



REMARKS

BY

**Ms. MAPOLAO ROSEMARY MOKOENA,
DIRECTOR-INFRASTRUCTURE**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**THE TWENTY- NINE SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CLIMATE
OUTLOOK FORUM (SARCOF-29)**

MONDAY 26 AUGUST 2024

HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Thank you Director of Ceremonies

The Hon Dr. Sitembiso Nyoni **Minister of Environment, Climate, and Wildlife,**

Members of the Senate from the Climate Change Committee

Members of Parliament for the Portfolio Committee of Environment, Climate and tourism

Permanent secretaries here present. (From Zambia: Permanent Secretary Ministry of Green Economy and Environment)

Mrs Rebecca Manzoo, Director of Zimbabwe National meteorological Services and Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe with the World Meteorological Organisation

Directors and Permanent Representative with WMO from SADC MS

Representative from Water, Energy, Food sectors and DRM

Representatives from the World Meteorological Organization

Representatives of our International Cooperating Partners

Representatives from ClimSA Implementing Partners WMO, JRC, EUMETSAT and OACPS Secretariat;

Climate experts of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in SADC Member States (MS);

Delegates from the SADC Regional Organisations;

Colleagues from the SADC Secretariat and Technical Assistance Team;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

A very good Morning to you all.

I would like to extend warm greetings to all of you on behalf of H.E. Mr. Elias Magosi, the SADC Executive Secretary who regrettably could not be present due to other pressing commitments.

Allow me to extend a cordial welcome to you all to this 29th Southern Africa regional Climate Outlook Forum, a significant event on the SADC programme of activities.

First and foremost I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our Host; the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, by accepting to host these SADC events in this beautiful City, Harare, known as the Sunshine City. As we may all be aware the events kicked off with the Climate Expert Meeting which started on the 19th August, as well as the SARCOF Climate Users Platform Forum.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to all the esteemed representatives of regional and international organisations as well as our partners, and other delegates who have joined us virtually for this momentous forum.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to believe that we are all familiar with the devastating impacts of the El Niño event that occurred in 2023/2024, which greatly affected the Southern Africa region. The SADC region is, to this day, experiencing widespread drought conditions; with a delay in the onset of rains and prolonged dry spells during the mid-season. There has been a consecutive record of extreme high temperatures, leading to heatwave conditions across the SADC region. As reported to the just ended SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, that took place here in Harare:

(i) in terms of regional Health Status: the WHO declared a global cholera resurgence as a Grade 3 Emergency in 2023. Over 667,000 new cases of cholera and 4,000 deaths reported across African Union Member States. SADC is multi-country cholera outbreak since early 2023. Drought-induced use of unsafe water sources likely to increase cases;

(ii) On Food security situation: the food insecure population in 2024 increased to 67.7 million people from 57.1 food insecure population estimated in 2023. The food insecure population represents 17.1% of the regional population. The analysis of food insecure population is based on 10 Member States that provided data and include Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe). At a country level, compared with the numbers of the food insecure population recorded in 2023, significant increases in numbers of the food insecure were recorded in Zambia (222%), Namibia (182%), Zimbabwe (80%), Botswana (61%), Angola (56%). The increased number of the food insecure population is attributed to the El Nino induced drought; and

(iii) disasters in the region: there have been multiple disaster types affecting SADC: droughts, cyclones, floods, landslides, wildfires, and rising sea levels. Seychelles declared state of disaster due to industrial explosion and heavy rains. Madagascar declared a National Disaster on 02 April 2024 because of Cyclone Gamane which hit

the north and northeast of Madagascar on 27 March 2024. The Tropical Cyclone severely affected 89,465 people from 22,189 households. Over 22,615 people were displaced and 19 people lost their lives; and

(iv) the El Niño-induced drought led to national disaster declarations in Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Significant flooding in several countries damaged infrastructure and property. SADC launched a Regional Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance in response to these crises.

