



**Opening Remarks by Mr Dhunraj Kassee:
Director – Industrial Development and Trade, SADC
Secretariat:**

**At the occasion of Gala Dinner for SADC Quality Awards
Ceremony, Johannesburg 25 March 2026
Premier Hotel**

**Acting Deputy Director General: Sectors – Dr Tebogo Makube,
Department of Trade Industry and Competition, of the Republic of
South Africa**

**Directors and CEOs of Quality Infrastructure Institutions
across SADC Region**

Madame Eve Gadzikwa CEO SADCAS

Dr Hermogene Nsengimana, ARSO General Secretary

PTB representative Mr Marius

Private Sector Representatives

Distinguished delegates

All Protocols Observed

It is a privilege to stand before you today as we gather to celebrate excellence in an area that often operates behind the scenes yet shapes every product we use—**quality infrastructure**.

We all know that Quality is a key business driver in the modern era as it serves as the basis for consumers decision whether to buy or not a certain good or service.

When we speak of quality infrastructure in the context of products, we are referring to the systems that ensure trust: standards, testing, certification, accreditation, and metrology. These are the invisible pillars that give consumers confidence, enable fair trade, and drive innovation across industries.

Complying with quality standards gives confidence to the customers that the products are safe, fit for purpose or are environmentally friendly leading to compliance with technical regulations, policies laws leveraging the products to enter and withstand in the market.

Cognisant to the importance of quality, the SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade (CMT) approved in June 2009 the organisation

of SADC Quality Awards competition by SADC Secretariat on annual basis.

The competition encourages both public and private sectors as well as individuals to adopt and comply with international standards in their day-to-day activities. They give entities and individuals opportunity to be regionally recognized and celebrated in five categories, as follows:

1. Company of the Year;
2. Product of the Year;
3. Service of the Year;
4. Exporter of the Year; and
5. Individual of the year.

The categories 1 to 4 comprise two subcategories each, LE-Large Enterprise and SME-Small and Medium Enterprise. Therefore, each SADC Member State is expected to submit to the regional competition a maximum of nine entries (two entries per category; i.e. **ONE** for Large Enterprise and **ONE** for Small and Medium Enterprise, and **ONE** entry for the individual award).

The 2025/2026 competition received 47 entries in total for all categories from eight Member States, namely Angola (5), Eswatini

(8), Malawi (1), Mozambique (3), Namibia (6), Tanzania (9), Zambia (8) and Zimbabwe (7).

These represent double of Member States who have shown interest to participate in the competition when compared with last year's edition, which is a very encouraging signal. And Thank You for that.

The adjudication process was conducted remotely by five judges in January 2026 and produced the following verdict:

Verdict	Winners	1 st Runner Up	2 nd Runner Up	Recognition	Total
TOTAL	8	8	7	11	34

Ladies and gentlemen

By being recognised at regional level, these companies and individuals do not only live quality but also demonstrate it. Let me take this opportunity to encourage other Members States here present to organise their National Quality Award Competition and assist the winners to submit entries to the regional competition.

In addition to the companies and individuals who have excelled at SADC Quality Awards, tonight we are also recognising the work well done by experts in the region in driving regional quality infrastructure agenda. The Secretariat wishes to take this opportunity to express a deep appreciation to these experts and will them all the best in their future endeavours.

Let us continue to champion quality—not just as a requirement, but as a value and as an investment

Thank you