



REMARKS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ELIAS MPEDI MAGOSI
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

AT

**THE 26TH MEETING OF THE SADC MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF
THE ORGAN (MCO) ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY
COOPERATION**

11 – 12 JULY 2024

LUSAKA, REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Honourable Mr. Mulambo Hamakuni Haimbe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (MCO),

Honourable Dr. January Yusuf Makamba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Incoming Chairperson of the MCO;

Honourable Dr. Peya Mushelenga, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia, and Outgoing Chairperson of the MCO;

Honourable Ministers and Members of the MCO;

Ms. Etambuyu Anamela Gundersen, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia, and Chairperson of the Senior Officials of the MCO;

Distinguished Senior Officials, Chiefs of Security Institutions and Delegates from SADC Member States;

Director of the Organ and SADC Secretariat Staff;

Partners from the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning!

I am honoured to welcome you all to the meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. I must thank you, **Honourable Ministers**, for making time from your busy schedules to participate in this important meeting, which is clear demonstration of your commitment to maintaining sustained peace and security in the SADC region.

Let me also extend our profound gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Zambia for the traditional warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us all, and for the excellent facilities availed for this meeting.

Before I proceed with my remarks, allow me to express our deepest condolences to the Government and people of the Republic of Malawi for the untimely passing of **H.E. Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima**, the former Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, who died alongside nine of his compatriots in a plane crash in Malawi, in June 2024. I also wish to extend our condolences to the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, for the untimely death of **Commissioner Patrick-Alain Lonji Mpoyi**, former Head of the Police Component within the Organ Directorate at the SADC Secretariat, who passed on in June 2024, in Pemba, while servicing the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). Our condolences also go to the Governments, the people, as well as families of all members of the SAMIM and SAMIDRC troops that we have lost in the theatre of operations. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

Honourable Ministers, peace and stability is at the heart of the SADC integration and development agenda. As such, SADC has established fundamental structures and adopted clear guiding legal instruments and mechanisms to ensure sustainable peace and security, as well as the consolidation of democracy. To this end, since your last meeting in July 2023, and in line with Article 3 of the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, SADC observed six (6) General Elections in five (5) Member States, namely the Republic of Zimbabwe in August 2023; the Kingdom of Eswatini in September 2023; the Republic of Madagascar for the presidential and legislative elections, held in November 2023 and May 2024, respectively; the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in December 2023; and the Republic of South Africa, in May 2024.

I wish to congratulate the Governments and the people of these countries for the generally peaceful way they conducted themselves in their respective elections. Later this year, elections will be held in four other SADC Member States: namely the Republics of Botswana, Mauritius,

Mozambique, and Namibia. It is our expectation that, as is generally the practice, these elections will be peaceful and will be in accordance with the SADC Principles and Guidelines governing Democratic Elections, to further cement peace and stability across the region.

It may be recalled, **Honourable Ministers**, that the 43rd SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government directed the leadership of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) to commence a phased drawdown of SAMIM by 15 December 2023, and the complete withdrawal by 15 July 2024. I am pleased to report that the withdrawal process is at the final stage, with the complete withdrawal expected within a week's time. The withdrawal is informed by numerous assessments conducted by the technical structures of the Organ. We are gratified that the mission had achieved its primary mandate following three years of boots on the ground in the Cabo Delgado Province and a sizeable financial commitment.

The 43rd SADC Summit also endorsed the deployment of the SADC Mission in DRC (SAMIDRC), which commenced on 15 December 2023, as the region's support to the efforts of the DRC Government in fighting the Armed Groups in the eastern part of the country. The mission has deployed, and as you would be aware, it requires enormous resources to effect and realize its mandate auspiciously. I can only call upon Member States to support our sister country to do all they can to bring the situation to normalcy.

The ultimate solution to the Eastern DRC conflict, **Honourable Ministers**, can only be found in our ability to consolidate the multiple Political and diplomatic endeavours to address core issues, and conclude an agreed set of resolutions relative to the conflict. We, therefore, continue to advocate for and support the Luanda and Nairobi Processes as we also look to the continental mother body, the African Union Commission to take the lead, in line with the agreed outcomes of the Joint Framework on Coordination and Harmonization of Peace Initiative in Eastern DRC, as adopted by the Quadripartite Summit held in Luanda, Angola, in June 2023.

