



**REMARKS**

**BY**

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

**DURING THE LAUNCH**

**OF THE**

**SADC REGIONAL APPEAL TO CONTAIN THE  
AFRICAN MIGRATORY LOCUST**

**11 NOVEMBER 2020**

**Honourable Celso Ismael Correia, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Mozambique, and Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security;**

**SADC Deputy Executive Secretaries;**

**Senior Government Officials**

**Representatives of our Regional and International Partners;**

**SADC Secretariat Staff;**

**Partners from the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am greatly honoured to deliver these remarks and to take part in this very important Launch of the SADC Regional Appeal for support to contain African Migratory Locusts.

Let me thank you Honourable Minister for accepting to launch this Regional Appeal to contain the African Migratory Locust. This signifies the commitment of the Republic of Mozambique, as the current Chairperson of SADC to SADC development and integration agenda, and your individual commitment as the Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security, to ensure sustainable food security through coordinated regional approaches and efforts

**Honourable Ministers,**

The SADC region has over the past few years been affected by a number of transboundary plant pests and diseases, including the African Migratory Locusts, the Fall armyworm, Fruit fly, Maize lethal Necrotic disease, and the Panama disease that affects Banana plants. Additionally, SADC has also recorded recent outbreaks of high-impact transboundary animal diseases, including foot and mouth disease and avian influenza.

In May 2020, the region saw the outbreak of the African Migratory Locusts in eight (8) SADC Member States, including Botswana, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. The latest outbreak has affected Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe with a potential to quickly spread to other countries in the region. Fortunately, the

damage to summer crops of the agricultural season 2019/2020 was minimal as harvesting had already occurred. However, irrigated crops, winter crops, and the next season of summer crops of 2020/2021, for which planting starts in November, are likely to be at high risk. The outbreak is a serious impediment to agricultural production and productivity and has the potential to compound the food insecurity that the region is already experiencing.

### **Honourable Ministers,**

The outbreak of the African Migratory Locusts comes at a time when the SADC region is still recovering from a number of disasters, including the persistent *E/ Nino*-induced drought that started in 2016/17, the impacts of a number of cyclones including Cyclones Idai, Belna and Kenneth that affected the region last year, and the COVID-19 pandemic whose socio-economic impacts continue to be felt across the various sectors in the region. These multiple disasters have resulted in an upsurge in vulnerabilities, including poverty and food insecurity, which leave SADC citizens less capacitated to adapt to the challenges through own means.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the region was already experiencing food insecurity with approximately 41.2 million people in the region projected to be food insecure. This is the highest population of food insecure people that the SADC region has experienced in a decade. According to the 2020 SADC Synthesis Report on the State of Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability, close to 44.8 million people in both urban and rural areas of Southern Africa are food insecure. The most recent figures according to 2020 Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme Synthesis Report, indicate that these numbers have escalated to 51.33 million. The combined impacts of COVID-19 and the African Migratory Locusts outbreak are likely to further worsen vulnerability to extreme weather patterns, among other challenges encountered in the region.

According to the 24<sup>th</sup> Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum, the bulk of the SADC Region is likely to receive normal to above-normal rainfall for most of the period from October to December 2020, with north-western Angola, bulk of Democratic Republic of Congo, most of eastern Madagascar, northern Malawi, northern Mozambique, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania and north-eastern Zambia projected to receive normal to below-normal rains. The January to March 2021 period is expected to have normal to above normal rainfall for the entire region. These normal to above normal rainfall is expected to bring about torrential rains, which are likely to cause flash floods across the region with implications for food security and people's lives and livelihoods in general. These multiple disasters underscore the need for the region to remain

vigilant and prepared, not just for multiple disasters, but also, and more importantly, for sudden disasters that may strike at any time.

May I, therefore, call upon Member States to accelerate preparedness measures to ensure readiness for these multiple disasters, by among others, adopting regional response approaches, sharing information, effectively using predictions and early warning information that are continuously generated and shared by the SADC Secretariat, and jointly managing the challenges. Enhancing engagement, coordination, capacity development, and monitoring and evaluation at the sub-national, national and regional levels, while adopting resilience-building initiatives cannot be overemphasised.

### **Honourable Ministers and Esteemed Partners**

We are gathered here today, even though virtually, to launch a Regional Appeal to contain the African Migratory Locust, may I thank all of you for attending this important launch, and all partners that have worked with us in our efforts to contain the outbreak of the African Migratory Locust, and preparing for this launch. In this regards, allow me to recognize the support that we have received from United Nations Organisation for Food and Agriculture (FAO) and the International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa. May I also thank the SADC Secretariat staff for the excellent work done in preparing the Appeal and its launch.

In a special way, allow me to express our gratitude to His Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of Mozambique, and Chairperson of SADC, for having endorsed the Launch of this Regional Appeal. This is a true demonstration of His Excellency's, commitment to regional integration, and the uplifting of the living standards of SADC citizens.

May I call upon Member States to continue working together in enhancing the region's preparedness, while stepping up measures to forecast, prepare and respond to these frequent disasters. The SADC Secretariat remains committed to supporting Members States in these endeavours, and in accelerating SADC development integration agenda as a whole. I am confident that with our commitment and combined efforts, we will minimise the impacts of these disasters for the betterment of the region.

With these few remarks, may I call upon Honourable Celso Ismael Correia, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Mozambique, and Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security, to officially launch the Regional Appeal to contain the African Migratory Locust, and request all SADC Partners, form within the Regional and Internationally to support this appeal.

**Thank you very much!**  
**Muito Obrigada!**  
**Merci Beaucoup!**  
**Asante Sana!**