



REMARKS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE AND
CHAIRMAN OF SADC,
COMRADE R.G. MUGABE,
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
35TH SADC SUMMIT,
THE GABORONE INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION CENTRE (GICC),
GABORONE, BOTSWANA,
17TH AUGUST, 2015.**

**Your Majesty, King Mswati III of the
Kingdom of Swaziland,**

**Your Excellency The President of the Republic of
Botswana and Incoming Chairperson of SADC,
Lt General Seretse Khama Ian Khama,**

**Your Excellencies, SADC Heads of State and
Government,**

**The Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma,**

**The Executive Secretary of SADC,
Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax,**

Honourable Ministers,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Heads of Other Regional Organisations

Here Present,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Comrades and Friends.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, I would like to express my appreciation to Your Excellency President, the Government and people of Botswana, for the hospitality that has been accorded us since our arrival.

Your Excellencies,

SADC is built on the firm foundation of the principles and values of unity, solidarity, freedom and independence, a legacy that our founding fathers, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Agostinho Neto, Samora Machel, Sir Seretse Khama, among others, bequeathed to us. We should continue to cherish these values and never ~~to~~ allow our detractors to divide us. For united we stand, and divided we fall.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Since the 34th Summit held in Victoria Falls, we have continued to work resolutely towards the realisation of our vision, to transform SADC into an independent, prosperous, and self-sustaining region. To this end, the Extraordinary Summit in Harare, in April this year, adopted the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Road Map, which has laid a firm foundation for the economic growth and development of our region.

Your Majesty, Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

The adoption of the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap is only the beginning of a very long journey, as more remains to be done, for our region to realize its benefits. We therefore urge the Secretariat to finalize the costing exercise for the Industrialization Plan and ensure its speedy implementation. We also call on the private sector

and other stakeholders to join hands with Governments in this noble endeavour, for the betterment of our people and region.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

With the finalization and adoption of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015 – 2020, the streamlining of industrial development into the master plan and the prioritization of the industrialization pillar, our vision of regional integration has been further solidified, and our priorities redefined. Let us now work assiduously towards the early and speedy implementation of this revised plan.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

During the period under review, we successfully launched the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free

Trade Area in Sharm El Sheikh, on 10th June, 2015.
The Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)
negotiations were also launched in June, 2015, in
South Africa. With an expanded industrial base,
SADC stands to benefit meaningfully from these
new trade arrangements.

Your Majesty, Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,

Our region continues to exhibit political maturity
and remains a shining beacon of democracy on the
continent. During the past year, six countries
conducted free, fair and credible elections. In that
regard, I wish to congratulate Heads of State and
Government, and the peoples of Botswana, Lesotho,
Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia, for
the exemplary manner in which they conducted
their respective elections.

SADC prides itself as the most peaceful and stable region on the Continent. This has not come on a silver platter, but is a result of tremendous sacrifices, in both human and material resources, since the days of our liberation struggles. We have persistently and consistently worked to promote peace and security, the vital ingredients for sustainable development. A practical demonstration of our commitment to these goals is the recent involvement of SADC in creating a conducive atmosphere in which peaceful, free, fair and credible elections were held.

Your Majesty, Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

I would like to commend the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, His Excellency President Jacob Zuma and the SADC Facilitator on Lesotho, Deputy President Cyril

Ramaphosa, for guiding our efforts to facilitate peace and security in the Kingdom. We must also continue to assist our brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in Madagascar, as they search for peaceful ways of resolving their current challenges.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

We welcome the decision by the African Union Assembly to name the new Peace and Security Building in honour of the former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. At this Summit, another book on the African icon, entitled '*ASANTE SANA, THANK YOU MWALIMU*,' is going to be launched. This is a collection of photographs and speeches made by Mwalimu from 1959 to 1999. We thank the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, for which Mwalimu was

patron, and the other editors who made this publication possible.

Your Majesty, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As I conclude, let me, on behalf of the Government and people of Zimbabwe, express sincere appreciation and gratitude to you, Excellencies, for the valuable support you rendered to us, during the last twelve months, as Chairman of SADC. I thank, in a special way, the SADC Executive Secretary, and the entire Secretariat, for the support we received from them during our Chairmanship. I am confident that our Secretariat, and all of us in the SADC family, will render the same level of support and cooperation to the incoming Chair.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, and Distinguished Guests,

It is now my singular honour and privilege to declare the 35th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government officially open.

I thank you.

RGM/jm