



HANDOVER SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY

AMBASSADOR A. R. CHIMBINDI,

THE PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND

OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC STANDING

COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS ON THE OCCASION OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE OF

SENIOR OFFICIALS,

6 AUGUST 2026,

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Interim Chairperson of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials and Deputy Director General for Africa in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo;

Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs. Etambuyu Anamela Gundersen

Your Excellency Mr. Elias M. Magosi, the Executive Secretary of SADC;

Deputy Executive Secretaries;

Distinguished Senior Officials;

Ladies and gentleman.

Good morning to you all!

1. Let me take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation to you, and through you, the Government of the Republic of South Africa for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful City of Ethekewini, KwaZulu-Natal Province.
2. We wish to convey our warmest appreciation to the Republic of South Africa for taking up the interim leadership of our region in the past year and ensure the continuation of the work of our organisation. Our region has witnessed substantial progress on the implementation of

regional programmes during that period. This was only possible because of your dedication and unwavering commitment to the success of our regional development agenda.

3. Colleagues, let me also take this opportunity to express Zimbabwe's profound gratitude for the invaluable support of each and everyone of you during our election as a member of the United Nations Security Council Non-Permanent seat. We are greatly honoured to work with other Members of the A3 to advance the interests of our region, the continent and those of the Global South. Advancing international peace and security is one of our top priorities. This resonates with our Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan in which Peace, Security and Governance are the Foundation Pillar.
4. We must remain steadfast in our commitment to peace, security, and good governance as the bedrock of sustainable development and shared prosperity. At this juncture, supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in restoring lasting peace in the eastern part of the country, and Madagascar in consolidating constitutional order, remain major priorities for our region's peace and security agenda.
5. We are encouraged by the progress we continue to realise under the RSDP Pillars. The Mid-Term Review of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan has provided an assessment, recognising the notable achievements realised across different strategic areas while ,also, identifying the challenges and risks that continue to affect the attainment of our objectives. Its findings provide us with yet

another opportunity to streamline our programme of work, to strengthen implementation efforts, and enhance our ability to achieve the remaining targets over the remainder of the implementation period.

6. Of particular importance is the need for us to continue to work collectively towards prioritising and enhancing the quality of decisions, ensure implementation effectiveness, accountability, coordination and sustainability across the decision-making cycle. We, therefore, welcome the Mechanism for the Rationalisation of Council and Summit Decisions that will be recommended for consideration and adoption by the Council. To optimise the benefits from the Mechanism, the SADC Secretariat should do its part, particularly in ensuring judicious use of the resources of the organisation.
7. Our intra-regional trade has not grown at the desired pace. We remain well below our potential and the targets we have collectively set for ourselves. We must, therefore, increase our efforts to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and accelerate industrialisation and regional value chain development, leveraging our comparative advantages. This is particularly important as the evolving geopolitical landscape underscores the need for us to build a more resilient regional economy and reduce vulnerability to external shocks. High impact priority projects should help us to ride the storm. The Retreats by our Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Skukuza has provided guidance on the priorities for our region.

8. **Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman**, as I conclude, let me handover to you, my dear brother, Ambassador Seokolo, the Chair of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials. We reaffirm Zimbabwe's unwavering support and commitment to working closely with all of you in our collective drive towards the SADC We Want, in our capacity as both, outgoing Chair and as a dedicated and loyal member of this community. The SADC we want will not be realized by accident. We have to deliberately work towards it.
9. I wish you, dear brother and the Republic of South Africa, a successful tenure as at the helm of our organization
10. I thank you.