



OFFICIAL REMARKS

By

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**MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL
DEVELOPMENT**

At the occasion of the

**SADC MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT, ICT,
INFORMATION AND METEOROLOGY**

HARARE, ZIMBABWE

28 FEBRUARY 2025

Salutations

Director of Ceremonies;

Honourable Ministers from the SADC Member States;

SADC Secretariat;

Heads and Representatives of other Regional Economic Communities here present;

Heads and representatives from the Transport, ICT, Information, Meteorology and Corridor Institutions here present;

Representatives from the Media houses;

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Let me start by thanking our leader the President of this country Cde Dr. ED Mnangagwa whom is our host and has allowed us to host this meeting as he is leading SADC.

It is a great honour and privilege to address you at this important *SADC Cluster Meeting of Ministers responsible for Transport, ICT, Information and Meteorology*. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, allow me to extend a warm welcome to all of you our esteemed guests. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the SADC Secretariat and Governments of the SADC Region for organising this crucial meeting.

Our gathering today is not just a formality but a significant step towards enhancing regional integration and cooperation. The sectors under our purview, that is: Transport, ICT, Information and Meteorology are critical enablers of socio-economic development, and their inter-linkages are vital for achieving our collective aspirations as the SADC region.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Transport, ICT, Information and Meteorology sectors are drivers and enablers of agriculture, mining, tourism and trade to mention but just a few. The movement of goods, persons and information within the region is a critical developmental factor which is only possible with adequate and seamless infrastructure to allow for joint programming, systems sharing and interoperability. Indeed, this meeting is befitting.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Our guiding instrument for development of the sector is the **SADC Protocol on Transport, Communication and Meteorology**, which aims at developing systems in the sector to ensure efficiency and productivity, thus promoting

economic and social development. Over the years, the instrument has inspired consummation of a number of programmes and projects that include the SADC Infrastructure Development Master Plan; the ADC Regional Railway Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RRIDMP) & Bankable Investment Program; the SADC-EAC-COMESA Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP); and the AU Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) among several other initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The **Transport** sector remains a fundamental pillar of regional trade and economic growth. Efficient and seamless transport networks facilitate the movement of goods, services and people, thereby fostering regional integration. The development of the transport sector has been riddled with a number of challenges from high costs of infrastructure investment to the current climate challenges that have caused a drastic deterioration of the regional transport network, particularly road and rail and border infrastructure. These challenges have caused the delays at our borders, damages to property and even fatalities in some instances. As Ministers, we must prioritise investments in sustainable transport infrastructure, harmonize policies, and strengthen partnerships with the private sector to enhance connectivity across our region.

Honourable Ministers;

As the main anchor of our transport system in the SADC region, **Road and Rail Corridor Development** initiatives within the region should be bolstered. Integrated transport corridors facilitate trade, promote economic activities, and create employment opportunities. To date, the region already has established corridor institutions such as the Trans-Kalahari Corridor, with a functioning Secretariat. The corridors have benefits to our region, particularly development of various infrastructure and also the channelling of investment towards development and sustainability. Other corridors such as the North-South corridor, Beira Development Corridor, Walvis Bay Corridor and others should

follow suit. I welcome you, Honourable Ministers to consider these matters as we discuss and note the need for such developments to unlock the potential and new economic opportunities of our region.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In **ICT**, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) modernisation and the rise of the Fourth Industrial Revolution has been necessitated by the emergence of ICT Technologies. Our region, should not be left behind in this drive. ICT has managed to integrate technologies in transport, meteorology, including the sharing of information and data, and this has had a major bearing towards our daily lives and how businesses are being run and managed. Digital Transformation has offered unparalleled opportunities for our region to leapfrog development stages, enhance service delivery. In this regard, let us focus on creating the conducive environment, formulating policy and regulatory frameworks to bridge the digital divide, expand broadband access, harness the gains of artificial intelligence and promote innovation. Cybersecurity and data protection should also be at the forefront of our discussions to ensure a secure digital future for our SADC citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In the **Meteorology** sector, the SADC region continues to experience increased climate-related challenges, including prolonged droughts, rising temperatures and devastating cyclones. These extreme weather conditions threaten food security, livelihoods, and infrastructure, making it imperative for us to strengthen our climate resilience strategies. Meteorology plays a crucial role in mitigating these risks by providing accurate weather forecasts and early warning systems. It is imperative that we invest in modern meteorological infrastructure, enhance regional cooperation, and develop policies that support climate resilience. Together, we can build a more sustainable and climate-resilient SADC region.

To enhance security and safety in aviation and maritime, we must:

- Invest in advanced meteorological technology and weather monitoring systems to improve forecasting accuracy;
- Strengthen regional cooperation in meteorological data sharing for enhanced safety;
- Develop policies that integrate meteorological insights into planning and operations;
- Train our personnel to effectively utilize meteorological data for decision-making.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

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Honourable Ministers;

There is need for Harmonisation of Systems, Policies, and Regulations to achieve our goals. As we have witnessed, fragmented regulatory frameworks create inefficiencies, increase costs, and hinder seamless collaboration among Member States. Given the challenges we face as a region, the development of uniform policies for issues such as cross border facilitation, digital transformation, information and data sharing, and requisite institutional frameworks remain important. Our engagements, Honourable Ministers, and the cooperation we enjoy as a block require commitment for us to achieve our

goals. We urge the SADC to continue to work on Model Laws which govern our sectors to ensure standardisation of practices, thus enhancing efficiency.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen;

As I welcome you to these deliberations today, let us remain committed to practical and actionable solutions. In development, one cannot move alone. We need one another and our region remains vulnerable to a number of challenges which need us to put our minds together.

In conclusion, I urge us all to seize this opportunity to forge stronger ties and develop strategic solutions that will propel our region forward. Our collective efforts today will shape the future of transport, ICT, and meteorology in the SADC and contribute to a more prosperous, resilient, and integrated region.

With these remarks, Honourable Ministers, allow me once again to welcome you to the Republic of Zimbabwe and I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to the outcomes of this important meeting.

With these remarks I declare the cluster meeting of Ministers responsible for Transport, ICT , Information and Meteorology officially opened.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.