

STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA AS
SADC CHAIR AT THE 46th SUMMIT OF SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

17 AUGUST 2026

ETHEKWINI, SOUTH AFRICA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Programme Director,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf,
Executive Secretary of SADC, Mr Elias Magosi,
Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Heads of Delegation,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and the people of South Africa, we accept the honour of being elected Chairperson of SADC with great humility and a deep sense of responsibility.

As a nation, we owe a debt of gratitude to the members of SADC and its predecessor, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, for their contribution to the achievement of democracy in our country.

Our participation in SADC is founded on this history.

It is sustained by an abiding conviction that progress in our region will be secured only through unity, cooperation and solidarity.

I once again extend my gratitude and appreciation to my brother His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and outgoing Chairperson of SADC, for his leadership.

I am also grateful to the SADC Secretariat, led by the Executive Secretary, for supporting and enabling the transformational agenda of our Community.

During our Chairship of SADC, we pledge to work closely with every Member State,

guided by the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect and consensus building.

We will continue to build on the work of the previous Chairpersons of SADC, who have led our Community with vision and dedication.

We will take forward the progress that has been made towards the achievement of our Vision 2050 and the implementation of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.

We will seek greater integration of our economies, building ties of trade and investment that drive resilient, sustainable and inclusive industrialisation.

Working together with all Member States, we will promote peace, security and stability in our region, which are essential conditions for the well-being and development of our people.

As the Government and the people of South Africa, we are determined that through our Chairship and through our continued participation in SADC, we will be worthy of the struggles that were fought by the members of this Community for the achievement of our freedom.

I thank you.

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA