



**REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

**DRAFT ADDRESS
BY**

**HONOURABLE ARMINDO DANIEL TIAGO,
MINISTER OF HEALTH,**

ON THE

**OPENING OF THE SADC EXTRAORDINARY
(VIRTUAL) MEETING OF MINISTERS OF
HEALTH**

11 MAY 2021

Honourable Ministers of Health of Southern African Development Community (SADC);

Distinguished Permanent Secretaries;

Madam SADC Executive Secretary;

SADC Secretariat Staff Members;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All Protocol Observed!

Allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique and health professionals, to welcome you all to this great event of our Community.

I would like to pay tribute to all our heroes, the health professionals of our region, who, on the front line and under the most adverse conditions, have been working hard to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, thus ensuring assistance to our people.

Today, the world and SADC Member States are faced with an unprecedented pandemic, the COVID-19. In this context, many countries in our region have put in place stringent measures to contain the pandemic.

This time of uncertainty and concern should be an opportunity for reflection by all Member States to make efforts and show solidarity with one another in order to

strengthen measures for the prevention and containment of the pandemic.

Distinguished Delegates,

This pandemic has taught us how to live in a new normal and demanding from all of us strength to capitalize gains in health, as well as the progressive strengthening of our Health System, including a sectorial high level of readiness.

It is time to join our collective efforts to fight this pandemic, not forgetting the burden of other diseases. We must capitalise on our gains, while implementing increasingly synergistic actions, demonstrating our solidarity over and over again.

Despite all efforts and progress made among Member States, so far, in relation to COVID-19, there is still a need to strengthen and reinforce joint plans to ensure availability of the COVID-19 vaccine as well as sustain the gains made in our region. Therefore, Member States should remain seized to the fight to reduce the increase in cases and mortality from COVID-19.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At this moment, Mozambique is in the process of mass vaccination roll out with the support of different bilateral and multilateral partners. In this process, the country intends to vaccinate about 16,000,000 people eligible for vaccination.

This process is based on prioritisation of groups, taking into account clear and transparent eligibility criteria. The vaccination roll-out started with health professionals, an action that began on March 8, 2021, with approximately 82628 citizens having been administered two shots of vaccine.

We are hopeful that progressively our country will get more doses and in a phased manner vaccinate other priority groups. The priority target groups in Mozambique, in addition to health professionals, include the elderly living in care centres, patients with diabetes, patients on immunosuppressive therapy, members of the defence and security forces, police officers and teachers and people over 50 years old, living in housing centres including journalists

Our government, in coordination with the private sector, will soon procure vaccines on a massive scale in order to vaccinate other groups, thus fulfilling the principle of comprehensive vaccination

Despite the satisfactory levels of the vaccination process, some challenges remain:

- - Availability of vaccines: Receiving vaccines in small quantities makes it difficult to plan vaccination roll-out. It does not allow the necessary coverage to be achieved;

- Vaccine Short shelf life: it leads to constraints in managing the system. There is a need for vaccination in a very short period of time. It does not allow for efficiency in the process.

Respected Leaders

In this meeting, our attention should be focused essentially on discussing actions aimed at improving our collective performance, so we should decide wisely on all proposals resulting from the work done yesterday by the technical meeting led by the Permanent Secretary.

As a working group, we should capitalise on the opportunities and maximise the experiences of different actors here in attendance, so that, in a coordinated manner, can overcome emerging adversities related to global health.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Improvement of people's health in our region must be our priority. I am convinced that Mozambique, as well as the Member States, have an interest and they are making efforts to adopt coordinated measures to prevent the COVID-19 Pandemic and curb lethal impact of its mutation.

With these remarks, it is with great honour that I declare the "SADC Extraordinary (virtual) Meeting of Ministers of Health" open, with a strong call for commitment from all, at all levels, to achieve the outlined objectives.

Thank you!