



WELCOME REMARKS

BY

**PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND
WILDLIFE,**

AMBASSADOR T. T. CHIFAMBA

**SADC TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREAS INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE**

Rainbow Towers Hotel, Harare

19 May 2025

Salutations

It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you all to the SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) International Conference here in Harare, Zimbabwe. Today, we celebrate and reflect on the 25th anniversary of the SADC TFCA programme, a remarkable journey marked by collaboration, resilience and a shared commitment to preserving our shared natural heritage. Our conference is held under the theme "***SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas: 25 Years of Cooperation for Regional Integration and Sustainable Development.***" is premised on the five goals as outlined in the SADC TFCA **Programme (2023–2033)**.

As we gather today, we do so with a shared vision: to foster integrated and effective management of our transboundary landscapes and seascapes, ensuring that they thrive for generations to come. Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference presents an opportunity to discuss critical areas that are essential to the success of TFCAs in our region. Our TFCAs will serve no purpose if they do not prioritise the well-being and livelihoods of local communities. Therefore, I call upon the SADC Member States to create a robust framework that supports both ecological and human prosperity. This can be achieved by strengthening governance, fostering multi-sector partnerships, and advancing regional integration.

A key priority for us is securing long-term sustainable finance for TFCAs. Without adequate resources, our efforts to conserve and manage these vital ecosystems will fall short. In this regard I urge all of you to put your best feet forward and come up with sustainable financing frameworks to

ensure the TFCA programme is sustainable now and into the future. We need to consider how we can rope in the private sector and ensure TFCA attract not only grants but also private capital.

As we celebrate 25 years of the SADC TFCA programme, we must also focus on enhancing local community engagement and beneficiation. There can be no conservation without local communities who since time immemorial have lived and carefully conserved the natural resources that we so dearly enjoy today. We therefore need this conference to consider innovative ways of ensuring communities are well capacitated, supported and directly benefit from the TFCA programme. Tied to this is the need to address Human Wildlife Conflict. This conference should ensure that all the available mitigation and response measures are explored and evaluated.

We need to ensure that our institutions and communities are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to manage these shared resources effectively. Improved knowledge management will further enable us to make informed decisions and share best practices across borders. In this regard, allow me to applaud our International Cooperating Partners for their unwavering support of the TFCAs over the past 25 years. Your contributions have been invaluable to our mission.

As we do this, we should not lose sight of the need to harmonise our various frameworks as part of transboundary collaboration. SADC should speak with one voice on all matters relating to conservation considering that most of our natural resources are transboundary in nature. This meeting therefore stands as a testament to our collective commitment to transboundary cooperation. By working together, we can address the

complex challenges facing our landscapes and seascapes, while unlocking opportunities for sustainable development and regional growth. We are at a pivotal moment where our collective actions can lead to transformative changes, benefiting not only our ecosystems but also the communities that depend on them.

I urge all of us to engage in open, constructive, and forward-looking discussions. Let us seize this opportunity to strengthen our partnerships, align our priorities, and chart a course toward a more sustainable and prosperous future for our people and our planet. Together, we can create a legacy of cooperation that will endure for decades to come.

Thank you for your participation. I look forward to the outcomes of our discussions and the positive impact they will have on our shared goals.

I Thank you, Tatenda, Siyabonga