



REMARKS

BY PROF. KULA I. THELETSANE,

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SECURITY AFFAIRS,**

**AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF
CORRECTIONS/ PRISONS/PENITENTIARY SERVICES**

**THEME: PATHWAYS TO CHANGE: “FACILITATING
EFFECTIVE OFFENDER REHABILITATION
AND REINTEGRATION IN
CORRECTIONS/PRISONS”**

19 MAY 2026

SALIMA, REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

Director of Ceremony

Guest of Honour, Honourable Peter Mukhito, Minister of Homeland Security

Our host, Commissioner General of Malawi Prison Service, Ms Wandika Phiri

Commissioner Generals of Corrections/Prisons/Penitentiary Services in the SADC Region

Colleagues from the SADC Secretariat

Representatives from partner institutions

Media representatives

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the SADC Secretariat, allow me at the outset to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Malawi, and in particular the Malawi Prison Service, for the invaluable financial, technical and logistical support provided towards the successful hosting of this important Conference. We are equally grateful for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements extended to all delegates since our arrival in the Warm Heart of Africa. Not to mention the beauty of Salima that I believe all delegates will take as an indelible memory back to their respective Member States.

Distinguished Member States,

Since 2024, the Corrections/Prisons/Penitentiary Annual Conference has become a cornerstone for the implementation of the regional prison reform agenda. The platform was intentionally designed to strengthen collaboration and coordination, create space for open and critical dialogue, and enable Member States to exchange best practices on matters that affect correctional systems across the region.

Through structured discussions and lessons drawn from lived experiences, the platform builds a cohesive regional approach, one that strengthens safety and security. It serves as a bridge, connecting leaders, sharing resources, and fostering partnerships that support offender transformation and improve overall outcomes for those in custody.

I hasten to reflect on the path already travelled since the first Conference in 2023 and the strategic themes that it has carefully prioritised over the year in line with emerging challenges:

In 2023, hosted by the **Republic of Namibia**, it examined the critical role Corrections play in the regional peace and security architecture, especially in conflict prevention and management.

In 2024, hosted by the **Republic of Zambia**, it focused on *preventing radicalisation to violent extremism* and violence in prisons, strengthening awareness and capacity building.

In 2025, hosted by the **United Republic of Tanzania**, it centred on strengthening the role of *intelligence gathering for early warning*. It appreciated that Correctional Facilities are a source of intelligence and can contribute to the compendium of intelligence at the national level.

Today, with the **Republic of Malawi** as the host of the **2026 Conference**, The theme is, "*Pathways to Change: Facilitating Effective Offender Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Corrections/Prisons*" reflects a

deliberate shift from purely punitive approaches towards rehabilitation and reintegration.

We have to accept that effective offender rehabilitation and reintegration require a structured transition from punitive custody to community-based support. Utilizing frameworks like the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, corrections systems reduce recidivism through vocational training, psychological therapy, and restorative justice. Transitioning from incarceration to a crime-free life relies on specific evidence-based strategies implemented during and after the sentence.

Across the SADC region, there is recognition that sustainable peace, security, and development cannot be achieved without addressing the root causes of offending behaviour and supporting offenders to reintegrate successfully into society. Rehabilitation and reintegration are therefore not peripheral functions; they are central to effective correctional management and broader human security.

Our theme builds on the significant progress made across the region, including the development of various guidelines and tools that advance approaches aimed at empowering offenders to rebuild their lives. These efforts are anchored not only in regional frameworks but also in key international standards, which strongly advocate for comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration. Such approaches are essential to promoting safer communities, reducing recidivism, and strengthening public confidence in correctional systems.

Distinguished Member States,

As we are all aware, correctional systems across the region face persistent challenges such as overcrowding, recidivism, against constrained resources. These realities require structured, evidence-informed pathways that guide offenders towards positive behavioural transformation and successful reintegration.

SADC continues to encourage Member States to strengthen correctional systems through:

- i. The adoption of **rehabilitation-focused approaches**;
- ii. The promotion of **skills development, education, and psychosocial support** for inmates; and
- iii. The enhancement of **post-release reintegration frameworks**, including community-based support systems.
- iv. **Transitional Housing:** Securing stable accommodation prevents immediate homelessness and relapse upon release.
- v. **Family & Community Support:** Involving families in the rehabilitation process helps rebuild social networks and community trust.
- vi. **Aftercare Programs:** Providing ongoing case management, mental health support, and mentorship during the critical first 12 months post-release.

It is important to align national practices with region and international normative frameworks that anchor the regional corrections agenda, namely, the SADC Treaty, Vision 2050, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), the Corrections/Prisons Strategic Plan (2021–2025) which is currently under review, the SADC Protocol on Extradition, the SADC Protocol on the Inter-State Transfer of Sentenced

Offenders, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), among others.

Distinguished Member States,

As I draw to a close, I would like to invite all delegates to approach this Conference with openness, honesty, and a strong spirit of regional cooperation. Let us dialogue, share best practices, identify obstacles and propose mitigating measures. My sincere hope is for us to leave this Conference with commitments that are realistic, with innovative resourcing models and measurable, so that “pathways to change” become pathways to tangible results across SADC Correctional Systems.

The SADC Secretariat remains committed to supporting Member States in advancing Correctional reforms that are people-centred, rights-based, and development-oriented.

Let us use this Conference as an opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to building correctional systems that not only ensure security but also restore dignity, promote rehabilitation, and create real pathways to change.

I thank you for your attention, and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank You

Merci

Obrigado

Asante Sana

Zikomo