



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ELIAS M MAGOSI

SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

AT THE

46TH SADC SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

DURBAN, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

17TH AUGUST 2026

Your Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Eswatini and Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation;

Your Excellency Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of SADC;

Your Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Outgoing Chairperson of SADC;

Your Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, represented by the Right Honourable Mr. Enoch Kanzingeni Chihana, Second Vice President of the Republic of Malawi;

Your Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Outgoing Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, represented by Honourable Dr. Rhimo Nyansaho, Minister of Defence and National Service of the United Republic of Tanzania;

Your Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia and Incoming Chairperson represented by Her Excellency Ms. Pamela Chisanga, Zambia's High Commissioner to the Republic of Botswana and Representative to SADC;

Your Esteemed Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Honourable Mr. Ronald Lamola, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Representatives of International, Continental and Regional Organisations, and Regional Economic Communities;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal;

His Worship Mayor of eThekweni;

Senior Officials of SADC Member States;

Deputy Executive Secretaries of SADC;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

A very good morning to you all, and a Happy SADC Day.

It is with a distinct honour and a great sense of humility that I welcome you to the 46th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), convened here in the vibrant city of Durban, in the Republic of South Africa.

At the outset, allow me to express our profound gratitude to His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, the Government, and the people of the Republic of South Africa for graciously hosting this important Summit. We deeply appreciate the warm hospitality, excellent arrangements, and generous welcome extended to all delegates and guests.

We are especially privileged by the presence of Their Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, whose leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment continue to guide our Community in advancing regional integration, peace, stability, sustainable development, and shared prosperity.

I also extend a warm welcome to our cooperating partners, representatives of continental and international organisations, members of the diplomatic corps, and all distinguished guests gathered here today. Your presence reflects the strength of our partnerships and our collective determination to advance the aspirations of the peoples of our regional Community, SADC. It also solidifies and strengthens our cooperation and mutual benefit as we bring value to the region, and to our citizens especially.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

As we gather today and commemorate the SADC Day, we celebrate a remarkable journey of solidarity, resilience, and transformation. For more than four decades, SADC has demonstrated the enduring value of regional cooperation in promoting peace and security, expanding trade and investment, strengthening infrastructure connectivity, deepening regional integration, and improving the lives of our citizens. We pay tribute to the founding leaders whose courage, foresight, and commitment to regional solidarity laid the foundations of our Community. Their legacy continues to inspire our efforts as we work together to build a stronger, more integrated, peaceful, and prosperous Southern Africa. I believe that ours is to sustain this legacy, if not to enrich it as we carve new and progressive chapters in pursuit of a shared prosperity.

From its beginnings as a movement for regional cooperation and liberation, SADC has evolved from a liberation focused cooperation into one of Africa's most dynamic and resilient regional communities. Today, our region is home to approximately 382 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product exceeding US\$847 billion. These achievements are a testament to the transformative power of unity, of partnership, and of collective action.

Our progress has been made possible by a foundation that remains indispensable: peace and stability. The relative peace and stability enjoyed across our region reflect the commitment of Member States to choose dialogue, diplomacy, democratic governance, conflict prevention, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. These are rare attributes in most parts of our continent and should be guarded jealously to sustain the peace we enjoy today.

Yesterday, the Troika Summit of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation reviewed political and security developments across the region, including the situations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republics of Madagascar and Mozambique. This reaffirmed our shared responsibility to safeguard peace, security, and stability as essential prerequisites for sustainable development and regional integration.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

The situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a matter of concern. We welcome the progress reported through diplomatic engagement and African-led peace initiatives. We trust that these initiatives bear fruits of peace, coexistence, social harmony and economic progress, rather than reverse the gains already achieved by previous interventions.

SADC remains steadfast in its solidarity with the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reaffirms its commitment to supporting efforts to restore peace, protect civilians, and create conditions conducive to sustainable development.

We also extend our solidarity to the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as they contend with the Ebola outbreak. Our heartfelt condolences go to the families and communities who have lost loved ones. Our deep appreciation goes to the dedicated of healthcare workers who continue to sacrifice their very own lives to serve and save others, and to our partners including the Africa CDC, WHO for coordinating and supporting the response efforts.

