



## **ZIMBABWE**

**HANDOVER REMARKS TO BE DELIVERED BY HON. PROFESSOR  
dr. AMON MURWIRA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR**

**12 AUGUST 2025**

- **Hon. Rafaravavitaſika Raſata, Miniſter of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Madagascar and Incoming Chairperson of the Council of Miniſters;**
- **Hon. Ambaſſador T  te Ant  nio, Miniſter of External Relations of the Republic of Angola and Outgoing Chairperson of the Council of Miniſters;**
- **Honourable Miniſters;**
- **Your Excellency Mr. Elias Mpedi Magoſi, SADC Executive Secretary;**
- **Distinguished Senior Officials;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. First of all, I would like to pay tribute to all our departed heroes and leaders. Dr Sam Nujoma, Dr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, Mr David Mabuza and many others who have lost their lives in the service of the Region. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

2. **Colleagues**, we are on a sacred mission. That sacred mission is a mission of economic liberation and prosperity. It is a long game. It's not a tomorrow game. It's not a tomorrow of tomorrow game. It's a long journey. We will put our brick and others will put their bricks too. Our job is never to remove any brick, but to put that brick.

3. We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to Honourable Dr. Rafaravavita fika Rasata, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Madagascar and Incoming Chairperson of the Council of Ministers, as well as to the Government and people of Madagascar, for their warm hospitality and gracious welcome.

4. **Hon Ministers**, as we convene today, we should do so with a renewed sense of purpose. Why are we here? What are we doing? We should always be inspired by our founding fathers. Why did they do this? Why should we continue it? 45 years ago, we envisioned a peaceful and secure, self-sufficient and united region. As we work, we carry the spirit and aspirations of the departed, the hopes of the living and those that are not yet born. As we deliberate, let's think of ourselves as an engine, as a medium, as a spirit through which they communicate. To say, **amandla**, as we deliberate, let's know that we are on a sacred mission. We are never on personal missions, short-term missions. This was not a vision born out of convenience, but one driven by strategic foresight and necessity.

5. To say, our countries are mere administrative regions of Africa, but they have a common purpose for common prosperity. Individually, we are extremely weak. The formation of SADC enhances sovereignty. It doesn't compromise sovereignty. As

we discuss, let's be with the whole spirit, not with the partial spirit, of an administrative region of Africa, but of the whole spirit of liberation. This vision that redefined geopolitical borders, not as rigid divides, but as bridges for cooperation, peace and collective stewardship over our rich heritage. The reason why it all started must be in our mind. The reason for our existence as mediums of communication for the departed, for the present, or for the unborn should always be in our mind. When we are going to the mountaintop, it is a long journey to the mountaintop, we will encounter streams. Some streams that are very difficult to handle, some streams that are very difficult to cross. The danger is starting to concentrate on that stream and talking about that stream as if that's the destination. The final destination is the mountaintop, lest we forget. We should never forget the reason for the formation of SADC, because of temporary setbacks. The mission is bigger. Together we can build the SADC we want, but it's built by its own people. Development can

never be delegated. Development is experienced and undertaken. Sometimes we feel weak, but we are not weak, it's just a feeling. We are strong.

6. We want a SADC that will transform the lives and livelihoods of our people. After 500 years of trying to prove that we are humans, we cannot drop the ball at any moment now. We want our people to enjoy peace and security, have access to food, shelter, communication, infrastructure, health, among others. That's the reason for SADC.

7. **Hon Ministers**, as we reflect on our achievements, let us recommit to regional integration. As we deliberate on the agenda before us, our aim and emphasis should always be on how we should integrate. As soon as the spirit of disintegration comes into your head, think about it and pray. From the departed to the present and the future of the unborn children, to say, now what am I talking

about? We should not be constrained and inhibited in our integration by the colonial boundaries. Let us remove any barriers amongst ourselves as we pursue regional integration for the prosperity and dignity of our people. Sometimes we talk about lack of resources. Sometimes this lack of resources is due to the fact that we are not accelerating integration. Everything that you say no to is hindering the prosperity of our people. It's about integration. Together we are a bigger family of 400 million people. With 18%, 19% trade amongst ourselves. When in actual fact, it should be 90% to 99% of the trade happening amongst ourselves. We should ask ourselves; did we ratify the trade protocol? If we didn't, what are we protecting? Who are we protecting? We are not protecting our people. I don't know who we are protecting. Our job is to give dignity to our people. And that dignity can come when they have food, when they have water, when they've got transportation, when they've got help. That's what brings dignity. Dignity is not talked

about. It's experienced through food, through shelter, through protecting their human beings. That protection comes from us. So, whenever we speak, let's ask ourselves, are we speaking for the departed? Are we speaking for the present? Are we speaking for the unborn? Or are we speaking under the influence of disintegration?

