

CLOSING STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT CYRIL MATAMELA RAMAPHOSA
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE 46TH SUMMIT OF SADC HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT

MONDAY 17 AUGUST 2026

ETHEKWINI, SOUTH AFRICA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Programme Director,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
The Executive Secretary of SADC, Mr Elias Magosi,
Heads of Delegation,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the conclusion of the 46th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community.

This Summit has reaffirmed something fundamental: the future prosperity, security and development of our countries are inseparable from the prosperity, security and development of our region as a whole.

Our meeting today was preceded by a rich programme of engagements, including a successful SADC Industrialisation Week, meetings of Senior Officials and the Council of Ministers, and a public lecture that stimulated important discussion on the future of regional integration and development.

These engagements laid a strong foundation for our deliberations and demonstrated the value of drawing governments, business, labour, academia, young people and civil society into the work of building our region.

I wish to express my appreciation for the political commitment demonstrated by all Member States throughout this Summit.

Our discussions have reflected a shared determination to strengthen regional integration, deepen solidarity and act collectively in confronting the challenges facing our Community.

During this Summit, we reviewed progress in implementing the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and advancing SADC Vision 2050.

We considered the peace and security situation in our region, including developments in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, northern Mozambique and Madagascar.

We reaffirmed our commitment to peaceful solutions, dialogue, constitutionalism and the resolution of conflict through regional and multilateral cooperation.

We advanced discussions on trade, infrastructure, energy, industrialisation and regional value chains.

Above all, we reaffirmed that the ultimate measure of regional integration must be the improvement it brings to the lives of the people of Southern Africa.

Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,

We welcome the adoption of the theme of this Summit, which rightly places the acceleration of industrialisation at the centre of our regional agenda.

Industrialisation is not an end in itself.

It is the means through which we must create jobs, expand productive capacity, beneficiate our minerals, strengthen agriculture and agro-processing, develop new technologies and build competitive regional value chains.

Our region is richly endowed.

We have minerals that are critical to the industries of the future. We have vast agricultural potential. We have abundant renewable energy resources. We have a young population and a growing market.

Our task is to convert these endowments into factories, farms, enterprises, skills, exports and jobs.

For this to happen, we are committed to build the infrastructure that binds our economies together.

South Africa will therefore place infrastructure development at the centre of its Chairship of SADC.

A major focus will be the development and efficient functioning of our regional corridors.

We intend to make these corridors arteries of regional integration – connecting our centres of production to markets, linking landlocked countries to ports and enabling goods, services and people to move across our region more efficiently and at lower cost.

We therefore call on corridor countries to conclude and implement the necessary legal and institutional arrangements required to operationalise these corridors.

We must accelerate the establishment of the identified One-Stop Border Posts.

A truck carrying goods across Southern Africa should not spend days waiting at a border.

Our borders must facilitate legitimate trade and movement while maintaining effective security and customs controls.

We will take steps to revitalise our railway networks, expand and modernise our ports and improve the roads and logistics systems that connect our economies.

We know that without efficient infrastructure, there can be no competitive regional economy.

The same applies to energy.

We are determined to work towards increasing access to electricity across our region to at least 85 percent by 2030.

But access alone is not enough.

Our households and businesses need electricity that is reliable, affordable and increasingly generated from the diverse energy resources with which our region is blessed.

We will strengthen regional electricity interconnection and accelerate investment in

generation and transmission infrastructure so that energy can move efficiently between our countries.

We will bring the same urgency to water and sanitation.

We will ensure that our people still do have reliable access to clean water and adequate sanitation.

Investment in water, sanitation, energy and transport infrastructure is not simply investment in physical assets.

It is investment in human dignity, economic opportunity and the future productive capacity of our region.

Your Excellencies,

None of these ambitions can be achieved without financing.

We will therefore strengthen our ability to mobilise domestic, regional and international resources for the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and SADC Vision 2050.

We will proceed without undue delay to operationalise the SADC Regional Development Fund.

We intend to increase to mobilise our own resources to finance our own development priorities, while continuing to build productive partnerships with international financial institutions, development partners and the private sector.

The deliberations of this Summit leave us encouraged.

But our citizens will ultimately judge us not by the number of resolutions we adopt, but by the difference those resolutions make in their daily lives.

The challenge before us is therefore implementation.

We have developed strategies.

We have established institutions.

We have identified the infrastructure we need.

We have agreed on many of the reforms required to deepen regional integration.

We must now accelerate implementation.

We must measure our progress not only in meetings held and agreements signed, but in kilometres of railway rehabilitated, megawatts of electricity generated and transmitted, border-crossing times reduced, factories established, intra-regional trade expanded and jobs created.

That must be the defining character of the next phase of SADC's development.

Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,

Southern Africa has all the ingredients required to become one of the world's great regions of growth and opportunity.

We have the resources.

We have the people.

We have the institutions.

And, as this Summit has demonstrated, we have the political will to work together.

What is required now is to turn that political will into action.

On behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, I extend my sincere gratitude to all Heads of State and Government and every delegation for your constructive participation, your spirit of cooperation and your unwavering commitment to our shared SADC vision.

I thank the Executive Secretary and the SADC Secretariat, our Ministers and officials, interpreters, security personnel and everyone whose dedication and hard work contributed to the successful hosting of this Summit.

As you return to your respective countries, I wish you safe travels.

Let us leave eThekweni with renewed determination to build a Southern Africa in which our borders connect rather than divide us; in which our resources are transformed into prosperity; and in which the benefits of regional integration are felt in the lives of all our

people.

Let us build a Southern Africa that is peaceful, integrated, industrialised and prosperous.

And let us build it together.

I thank you.

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA