



**REMARKS**

**BY**

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 41<sup>ST</sup> ORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE  
SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**ON**

**17 AUGUST 2021**

**Your Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and Chairperson of SADC;**

**Your Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, and Incoming Chairperson of SADC;**

**Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government and Representatives;**

**Honourable Eisenhower Mkaka, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi, and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;**

**Your Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;**

**Your Excellency, Dr. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;**

**Honourable Ministers from SADC Member States;**

**Your Excellencies, Heads of Regional and International Organisations;**

**Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Officials from SADC Member States and SADC Secretariat staff;**

**Invited Guests;**

**Partners from the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I am greatly humbled to stand before you to deliver some remarks this morning. May I begin by expressing our gratitude to His Excellency **Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera**, President of the Republic of Malawi, the Government, and people of the Republic of Malawi, for accepting to host this 41<sup>st</sup> SADC Summit and to take over the Chairperson-ship of SADC for 2021/22, notwithstanding the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Since your meeting in August last year, the region lost a number of leaders, including, H.E Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, the First President of Republic of Zambia, H.E Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, the Fifth President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, and His Excellency Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, the then Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini, and a number of SADC citizens. May I extend our condolences to the Government and people of Eswatini, Mauritius, Tanzania and Zambia, Secretariat staff, and to all SADC citizens who lost their loved ones. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

Since August 2020, three (3) Member States conducted elections, the Republics of Seychelles and Zambia, and the United Republic of Tanzania. May I congratulate the people of the Republics of Seychelles and Zambia, and the United Republic of Tanzania for the peaceful and successful elections.

### **Your Excellencies,**

My journey as the SADC Executive Secretary begun on 18 August 2013 when I was appointed and sworn-in, in this very city of Lilongwe, in the warm heart of Africa. Having completed my tenure, God, saw it fit that, it be in this same city that my tenure ends, and I hand over to my successor. I am grateful to the Almighty, that it started well, and it is ending well here.

This being my last Summit in my capacity as the SADC Executive Secretary, I stand in humility, before Your Excellencies, to thank you profoundly for the confidence and trust that you bestowed on me to lead the SADC Secretariat, and to serve the SADC Region. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity, and for the guidance and support that you rendered to me during my tenure. I am proud of what the region has achieved over the eight years, under Your Excellency's stewardship. I am also grateful for the wealth of knowledge and experience that I have acquired over the eight years, which I will always

treasure. As I express my gratitude to Your Excellencies SADC Heads of State and Government, allow me to also extend my profound gratitude to my Government, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the trust, and for nominating me for this important position. Naomba pia kutoa shukram zangu za dhati kwa Serikari yangu, Serikari ya Jamuhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania kwa heshima kubwa na kunipendekeza mimi kushika nafasi hii kati ya mamilioni ya wataanzania wenye sifa. Asante sana Mhe Rais, asante sana Watanzania. May I also thank Ministers and officials from SADC Members States, SADC Partners and Stakeholders for the tremendous support accorded to me and my Team since my appointment.

### **Your Excellencies,**

SADC has come a long way since the days of liberation struggles, and we owe our cooperation, unity and development to the founders of our great organisation. Their sacrifices have enabled the level of transformation and successes we are enjoying today. It is befitting that SADC recognises their contributions, and in acknowledging their contributions, in August 2020, the SADC Summit approved a Mechanism to honour the Founders of SADC. May I implore SADC Member States to operationalize the mechanism, which will ensure that the history of SADC, and the legacy of the SADC Founders, remain engraved in the history of our organisation, and is imparted to the generations to come.

The Hashim Mbita publication, which was launched in 2014 also documents authentically the history of the Southern Africa Liberation struggles, and is also an important reference for SADC history. The publication is now available in full, in English, French and Portuguese, while Swahili volumes will also be made available soon. In the same breadth, the journey that our Organization has travelled over the 40 years of its existence, since the establishment of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in April 1980, has been documented in a SADC at 40 publication that was launched in June 2021. The publication presents four decades of lessons and successes. We all need to be proud of the contributions that we have all made towards the advancement of the SADC development and integration agenda, and use the lessons, to drive our organisation forward, and keep the organisation relevant. May I encourage all, to take time to read and use these publications, and preserve SADC values, and the long and inspiring history of SADC. A nation or a region that

does not premise its future on its values and history, journeys on a bumpy and a dangerous road.

## **Your Excellencies,**

As I exit, the region remains generally stable, with some areas of turbulence, that we need to continue to manage collectively. These include unemployment, poverty, disasters, pandemics, acts of terrorism, violence, and cyber security threats. The region needs to remain alert, while strengthening mechanisms put in place to address such threats.

On the social and economic front, the region has made notable strides in terms of macro-economic convergence, industrialization, SADC intra-trade, regional connectivity, access to energy, financial integration and inclusion, and mobile penetration.

While the region progressed well in terms of macroeconomic convergence over the years, it has been severely hit by a dual shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fall in commodity prices. The impact of COVID-19 has exerted more pressure on an already weak regional economy, resulting in significant deterioration in fiscal position and elevated debt sustainability risks. Member States are therefore encouraged to continue with fiscal and monetary measures.

In the Energy sector, during the period 2014 to 2020, the commissioned power generation in the Region increased by 19,738 Megawatts (MW), translating to 90% of the targeted capacity of 22,000 MW. Access to electricity at weighted average, increased from 36% in 2014/2015 to more than 50% in 2020/2021. The target is to reach at least 85% by 2030 in line with the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030. The share of renewable energy also increased from 22% in 2015/2016 to 32% in 2019/2020.

Energy traded through bilateral agreements also increased from 4,761 Gigawatt-hours (GWh) in 2014/15 to 7,992 GWh in 2018/2019, and dropped slightly to 5,642 GWh in 2020/2021. The share of the monthly volumes traded through competitive Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) market also increased from 10% in 2014/2015, to the highest level of 33% recorded in 2019/2020. Sadly, the traded volumes have been affected by decreasing demand since March 2020, as a result of COVID-19.

There has also been significant progress in the SADC Mobile Penetration. All SADC Member States have established at least two (2) cross-border terrestrial optical fibre links for regional and international transit traffic, and the SADC Mobile Penetration has increased from 60% in 2012, and currently stands at 77.4%, with five (5) Member States exceeding 100% mobile penetration. The SADC Internet User Penetration has also increased from 4% in 2012 to 22.9% in 2020. In terms of coverage of mobile services, the SADC average population coverage by a mobile network is 88%, whereas the SADC average population coverage by at least 3G Mobile is 80%, and 54% for a 4G Mobile Network. The SADC region accounts for 57% share of the 46 Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) in Africa. These milestones are also contributing to our digitization efforts.

Notable progress has also been recorded in financial integration and inclusion. The SADC Real Time Gross Settlement System (SADC-RTGS) has lowered transaction costs as it has removed the need for correspondent bank. As of June 2021, a total of 83 participating Banks, from fifteen SADC Member States (except Comoros), were electronically linked, to effect cross-border payments and settlements in real time. From July 2013 to June 2021, total number of transactions settled reached 591.38 billion USD.

In the area of financial inclusion, the implementation of the SADC Financial Inclusion Strategy and SME Access to Finance (2016-2020), which was approved in 2016 is ongoing. As of December 2020, 68% of adults in the region were financially included (including both formal and informal financial products/services), which is around 97 million individuals. In terms of gender split, 67% of female and 70% male .

Intra-SADC trade has been fluctuating from 21.6 percent in 2016, slowing down to 20.0 percent in 2017 and to 19.3 percent in 2018. To address this, a number of measures are in place, notably through the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063, and the SADC Regional Mining Vision (RMV) and Action Plan 2019, which were approved in 2015 and 2019 respectively, and a number of frameworks have been put in place, and value chains developed. Nonetheless, implementation needs to be accelerated. The structure of SADC economies remains undiversified with a growing natural resource-based sectors, in particular, agriculture and mining that still account for an average of over 25 percent of Gross Domestic Product, while manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP has remained at

around 13 percent. The SADC industrialization strategy and roadmap that articulates a coherent approach, therefore, remains relevant, and of high priority on the SADC agenda. The late Mwalimu Nyerere once said that **“the more varied the industrialization base for an area, the more prosperous can be the people throughout”**.

### **Your Excellencies,**

The region has encountered various disasters of varying proportions. These include the El Niño-induced drought of 2016, the devastating Tropical Cyclones Idai, Chalane and Eloise between 2019 and 2020, and the current COVID-19 pandemic. His Excellency Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa, once said that **“trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times”**. Your Excellencies, I am proud of SADC’s courage, resilience and unity when confronted by such adversities. SADC has put in place measures to collectively address such challenges, which include the SADC preparedness and response mechanism, which has a number of instruments. Ongoing work to operationalize these instruments needs to be finalized expeditiously.

Regional health security is critically important to our Region. Based on lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, concrete measures that will ensure health security in terms of sustainable availability health products and commodities, and vaccines are urgently needed, and as such the need to enhance local manufacturing capacities.

### **Your Excellencies,**

Whereas, funding of regional programmes and activities remains a challenge, SADC has undertaken critical activities using own resources. These include, the deployment of the SADC Preventive Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho, and the deployment of a SADC Standby Force to Mozambique, using the SADC Contingency Fund that was approved in 2012, and operationalized in 2015. The construction of a SADC Regional Logistic Depot that started in April 2018 is also using contributions by SADC Member States. While we pride ourselves for these achievements, it should be noted that sustainable financing of regional programmes remains a priority if we are to accelerate regional integration. Hence the need to fast-track the

operationalization of the Regional Development Fund, whose agreement was approved in 2016, and the Regional Resources Mobilization Framework that was approved in 2019.

### **Your Excellencies,**

I am, and will forever be proud of the unity demonstrated by SADC Member States. It gives me a sense of belonging and identity. I remember how fondly the founding President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, preached the gospel of unity in Southern Africa, throughout his life. In December 1980 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, he said, **“We have been united in the struggle for freedom. We are united in the freedom of political independence. We shall go forward in unity in the struggle for economic liberation and progress... We shall go forward together ... the free states of Southern Africa, to build Southern Africa, free Southern Africa, in unity”**. I wish to reiterate and reinforce Mwalimu’s message and encourage all Member States to remain united in confronting challenges experienced in the region, and ensure that SADC remains the beacon of hope, peace, security and stability, and the shining example of economic development.

