

MAIDEN ADDRESS H.E. Dr. Patrick Herminie, President of the Republic of Seychelle at
46th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government

Your Excellency Mr. Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Interim Chairperson of SADC;

Your Majesty King Mswati III;

Your Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, Outgoing Chairperson of SADC;

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Executive Secretary of SADC;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is a profound honour to address this distinguished Assembly for the first time as President of the Republic of Seychelles.

I thank the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa for their warm hospitality, and I commend the Republic of Zimbabwe for its stewardship of our community over the past year.

As Seychelles marks fifty years of Independence, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the ideals upon which SADC was founded; solidarity, regional integration and the shared prosperity of our people.

Excellencies,

History rarely announces the moment when it changes course.
It simply presents a generation with a choice.

I believe this is Africa's moment.

Our predecessors fought for political liberation.

They secured our sovereignty and built the foundations of regional cooperation. Our generation is called upon to fulfil a different mission:

To transform Africa's immense potential into prosperity for its people.

For centuries, others crossed oceans in search of Africa's wealth. Today, history presents us with a different opportunity, not simply to supply the world with our resources, but to build prosperity from them. The measure of Africa's success can no longer be the value of what leaves our shores, but the opportunities we create within them.

The theme of this Summit points us in that direction. Industrialization, infrastructure, agricultural transformation and the responsible development of our critical minerals are not separate priorities. Together, they form the foundation of a resilient, competitive and prosperous Southern Africa.

Excellencies,

The world around us is changing rapidly. Geopolitical tensions, disruptions to global supply chains, volatile energy markets and climate-related events remind us that our prosperity cannot depend solely on circumstances beyond our control. For Seychelles, these realities are immediate.

As an island nation, we experience the effects of global disruptions in the cost of food, fuel and essential goods, and in the confidence upon which our tourism economy depends. Yet this is not the experience of Seychelles alone. It is a reminder that, in today's world, **the resilience of every Member State depends upon the resilience of the Community as a whole.**

Our response must therefore be greater regional integration. Not as an aspiration. But as an economic necessity. Geography has blessed our community with different strengths.

Some Member States possess fertile agricultural lands. Others hold the critical minerals that will shape the industries of tomorrow. Others serve as the gateways through which Southern Africa connects to global markets. These are not competing advantages. They are complementary strengths. The prosperity of a landlocked economy depends upon efficient access to ports.

The success of our ports depends upon vibrant regional production and seamless transport corridors. Our future will be built by connecting these strengths into one integrated regional economy.

Excellencies,

Industrialization is not simply about manufacturing.

It is about dignity.

It is about creating opportunities for our young people.

It is about ensuring that African resources create African jobs, African industries and African prosperity.

Africa should no longer export raw materials and import finished products at a premium.

The era of African potential must now become the era of African prosperity.

This demands leadership.

It demands investment.

And above all, it demands unity.

Excellencies,

The founders of SADC understood that our greatest strength would never be found in the size of our individual economies. It would be found in the unity of our purpose. That truth remains as relevant today as it was over four decades ago.

History will not judge our generation by the speeches we delivered or the declarations we adopted.

It will judge us by whether we had the courage to transform our resources into opportunity...our integration into prosperity... and our shared vision into tangible progress for the people we serve.

Africa's greatest resource has never been beneath its soil.

It has always been the determination of its people.

If we unite that determination with visionary leadership, sound institutions and bold economic transformation, then the next great chapter of global development will not simply include Africa **it will be shaped by Africa.**

Seychelles stands ready to play its part.

I thank you.