



REMARKS

BY

**HER EXCELLENCY DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX,
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 40TH ORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE
SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

ON

17 AUGUST 2020

Your Excellency, Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Chairperson of SADC;

Your Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and the Incoming Chairperson of SADC;

Your Excellencies, SADC Heads of State and Government;

Honourable Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo, Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers;

Honourable Ministers;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

SADC Deputy Executive Secretaries and Secretariat staff;

Our partners from the Media and Esteemed viewers.

I am greatly humbled to have this opportunity to deliver some introductory remarks, and to welcome you to the Opening of the 40th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, which is being held virtually for the first time in the history of our Organisation due to challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the excellent preparations, a clear demonstration of Mozambique's commitment to SADC cooperation and integration.

Your Excellencies,

Before I proceed, allow me to express our deepest condolences to the Mkapa family, Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania, on the untimely passing of **His Excellency Benjamin William Mkapa**, third President of the United Republic of Tanzania. The late President Mkapa had a very strong passion for regional cooperation and economic integration. In his own words during the SADC Summit held in 2001 in Blantyre, Republic of Malawi, he said, "SADC belongs to the people, and the people need peace; they need security and stability if they are to work and invest for today and tomorrow." His legacy is visible for everyone to see and cherish, he has left an indelible mark on the lives of SADC citizens, and his name and achievements are inscribed in the history books of SADC. May his dear soul rest in eternal peace. **Amen!**

Your Excellencies,

This year's Summit comes at a time when SADC is celebrating 40 years of existence. The COVID-19 pandemic, though devastating, will not overshadow the achievements that SADC has attained since the establishment of the Southern African Development Coordination

Conference in April 1980. We remain indebted to the founders of our regional organisation who, had the foresight to establish an organisation that would front stable, sustainable, and equitable regional integration, as espoused in the Lusaka Declaration. It is gratifying to report that during the year, the formulation of a Mechanism in honour the Founders of SADC was finalised. The mechanism will go a long way in honouring the Founders of SADC, in preserving and promoting the history of our Organization, and in entrenching a sense of patriotism, self-love, and belonging, among the peoples of our region, particularly the youth.

Your Excellencies,

In line with the August 2019 Summit decision directing the Secretariat “to undertake an assessment of the status of industrialisation and SADC intra-regional trade”, and the challenge advanced to the Secretariat, by the Chairperson of SADC, His Excellency Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, to advise Member States on the appropriate direction to overcome challenges confronting the region, the Secretariat reviewed the status of industrialisation and market integration in the SADC region. The findings of this review show that, while SADC integration has progressed, there is still work to be done if we are to effectively promote industrialization, and improve economic growth in the region. The assessment shows that the structures of SADC economies remain undiversified with a growing dependency on natural resources and export of unprocessed commodities characterized by a stagnant industrial sector. Natural resource-based sectors, including Agriculture and Mining, still account for on average 25 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The assessment further reveals that despite some improvements in intra-SADC trade flows, the total intra-SADC trade, which stood at 19.3 percent in 2018, is significantly less compared to other regions. These observations, among others, point to the urgent need for Member States to improve competitiveness by addressing the supply-side constraints, including strengthening cooperation in cross-border infrastructure, and deal with non-tariff barriers that remain a hindrance to the smooth flow of goods. The findings also point to the importance of ratifying and implementing the SADC Protocol on Industry, as an important instrument for the promotion of an industrialised and globally competitive regional economy. In this regard, allow me recognize the twelve (12) Member States that have signed the Protocol, and to commend the Republic of Seychelles the only Member State that has ratified the Protocol.