Regarding Transnational Organised Crime, the 2022 SADC Threat Assessment Report on the Extent and Impact of Transnational Organised Crime in the region noted with concern that Transnational Organised Crime poses a significant threat to our common efforts to enhance peace, security, development, and regional integration. In this regard, your meeting of July 2023, held in Windhoek, Namibia, urged Member States to operationalise the SADC Integrated Strategy and Action Plan to prevent and combat Transnational Organised Crime by developing commensurate national strategies and action plans which resonate with the Regional Strategy and Action Plan. It is gratifying to note that the Republics of Namibia and Zimbabwe, with technical support from the Secretariat, are developing national strategies to prevent and combat Transnational Organised Crime. More importantly, the two countries have also established their respective National Task Forces to coordinate implementation of the regional strategy for combating Transnational Organised Crime. It is our hope that other Member States will do likewise.

Further, the SADC Multistakeholder Conference on Combating Transnational Organised Crime, which took place in May 2023 in Swakopmund, Namibia, noted with grave concern the rampant prevalence of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in the region, with reported cases of some women being trafficked from the region to the Middle East for labour and sexual exploitation. While the Extra-ordinary SADC Summit held in 2022 in Pretoria, South Africa, approved the SADC Protocol Against Trafficking in Persons, it is concerning that the Protocol is still not yet in force despite the reality we are facing daily. Let me take this opportunity, therefore, to urge Member States to sign and ratify this Protocol to pave way for its implementation and strengthen our efforts in combating this heinous crime.

It is also of great concern to note that the region is increasingly being used as a conduit for drugs destined for international markets. Illicit drug trafficking generates significant financial gains and wealth, thus encouraging cross-border criminals and organisations to penetrate, contaminate and corrupt society at all levels. This situation afflicts our Member States, especially as illicit drug trafficking and substance abuse largely affect the youth. Therefore, there is need for all Member States to

intensify efforts to combat, and eventually eliminate drug trafficking, money laundering, and the abuse of drugs, especially through implementation the SADC Protocol on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking.

On a more positive note, it is pleasing to report that the Agreement Amending the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials entered into force last year. This is a commendable achievement that should bolster the region's collective efforts to combat the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Undeniably, small arms and light weapons act as enablers of various transnational organised crime, including terrorism, hence the need for Member States to effectively implement the Protocol, alongside the African Union Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa (2021-2030).

Honourable Ministers, the SADC region remains committed to facilitating the movement of persons as an integral part of our regional integration agenda. We note that Member States continue to negotiate bilateral visa exemptions amongst themselves, and the recent very progressive development between Botswana and Namibia for their nationals to use identity cards to travel between them. These are commendable as they showcase how the region is progressing steadily towards unlocking the development potential of migration.

Further, the fight against corruption continues as Member States investigate and prosecute cases of corrupt practices and recover assets gained through proceeds. To this end, a total of US\$286,357,974.91 from illicit assets was recovered by Member States in the year 2023 alone.

Additionally, in keeping true to its obligations towards continental and international conventions and instruments, whilst simultaneously ensuring the safeguard of, and proper adaptation to the region's realities and contexts, this meeting will consider the home-grown and contextualised Draft SADC Minimum Standards for the Management and Treatment of Prisoners, that have been developed in line with the United Nations Nelson Mandela Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Allow me, **Honourable Ministers**, to conclude by thanking, once more, Hon. Mulambo Hamakuni Haimbe, for his exemplary leadership, and all the Ministers, for attending this important meeting. I wish to also recognise the work of the Senior Officials, and the Secretariat Team in preparation for your meeting.

I now have the honour to welcome Hon. Haimbe, Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ to deliver his remarks and formally open the meeting.

I thank you for your attention.

Zikomo Kwambiri! Merci beaucoup! Muito Obrigado ! Asante Sana!