



REMARKS BY
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR REGIONAL
INTEGRATION

MS. ANGELE MAKOMBO N'TUMBA

SADC JOINT MEETING OF MINISTERS OF
EDUCATION AND TRAINING & SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY
AND INNOVATION

HOSTED BY ZIMBABWE

20 JUNE 2025

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Honourable Minister, Dr Fredrick M. Shava, Minister for Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation Science and Technology Development of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for Education and Training & Science, Technology and Innovation;**
- **Honourable Minister, Dr. Torerayi Moyo, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Zimbabwe;**
- **Honourable Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Your Representatives responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation present from the SADC Member States;**
- **Professor Fanuel Tagwira, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education,**

**Innovation, Science, and Technology
Development of the Republic of Zimbabwe and
Chairperson of Joint Meeting of SADC Senior
Officials for Education and Training & Science,
Technology and Innovation;**

- **Mr. Moses Mhike, the Permanent Secretary for
the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
for the Republic of Zimbabwe**
- **Prof. Lidia Brito, Assistant Director General for
Natural Sciences for the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)**
- **Ms Alison Parker, Deputy Regional Director for
the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).**
- **Dr Martha Phiri, Director, Human Capital, Youth
and Skills Development Division for the African
Development Bank;**

- **Dr Ben Piper, Director, Global Education Programme for the Gates Foundation;**
- **Ms Elizabeth Colucci, Director of Education Policy and Programmes for OBREAL Global**
- **SADC Senior Officials Responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation;**
- **Ms. Duduzile Simelane, SADC Director of Social and Human Development**
- **Mr. Dhunraj Kasseer, SADC Director of Industrial Development and Trade**
- **Member from the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **International Cooperating and Implementing Partners**

- **Members of Staff from the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe**
- **Colleagues from the SADC Secretariat**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Distinguished Delegates, Invited Guests, ladies and Gentlemen;**

All protocols observed:

It is indeed with great pleasure that I address you this morning at this Joint hybrid meeting of the SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation. I extend my gratitude to the SADC Chair, and the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe for organising and hosting this important meeting.

Honourable Ministers, I am honoured to extend the greetings from His Excellency Mr. Elias Magosi, the SADC Executive Secretary.

Let me at the outset, thank the Honourable SADC Ministers for prioritising this meeting despite the many other equally important and pressing commitments. I also wish to express appreciation to the International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), for their ongoing support in advancing the priorities outlined in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020-2030, particularly those related to the Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation sectors.

Let me, also acknowledge the Chairpersons of the Senior Officials Professor Tagwira, and Mr Mhike for their effective leadership in chairing the Senior Officials' meetings which which ensured the thorough preparation of documents for this Ministerial meeting.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to our dedicated Senior Officials, International Cooperating and Implementing Partners, and stakeholders for the

excellent work they have carried out over the past two days.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As you may be aware, in August 2020, Summit approved the SADC Vision 2050 and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) (2020-2030). Both frameworks highlight Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation as critical components of regional integration. These are reflected under Pillar 1 on Industrial Development and Market Integration and Pillar 3 on Social and Human Capital Development, respectively. Accordingly, this meeting, will review and approve a number of key sectoral policies, strategies and frameworks towards the realisation of the SADC Vision of “a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle to high income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom.”

The Honourable Ministers will also consider the Report on the Operationalisation of the SADC University of Transformation. The proposed University aimed to enhance human capital by producing graduates in three priority value chains; Pharmaceuticals, Mineral Beneficiation and Agro-Processing. Additionally, it will focus on entrepreneurial skills, and innovation through short courses, as well as undergraduate and graduate programmes where needed. The SADC University of Transformation is a strategic initiative designed to meet the region's demand for skilled human resources, fostering industrialization and economic growth.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship is a key topic for discussion today. In this regard, Secretariat, with the support of the African Development Bank and RUFORUM, has commissioned a baseline study on Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in the SADC Region. The study provides an in-depth analysis of the status of the entrepreneurship and

innovation ecosystem in the SADC region. Similarly, Ministers will be pleased to learn that Secretariat, in collaboration with OBREAL and the Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA), is implementing the University-Industry Co-create project (UNII). This project aims to, amongst other things, support the development of a university-wide culture of entrepreneurship and innovation and create an ecosystem of change agents within the SADC region. These agents will systematically contribute to policies on university-industry cooperation, curriculum design, and joint qualifications, ultimately supporting the creation of Entrepreneurial Universities.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen

While several policy documents have been submitted for your consideration today, I would like to draw your attention specifically to key documents; the Draft Higher Education Strategic Framework and the Draft Revised TVET Strategic Framework.

The Draft Higher Education Strategic Framework has been developed with the SADC Vision 2050 as its foundational guiding principle. Its primary objective is to underscore the critical role of higher education in fostering a competitive, middle-to-high income industrialized region, aligning closely with the goals outlined in the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063).

