



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

STATEMENT BY

**HONOURABLE NANCY TEMBO, M.P., MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI,**

AT THE

SADC GENDER MINISTERS' MEETING

ON

**10TH JUNE, 2022 AT 9.00 .m.
GOLDEN PEACOCK HOTEL**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Lilongwe 3.

June, 2022

- **Honourable Dr Patricia Anne Kaliati, Minister of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare, Malawi, and Chairperson of the SADC Ministers of Gender/Women Affairs;**
- **Honourable Ministers from SADC Member States;**
- **Your Excellency Ambassador Joseph Nourice, SADC Deputy Executive Secretary;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament;**
- **- Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **UN Agencies and Development Partners;**
- **The GIZ Team;**
- **Principal Secretaries and Senior Government Officials;**
- **Civil Society Organisations;**
- **The Media;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good Morning

It is my privilege and honour, to stand before you this morning and officially open the meeting of the SADC Ministers of Gender, which is an important gathering, of all the Ministers of Gender, from all the SADC member states. On behalf of my fellow Malawians, I would like to express my sincere gratitude, for the opportunity to host you at this year's SADC Ministers of Gender Meeting, here in Lilongwe. Let me also join the Chairperson, Honourable Dr. Patricia Kaliati, in welcoming you to Malawi, **the Warm Heart of Africa**. Let me take this opportunity to recognize all the distinguished delegates that are participating virtually. You are also very welcome to this meeting.

Distinguished Delegates,

I am aware, that the last SADC Ministers of Gender Meeting, was held on 26th August, 2021. Today is another important day for us, as SADC, as you, our Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Rights, are meeting to discuss various issues pertaining to achieving Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in the SADC region. The discussions which you will have today, are very crucial considering the critical

roles that your respective ministries play in your respective member states. The meeting also, has a unique significance, as it is an opportunity for policy discussion and sharing of lessons and experiences, among member states. It is even more critical, to have this gathering now, when governments and its key partners are grappling with ending Gender-Based Violence and Violence against Women and Girls, among other key gender related issues, as outlined by the chairperson, the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare.

Distinguished Delegates,

Gender equality is a critical component, and contributing factor to sustainable development of a country, and SADC at large. We cannot talk about sustainable development, without talking about equality between men and women. We cannot talk about sustainable development, in a society where women are denied opportunities for employment, businesses, and access to banking and lending institutions, as well as, participation and representation in political leadership. We need a society where both men and women enjoy their full rights

without infringement or oppression of any kind. We need a society, where men and women have equal employment opportunities, businesses, access to financial institutions and representation in leadership positions. May the discussions, you are having today help us towards creating such a society.

Distinguished Delegates,

I am informed that, one of the key focus areas of this meeting, is progress in the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which will also include reviewing the 2022 SADC Gender and Development Monitor, on Women in Politics and Decision-making. It is my sincere hope, that best practices from member states, on the implementation of the Protocol, will be shared for the benefit of all the member states.

I am also aware that today's SADC Ministers' Meeting was preceded by a two day meeting of senior technical officials, from the Ministries of Gender. It is, therefore, my appeal, that the issues that will be tabled at this meeting, arising from the officials meeting, should guide in addressing gaps, that might have been faced in achieving gender equality.

Distinguished Delegates,

Various SADC member states, including Malawi as Chair, have put in place several gender-friendly laws such as the Gender Equality Act, Marriage, the Divorce and Family Relations Act, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, among others. They have also adopted policies aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of all women and girls. All that is immaterial, if not well implemented and enforced. It is, therefore, through your leadership, Honourable Ministers, and through the decisions, that will be made in this meeting, that will escalate the already existing efforts and strides made in achieving gender equality.

Distinguished Delegates,

May I take this opportunity, to thank the SADC Secretariat, and all the organizers of this meeting for the wonderful job done, and the commitment demonstrated in making sure we are all here today for this good cause. Once again, welcome to Malawi, the Warm Heart of Africa and feel at home.

With these remarks I am very pleased to declare the SADC Ministers of Gender Meeting officially opened. I wish you fruitful deliberations and may God bless you all!