



**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SADC AT THE
OPENING OF THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE ON
REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

HARARE, ZIMBABWE

05 MARCH 2015

-
- **Honourable Michael Bimha, Our host and Chairperson of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration;**
 - **Honourable Ministers;**
 - **Senior Officials of the Task Force;**
 - **Members of the Secretariat**

It is my humble honour to welcome you to this important meeting of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration. Following the August 2014 Summit decision, the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Integration was reconstituted to include Ministers responsible for Infrastructure in order to streamline and strengthen

institutions driving the SADC Regional Integration Agenda. Since this is the first time since the Ministerial Task Force is meeting as an expanded committee with the Ministers responsible for Infrastructure, I would like to welcome the Ministers of Infrastructure to this august body, and acknowledge the important role of Infrastructure in fostering industrialization and trade facilitation, and therefore its great contribution to regional integration.

Honourable Ministers,

As you are aware, you are meeting here today on a very specific assignment, regarding the development of a SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap, as mandated by Summit in August 2014. According to the Summit decision, the Ministerial Task Force is expected to contribute in, and oversee the development of an Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap for the region, to be presented to Summit in April 2015.

Since August 2014, the Secretariat has been working tirelessly to ensure that the timelines as spelt by the Summit are adhered to, but without compromising quality of the expected output towards the realization of this important milestone. **This has involved contacting Strategic**

Partners soliciting for the necessary technical and financial support. May I report to this August meeting, that **UNECA and GIZ graciously heeded our call, by providing the necessary resources;** UNECA as a strategic partner, and both UNECA and GIZ, granted us financial support. The interim report will be presented to this meeting.

I wish to express our sincere gratitude to UNECA and GIZ for the financial support granted to SADC, which enabled us to commence work, I look forward to their continued cooperation as we move to the next stage of implementation. Special gratitude goes to UNECA, for its expeditious response and willingness to partner with SADC technically in the realization of the Summit Decision.

Honorable Ministers,

The Development of the Industrialisation strategy commenced in December, following completion of the preparatory phase which included resource mobilisation, preparations of TORs and assembling experts. The interim report is now ready and will be presented during this meeting for your consideration. The Interim Report, lays the foundation for the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap,

outlining key elements and recommendations on which the Strategy will be anchored on. Important as this exercise is, obtaining strategic direction from Honorable Ministers at this stage of the development of the Strategy will ensure, not only a constructive and functional outcome, but also a fully informed outcome, set to drive major socio-economic development and transformation of our Region. The Interim Report was considered by Experts and Senior Officials during the past week and they have also given their inputs on various aspects of the report.

Work on the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan is moving simultaneously, finalization of which, needs to be informed by the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap. The primary objective is to ensure that industrialization is prioritized and takes centre stage in the finalization of the RISDP. Hence, these processes are going on in tandem, and the two documents, will be presented for approval by Summit in April.

I also wish to thank the Member States, who continue to demonstrate a high level of cooperation and commitment to this work. I am certain with their continued support, we will be able to finish this work on record time. What remains critical

is to ensure that National Reports are urgently finalized to adequately inform this work.

My sincere appreciation, also go to the Regional Experts who have partnered with the Secretariat and worked tirelessly to put together this important piece of work. I implore them to continue this hard work to the end. Furthermore, I wish to thank the Secretariat staff for their dedication and tireless efforts.

It will be remiss on my part if I fail to thank the experts and senior officials for the excellent preparation for this meeting.

Honorable Ministers

With these few remarks, I look forward to further deliberations and guidance from your meeting. Your Secretariat is committed to ensuring that the aspirations of our leaders, to beneficiate and add value to the resources of the region for socio-economic transformation and upliftment of millions of our people out of perennial poverty are realized.

I THANK YOU.