

Our guest of honour, Honorable Daniel Garwe, minister of Local Government and Public works in the republic of Zimbabwe as represented by Hon Eng. Benjamin Kabikira, Deputy Minister of Local Government & Public Works

Honorable Advocate Misheck Mugadza, minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Manicaland Province,

Mr. Nathan Nkomo, Chief Director, Chief Director in the Department of Civil Protection and National Focal Point for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Republic of Zimbabwe

Mister Peter Muller, head of the OCHA delegation and global lead for the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

Mr. Anderson Banda, Director of the
SADC Humanitarian and Emergency
Operations Center

I'd like to recognize the participants
representing 13 SADC Member States

Officials from the government of the
Republic of Zimbabwe

Representatives of various International
Cooperating Partners present

And my colleagues from the SADC and
SHOC Secretariats

Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of
the

SADC Secretariat, Mr Elias Magosi, I am honoured to speak this very important platform.

The support that the Government of Zimbabwe has given the region in the implementation of Disaster Risk Management initiatives is truly humbling.

We thank you for the great hospitality we have enjoyed since our arrival

Honorable Ministers, please allow me to get nostalgic a little bit and remind us that in 2019, the SADC region suffered a disaster of unprecedented proportions in the form of Tropical Cyclone Idai. The death toll as well as overall loss and damage challenged everything we knew about Disaster preparedness and response in the region.

Based on this, In August 2019, SADC Council of Ministers directed the Secretariat to expeditiously operationalize the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanisms, including the establishment and operationalization of the SADC Emergency Response Team.

By 2021, the first cohort of the Emergency Respinse Team was established and approved by Council, and they underwent their induction training in July 2024 in Maun Botswana.

In November 2024, Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk Management under the chairmanship of Minister Garwe directed the Secretariat to expand the roster of

the SADC Emergency Response Team
to

diversify the expertise and capabilities of the team in order to be able to respond to a wide array of Disasters.

Honorable Ministers, I am very pleased to report that today we are training the second cohort of the Emergency Response Team as directed by our Ministers during their extraordinary meeting in May 2025.

Winston Churchill says, never let a good crisis go to waste, meaning that while a crisis is undesirable, it presents an opportunity for growth. From the devastation of 2019, the region now has ways a means of responding to disasters as well as a centre for the coordination of humanitarian affairs for the region.

Honorable Ministers this attests to the

tremendous gains that the SADC region has made in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction.

The SADC Region has always relied on our partners to support us to respond to large scale Disasters, but today we are building our own. We are building the capacity of SADC to be first responders in large scale Disasters. During this training, we are not only training the ERT, but building Capacity of SADC to facilitate the training as there selected members of the first cohort who are participating as trainers today.

It is our hope that the team being trained today will contribute to the mitigation of disaster impacts in the region through provision of humanitarian support to SADC Member States affected by Disasters.

While this course is not easy, it is very rewarding, and we hope that the participants will thrive in the course