



MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE

**OPENING REMARKS BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC
SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE, ZIMBABWE**

VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

27 MARCH 2025

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution Matebeleland North Province, Honourable Richard Moyo;**
- **Colleague Honourable Ministers here-present;**
- **Chairperson of the Committee of Senior Officials, Mr. Simon Masanga;**
- **Permanent Secretaries and Heads of delegations;**
- **SADC Deputy Executive Secretary responsible for Regional Integration, Ms. Angele Makombo Ntumba;**
- **Chairperson of the SADC Private Sector Forum, Ms. Nester Mukwehwa and all representatives of employers;**
- **Executive Secretary of the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council, Ms. Mavis Koogotsitse and all representatives of workers;**
- **Chairman of the Zimbabwe Public Service Commission, Dr Vincent Hungwe**
- **Chairman of the South Africa Public Service Commission, Professor Somadoda Fikeni;**
- **Commissioner of the Public Service Commission, Zimbabwe, Ambassador James Manzou**

- **Director of the ILO Decent Work Team for East and Southern Africa, Mr. Alexio Musindo;**
- **IOM Sub-Regional Director for Southern Africa, Mr. Justin MacDermott;**
- **Senior Government Officials;**
- **SADC Secretariat Staff;**
- **Invited Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a great pleasure and privilege for me to be here with you this morning. I feel particularly honoured on behalf of Zimbabwe to preside over this Meeting of SADC Ministers of Employment and Labour and Social Partners in its 2025 session. It is my sincere hope that this meeting will provide the strategic guidance and policy direction required in taking forward the work of the Employment and Labour Sector in our region.

Director of Ceremonies, it is pleasing to note that several policies and programmatic interventions have been introduced to promote decent work opportunities for full and productive employment across the region, and we will have an opportunity to deliberate on these in detail.

Historically, the SADC Charter on Fundamental Social Rights in SADC has sought to “promote the formulation and harmonisation of legal, economic and social policies and programmes, which contribute to the creation of productive employment and opportunities and generation on incomes in Member States.”

We have noted however that although past periods of economic growth have been positive, they have often failed to generate a proportional increase in productive employment opportunities.

This phenomenon of “jobless growth” has contributed to high rates of working poverty and precarious employment, within a context of high informality.

Ladies and gentleman, it is thus important to ensure that economic growth integrates employment objectives. It is our duty as we are gathered here to ensure that we work towards transitioning from conventional stand-alone employment and economic policymaking towards an integrated and coordinated approach for pro-employment growth.

This includes the need to ensure that we have robust and comprehensive National Employment Policies (NEPs) that can serve as a framework for coordinating critical interventions across key socio-economic sectors while placing decent work at the centre of development efforts. We need to have a deliberate regional approach that includes the development and updating of guiding frameworks and regular sharing of best practices to ensure we tackle unemployment as a region collectively.

In order to make impact, growth should be labour-intensive so that opportunities are created to economically empower particularly productive sectors. Promoting productive sectors of the economy such as agriculture, mining and many others, which have the potential for economic growth and at the same time job creation is fundamental.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to bear in mind that maximising productive employment as part of the efforts of achieving “sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development is directly linked to poverty eradication.

In this regard we need to deal effectively with the prevalence of informality in employment among SADC Member States. As you

may be aware, employment in the informal economy is associated with decent work deficits and low level of productivity. This shows the urgent need for the majority of countries to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy and promote the structural transformation of economies. Some of the key issues that need addressing is the need to extend social protection coverage, social dialogue, labour rights and the need to create conducive business environment that allow the informal sector to transition to the formal sector.

Distinguished participants, the SADC region, just like the rest of Africa has the youngest and fastest-growing population in the world. It therefore becomes crucial for the region to develop targeted policies for the youth to ensure their active participation in mainstream economy.

This can be achieved through investing in them by providing them with the necessary skills, resources, entrepreneurial and job opportunities, in order to unlock their potential. This will create pathways for them to become agents of change and contributors of regional integration, sustainable peace, security, and inclusive economic growth.

Distinguished participants, it is a fact that robust Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) play a key role in the socio-economic development of nations. A comprehensive LMIS facilitates the effective monitoring of the labour market as well as the designing, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes related to employment creation, income generation, skills development and related decent work policies. It is thus gratifying to note that the significant progress has been made towards the establishment of the SADC Labour Market Observatory (LMO) which is expected to be completed by December 2025. This will go a long way in strengthening labour market information systems and enhancing the implementation

of sound labour market policies and well informed labour market interventions at the regional and national levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, we should never tire in our quest to enhance regional cooperation of labour and employment issues. Accordingly I would also like to encourage members to sign and ratify the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour Protocol and provide updates on steps taken at national level. In this regard allow me to also commend the members who signed the Protocol in August 2024 in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Allow me to also add that as you may be aware, Zimbabwe will be presiding over the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC). I therefore urge you all to take note of technical items on the agenda so that we present our issues in a robust manner as a region.

As I conclude, I wish to recognise the continued cooperation between the SADC Member States and Social Partners, represented here by the SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF) and the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC). Your continued support towards Labour and Employment issues will surely go a long in ensuring that we promote the decent work agenda collectively for all our citizens in the region.

With these remarks, I look forward to well as very fruitful deliberations during this meeting. I believe this meeting will enable us to come up with strategies to enable us as SADC to have a clear and robust employment impact with tangible dividends for our national employment objectives for the SADC region and beyond. What remains is for us therefore to single out the strategies that fit into the realities of our economies for implementation.

Allow me to thank all the Honourable Ministers, Social Partners and distinguished delegates from partner organisations, for attending this meeting today.

I thank you.

Merci beaucoup!

Muito obrigada!

Asante sana!