



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. LAZARUS McCARTHY CHAKWERA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE 41ST ORDINARY SUMMIT
OF THE SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

LILONGWE, MALAWI

17TH AUGUST, 2021

- **Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;**
- **Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, SADC Executive Secretary;**
- **All Protocols observed**

Eight years ago, Her Excellency Dr. Joyce Mtila Banda, former President of the Republic of Malawi, had the honour of assuming the rotating Chairship of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), from His Excellency Armando Emilio Guebuza, former President of the Republic of Mozambique.

By God's providence, I am honored and humbled today to take over the mantle of leadership of SADC from my Dear Brother, His Excellency Felipe

Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and Outgoing Chairperson of SADC, following a very productive tenure of office.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Malawi, and on my own behalf, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my Dear Brother, His Excellency President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, the Government and people of the Republic of Mozambique, for your leadership in the launch of two key documents for the region: the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and the SADC Vision 2050, as well as the establishment of SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Center (SHOC). We will put these instruments to full and good use.

Malawi's assumption of the SADC Chairship comes in the context of COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to stop it in its tracks and restore social order.

However, the inequalities and disparities in accessing COVID-19 vaccines are seriously hindering efforts to save the lives of millions in the SADC and must be tackled head on. I therefore want to make a larger point to the rest of the global community. The inequalities and disparities we are seeing in the distribution and production of COVID-19 vaccines are symptomatic of an old geopolitical framework that is no longer working, no longer sustainable, and no longer acceptable.

I am referring to a framework that regards the world as an animal farm in which some nations are more equal than others. I am referring to a framework that regards some nationalities as more special than others. I am referring to a framework that regards some human lives as more worthy of saving than others.

Our message to those nations that promote and perpetuate this framework is simple: You are using a tired and failed formula. African countries are full members of the global community, period. As such, for the sake of the dignity of all human beings everywhere, we as Africans have a moral duty to refuse to be treated as second class citizens.

We as Africans have a moral duty to refuse second class status in the rules of engagement for participating in the global economy. So the time has come for us to work together to put the ratified African Free Trade Area to full use until the economic rules that disadvantage our nations are rewritten.

We as Africans have a moral duty to refuse second class status in the restrictions we accept from outsiders for managing our own finances and

resources. So the time has come for us to stand together in insisting that our Bretton Woods Institutions reconfigure the terms and conditions they have imposed on us for decades, leaving us in deeper poverty than they found us.

We as Africans have a moral duty to refuse second class status in our participation in United Nations decisions that affect the peace, stability, and sustainability of our world. So the time has come for us to insist that Africa must have at least one permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

And now, as the world faces this global health crisis that has killed millions, torpedoed economies, and disrupted social order, we as Africans have a moral duty to reject second class status in the distribution and production of Covid vaccines, vaccines invented and manufactured in labs where some of the scientists doing such work

are Africans. So the time has come for us to insist that a vaccine that preserves and sustains a person's basic right to life belongs to all nations, no matter who discovered it.

I repeat, treating African nations and nationals as second-class members of the global community is no longer acceptable. We do not accept it. We will not accept it. We cannot accept it.

At a regional level like SADC, this means recognizing that our truest friends in this world are not those who are satisfied to see us continue in our poverty so that they can sustain their messianic complex as our benefactors and liberators. No! Our truest friends in this world are those who work side by side with us on increasing our productive capacities and turning our economies into engines for sustainable growth.

I am, therefore, honored to launch Malawi's proposed Theme for the 2021 to 2022 SADC Chairship, which is: *“Bolstering Productive Capacities in the face of COVID-19 Pandemic for Sustained, Inclusive, Economic and Industrial Transformation.”*

It is our considered view that the SADC we want is untenable without leveling the playing field on COVID-19 pandemic, revitalizing the agricultural sector, enhancing value addition, facilitating trade, and simplifying rules of origin. The African Continental Free Trade Area has availed SADC the opportunity to become the breadbasket and export basket of Africa. But we must seize the moment. We must fully implement the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Road-map, SADC Regional Agriculture Policy and SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan, among others.

In line with the new SADC theme, the Government of Malawi is currently implementing the Malawi 2063, a vision focused on three drivers towards middle income status for our economy: Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization, Industrialization, and Urbanization.

In this regard, one of Malawi's flagship projects is the Shire Valley Transformation Programme (SVTP) for the period 2018 to 2031 valued at 563 million US Dollars. Its aim is increasing agricultural productivity and commercialization for targeted households in the Shire Valley, and to improve the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources. The true potential of this project lies in the opportunities for private sector participation from Member States with the wherewithal for value addition chains towards industrialization.

Such initiatives also benefit greatly from the Annual SADC Industrialization Week, which facilitates business linkages and promotes trade opportunities between Member States. These are the tools for regional integration I promise to push for during my tenure as chair, because the time has come to turn our talk on regional integration into our walk. That is why Malawi will ensure that the 5th SADC Industrialization Week is held here sometime this coming November to make this year's theme a reality.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

At this juncture, allow me, to pay my profound tribute to my Dear Brother, His Excellency Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, and Outgoing Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security

Cooperation, for the commendable progress achieved in consolidating democratic principles of transparency and the rule of law, peace and security in the Region during his term of office.

Building on that work, we have no choice but to apply ourselves to sustaining the gains made to date, considering how critical this is to other multi-lateral agreements like the 2063 African Union Agenda; the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014 to 2024. In assuming the SADC Chairship, Malawi commits to ensuring that we push our Regional goals as we represent the Southern African Group at the AU Peace and Security Council, UN Human Rights Council and provide leadership at the UN Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Excellencies

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, and the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. I commit to work closely with Your Excellency to ensure sustained peace and security in the Region.

In conclusion, I give you all three assurances: I assure you of my Government's commitment to the ideals, values, and principles of SADC; I assure you of my best efforts to steer the implementation of the SADC Regional Integration Agenda; and lastly, I assure you of my enthusiasm to serve you by conducting the affairs of SADC with the determination required of your Chair, an honor I hereby accept with great humility and joy.

Long Live SADC;

Muito Obrigado;

Merci beaucoup;

Asante Sana;

Zikomo Kwambiri;

And thank you for your kind attention.