8. Let us also harmonize our systems, and talk one language, the language of integration. SADC was formed exactly to safeguard peace for integration. It's not a club. It is a unit formed from blood and sweat and hopes for the future of a liberated Africa.

9. We commend Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe for Visa exemptions that allow the free movement of people in our own region; we urge all other countries to follow suit. This is integration. What are you protecting? Those people are the market. Those people are the tourism that we are looking for. Those people are the money that we say we like. Let them

move. They take nothing. They bring everything. Integration. It is through integration gestures and actions that we eliminate poverty by increasing economic activity for prosperity.

10. Honourable Ministers and dear colleagues, it has been a privilege and an honor to serve as chair during Zimbabwe's tenure. It can never be taken for granted. We have worked. We have cooperated. We have given each other support. We have gone through thick and thin. We have taken decisions. We still have to take more decisions.

11. During the past year, various sectors engaged in fruitful discussions on strategic issues, which include, inter alia, Health, Education, Science, Technology, Innovation and Infrastructure Development and Gender, which are foundational to building the SADC we want. The foundational building blocks to the subject we want. From the foundation of peace and security, we can do production and trade. We can do

infrastructure, and at the same time, we can train our people to integrate. I want to repeat, limited resources that we are having are further limited by the lack of integration. Further integration would just eliminate these things completely. This is the reason why SADC was formed.

12. Most importantly, we explored how SADC could leverage its combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to boost intra-regional trade, through the SADC Free Trade Area (FTA), the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

13. In doing so, we reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening our resilience, and unlocking sustainable inclusive growth in the SADC region and across the African continent. Let us engage in joint regional projects. As a region let's take ownership of our regional development agenda by harnessing our human capital and natural resources and reduce

reliance on external support. Colleagues, I want to repeat the reasons, some of the reasons, for poverty, its lack of integration, simple economies of scale. We want to unlock sustainable and inclusive growth in the SADC region and across the African continent. Let us engage in joint regional projects, not small factories but big joint regional projects. One for example is the South African Power Pool, a big example. Other bilateral examples are there to see, the Kariba Dam operated between Zambia and Zimbabwe, it's a dam of peace and integration. We can do more. Who says we should not do joint industrial parks? Who says we cannot be shareholders in a mega SADC company? Who says? Who says we should not have a common road network which we are having but we can accelerate it? Who prevented us from doing so? Individually we are too small to make a difference. That's why others can play yo-yo with us because we will be weak. But the SADC region is not weak because it has resolve. And that resolve is watered in blood and sweat of our

departed. We cannot betray them. We keep on moving. Let us take ownership of our regional development agenda. Development is not given, it's experienced and pushed. It's a combination of attitude, skill and knowledge. Attitude is more important. Zimbabwe cannot do it alone without Zambia, without Malawi, without DRC, without United Republic of Tanzania, without all the countries that are here. Without those countries we are weak and vulnerable. We can do more with our human capital and with our natural resources.

14. We are tired of the sorrow that we are endowed with natural resources. Endowment is good but use is better so that we can develop. When it comes to mineral resources, Southern Africa has all the minerals that are needed in the world. All of them while we are poor. Lack of integration. We even have oil. We are discovering more. We have fish. We have everything. Let's not start running for bones that are

thrown on us and we are all over each other like little puppies. There's a bigger rise. There's a bigger step.

15. There's a reason why this region stands as the last region under colonialism. Because there's something there. There's something there. We should realize that there's something there. That's why we have a sacred mission, not only for ourselves, but for the whole of Africa. In this region we are willing to die for each other.

16. But now we are willing to work for each other and make sure that it works. We want super sovereignty, not fragmented sovereignty. Individually we are weak, I repeat. Individually we are extremely weak and vulnerable.

17. **Honourable Ministers,** without peace and security in our Region, there is no development to talk about, when people are running around, shooting each other with guns that they never made

and for issues that they never started. It's only a war of our resources. Brother and brother, sister and sister fighting each other, thinking that you are fighting for something. No, you are fighting for poverty. The peace and security foundation is the template upon which all other pillars of development are based.

18. There was some time when the whole region formed the front-line states to make sure that Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia are liberated. It is that time. It is very important to know that there should be another time, which is now, to make sure that we sacrifice for each other for development. Thus, the Mutual Defence Pact is the cornerstone upon which peace and security is safeguarded. It may at some point seem to be an expensive enterprise but it is necessary. The threats to the peace that we enjoy as a region, if not contained, will undermine intra-SADC trade and the very fabric of our integration agenda. We have to demonstrate

oneness, as brothers and sisters, in our search for a lasting solution to the conflict in the Eastern DRC, for an injury to one is an injury to us all. The threats to peace that we enjoy as a region, if not contained, will undermine infrastructural threat in the very fabric of our integration agenda. And the very prosperity that we are looking for becomes a pipe dream. We cannot, after 500 years of slavery and colonialism, still be used again to perpetuate the poverty of the African child. As a minister, as a government, as a people, we have an obligation not to the divided. We have an obligation to the enslaved. We have an obligation to the colonised. We have an obligation to the people here. We have an obligation to the unborn child to say; never again should I participate in the enslavement of our people. So, the mouth that we use must be the mouth of the undivided, the mouth of the present and the mouth of the future. Whose mouth are we using? We have to demonstrate oneness, as brothers and sisters, in our search for lasting solution to the

conflict in the Eastern DRC, where an injury to one is an injury to all of us. It is very important that the resolve that we have is kept. And we have made a lot of movement, as council in the positive direction.

19. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** a key impediment to advancing our regional integration agenda is our slow uptake of SADC Protocols and Agreements. We are meeting sometimes to say, no, that one we don't want, that one we don't want. It's just as soon as you don't want something, we must say, we must not want something that is for disintegration, but for everything to do with integration, we must want. This delay is not just a procedural concern, because people, we end up speaking good English, good French, oh, in French it's not like this, in English it's like that, in Portuguese it's like that, in Spanish it's like that. What is it in Zulu? Use Zulu if there's other one like that.

20. We should not behave the way we were trained to behave and serve the colonial master, but behave in a way that liberates our people. Who are you speaking for, is the question. Are you speaking for Mandela? Are you speaking for Kaunda? Are you speaking for Julius Nyerere? Or are you speaking for the very same people that they say we should never speak for? Without our timely ratification, our ability to establish a robust rules-based framework is significantly hampered.

21. **Honourable Ministers,** we extend our appreciation to all SADC Member States for the unwavering support and cooperation during our SADC Chairmanship. It was overwhelming. It is still overwhelming. Your steadfast commitment has been instrumental in driving forward our collective regional agenda.

22. The 45<sup>th</sup> SADC theme, **“Advancing industrialisation, agricultural transformation,**

**and energy transition for a resilient SADC”**

resonates well with our aspirations. This theme will continue to focus our collective attention on industrialisation, productivity and infrastructure development. When you feel you are getting tired, think about it. Strength will come. Let's move.

23. **To you, my dear Sister and esteemed Colleague, Honourable Dr. Rafaravavitaika Rasata;** we commend your readiness to assume this important leadership role and we assure you of Zimbabwe's full support as you guide our region into the next chapter of its journey. That journey of liberation, that journey of economic integration, that journey of oneness, that journey of us, not I. We call upon all Member States to give the same unwavering support and solidarity that you graciously offered us during our tenure. We have every confidence that with your wisdom, together, we will be stronger and united. Let's never forget why we were formed in the first place. There's a reason. And that reason is

noble. That's why I characterize it as sacred. If I wake Samora Machel up, what will they think about us? If I wake Robert Mugabe up, what will they think about us? If I wake Sam Nujoma up, what will they think about us? Agostinho Neto, what will they think about us? Will they not ask what is it? Where are you now going? Who told you to go there? What is your problem? What's wrong with you, you young people? Why are you getting back into the track where we were? We were there before. We should be stronger. If I wake Seretse Khama up, what will they think about us?

24. We, also wish to sincerely thank the SADC Executive Secretary, His Excellency Mr. Elias Mpedi Magosi, and his dedicated team for their tireless efforts and resolute commitment to the effective implementation of our programmes. Having experienced the privilege that gave us the chair, we have moved across the world. And there's one conclusion. SADC is extremely organized. It's a

fearful organization in terms of organization. Very organized. The bureaucracy is just correct. Let's do it exactly like that. And my sister the bureaucracy in SADC is just correct. It makes us make systematic decisions, not random decisions. That Murwira wakes up in the morning and he thinks that his opinion is a SADC opinion, all of a sudden. No, it's subjected to discussion. Therefore, it then forms a SADC opinion. And a SADC opinion liberates all of us. In the face of geopolitical development, we can only be together more than otherwise. We are not a favourite of anyone. We are a favourite of ourselves. I think it's very important. Don't be a favourite of anyone else, besides ourselves. We are our own favourite people. If you find certain people saying, oh, we are very good, we are outside of this region and that region, you must ask whether we are really good or they are looking for something else. This language is difficult, but it's necessary. Let's be told that we are good by your father, by your mother, by your sister. Those are good, good, good. The other

ones, we don't even want them saying good. We don't want to be good to the world but good to ourselves.

25. Let us continue to champion inclusive and sustainable policies that leave no Member State behind. Brick by brick and stone upon stone, we will continue building a stronger, united SADC, that is a beacon of a hope, stability and progress.

26. **Distinguished Colleagues**, it is now my distinct honour and privilege, to officially hand over the Chairpersonship of the SADC Council of Ministers to the Republic of Madagascar.

27. Before I do that, I want to say **Long live SADC! Long live our solidarity! I thank you! Merci Beaucoup! Muito Obrigado! Asante Sana! Zikomo Kwambili! Siyabonga! Amandla! Maita basa!**