



## **OPENING REMARKS**

**BY**

**MS ANGELE MAKOMBO N'TUMBA**

**DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

**SADC SECRETARIAT**

**AT THE OPENING OF THE**

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON SADC ICT**

**STATISTICS FOR OBSERVATORY**

**KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF**

**CONGO**

**25 AUGUST 2025**

**Distinguished Excellence Monsieur Guylain Nyembo MBWIZYA, Ministre d'État, Ministère du Plan et de la Coordination de l'Aide au Développement;**

**Distinguished Excellence Monsieur Jose MPANDA KABANGU, Ministre des Postes et Télécommunications;**

**Distinguished Monsieur Christian KATENDE, Président de L'Autorité de régulation de la poste et des télécommunications du Congo (ARPTC);**

**Distinguished Madame Elysee Chovu Alima, Directrice Generale de L'Institut Nationale des Statistiques (INS);**

**Members of Media;**

**SADC Secretariat Staff;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of SADC Secretariat and indeed on my own behalf, it is with great honour and privilege to deliver some remarks in this highly important and timely event, the Regional Workshop on SADC ICT Statistics for Observatory. I extend a warm welcome to all the delegates, with deep gratitude to your respective governments for facilitating your presence at this event.

I wish to particularly thank the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for graciously hosting this workshop and for putting in place the necessary logistical and administrative facilities for our participation. I also express our gratitude for the warm hospitality of the people of the DRC and Kinshasa in particular.

Indeed, the SADC Secretariat would like to convey its sincere gratitude to the World Bank for the invaluable support towards this workshop under the SADC Statistics Project. The World Bank has consistently been a dependable partner in our

shared mission to advance development within the SADC region, and your unwavering commitment to this partnership is both commendable and appreciated.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The 45<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government convened on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2025 in Antananarivo, Republic of Madagascar under the theme, “***Advancing Industrialisation, Agricultural Transformation, and Energy Transition for a Resilient SADC***”. This theme is aligned to the SADC Regional integration agenda and is supported by key pillars and sectors including infrastructure development in support of regional integration through the SADC ICT Programme, industrial development, regional value chains, modernization of agriculture, inclusive energy transition and the SADC Regional Statistical Programme which aims to provide accurate, comparable and current data and information focusing on economic, social and cross-cutting sectors across the SADC region. Accurate Statistics and Indicators are critical for

measurement, monitoring and evaluation, policy formulation and decision making by Member States. It is often said that “***what you cannot measure, you cannot improve***”. All these initiatives are therefore aimed at building a resilient, sustainable, and cohesive SADC region in line with the SADC Vision 2050.

It is now widely acknowledged that over the years, there have been systematic and noticeable improvements in statistical development across the region. The demand for data has increased at an unprecedented rate not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of scope, quality and disaggregation thereby requiring to tap in administrative and innovative data sources . This surge in demand for statistics requires ICT infrastructure support to access Big Data sources such as mobile phone, scanner and earth observation to complement traditional data collection methods. The development of modern National Observatories with capabilities such as Mobile Phone Data (MPD), Artificial Intelligence and Geospatial capabilities also become

highly prominent requiring support at the highest level.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The SADC region places great emphasis on the accurate collection and publication of ICT Statistics because ICT is a key and cross-cutting enabler and vital sector in achieving the SADC Regional Integration Agenda. This is further highlighted through the development of the SADC Digital Transformation Strategy which was approved by the SADC Council of Ministers in August 2023. Digital Transformation calls for the digitalization of key sectors and systems across the region therefore automation of sector-specific systems including Statistics and ICT systems is a key priority for the region.

The SADC ICT Observatory is one of the flagship projects from the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP) and the RISDP 2020-30. The SADC ICT Observatory aims to be the central point of reference for reliable, accurate and

up-to-date collection and dissemination of ICT indicators, measurement, benchmarking and reports. The SADC ICT Observatory Web Portal is automated and operational and provides for online data collection and publication of ICT indicators.

We are confident that the engagements during this workshop will facilitate the exchange of best practices and ensure greater progress across Member States. We also commend Member States for the commitment to the SADC Statistics Programme and the SADC ICT Observatory Project through the annual submission of indicator data as this enables the region to have insights into the various sectors including the ICT Sector and also assists with policy formulation and decision making. This workshop will review and further enhance the SADC ICT Observatory and its Indicators, provide an overview of the SADC Statistics and ICT Policy Instruments, provide a platform for Member States engagement on ICT Statistics best practices and build capacity on new technologies including Big

Data, Geospatial/GIS Mapping for the benefit of all SADC Member States.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The journey towards the strengthening of statistics in SADC has benefitted from fruitful collaboration with key international partners, notably the World Bank. The support by the World Bank under the SADC Statistics Project, with its emphasis on capacity building is particularly critical for our Member States in ensuring that there is a critical mass of experts skilled in modern data collection methods, statistical analysis, and the use of digital platforms for data dissemination. These efforts in capacity building are not only about improving technical skills but also about fostering a culture of evidence-based decision-making across the region.

You will recall that from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025, the project supported the convening of the “*Putting Mobile Phone Data (MPD) for Official Statistics SADC Regional Workshop*” in Johannesburg, South Africa. Today’s event continues the momentum build



and aims to further enhance the existing ICT Statistical landscape and the SADC ICT Observatory.

We are also grateful to all partners that are supporting Member States during this event including the World Bank, ITU, Flowminder and Ookla. We look forward to your continued support and collaboration.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Going forward and to sustain the statistical development momentum, there will be a need for enhanced data governance, transformational leadership and automation. There will also be a need to acquire new knowledge, capabilities as well as strategic skills to unlock the full data potential in the region. As your Secretariat, we shall undertake regular capacity building activities in development of ICT statistics and count on your continued cooperation.

As I conclude, allow me to thank you once again for your participation at this important workshop and wish you fruitful deliberations.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**

**MERCI BEAUCOUP**

**MUITO OBRIGADO**

**ASANTE SANA**