Similarly, the Draft Revised TVET Strategic Framework aims to promote industrialization, innovation, and competitiveness. It seeks to cultivate a culture of lifelong learning and adaptability to changing labour market needs while enhancing the employability and entrepreneurial skills of citizens, particularly young people. These efforts contribute directly to the reduction of poverty and inequality. Both frameworks are essential to developing the relevant skills needed to drive entrepreneurship and job creation, thereby supporting sustainable long-term economic growth.

Honourable Ministers, I am pleased to report on the progress made under the Roadmap on the Implementation of the SADC Qualifications Framework, which your meeting endorsed in 2023. To date, 14 Member States have either developed or in the process of developing their national qualifications framework which is very crucial in promoting the mutual recognition of qualifications across the Member States. In addition, the development of the Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation Guidelines which will inform the development of national frameworks, will allow learners to accumulate credits from different programmes and institutions contributing to the completion of qualifications even if they move across institutions and across SADC countries. The successful implementation of the SADC Qualifications Framework will undoubtedly result in a more integrated region. While there is progress in this area, the progress is slow especially in the area of Credit Accumulation across SADC countries and I urge Member States working with Professional

Bodies to develop bilateral agreements to strengthen RPL and CATS.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Yesterday, we held the Roundtable on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy and the robust engagement among Member States underscores the importance of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy which unfortunately many learners fail to acquire with the poorest and most vulnerable children being disproportionately affected. I am pleased to inform your meeting that the Secretariat, in partnership with Gates Foundation and UNICEF is supporting a series of interventions on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in the Member States. Substantive interventions have been highlighted in the report on the Impactful Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in the SADC Region which you will receive for your consideration in today's meeting.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We continue to pay due attention to intersections between education, health, learner and teacher wellbeing in education settings. With the support of UNESCO, MIET Africa and WFP, we have been implementing the Care and Support to Teaching and Learning (CSTL), Future Life Now, School Nutrition and the O3Plus, a health and education programme in higher and tertiary education institutions supported by UNESCO. In this regard, I wish to urge Member States to continue investing in programmes to drive and sustain the integration of health and well-being into education sector planning and ensure continuous capacity strengthening for its implementation.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Your meeting will also consider the 5-year Cyberinfrastructure Strategy which seeks not only strengthen existing cyberinfrastructure capacities but also to focus on applying resources strategically through collaborative research programmes. These programmes are designed to tackle the complex and

interconnected socio-economic challenges facing our region, including poverty, inequality, healthcare, agriculture, and climate change. By translating our technological investments into concrete solutions, we can foster sustainable growth, enhance regional competitiveness, and improve the livelihoods of our citizens. Importantly, this strategy is a product of collective effort and consensus across all SADC Member States, and it represents a shared vision of progress and collaboration, where each Member State contributes its expertise and resources toward a common goal.

Honourable Ministers,

It is also important to acknowledge that Member States continue to face challenges in meeting the target of investing 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Research and Development. A large number of our Member States are still experiencing human and financial resources to conduct regular national surveys on research and development and innovation. To address some of these challenges,

you may wish to note that the Secretariat is currently implementing the Regional Statistics Project, funded by the World Bank Group, with the project development objective geared towards enhancing institutional capacity of Member States, including on STI statistics. You may wish to note that in this regard, Secretariat, in collaboration with the specialised agencies on STI, convened a regional training workshop on STI statistics with the overarching objective of Strengthening the capacity of SADC Member States to sustain the production of STI indicators.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

You will recall that your meeting in 2023 directed the Secretariat, with the support of partners, to develop a concept proposal for the establishment of a regional Centre of Excellence on STI Policy and Measurement to foster evidence-based policy prescription. In this regard, today's meeting will consider the concept proposal for the establishment of Centre of Excellence on STI Policy and

Measurement which serve as an institutional beacon, guiding the measurement and evaluation of STI activities across the region. It is also expected that such a Centre would provide the necessary data analytics to inform policymaking, track progress towards the goals set out in Agenda 2063 and STISA and ensure that STI remains a central driver of socio-economic development.

Honourable Ministers, you will also note that since the approval of the SADC Charter on the establishment of the Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Organization (WISETO) by the SADC Council of Ministers in 2017 in Pretoria, South Africa, Member States have consistently ratified the Charter which entered into force in 2022 after Botswana became the 11th Member State to do so. In this regard, I am also pleased to inform you that Zimbabwe will be signing the Charter today, bringing the total signatures to Twelve (12) Member States. Honourable Ministers, I would like to seize this opportunity to kindly encourage Member States to fast track the

establishment of your National Chapters for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology so that the regional organisation for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (WISETO) can be established.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

With these brief remarks, I wish us all very fruitful deliberations.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Thank you!

Merci beaucoup!

Muito obrigado!

Asante sana!

Tatenda!

20 June 2025