As alluded to earlier, the agricultural sector has been negatively affected, with extensive crop failure due to water deficits, resulting in significant degradation of pastures and poor livestock conditions, leading to deaths. Both surface and groundwater levels have significantly decreased in various Member States, causing a substantial decrease in energy production and exacerbating the impact of load-shedding.

The season has presented numerous challenges, necessitating diligent efforts.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

In response to the drought situation in the 2023/2024 period, the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government has on 20th May 2024 launched a Regional Appeal to facilitate coordinated response to the various disaster affecting the region of at least US\$5.5 billion to support over 61 million people affected by the El Niño induced Drought and Floods.

The SADC Regional Humanitarian Appeal was developed with support and collaboration of SADC's cooperating partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), World Food Program (WFP) and other regional and international humanitarian agencies. The Appeal serves as a call to the International Community, the Private Sector, and individuals of good will, to extend assistance in meeting the needs of the affected populations impacted by the devastating climate events.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This SARCOF holds Immense importance as we prepare to navigate the upcoming rainfall season, which will span from October 2024 to March 2025. This period historically brings both opportunities and climate risk to the SADC region. We have gathered here with the expectation that the forthcoming season will bring an end to the prolonged drought that most Member States are currently experiencing.

As I take a glance in the previous week, I take a look at the Climate Experts who have convened here in Harare. They have been diligently utilising scientific tools and methods to develop a seasonal forecast for the region.

The primary objective of the climate experts and the SADC Climate Service Centre is clear. Their purpose is to deliver a seasonal forecast that will serve as a guide for decision-making across crucial sectors such as health, energy, water, and food security. These forecasts outlooks are not merely theoretical; they are practical tools designed to aid our region in anticipating and responding to climate-related challenges.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Central to our endeavours lies the Climate Services and related Applications (ClimSA) project, a cornerstone initiative funded by the European Union through the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS). This project, supported by the European Development Fund (EDF), has been instrumental in enhancing our region's capacity to deliver tailored climate services that directly address the needs of our communities. Through ClimSA, we have made significant strides in terms of technical advancements in our products, and climate services through co-production. This collaborative approach ensures that the information we generate is not only scientifically sound but also relevant and actionable for the key sectors. The Regional User Interface Platforms (UIP), established in previous SARCOFs, have played a crucial role in facilitating this co-production, enabling a continuous dialogue between climate experts and sectoral users.

As I reflect upon our Climate Experts Meeting last week, it becomes evident that the meeting played a crucial role in refining the seasonal forecasts by downscaling global climate outputs to regional and national levels. This process is of utmost importance in providing accurate predictions that are contextually specific and will guide the strategies and actions of SADC member states.

The SARCOF-29 will build on this progress by generating the regional climate outlook for the summer season of 2024/2025. This outlook will provide valuable insights that

will assist our sectors in preparing for potential impacts, including the management of water resources, ensuring food security, and safeguarding public health.

As we progress, it is essential that we continue to enhance the co-production of climate services and expand the reach of the Regional User Interface Platforms (UIPs) for Climate services. These efforts are vital for transforming our forecasts into practical, sector-specific guidance that can be implemented at national and local levels.

I implore the participants to actively engage in these discussions, share their expertise, and collaborate in developing solutions that will enhance the resilience of our region. Let us remain focused, pragmatic, and unwavering in our commitment to delivering the most optimal outcomes for our communities.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that our work at SARCOF-29 encompasses more than just seasonal forecasting. It is about forging a resilient future for the SADC region through collaborative partnerships, innovative approaches, and informed action.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and for the pivotal role each of you plays in this process. Let us seize this opportunity to strengthen our collective capacity in managing the challenges that lie ahead.

With these few remarks, I extend my best wishes for successful deliberations in the upcoming days.

THANK YOU

MUINTO O`BRIGADO,

ASANTE SANA

MERCI BEAUCOUP

26th August 2024, Harare Zimbabwe.