

Opening Remarks for SARCOF-31 by Dr. Joshua Ngaina, Acting WMO Representative for Eastern and Southern Africa / Project Officer, Regional Office for Africa (RAF). Lusaka, Zambia – 8 September 2025

- The Permanent Secretaries, Dr. Douty Chibamba, Ministry of Green Economy and Environment and Eng Kamanga, Ministry of Water and Sanitation, Republic of Zambia
- Mr. Catalin Gherman, Head of Cooperation and Representative of the European Union Delegation to Botswana
- Ms. Mapolao Mokoena, Director of Infrastructure, SADC Secretariat
- Mr. Edson Nkonde, Director of Meteorology and Permanent Representative (PRs) of the Republic of Zambia with WMO and all the PRs of WMO with SADC members

Excellencies, Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, the SADC Secretariat, the European Union Delegation, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed,

My name is **Joshua Ngaina**, Acting WMO Representative as well as Project Officer for Eastern and Southern Africa, and it is my honour to deliver these opening remarks on behalf of the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** at the Thirty-First Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum, or as we all know it, **SARCOF-31**.

We gather here under the theme: “*Closing the Early Warning Gap Together within the SADC region.*” For over two decades, SARCOF has been a cornerstone of regional collaboration—bringing together climate scientists, decision-makers, and stakeholders to co-produce and apply seasonal climate information.

This year’s forum is particularly significant. In addition to producing the **2025/2026 rainfall season outlook**, SARCOF-31 provides a platform to **validate the SADC Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Action System**, and **showcase tailored climate services** for agriculture, water, energy, health, disaster risk reduction, and other critical socio-economic sectors.

Excellencies and distinguished guests,

WMO is proud to be a long-standing partner of the SADC region. Through the **ClimSA Programme**, WMO has supported:

- Building technical capacity for **seasonal forecasting, downscaling, and impact-based services**;
- Establishing **Regional Sectoral User Interface Platforms (RSUIPs)** for co-production of advisories;
- Advancing **digital transformation and data sharing** through WIS2.0 and related innovations; and
- Mobilizing partnerships for the **Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative**, ensuring no community is left unprotected.

Here in Zambia, WMO is honoured to continue supporting the Government’s leadership on EW4All. Later this month, on **25–26 September 2025**, Zambia will host the **national launch of the EW4All initiative**, prepared in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, national pillar leads, and UNDRR. This launch marks an important step in operationalizing the global vision of universal protection at the national level, and WMO is proud to contribute to this milestone through technical support and dedicated expertise.

We are often reminded that *hazards and disasters collaborate more effectively than many of our partners. Platforms such as SARCOF give us the space to outpace that collaboration—by working together across borders, sectors, and institutions—to foster resilience and protect our communities.*

As WMO Secretary-General, Prof. Celeste Saulo, has reminded us:

“Early warnings are not a privilege; they are a human right. Protecting every community with timely and accurate warnings is both a moral and a development imperative.”

In this spirit, SARCOF-31 gives us an opportunity to advance three shared priorities:

1. **Science and Services** – Applying cutting-edge science and digital innovation to ensure forecasts are reliable, actionable, and user-oriented.
2. **Partnerships and Co-production** – Strengthening collaboration among NMHSs, regional centres, sectoral ministries, humanitarian actors, and communities.
3. **Sustainability and Financing** – Securing investments to implement the **SADC Early Warning for All Roadmap**, institutionalizing climate services that are inclusive and resilient.

Colleagues, as we deliberate over the coming days, let us reaffirm our collective commitment to saving lives, protecting livelihoods, and strengthening resilience across Southern Africa.

On behalf of the World Meteorological Organization, I wish you fruitful discussions and a successful SARCOF-31.

I thank you. Asante Sana