



REMARKS

**BY MR. ERIC RATSIMBAZAFY, PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MADAGASCAR AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS**

AT THE SADC- USA DIALOGUE FORUM

13 AUGUST 2025

ANTANANARIVO, REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR

**Ms Melanie Higgins, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
at the United States Department of State;**

**Mr. Eric Ratsimbazafy, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Madagascar and Chairperson of
the Standing Committee of Senior Officials;**

**Your Excellency, Ambassador Claire Pierangelo, United States
Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and the Union of
Comoros;**

**Your Excellency, Ambassador Howard Van Vranken, United States
Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana and Special
Representative of SADC;**

Your Excellency, Mr Elias Magosi, SADC Executive Secretary;

**Your Excellencies, Senior Officials, and Representatives from the
SADC Member States;**

**Distinguished Delegates from the United States Department of State
and Government;**

**SADC Secretariat Staff, and staff from the Government of the
Republic of Madagascar;**

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Afternoon!

It is both an honour and a privilege to address you at this inaugural SADC-
USA Dialogue Forum. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of
Madagascar, I am pleased to welcome you to this beautiful city of
Antananarivo, the City of a Thousand. I trust that you have settled in
comfortably, and I assure you that our people and Government will make

sure that your brief stay here in Madagascar is safe, enjoyable, comfortable and memorable.

At the outset, I wish to commend the United States Government for its commitment to this important Dialogue initiative. We are very much aware that deliberations for this Dialogue date back to 2022. It is therefore encouraging that today we have reached this political milestone. This Forum marks a historic moment in our partnership, and we welcome the opportunity to engage in open and constructive dialogue.

SADC and the United States Government have a longstanding partnership and a rich history of cooperation, both at bilateral and regional levels. This cooperation has taken shape through transformative initiatives in the areas of health, trade and economic development. Notably, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is a cornerstone of our cooperation in the health sector and remains the largest global commitment towards prevention, treatment and care.

Similarly, the trade cooperation that has been facilitated through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) stands as a testimony to our shared pursuit of growth and sustainable development. The Millennium Challenge Account has extensively contributed to democratic

governance, freedom, investment and economic growth. These impactful initiatives demonstrate that our people and Governments can achieve more if we continue working together, and we are proud of this rich history of collaboration, diversity, mutual trust and respect.

Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite our accomplishments, the world is faced with evolving challenges that require innovative solutions. The global economy remains challenged, with bleak prospects of growth and expansion. In view of this, today's engagement provides a timely opportunity to reflect on our partnership and ascertain how it can be recalibrated to better serve our growth and development goals. Our regional integration agenda is anchored on peace and security, and the global economy requires peace and stability. It is therefore important that we learn from each other on how this essential commodity of peace can be secured and spread across the world.

Our industrialisation agenda prioritises three value chains on agro-processing, pharmaceuticals and mineral beneficiation, hence there is an opportunity to reflect on how mutual gains can be explored. The SADC region requires extensive business and investment opportunities to fast-

track Regional Integration, which we believe can benefit from the investment-led strategy of the current United States Administration.

Trade is at the core of our regional integration agenda, and our key focus is to strengthen and deepen trade within our region, within the continent under the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and with the rest of the World, including the United States. It is therefore important that we advance our trade cooperation into a renewed path of mutual trust, sustainability and certainty.

Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

As already mentioned by the SADC Deputy Executive Secretary, today's engagement may not bring immediate solutions to the prevailing challenges of global growth and the turbulent foreign policy environment. However, I believe that we will walk out of this dialogue with a clear understanding, mindset and appreciation for the need to enhance our cooperation.

As I conclude, I wish to thank both the SADC Secretariat and the United States Government for the good collaboration in organising this Dialogue Forum. I am confident that the same spirit will be maintained in convening subsequent meetings, including the prospective Ministerial Dialogue

Forum that will tackle the political and strategic dimensions of our cooperation.

With these remarks, I am pleased to declare the inaugural SADC–USA Dialogue Forum officially open. I encourage all participants to engage freely, share constructive insights, and lay a foundation for meaningful networks. I wish you all a fruitful dialogue.

Thank you!

Merci Beaucoup!

Muito Obrigado!