Just like it was the case during the years of the struggle for liberation of Southern African countries, whenever SADC proclaims its position in unity, the world listens. When SADC united to affirm its position on the removal of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, on the self determination of the people of Western Sahara, and on non-interference in the internal affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the world listened attentively. This is the case even at continental level. You may recall our region’s unity in driving the agenda on the African Union Institutional Reforms, the unity on the reconfiguration of the Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo, unity in resolving political and security challenges in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Madagascar and the Kingdom of Lesotho, and the support to the Republic of Mozambique to combat terrorism. This notwithstanding it is worth noting that we are currently confronted with different challenges in the New Economic Order. Let us sustain and strengthen our position in unity, and avoid being fragmented, and marginalized, as together we will continue to stand, while divided we will stumble and fall. Challenges of today are different and complex, and sometimes may seem not to be visible, but are real, requiring us to remain



vigilant and united. May I thank our leaders and all of us, for committing to SADC solidarity.

### **Your Excellencies,**

As I look back, I visualize that unique and famous 2013 picture of female leaders in Africa and SADC, Her Excellency Joyce Banda, the then President of the Republic of Malawi and Chairperson of SADC; Her Excellency Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the former Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Justice Anastasia Msosa, who was the Chief Justice of Malawi at the time; and I being celebrated as the Executive Secretary of SADC; this was a pinnacle of women empowerment. It was a picture of FIRSTS the first female President of Malawi; the first female Chairperson of the African Union Commission; the first female Chief Justice of Malawi; and I had just been appointed as the sixth, but the first female Executive Secretary of SADC. As I handover, and look back, I note with satisfaction the progress made in empowering women, both, economically, and in leadership positions. We have a number of female leaders in various positions, including a female president in SADC, H.E Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania, who has demonstrated beyond any doubt that women are capable of steering nations with outstanding and exemplary leadership, and wisdom. May she be supported by all, internationally, regionally and nationally. **Mhe. Samia Suluhu Hussan, amethibitisha bila wasiwasi wowote kuwa wanawake wanao uwezo mkubwa wa kuongoza Mataifa kwa umahiri na busara. Tuendee kumunga mkuno, Kitamatifa, Kikanda na Kitaifa.**

May I also add my voice to the voices of women empowerment advocates, in calling for sustained and accelerated progress in women empowerment. I am confident that, the Region is set to get more Female Presidents, more female Chairpersons of the African Union, and more female SADC Executive Secretaries, and many more women in leadership positions. There is still ground to be covered, and I am confident that with the excellent leadership and commitment that the region has, it will be achieved.

### **Your Excellencies,**

A sound organisation is grounded on sound policies and strategies. As I exit, I am thankful to SADC Member States, and all SADC stakeholders for taking part in the formulation of the SADC Vision 2050, and the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2020-2030), which were approved in

August, 2020. It is therefore, imperative that these policies are used to transform our region to the SADC We Want. I am confident that the Secretariat, under my successor, will drive regional integration through these strategic frameworks for the betterment of the region.

Your Excellencies, as I conclude, allow me to affirm that our region needs a dynamic, effective and efficient Secretariat. A vibrant and dynamic Secretariat facilitates a vibrant SADC region. I profoundly thank my Deputy Executive Secretaries, the Management Team and the entire Secretariat staff for supporting me to realise the objectives of our region, and what was expected of us, as servants of the region. The recorded achievements are a result by a wonderful team of dedicated professionals, who gave their best in ensuring that we succeed. I am leaving office with a deep sense of fulfilment. Thank you, and thank you. I will forever cherish you, and remain indebted to you.

As I bid farewell, I wish my successor all the best, and assure him/her of my full support, and humbly request that we all support him/her.

Being human, I may have erred, where I erred, it was not intentional, and I sincerely beg for your understanding and forgiveness.

Naondoka wakati Kiswahili kimekubalika kuwa moja ya lugha za SADC. Nafarijika sana kama mwana SADC, kwa kutambua mchango wa lugha ya Kiswahili katika ukombozi kusini mwa Afrika, na kama Mtanzania, kwani Kiswahili ni lugha ya Taifa langu. Katika Mkutano wa Baraza la Mawaziri uliotangulia Mkutano huu, Tanzania ilitumia Kiswahili muda wote, na wakarimani walitafsiri kwa ufasaha.

It is not easy to present achievements made by SADC in 15 minutes. May I just assure SADC citizens, that when our leaders meet during Summits, they take stock of progress made, and provide the needed guidance, and this is what enabled SADC to achieve visible results that continue to benefit the region. Let us continue believing in our leaders. Asanteni sana Waheshimiwa Wakuu wa Nchi, Mwenyezi Mungu andeele kuwaongoza na kuwazidishia hekima.

**I thank you very much. Merci beaucoup. Muito obrigada. Asante. Zikomo kwambiri**