REMARKS BY DR. MIKE MASIYE

ACTING DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY- REGIONAL INTEGRATION

DURING THE OFFICIALS OPENIING

OF THE

SEVENTH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISATER RISK MANAGEMENT

VIRTUAL

12 NOVEMBER 2026

Honourable Velenkosini Hlabisa, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the Committee of SADC Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk Management from SADC Member States;

Dr. Elias Sithole, Head of the National Disaster Management Centre of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the Committee of SADC Senior Officials Responsible for Disaster Risk Management

Senior Officials from SADC Member States

Dr. Manuel Lutango, Head of Disaster Risk Reduction at the SADC Secretariat

Representatives of our Esteemed International Cooperating Partners; humanitarian and development partners, research institutions, climate experts, disaster risk management institutions and regional organisations

SADC Secretariat staff

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests

Good morning to you all.

On behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary, His Excellency Mr. Elias Magosi, I am honoured to welcome you to the Seventh Ordinary Meeting of the Committee of Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management.

I extend our appreciation to the Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates and all participants for your presence and continued commitment to strengthening regional cooperation in disaster risk management.

This meeting marks an important milestone in the evolution of disaster risk governance in our region. It is the first Ordinary Meeting convened to reflect on the state of disaster preparedness

for the SADC region at the beginning of the cyclone season. Following the SADC Council of Ministers' direction in March 2026, and this Committee's endorsement in May 2026, the Committee is now expected to meet twice annually: before the cyclone season to assess preparedness, and readiness, and after the season to review its impacts and consider broader disaster risk management priorities. This regular cycle will enable Ministers to provide strategic guidance before hazards materialise, while also drawing lessons from experience to strengthen future preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates

You will recall that the Regional Preparedness Snapshot for the 2025/26 season estimated humanitarian requirements of about US$500 million, against available resources of about US$171 across Member States. In February 2026 our region stood in solidarity with sister Member States who had declared states of disaster as a result of floods and cyclones. Member States demonstrated remarkable commitment to regional cooperation as they deployed emergency response teams and provided relief supplies and technical expertise to augment the response efforts of the affected Member States.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all Member States for their invaluable support, generosity, solidarity, and unwavering commitment to supporting one another during times of crisis. These actions are a powerful reflection of the principles of regional unity, collective responsibility and mutual support upon which SADC is founded.

I also wish to acknowledge with profound appreciation the financial, technical and operational support extended to the region and affected Member States by our development partners, particularly the United Nations agencies, international humanitarian organisations and other cooperating partners. Their continued partnership, and timely assistance have been instrumental in complementing national and regional response efforts and addressing the urgent needs of affected communities.

Together, these collective efforts reaffirm our shared commitment to standing alongside one another in times of crisis, strengthening regional resilience and responding collectively to the humanitarian challenges facing our region. They also underscore the importance of sustained partnerships and international cooperation in ensuring that no Member State is left to face such challenges alone.

Earlier, in May 2024, the region declared a state of disaster following declaration from several Member States due to the ElNiño induced drought. In response the region launched an appeal of USD 6.5 billion to address humanitarian response and recovery needs. About USD1.1 billion was mobilised to respond to the impacts of the drought.

These experiences highlight both the strength of regional solidarity and the scale of the challenges before us. They also demonstrate the value of preparedness, timely action and coordinated resource mobilization. As a community, we must now build on these lessons by strengthening our preparedness systems so that support can be anticipated, organised and mobilised before crises escalate.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates

The outlook for the 2026/27 season points to strong to very strong El Niño conditions, with below-normal rainfall expected across much of central and southern SADC and above-normal temperatures expected throughout most of the region. The implications will vary across Member States. Drought and extreme heat are likely to place additional pressure on crops,

livestock, water resources and energy production in some areas, while other parts of the region will remain vulnerable to floods, storms and related hazards.

At the same time the global economic and geopolitical environment continues to exert pressure on public finances and international assistance. This makes it even more important for us to use available resources strategically, strengthen national ownership, and ensure that preparedness is reflected in plans, budgets and investment decisions. While regional and international partnerships remain essential, sustainable readiness depends on shared responsibility, national preparedness, clearly defined roles, responsibilities and financing that is available before Disasters strike.

Honourable Ministers, I encourage this Committee to provide clear direction on the actions, responsibilities, timelines and resources needed to implement the proposals before you. Your leadership will be critical in translating forecasts into timely action, protecting the recovery gains achieved over the past season and reducing avoidable losses across our region.

I thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to building a safer, more resilient Southern African region. I wish the Committee productive deliberations and a successful meeting.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Thank you.
Muito obrigado.
Merci beaucoup.
Asante sana.