



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

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COMMUNITY (SADC)**

**AT THE OPENING OF THE 8TH ANNUAL SADC INDUSTRIALISATION WEEK
| ANTANANARIVO, REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR**

28 JULY 2025

Your Excellency, Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar,

Honourable Rasata Rafaravavitafika, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Madagascar,

Honourable David Ralambofiringa, Minister of Industrialisation and Trade of the Republic of Madagascar,

Chairperson of the SADC Business Council,

Representative of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat,

Ms. Fatou Haidara, UNIDO Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director, Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations /UNIDO Special Representative for Africa

Senior Government Officials and SADC Secretariat Staff.

Partners from the Media.

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Members of the Business Community, Development Partners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a great honour and privilege for me to deliver these introductory remarks on the occasion of the 8th Annual SADC Industrialisation Week (SIW), here in the beautiful city of Antananarivo, under the gracious hosting of the Republic of Madagascar.

Allow me at the outset to convey, on behalf of the SADC and indeed on my own behalf, our deep appreciation to the Government and People of Madagascar for their warm hospitality and for embracing this year's event under the theme:

“Advancing Industrialisation, Agricultural Transformation and Energy Transition for a Resilient SADC.”

This theme is not only timely, but also highly strategic. It speaks directly to our shared regional aspirations of economic transformation, diversification, and sustainable development.

Your Excellencies,

Our region has made commendable progress in laying the foundation for industrialisation. Yet, the pace remains uneven. Currently, **industry accounts for only 13% of the region's GDP**, and our economies are still heavily reliant on exports of unprocessed raw materials. This reality limits value retention and job creation.

The implementation of the **SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015–2063)** remains central to reversing this trend. It is through industrialisation that we will deepen value chains, enhance productivity, increase regional trade, and integrate our economies more effectively into continental and global markets.

The SIW provides a key platform to showcase progress, share experiences, and foster collaboration across Member States and with the private sector in areas such as **mineral beneficiation, pharmaceutical manufacturing, textiles and agroprocessing**.

Distinguished Delegates,

Agriculture remains a lifeline for over **60% of the SADC**

population, yet the sector contributes less than **20% to regional GDP** due to low productivity and minimal value addition.

We must address this. The transformation of agriculture—through **agro-processing, technological innovation, and climate-smart practices**—is essential for increasing rural incomes, reducing food imports, and ensuring food and nutritional security. Currently, the region imports over **USD 35 billion worth of food annually**. This is a clear opportunity for import substitution, job creation, and regional value chain development.

Excellencies,

Without reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy, neither industrialisation nor agricultural transformation can thrive. Yet, **45% of people in our region still lack access to electricity**, and many productive sectors face regular power disruptions.

We must act decisively to transition toward **cleaner and more secure energy systems**. Through increased investments in **renewable energy**, improved **cross-border power trade** via the **Southern African Power Pool**, and innovations in **energy efficiency**, SADC can power its development sustainably while contributing to global climate goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This theme also reflects the region's renewed commitment to **resilience**. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate events, and global market shocks have shown us the importance of building **self-reliant and shock-resistant economies**. Resilience means:

- Diversifying our supply chains,
- Empowering our youth and women entrepreneurs,
- Strengthening trade under the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**,

- And fully realising our **Agenda 2063** and the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

Let me also commend the **Republic of Madagascar** for hosting this important platform and for its commitment to SADC's regional industrialisation agenda. Madagascar's **strategic geographic location, growing manufacturing sector, and renewable energy potential** make it a key partner in advancing regional integration.

Likewise, the **private sector**, represented here through the **SADC Business Council** and various industry leaders, remains a critical partner. Industrialisation cannot be achieved by governments alone—it must be driven by enterprise, investment, and innovation.

Excellencies,

We are witnessing a world shaped by uncertainty: geopolitical rivalries, climate shocks, pandemics, and economic fragmentation are redefining global and regional priorities. Major powers are turning inward, reshoring industries, and competing over access to critical resources. Global supply chains are no longer built for efficiency alone — they are being rebuilt for resilience, for security, and for strategic control.

For too long, Southern Africa has been integrated into these global systems as a supplier of unprocessed raw materials. That can no longer be our destiny. **The time has come for us to redefine our role — from extraction to transformation, from fragmentation to integration, from dependence to resilience.**

In closing, I call upon all stakeholders—public, private, development partners, and civil society—to seize the opportunity of this week to engage meaningfully, forge lasting partnerships, and commit to action.

Let us build a **resilient SADC**—one that can **withstand shocks, create jobs, feed itself, power its industries, and compete confidently** in global markets.

Together, let us turn vision into action. I thank you.

Asante Sana!

I Thank You Very Much.

Merci Beaucoup!

Muito Obrigado