Your Excellencies

A number of milestones were recorded during the year, including timely development of SADC Guidelines on Movement of Goods and Services

across the region during COVID-19. The guidelines greatly contributed to containment of the spread of COVID-19, and facilitated movement of goods, and thus minimizing disruptions to economic activities, and mitigating socio-economic hardships to SADC citizens. Furthermore, the region finalized the development of the SADC Vision 2050, and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030. These are key blueprints that are to provide a strategic direction of our region, taking forward the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2015 – 2020, which lapsed in March 2020. The Secretariat also carried out an in-depth assessment of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on SADC economies, and a report with concrete proposals across sectors was prepared.

Notwithstanding the impacts of COVID-19, Member states have put in place rigorous response measures. In this regard, may I commend Member States for the measures put in place that have gone a long way in containing the spread of the pandemic, and protecting the livelihoods of SADC citizens. Sadly, however, we are now witnessing a surge, especially in local transmissions and an increase in casualties in some of our Member States. This calls for SADC to remain united and vigilant in the fight against this pandemic.

Your Excellencies,

In the area of **peace and security cooperation**, SADC continued to strengthen peace and stability, as well as, democracy and good governance. In a bid to enhance peace and security in the SADC region, and in line with the guidance provided by the SADC Chairperson, and the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, the Secretariat conducted an assessment of emerging security threats in the region. The findings show that, while the security landscape in the SADC region remains stable, there are areas that require strengthening, and these relate to terrorism and cybersecurity; transnational organized crime; climate change and disasters; governance and democracy; and cross-cutting issues. Proposed recommendations to address the emerging threats were considered by the Organ Troika Summit on the 14th August 2020. In implementing the recommendations, priority will be placed on measures to combat terrorism, violent attacks, and cybercrime; address adverse effects of climate change; and mitigate external interference, impact of fake news and abuse of social media, especially in electoral processes.

The Region also continued to consolidate democracy as evidenced by the transparent and peaceful elections held in several countries since your last Summit in August 2019. To this end, allow me to congratulate the Republics of Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Namibia, for conducting peaceful elections. During the year, the region also witnessed a peaceful transfer of power in the Kingdom of Lesotho following the resignation of

Former Prime Minister. Allow me to congratulate our leaders for being elected or re-elected, and appointed.

Recognising the progress made and the recorded achievements, allow me **Your Excellencies** to express our profound gratitude to **His Excellency, Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania**, and Chairperson of SADC, and his entire team, for the exemplary leadership and continued guidance during the year. His commitment to the SADC agenda made it possible for the region to register the recorded progress. Your Excellency, thank you very much. We are grateful for your leadership, and for the outstanding work done by your team led by Hon. Prof. Palamagamba John Kabudi, Outgoing Chairperson of Council of Ministers.

Allow me to also thank the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, **His Excellency Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe**, for having diligently and outstandingly steered the work of the Organ during the course of the year, and for ensuring that SADC remains a beacon of peace and security and stability. We thank Your Excellency for your leadership, and for the excellent work done by your team led by Hon. Lt. Gen. (retired) Dr. Sibusiso Moyo, as Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ.

Your Excellencies,

Having attained 40 years of existence, the theme of this Summit “**40 Years Building Peace and Security, and Promoting Development and Resilience in the Face of Global Challenges**” could not have come at a better time. The Theme consolidates the progress registered over the past 40 years, and is in line with the proposed SADC Vision 2050, which foresees a peaceful, inclusive, middle to high income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom.

We welcome **His Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi**, President of the Republic of Mozambique, as the Chairperson of SADC. Your Excellency, may I assure you of the Secretariat’s and my personal commitment and diligent services.

Your Excellencies,

As I conclude, may I pay tribute to Your Excellencies for your steadfast leadership and commitment to the prosperity of our region.

I also wish to thank our partners, both internal and external for their contributions to the SADC regional integration.

Finally, may I recognise the support that I have continuously received from my Deputy Executive Secretaries, and the entire Secretariat Team. I thank

you Team for your usual professionalism and dedication towards results.
Asanteni sana, Asanteni sana, sana!

Thank you very much!

Merci beaucoup!

Muito obrigada!

Asanteni sana!