



## **OPENING REMARKS**

**BY**

**MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY  
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE  
HONOURABLE ZIYAMBI ZIYAMBI AND CHAIRPERSON OF  
THE SADC COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF JUSTICE/  
ATTORNEYS GENERAL**

**DURING OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
THE MEETING OF THE SADC COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF  
JUSTICE/ ATTORNEYS GENERAL**

**11 JULY 2025**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Elias Mpedi Magosi, Executive Secretary of SADC,**

**Honourable Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General from SADC Member States herein who have joined virtually,**

**Mrs. Vimbai Nyemba, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs in the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Senior Legal Officials,**

**Permanent Secretaries, Senior Legal Officials and Delegates from SADC Member States present,**

**SADC Secretariat Staff,**

**Partners from the Media,**

**Honourable Ministers/ Attorneys General,** let me take this opportunity to convey my sincere gratitude and welcome you all to this meeting of the SADC Committee of Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General (“the Committee”) being hosted virtually by the Republic of Zimbabwe.

**Honourable Ministers/ Attorneys General,** it is a great pleasure and honour for the Republic of Zimbabwe to host the meeting of this Committee in 2025. The last time that the Republic of Zimbabwe chaired this Committee was in July 2015 and hence it is pleasing to note that exactly ten years later, we have the honour and privilege to lead your Committee again.

Your presence in this meeting is not only an indication of a willingness to contribute to shared goals and participate in decision-making processes but also a commitment to this Committee’s objectives and a reflection of the dedication necessary to enable the Committee to continue to discharge its mandate as provided for in the SADC Protocol on Legal Affairs as well as its Action Plan adopted in July 2016.

## **Honourable Ministers, Attorneys General**

This meeting is very important as it will consider a number of legal issues and draft SADC Legal Instruments which are pivotal to the attainment of the objectives of SADC. This underscores the fact that SADC is a rules-based Organisation under which implementation of programmes, projects and strategies have to be informed by appropriate SADC Legal Instruments as well as sound legal advice, which are matters within the mandate of this Committee.

## **Honourable Ministers, Attorneys General**

SADC has been adopting SADC Legal Instruments which are aimed at facilitating cooperation by Member States in all areas necessary to foster regional development and integration on the basis of balance, equity and mutual benefit. The entry into force of these SADC Legal Instruments is therefore an important precursor to ensure that the objectives set out in the Legal Instruments are met for benefit of the SADC region in various core Areas of Integration as provided for in Article 12 (2) of the SADC Treaty.

The major drawback that we have encountered as Region is the slow pace by Member States in the signing of, ratification of, and accession to, SADC Legal instruments which undermines the attainment of the objectives of SADC.

It is, therefore, pleasing to note that this meeting will consider the status of signing of , ratification of, and accession to, SADC Legal Instruments as well as the proposed Reporting Template to be used by Member States to report progress on the status of signing of, ratification of, and accession to, SADC Protocols and other SADC Legal Instruments at their respective Sectoral Ministerial Committee Meetings.

It is my firm belief that that this reporting mechanism will address the slow pace in signing of, ratification of, and accession to, SADC Legal Instruments as Member States will have to account for the progress or lack thereof in the signing of, ratification of, and accession to these Legal Instruments

## **Honourable Ministers, Attorneys General**

The Committee will also be considering:

- (a) the Draft Agreement Amending the Protocol on Finance and Investment (Provisions Relating to Anti-Money Laundering), which has been recommended to us for legal clearance by the Committee of Ministers of Finance and Investment before the Draft Agreement is referred to Council and Summit for approval, adoption and signature;
- (b) several Draft Amendments to the Protocol on Trade dealing with matters relating to Rules of Origin; application of safeguard measures; elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade and trade facilitation measures, which have been recommended to this Committee for legal clearance by the Committee of Ministers of Trade prior to their final adoption by the Ministers; and
- (c) the Draft Agreement Amending the Charter Establishing Southern African Development Community Aviation Safety Organisation, which has been recommended to this Committee for legal clearance by the Committee of Ministers of Transport and Meteorology prior to their final adoption by the Ministers.

The Draft SADC Legal Instruments referred to this Committee for legal clearance are central to the promotion of sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development of the SADC region. It is therefore my sincere expectation that this Committee will provide the necessary legal clearance to these Draft Legal instruments.

## **Honourable Ministers, Attorneys General**

The SADC Treaty remains the key founding legal instrument of SADC which, amongst others, guide the functioning our Organisation as well the conduct of Member States in carrying out their obligations as provided for in the Treaty.

I note, however, that in some respects, certain provisions in the SADC Treaty have been tested and found not to effectively respond to emerging issues more specifically in relation to sanctions that are imposed on Member States that are in arrears for a period of four years or more.

It is in this regard that, the Committee has been called upon to provide legal guidance on proposals that have been referred to us by the Standing Committee of Officials on the review of Article 33 of the SADC Treaty which deal with application of sanctions on Member States that are in arrears. The Committee's legal guidance is, therefore, essential in that it will inform Council and Summit on the appropriate amendments to be made the SADC Treaty in order to address the challenges identified by the Standing Committee of Officials.

### **Honourable Ministers, Attorneys General**

Allow me not to pre-empt the presentation of other matters that are on the Agenda for our meeting as you will have adequate opportunity to go through the entire Agenda set for the meeting.

I am optimistic that the Committee will take this opportunity to consider the draft Legal Instruments before us and provide the necessary legal guidance on all issues referred to the Committee.

I am confident that the work of this Committee remains relevant in ensuring the achievement of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020-2030 which seeks to deepen Southern Africa regional integration and foster socio-economic development.

### **Honourable Ministers/Attorneys General**

Let me take this opportunity to commend SADC Member States for their continued support of the legal sector, which has paved way for the Committee to continuously and effectively discharge its mandate. Your support and contribution to the work of the Committee is undoubtedly instrumental in the acceleration of the SADC Regional Integration Agenda and is hereby recognised and appreciated.

Allow me to express my gratitude to the Senior Legal Officials, under the leadership of **Mrs. Vimbai Nyemba Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs** of the Republic of Zimbabwe, for their commitment as they relentlessly prepared for the meeting of the Committee this week. Our work will, without a doubt, be

easier due to the exceptional preparatory work undertaken by the Senior Legal Officials during the last four days.

Allow me to also thank the Secretariat Staff led by the Executive Secretary of SADC, His Excellency Mr. Elias Mpedi Magosi, for the tremendous work that has gone into preparing for this meeting and for facilitating the convening of this meeting.

### **Honourable Ministers/Attorneys General**

As you may all be aware, the Republic of Zimbabwe will be handing over the Chairship of SADC to the Republic of Madagascar in August 2025. To this end, the next meetings of the Committee will be hosted and chaired by the Republic of Madagascar. Let me convey my best wishes to the Republic of Madagascar as they take over the leadership of SADC. The Committee will agree with me that the Republic of Madagascar can always count on our support whenever required as they will be directing the work of the Committee towards expected outcomes.

### **Honourable Ministers/Attorneys General**

With these remarks, it is my pleasure to declare this meeting of the SADC Committee of Ministers of Justice/ Attorneys General officially open. I wish you fruitful deliberations and successful outcomes.

**I thank you for your attention,**

**Merci beaucoup,**

**Muito obrigada,**

**Asante sana.**

**Tatenda**