



REMARKS BY

SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY H.E. MR ELIAS MPEDI MAGOSI

AT

**THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF
SADC STANDBY FORCE REGIONAL LOGISTICS DEPOT**

AT RASESA VILLAGE, BOTSWANA

13 DECEMBER 2024

Your Excellency Dr. Emerson Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and SADC Chairperson;

President of the Republic of Botswana, Advocate Duma Gideon Boko;

Honourable Ministers from the Governments of the Republics of Botswana and Zimbabwe here present;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners;

Mrs Kolobetso Sejakgomo, District Commissioner, Kgatleng District

Kgosi Sekai, Bakgatla Deputy Chief, and all Community leaders present here;

Honourable Dr. Unity Dow, Member of Parliament for Kgatleng West;

Officials from the Government of Botswana and the Delegation from Zimbabwe;

SADC Secretariat staff;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good afternoon!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Your Excellencies, again for taking time from your tight schedules, to visit Rasesa village this afternoon to perform the groundbreaking of the construction of the SADC Standby Force Regional Logistics Depot (RLD). This is a clear testimony of your commitment to peace and security in the region. We would also want to appreciate the leadership of the Kgatleng District and Rasesa, and thank them for welcoming us in their village.

I wish also, to extend our profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Botswana for its commitment to the SADC ideals and aspirations by allocating the regional block this piece of land for the construction of the RLD, and the security provided by the Botswana Defense Force. We shall remain indebted to the Government of Botswana for this noble gesture.

The region is anxiously waiting with a high sense of expectation for the completion of this project, and the Secretariat undertakes to do all that is necessary to achieve this within the stipulated time. Once completed, the depot will enable the storing of materials, equipment, and end-user stocks for the SADC Standby Forces when undertaking mandated peace support and humanitarian missions.

The depot will also provide a central platform for logistics support to SADC Standby Forces, and thus eliminate delays in logistical support and cut long procurement lead times to enhance the ability and agility of SADC Standby Forces to effectively and successfully conduct peace support operations.

Your Excellencies, the architectural and engineering designs of the depot were produced by a consortium of eight professional firms in 2022. The construction of the Depot will be in two phases: the first phase being the Initial Operational Capability to be completed by 2026, and the second being Full Operational Capability scheduled for completion by 2030, subject to the availability of funds. The total cost for the full construction of the entire depot is approximately USD 45 million, of which USD 15 million has already been sourced from the SADC Member States for the designs and construction of the first phase. We therefore have a deficit of USD 30 million to complete the second phase of the depot, for which we have increased our efforts to mobilise from other sources including International Cooperating Partners.

The first phase of the project has been awarded to Zhong Gan Engineering and Construction Corporation Botswana (Pty) Ltd, for 24 months, from November 2024 until November 2026. Once completed, the RLD will comprise a variety of buildings, including office space, residential buildings, warehouses, workshops and supporting infrastructure such as roads, water and sewerage, electricity and security systems. We will be working closely with the government, the village leadership and the community to ensure a successful delivery of this project, and therefore look forward to a seamless collaboration by all stakeholders.

Your Excellencies, let me thank you once again for affording us this unique opportunity and agreeing to jointly perform the groundbreaking of the RLD. It is my sincere hope that, with the support of the Government of Botswana as the host country, and the leadership of the Chairperson of SADC, the construction of the RLD will be successful, and enable us to transition to the

second phase, the completion of which will enhance the capability of the SADC Standby Force.

I thank you! Muito obrigado! Merci beaucoup! Asante Sana!

Tatenda! Ke a leboga!