



**REMARKS BY MS ANGELE MAKOMBO N'TUMBA  
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY- REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

**DURING THE OFFICIALS OPENIING**

**OF THE**

**SIXTH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR DISATER RISK MANAGEMENT**

**MASVINGO, ZIMBABWE**

**13 MAY 2026**

Honourable Velenkosini Hlabisa, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, and chairperson of the Committee of Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management

Our host, Honourable Daniel Garwe, Minister of Local Government and Public Works of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk management;

Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officials from SADC Member States;

Representatives of International Cooperating Partners;

Officials from SADC Member States;

SADC Secretariat staff;

Members of the Media;

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Morning.

It is a great honour to welcome you all, on behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary, His Excellency Mr. Elias M. Magosi, to this sixth ordinary meeting of the Committee of Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk Management, convened in this beautiful city of Masvingo, Republic of Zimbabwe.

I wish to express sincere gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Zimbabwe for their outstanding hospitality and for giving us the opportunity to experience more of this beautiful country.

Honorable Ministers,

Your presence here demonstrates the continued commitment of SADC Member States to strengthening regional cooperation in disaster risk management. It affirms our shared recognition that disaster risk is not merely a humanitarian concern, but a fundamental development, economic, social, environmental, and regional integration challenge.

Since our last engagements, the region has continued to experience recurrent and compounding shocks. The 2025/26 season has been particularly instructive. It has shown both the scale of our exposure and the strength of our solidarity. Several Member States were affected by Tropical Cyclones and Floods, which resulted in declarations of states of disaster and activation of disaster response mechanisms at both national and regional levels, including deployment of Emergency Response Teams and provision of humanitarian support.

These actions demonstrate that SADC is moving from policy intent to operational capability. We can now show that as a region we are transforming our commitments into action. However, the 2025/26 season has also provided valuable lessons on areas that we still need to strengthen, including coordination, cross-border facilitation, and the need to be self-sustainable as a region when responding to disasters, particularly in search and rescue and other emergency functions.

This meeting is therefore both timely and strategic. Ministers will consider critical frameworks that will guide how we further strengthen the Disaster Risk Management Agenda and transform risk into resilience dividends.

Honorable Ministers allow me to highlight four issues that require continued political leadership:

**First**, we need to institutionalize preparedness as a permanent function of government and regional cooperation. Preparedness must never be seasonal or reactive. It must be institutionalized, financed, tested, and updated annually.

**Second**, we must accelerate the operationalization of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations' Centre (SHOC). The SHOC is central to the region's ability to coordinate disaster preparedness, response, and early recovery. Its continued functionality, staffing, financing, and strategic direction are therefore essential to the credibility and effectiveness of the regional disaster risk management architecture.

**Third**, we must prioritize sustainable financing for resilience. In today's shifting geopolitical landscape, humanitarian aid flows are uncertain and increasingly contested. SADC must therefore build its own capacity to finance resilience through regional disaster funds, risk insurance pools, and partnerships with the private sector. This is the essence of self-sustenance: ensuring that our response capacity is not dependent on external generosity, but on our own collective strength.

**Lastly**, we must address the deeper drivers of vulnerability. Disasters are increasingly linked to unplanned urbanization, informal settlements, fragile livelihoods, displacement, climate change, food insecurity, and infrastructure deficits. Our disaster risk management agenda must therefore be implemented in close

alignment with the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. We must recognize that disaster risks are a constant threat to our development agenda, and development itself must be implemented in an emergency mode.

Honorable Ministers,

We must also harness technology, data, and early warning systems. Real-time information sharing across borders is essential to ensure that no Member State faces a disaster uninformed or unsupported.

Equally, our resilience agenda must empower communities, especially the youth and women, who are often the first responders in times of crisis. Their inclusion strengthens ownership and sustainability of our disaster risk management strategies.

At the same time, the global humanitarian system is undergoing a reset. Traditional aid models are being redefined, and resources are increasingly constrained. This reality compels us to strengthen our own regional mechanisms, to ensure that SADC is not left vulnerable to external shocks in humanitarian financing. Self-sustenance is no longer optional; it is a strategic imperative.

This meeting also provides an opportunity to consolidate the region's common voice on disaster risk reduction. SADC priorities must inform both the continental and global agendas.

As we move towards 2030, the remaining period for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction requires urgency. We must translate commitments into practical action, strengthen accountability, and ensure that

investments in resilience protect the development gains of our region.

Allow me to commend Senior Officials for the work undertaken in preparing the documents before Ministers. Their technical deliberations have laid the foundation for focused and strategic decisions by this Committee.

As I conclude, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the SADC Secretariat to continue supporting Member States in strengthening disaster risk governance, preparedness, response coordination, early warning, recovery, and resilience building.

Together, let us commit to building a SADC region where resilience is not an aspiration but a lived reality, a region that transforms risk into opportunity, adversity into unity, and dependence into self-sustenance.

With these remarks Honorable Ministers, I wish you productive deliberations and a successful meeting that advances our collective resilience agenda.

I thank you.

Muito obrigada.

Merci beaucoup.

Asante sana.