



REMARKS

OF

**THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SADC
H.E. DR STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL
COMMITTEE OF THE ORGAN (MCO) ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND
SECURITY COOPERATION**

**JULY, 2015
PRETORIA
SOUTH AFRICA**

Honourable Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwa, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Senior Officials;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my profound honour and gratitude for me to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Honourable Nkoana-Mashabane, the Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ; the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all of us since our arrival in this historic and vibrant city of Pretoria. I also wish to thank the government of South Africa for the excellent preparations and facilities placed at our disposal which made the holding of this meeting a resounding success.

Allow me, Honourable Ministers to congratulate, on your behalf and indeed on my own behalf, the excellent manner in which the Republic of South Africa has steered the operations of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation since taking over the chairpersonship of this very critical organ of our regional organization.

I wish to single out the statesmanship and steadfast leadership provided by His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, with the able assistance of His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa SADC Facilitator to the Kingdom of Lesotho; and Honourable Nkoana-Mashabane and all the organs of the South African state.

Honourable Ministers,

The focus of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation during the year 2014/2015 has been on strengthening existing peace, defense, security, democracy, and good governance. This is in recognition of the fact that peace and stability are prerequisites for sustainable economic integration and development in the region. In this regard, planned activities and programmes of the Organ were geared towards enhancing the capacities of the SADC Mediation Support Structure; Election observation, advisory and support; Disaster Risk Management; Regional Collective Defense; Regional Early Warning mechanisms; Public Security and Safety; and training of Military, Police, Civilian and Corrections/Prisons Components in Peace Support Operations. We have made commendable progress in these areas in the last year.

Under the leadership of the Republic of South Africa, and in tandem with the directives of Summit and Council, the Secretariat made all efforts to strengthen peace, security, and consolidation of democracy and good governance in the region. Since the last MCO meeting in Swakopmund, Namibia in August 2014, the Secretariat was able to successfully mobilise

extra resources to facilitate SADC Electoral Observation Missions to the Republics of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Mauritius, the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Presidential By-elections in the Republic of Zambia. I once again, wish to thank the Republic of South Africa for leading these successful elections observation missions. I also wish to commend the Governments and peoples of these Member States for holding peaceful, credible and free and fair elections through which the will of the people was democratically expressed.

I wish to pay special tribute to the Republic of South Africa for the exemplary leadership in the facilitation of the democratic process in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Before the holding the General Elections in the Kingdom of Lesotho on the 28th of February 2015, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation deployed a peace and security mission. Under the leadership of the Facilitator, His excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, Vice President of the Republic of South Africa, the Maseru Facilitation Accord and the Maseru Security Accord among political and security role players were signed. The two accords were part of SADC's road map towards the stabilisation of the politico-security situation in the country. In addition to this, a number of SADC Double Troika meetings were held aimed at assisting the people of Lesotho to address constitutional and security sector reforms. For this we need to congratulate the Organ Chair, the Republic of South Africa for the exemplary leadership.

Honourable Chairperson,

Member States deserve to be applauded for their immense contribution towards the maintenance of peace, security, stability and good governance

through their deployment of personnel in peace and security missions in the region, including, but not limited to elections observations. The human, financial and material contribution by Member States to these missions is welcome, and efforts should be made to ensure that these undertakings are sustained more vigorously and robustly.

Allow me, to immensely thank the Honourable Ministers of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ for your dedication and hard work during the year which enabled our organization to record tremendous achievements. Allow me once again, to pay tribute to the outgoing Chairperson of the MCO, Honourable Nkoana-Mashabane for having steered the Region to a new level since August last year, and for the immense support rendered to the Secretariat. The Secretariat looks forward to working closely with our Incoming Chairperson.

May I conclude by thanking the Senior Officials and the Secretariat staff, with special recognition going to Mr. Jorge Cardoso, the Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs and his team for the excellent job in preparation of the documents for this meeting. I also wish to recognise Ambassador Jerry Mtjila, Director General in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, supported by Mr. Xolisa Makaya, the Director for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and team for their and support to the Secretariat.

Thank you!!!

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Merci Beucoup!!!