



Remarks by

The Commissioner General of Prisons

Ms. Wandika G.C Phiri

on the Official Opening of SADC Heads of  
Corrections/Prisons/Penitentiaries Conference at the  
Sunbird Livingstonia Hotel in Salima, Malawi

19<sup>th</sup> May 2026

- Our Guest of Honour, The Minister of Homeland Security, **Honourable Peter Mukhito**;
- The Director of SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, **Professor Kula Theletsane**;
- The Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Homeland Security, **Mrs Linda Moyo**;
- All Heads of Corrections, Prisons and Penitentiary Services in SADC Member States or their Representatives who have attended this conference and are present here today;
- The Directors and other Senior Officials in the Ministry of Homeland Security and Malawi Prisons Service here present;
- Officials from the SADC Secretariat;
- The M&E Experts and other senior officials from SADC Member States attending this conference,
- Members of the Press;

- Ladies and Gentlemen.
- Good morning!

Good morning!

It is my singular honour and privilege to warmly welcome you, Honourable Minister, Sir, our Guest of Honour, as well as all my colleagues from the SADC corrections family, to the Republic of Malawi for the 2026 SADC Heads of Corrections/Prisons/Penitentiary Services Conference here in Salima.

Honourable Minister Sir, allow me, at the outset, to sincerely thank you for finding time from your busy schedule to grace this official opening of this conference. Your presence today signifies the importance that the Government of the Republic of Malawi attaches to regional cooperation, correctional reforms, peace, and security within the SADC region.

Allow me also to extend a special welcome to the Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and

Security Affairs, and to all Heads of Corrections, Prisons and Penitentiary Services, the M&E experts who had their meeting yesterday, and all delegates from our SADC Member States who are here for this conference. We are deeply honoured by your presence and grateful for your commitment to strengthening cooperation within the correctional space in our SADC region.

Our Guest of Honour, this annual conference has become to be an important regional platform for dialogue, cooperation, and exchange of best practices among correctional leaders within SADC. Since its establishment, the forum has continued to promote collaboration in advancing progress and addressing common challenges affecting correctional services across our region.

Honourable Minister, the theme for this year's conference, *"Pathways to Change: Facilitating Effective Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Corrections,"* is both timely and highly relevant to the evolving role of our correctional services.

Across SADC, correctional services are increasingly expected not only to ensure the safe and secure custody of offenders, but also to facilitate the meaningful rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society of those people incarcerated in their facilities. This calls upon us all to continuously rethink our correctional approaches, strengthen partnerships, and embrace innovative strategies that reduce recidivism and contribute to public safety and national development.

As correctional leaders, we recognise that rehabilitation cannot be achieved through

confinement alone. It requires comprehensive interventions that include education, vocational training, psychosocial support, behavioural change programmes, restorative justice initiatives, and active community participation. Reintegration therefore becomes a shared responsibility involving governments, communities, civil society organisations, faith-based institutions, and development partners.

Honourable Minister, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference also provides us with an important opportunity to reflect on the progress made in implementing resolutions from previous conferences which took place in Namibia, Zambia, and the United Republic of Tanzania. We must continue building upon the strong foundation already established in areas such as intelligence gathering and prevention

of violent extremism and radicalisation in our prisons.

I am particularly pleased that this year's programme includes discussions on innovative approaches to offender rehabilitation, collaboration beyond prison walls, measuring success using international standards such as the Nelson Mandela Rules, and sharing best practices from around the globe. These discussions will undoubtedly enrich our collective efforts and help shape the future of correctional administration within the SADC region.

Honourable Minister Sir, the Republic of Malawi remains fully committed to the ideals and objectives of SADC, particularly in promoting peace, security, justice, and human dignity. As Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation,

Malawi is greatly honoured to host this important gathering.

As a matter of fact, Honourable Minister, Sir, these conference's engagements kick-started yesterday with a meeting of our Correctional Services Monitoring and Evaluation Experts, who convened ahead of this conference to lay a solid foundation for our deliberations. Allow me, therefore, to commend them for their valuable contribution, as their work is critical in ensuring our services' effectiveness and alignment with emerging regional challenges.

It is my sincere hope, Honourable Minister, Director of the Organ, and my fellow Distinguished Delegates, that as we deliberate over the coming days, we will remain guided by our shared vision of transforming our correctional facilities into centres of rehabilitation. Let us continue strengthening

cooperation as SADC Member States, learning from one another, and working collectively towards building correctional systems that positively contribute to peace and security.

Our Guest of Honour, Sir, allow me once again to sincerely thank you for graciously accepting to preside over this official opening ceremony. We all appreciate your presence today, as it serves as encouragement to all of us in the SADC corrections space of our respective Governments' commitment towards correctional matters.

Allow me also, before I conclude, to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Malawi, through you, Sir, for the invaluable financial and material support provided towards the successful hosting of this conference.

Finally, I wish us all productive deliberations and a pleasant stay here in Salima at the beautiful Sunbird Livingstonia Beach Resort.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

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