



## **SADC MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF HIS EXCELLENCY FESTUS GONTEBANYE MOGAE, THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

The people and governments of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) received with profound sorrow and deep sadness the news of the passing of His Excellency Festus Gontebanye Mogae, Third President of the Republic of Botswana, on 8 May 2026 at the age of 86.

On behalf of the SADC Heads of State and Government and indeed the citizens of the SADC region, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Her Excellency Mrs. Barbara Gemma Mogae, former First Lady and the bereaved family, President Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, the Government and the people of the Republic of Botswana on this great loss.

His Excellency Former President Mogae was a distinguished statesman whose wisdom, humility, and commitment to peace, good governance, and health advocacy continue to inspire the SADC region and beyond.

His courageous and principled leadership in the development and deepening Public Health care and capacity to respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic stands out as an example of high-level leadership and commitment to be remembered for generations to come. President Mogae rallied the nation of Botswana in responding to the pandemic with compassion and resolve. His example inspired the nation and lifted SADC as a region. We remember him with gratitude and salute his remarkable contribution to public health.

His Excellency Mogae's unwavering commitment to democracy, good governance, and public service was recognised globally when he was awarded the prestigious Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership in 2008.

As Chairperson of SADC from August 2005 to August 2006, Former President Mogae provided exemplary leadership during a pivotal period in the organisation's history. Upon assuming the Chairship of SADC at the 25th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government in Gaborone, Botswana on 17th August 2005, he reaffirmed the collective resolve of SADC Member States to pursue the shared vision of prosperity through deeper regional integration.

On the margins of the 25th SADC Summit, the Silver Jubilee Summit commemorating 25 years of SADC's existence, President Mogae led his fellow SADC Heads of State and Government in laying a foundation stone to mark the commencement of the construction of the new SADC Headquarters, in Gaborone, Botswana. Today, the SADC Building, which President Mogae championed, remains a towering symbol of regional integration and cooperation of 16 SADC Member States and positioning SADC as key player in international relations and diplomacy.

Former President Mogae will be remembered as a firm advocate of opening borders to facilitate free movement of goods, services, and other factors of production in the SADC region. During President Mogae's tenure, the first cross-border conservation park in southern Africa was launched, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Through this important project SADC demonstrated that it is possible to share our resources for the advancement of our countries and to create a conducive environment to foster regional cooperation and integration.

May his legacy continue to inspire us as we work towards the attainment of the SADC Vision 2050 where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom.

May his Soul rest in Eternal Peace.

**Issued on behalf of SADC by**

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. MATAMELA CYRIL RAMAPHOSA  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND  
CHAIRPERSON OF SADC**

**9 MAY 2026**