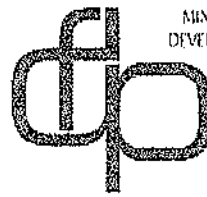


REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA



MINISTRY OF FINANCE &
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
BOTSWANA

■ LOOKING BEYOND TODAY

REMARKS

BY

**HONOURABLE O.K. MATAMBO
MINISTER OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS**

**AT THE OPENING OF THE SADC MINISTERS OF FINANCE
MEETING**

**HELD AT
GABORONE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE**

**12 MARCH 2016
BOTSWANA**



Honourable Ministers of Finance here present;
Deputy Ministers;
Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr Stergomena
Lawrence Tax and your Deputies;
Chairperson of Senior Treasury Officials, Mr.
Kelapile Ndobano;
Senior Treasury Officials;
Members of the Media;
Distinguished delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It gives me pleasure to welcome you all to this meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Finance and Investment, taking place here in Gaborone, Botswana. May I, on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Botswana, and indeed on my own behalf, welcome you Honourable Ministers to Botswana and to the city of Gaborone. I trust you will find your stay comfortable and that you will find time in between your busy

schedule to explore the hospitality of Batswana and the country's rich cultural heritage.

2. Honourable Ministers, this meeting comes at a time when the region is facing many challenges, amongst which is the devastating drought that has affected the entire SADC region and is threatening the livelihoods of our people. I will come to this matter in detail at the full Council of Ministers meeting.

3. Honourable Ministers, we meet time and again to review progress made in implementation of our decisions and strategic programmes for the region as articulated in the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. Although we have a short agenda before us, it carries some of the key elements to regional integration in SADC.

4. You will agree with me Honourable Ministers, that it is necessary to review progress in the development of the long envisaged SADC Regional Development Fund while we continue to seek other sustainable ways of financing our regional programmes. Apart from the high levels of poverty, the region also faces water and energy crisis requiring immediate and urgent attention. Committing our own resources to dealing with these issues is important while we seek the support of our International Cooperating Partners to complement our limited funds.

5. Let me also hasten to say that having identified Industrialisation as the region's strategic priority for deepening integration, realization of this goal would also require us as the Committee of Ministers of Finance and Investment to play a facilitative role in ensuring financing for industrialization.

6. Related to this would be the need to begin to forge a strong relationship with the African Development Bank than was ever the case before. Noting that the Bank's focus areas are very much aligned to our regions ambitions, we stand to gain from a structured and regular interaction with the Bank. We have already established contact in Lima with the newly appointed President of the Bank, Dr. Adesina, during our meeting held on the margins of the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings in October 2015 and communicated our region's position regarding the operations of the Bank. This is a step in the right direction and we need to build on the momentum. This is yet another matter for our discussion during our meeting today and I look forward to Ministers' contribution to this important matter.

7. Finally, Honourable Ministers, let me thank the Senior Officials for the thoroughness they

exercised in preparing our documents. This will make our discussions easier and efficient.

8. With these few remarks, I would like to thank you for your attention and look forward to fruitful deliberations.