



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

**H.E. MR ELIAS M. MAGOSI,
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT OF HEADS
OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

HELD VIRTUALLY

ON

13 MARCH 2025

Your Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of SADC.

Your Excellency Mr. Andry Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and incoming Chairperson of SADC.

Your Excellency Mr Joao Manual Goncalves Lourenco, President of the Republic of Angola, and outgoing Chairperson of SADC.

Your Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Chairperson of the SADC Organ.

Your Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, and incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ.

Your Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, and outgoing Chairperson of the SADC Organ.

Your Excellencies, SADC Heads of State and Government and Representatives of Heads of State and Government.

Honourable Professor Amon Murwira, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers.

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

Senior Officials and Heads of Security Institutions.

Members of the Media.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

good morning!

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome Your Excellencies to this virtual Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which has been convened at short notice, to address the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We are pleased, Your Excellencies, for creating time at a very short notice to participant in this Summit, which is a clear demonstration of your commitment to the peace and security agenda of the SADC region.

I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of SADC, for convening this Summit to receive the report of the virtual Extraordinary SADC Organ Troika Summit of 6 March 2025 on the prevailing security and humanitarian situation

in the eastern part of the DRC, as well as the review of the mandate of the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC). I would also like to offer our sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of Zimbabwe for the continued gracious hospitality extended to our delegations.

The security situation in eastern DRC is worrisome and continues to be a concern for the region. The attacks by the M23 Armed Group against DRC Government Forces, SAMIDRC Troops, and the civilian population, and the subsequent capture of various cities and towns in the area, have resulted in the loss of lives and injuries, and led to a sharp increase in internally displaced persons, forcing many people, particularly women, children, the elderly and disabled, to flee their homes. SADC strongly condemns the unwarranted attacks on innocent people by the rebel groups, and is resolute in standing in solidarity with our sister country, to address the prevailing security challenges through the relevant SADC structures.

Your Excellencies, the situation is compounded by the blockade of main supply routes and the capture by the M23 Armed Group of both Goma International Airport and Kavumu Airport in Bukavu. An urgent diplomatic intervention is, therefore, urgent to open these airports to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance and allow SADC and its structures to find an immediate and workable solution for our Mission.

The invasion of DRC territory by M23 and their external supporters, along with the establishment of defacto authorities and illegitimate parallel administration in some parts of the country, are serious violations of international law and a clear and unapologetic defiance of both the Nairobi and Luanda Peace processes. As a region, SADC stands for the protection and respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC. To this end, collective efforts are ongoing in line with the SADC Mutual Defence Pact of 2003, to protect the people of the region against instability arising from the conflict, and address security challenges in accordance with international law.

Your Excellencies, the report of the Extraordinary SADC Organ Troika Summit consolidates the outcomes and recommendations of the following meetings: first, the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government held on 31 January 2025 in Harare, Zimbabwe, which directed Defence Chiefs to review the SAMIDRC mandate and report to the Chair of the Organ; second, a joint Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the East African Community (EAC) and SADC of 08 February 2025 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, which was convened to provide direction on the required measures to pacify the volatile security situation eastern DRC; third, an extraordinary meeting of the Defence Sub-Committee of Organ Troika Plus SAMIDRC Troop Contributing Countries and DRC of 20 February 2025, held in Dar es Salaam to review the mandate of SAMIDRC; and, fourth and lastly, a joint meeting of EAC-SADC Chiefs of Defence Forces of 24 February 2025 in Dar es Salaam, where a securitisation plan for Goma and eastern DRC was developed.

In all meetings stated above, it was a recurring theme that a lasting solution to peace in eastern DRC can only be achieved through inclusive diplomatic efforts and dialogue among all state and non-state parties to the conflict, both military and non-military. The region, therefore, fully supports the call for the reopening of diplomatic channels through existing frameworks of the Nairobi and Luanda Peace Processes. We trust that with our collective efforts, and through the support of the international community, efforts to return the DRC to normalcy would bear fruits.

I wish to also highlight, Your Excellencies, that the EAC-SADC engagement process must be protected and nurtured. It is probably the only structure in recent times that has brought some level of trust for both the DRC and Rwanda, and hope to multiple stakeholders, namely the SADC and EAC regions, the African Union Peace and Security Council, the UN Security Council, and the international community. The two RECs must, therefore, jealously guard this structure and ensure it does not become another failed process. We must do everything in our power, as SADC especially, and ensure this structure achieves its objectives, and that it remains credible, trusted and free from blemishes. Even as it interacts with both Luanda and Nairobi processes and with the African Union structures, the EAC-SADC engagement process should be without reproach.

With these few remarks, allow me to humbly invite the Chairperson of SADC, His Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, to address and officially open the Extraordinary Summit.

**I Thank you! Merci beaucoup! Muito obrigado! Asante Sana! Tatenda!
Siyabonga!**