expanding to the entire SADC region and East African states.

The Angolan communications satellite ANGOSAT II is in a position to provide services to the countries of our region.

The construction of the Lobito oil refinery opens up the prospect of a greater supply of refined products for the region, via a pipeline that will connect it to Zambia.

Excellencies,
Distinguished ladies, gentlemen;

It is also important to highlight here some of the main security challenges in the region, such as the situation prevailing in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where, as you know, we have been making joint efforts between the ICGLR, ECCAS, SADC and the African Union to resolve the intractable conflict in this region of the brother country.

I would like to highlight the recent holding in Luanda, under the auspices of the African Union, of the Quadripartite Summit between the East African Community, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Southern African Development Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region with the participation of the United Nations, which adopted a Joint Plan for the coordination of all the existing initiatives of these Communities and Regional Mechanisms for the achievement of peace in the east of the DRC.

At SADC level, the decision to deploy a regional force within the framework of the SADC Standby Force as a regional response to efforts to restore peace and security in the DRC should be applauded.

Despite the progress that has been made, the challenge of combating terrorism and violent extremism in the Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado still prevails, and SADC has taken noteworthy action to resolve it, with encouraging results.

In this context, I must welcome the decision of our Regional Community, at its last Extra-ordinary Organ Troika Summit plus Personnel Contributing Countries, to extend the SADC Mission in Mozambique for an additional 12 months, with a view to continuing actions to combat violent extremism and terrorism in that country, thus allowing stability to be consolidated and conditions to be created for the resettlement of populations.

In addition to these issues, and taking into account the process of consolidating democracies in our region, SADC will hold elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ESwatini, Madagascar and Zimbabwe during our tenure.

SADC will monitor the electoral processes in these countries in our region, so that peaceful, free and fair elections are guaranteed, in harmony with the principles and guidelines governing the holding of elections in the Region.

The region must remain united in its firm desire to guarantee an environment of peace, security and stability as fundamental factors for bringing about significant levels of economic and social development in the Community and deepening the process of regional integration.

We believe it is essential that governance in our region is increasingly participatory and inclusive and that it contributes to the promotion of a culture of peace and respect for democratic principles.

Excellencies,
Distinguished ladies, gentlemen;

Although we are experiencing an extremely challenging international environment due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the damaging effects of the conflict in Eastern Europe, our region has shown signs of resilience and concrete responses aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of these two events, especially with regard to rising food prices, especially cereals, which have had a negative impact on food security;

More than the challenges, our region must exploit the opportunities arising from this extremely unfavourable environment for economic and social growth, investing in initiatives and policies aimed at strengthening agricultural production in order to achieve food self-sufficiency.

Thank You!