



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ELIAS M MAGOSI

SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ORDINARY SADC COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS MEETING**

LUANDA, REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

13TH AUGUST 2023

Your Excellency Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, Minister of Regional Integration and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Your Excellency Ambassador Tête António, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Angola, and Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Hon. Nancy Gladys Tembo, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi, and Outgoing Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Honourable Ministers here present;

Ambassador Dr. Nazaré José Salvador, Director of SADC Office in Angola, Ministry of External Relations, Republic of Angola, and Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials;

Deputy Executive Secretaries of SADC, Ambassador Joseph Nourrice and Ms. Angele Makombo N'tumba;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners;

Senior Officials from the SADC Member States;

SADC Secretariat staff, and staff from the Government of Angola

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning!

I am greatly honoured to welcome you to this Ordinary SADC Council of Ministers Meeting. I wish to express my gratitude to the people and the Government of the Republic of Angola for the warm reception and the excellent facilities put at our disposal since our arrival in this wonderful city of Luanda.

Let me express our appreciation to the Democratic Republic of Congo for chairing and coordinating our meetings and programmes during the 2022/2023 period, and in particular to His Excellency Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, Minister of Regional Integration and Francophonie of the

Democratic Republic of Congo and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers and his team, led by Ambassador Songhu Kayumba Donatien, Secretary General in the Ministry of Regional Integration, for his leadership and guidance to the Secretariat. **MERCI BEAUCOUP!**

May I also express gratitude to Your Excellency Ambassador Tété António, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Angola, and Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers and your team, led by Ambassador Dr. Nazaré José Salvador, Director of SADC Office in Angola, Ministry of External Relations, and Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials for the support rendered to the Secretariat in preparation for this meeting.

Honourable Ministers, allow me to recognise all your support, and the guidance provided to the Secretariat during the on-going implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and its development targets. As I stand before you today, the region is in its third year since the approval of both the SADC Vision 2050, and the RISDP 2020-2030 in particular. The RISDP 2020-2030 is the main strategic document guiding the direction of SADC in terms of the key interventions and activities to undertake during the 10-year period.

While we continue to make progress in pursuing the various targets in this RISDP, it is evident that we need to accelerate the regional integration agenda and tackle head-on and remove the bottlenecks which are slowing integration, industrialisation, and ease of access to markets in the region and beyond. If we address these bottlenecks, we stand a good chance to make inroads and really progress swiftly towards the realisation of the RISDP's objectives and outcomes, and ultimately the region's vision.

Honourable Ministers, SADC places a high premium on peace, security, and good governance as the foundation on which our aspirations of economic and social development can be achieved in our lifetime and indeed for generations to come. In this regard, SADC has developed strong institutions for Peace and Security, and has been tackling the security challenges by prioritising duly considered interventions that are premised on collective response, and respect for the sovereignty of the concerned Member States.

You will recall that the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) was deployed in July 2021 to support the Government to fight terrorism and violent extremism in the Cabo Delgado Province. In the spirit of solidarity, Member States deployed their limited resources and personnel to the Mission. Good progress has been recorded and the gains attained ought to be protected and sustained to ensure that positive benefits continue to be realised, including the return of Internally Displaced Persons to their homes of origin, functioning of public institutions, and more importantly, dislodging the terrorists.

However, the deteriorating security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo remains a concern to the region. Armed groups continue to terrorise citizens, leading to displacement of the population, especially women, girls, and children. The situation also poses a challenge to the preparations for the upcoming elections scheduled to be held in December this year. To address the situation in the Eastern DRC, the region approved the deployment of the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC) as a regional response against armed groups. Your meeting will receive an update on the region's preparedness for this deployment.

Honourable Ministers, adverse shocks related to climate change and the Russia and Ukraine conflict affected the region's economic performance in 2022, resulting in most of the Member States underperforming in achieving the agreed macroeconomic convergence indicators. While the region is lagging in meeting some of our high-level developmental targets, such as the desired average economic growth, and level of industrialisation, prioritised macroeconomic convergence indicators, agricultural performance targets, to name but a few, the region recorded progress in facilitating Member States with access to regional and international markets. In particular, the United Republic of Tanzania gained access to avocado markets in China, India, and South Africa, while Zambia signed two (2) Protocols with China to export soya beans and stevia leaves. Botswana implemented a process to access the citrus market in Europe, as Namibia gained access to the blueberry markets in South Africa and the Netherlands, as well as table grapes export to China.

With regards to the industrialisation agenda, our region is uniquely positioned with abundant mineral resources that could all serve as feedstock into the manufacturing of intermediate and final goods, or for industrial use into infrastructure, agriculture, and other sectors. I am therefore happy to report that, we now have a pipeline of 20 projects in the minerals beneficiation value chains that are ready for development, and thereby increase value addition, job creation and reduce poverty.

The Region has also witnessed reduced congestion and transaction costs at selected borders following the completion and functioning of the specific One-Stop-Border-Posts, namely: Walvis Bay Container Terminal in Namibia; Rehabilitation of the Plumtree-Bulawayo-Gweru-Harare-Mutare Road in Zimbabwe; Kazungula Bridge and the One-Stop Border Post (OSBP), Botswana and Zambia; Mwami/Mchinji One-Stop Border Post, Malawi and Zambia; Nakonde/Tunduma One-Stop Border Post between Zambia and Tanzania; and Kasumbalesa One-Stop Border Post for DRC and Zambia-partially completed.

Honourable Ministers, the SADC region continues to make significant strides in the HIV and AIDS response, across the key areas of prevention, treatment, care and support and impact mitigation. With respect to Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT), as at 2021 eleven Member States had reached 80% coverage or higher. Four Member States, namely Botswana, Eswatini, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have met all the 95-95-95 targets for treatment. This means that 95% of the population know their HIV status, 95% of people living with HIV are receiving ART and 95% have sustained suppressed viral loads.

Three-quarters of the population of our community, is under 35 years of age, and it is in this regard, that the Secretariat facilitated finalisation of consultations and the adoption of the draft SADC Youth Empowerment Policy Framework in March 2023. The draft policy framework provides key interventions in the priority areas of youth policy harmonisation; youth skills and employment; youth health and wellbeing; and youth leadership. The policy framework is expected to facilitate the realisation of the demographic dividend arising from the region's youthful population.

As part of promoting the participation of women-owned businesses and female entrepreneurs in regional value chains, the Secretariat, with support from the German Government, launched the SADC “Challenge Fund” in 2022 to enhance capacities of women entrepreneurs. The Fund provides grants to non-profit making organisations to build the capacity of women entrepreneurs by improving their skills in business and product development, and to grow and expand their businesses. Applicants from 14 out of 16 Member States received grants of about EUR20,000 each for their projects.

Honourable Ministers, the Region continues to experience natural disasters, which are increasing in magnitude and intensity, leaving a trail of destruction to infrastructure and loss of lives. This situation requires Member States to provide relief and humanitarian support to populations that are affected by these impacts. For this very reason, we need to expedite national processes towards the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement amongst SADC Member States to operationalise the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre. We are remaining with three Member States to sign the Agreement, to be operationalised.

As I conclude, **Honourable Ministers**, I wish to recognise the excellent work and diligence of the Senior Officials and Secretariat Team led by my two Deputy Executive Secretaries in preparing for your meeting.

At this juncture, I wish to humbly request His Excellency Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, Minister of Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, to deliver his remarks.

I thank you for your attention! Muito obrigado! Merci beaucoup! Asanteni sana!