This outbreak, however, is a stark reminder of the importance of strengthening regional cooperation in health security, disease surveillance, preparedness, and coordinated and swift response. SADC remains committed to supporting Member States in building resilient health systems capable of effectively addressing current and emerging public health challenges.

We are equally encouraged by the positive dialogue taking place in the Republic of Madagascar through the efforts of the SADC Secretariat, the Mediation Reference Group, and the Panel of Elders. Such efforts continue to strengthen trust, consensus-building, and inclusive governance.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Our region is also affected by the frequent and rapidly changing global environment, which is characterised by economic uncertainty, climate-related challenges, technological transformation, and shifting geopolitical realities. These occurrences are increasingly reminding us of why we exist as a Community and why we must expedite our integration. We now realise that we can no longer depend on others elsewhere but ourselves, that we need each other more and must depend on each other more, and so must we trust each other more. Equally, in an increasingly interconnected world, no country can realise its full potential in isolation. Our strength lies in working together, trading together, investing together, and building together. Your Excellencies, I believe that we have a duty to create this reality and future for ourselves.

As the global economy transitions towards clean energy, digital technologies, and advanced manufacturing, SADC is uniquely positioned to play a strategic role. The region is endowed with abundant reserves of critical minerals, including platinum group metals, lithium, cobalt, graphite, manganese, rare earth elements, and copper, all of which are essential to the industries of the future.

Our ambition must be to move beyond the export of raw materials and position SADC as a globally competitive centre for beneficiation, value addition, manufacturing, innovation, and industrialisation. However, the challenge for us as a region is not a lack of these strategic resources, nor is it that we don't know their potential to transform our economies and change our fortunes.

It is not even that we have not talked about them and made commitments to change the trajectory. The challenge is when do we stop exporting them in raw form and start adding value to them and creating sustainable jobs and wealth. Once more, we do not need permission from anyone to start this process. Let us start now!

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Industrialisation remains central to achieving structural transformation, economic diversification, job creation, poverty reduction, and improved living standards. However, industrialisation cannot succeed without modern and reliable infrastructure. Robust and sustainable energy systems, refreshed and reliable transport networks, ports and logistics platforms, and cost effective digital connectivity are indispensable enablers of industrialisation and ultimately competitiveness and economic growth.

Agriculture also remains a cornerstone of many of our economies and a source of livelihood for millions of our citizens. Despite climate-related challenges, Member States continue to invest in irrigation, mechanisation, climate-smart agriculture, improved seed systems, and agro-processing. These efforts have strengthened resilience and contributed to improvements in food security across the region and to the reduction of food insecurity by 16 percent.

To fully unlock the potential of agricultural sector, we must continue investing across its entire value chain, from production and processing to storage, transport, and market access. Doing so will enhance food security, create jobs, and drive inclusive growth.

The vision I have painted above is reflected in the theme of this Summit: **"Resilient, Sustainable and Inclusive Industrialisation through Infrastructure Development, Agricultural and Critical Minerals Transformation in Pursuit of a Just World."** It captures the aspirations of our region and underscores the importance of building resilient economies capable of creating opportunities for all.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

The success of our region will depend largely on its people, particularly our youth. As technological change accelerates and economies become increasingly knowledge-driven, it is imperative that our young people are equipped with the skills, education, and opportunities necessary to thrive. Investment in quality education, technical and vocational skills development, digital literacy, innovation, entrepreneurship, science, and technology must therefore remain among our regional priorities.

We must create an enabling environment that empowers young women and men to participate meaningfully in economic transformation. Supporting youth-led enterprises, expanding access to finance and technology, and creating pathways to decent employment will be critical to our long-term success.

We wish to extend our congratulations to His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa and his team led by Hon Parks Tau, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, on the successful hosting of the 9th SADC Industrialisation Week. Over the years, SADC Industrialisation Week has become the region's premier platform for dialogue between governments, the private sector, investors, innovators, and development partners. The recommendations emerging from this year's edition should help the region implement the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

As we celebrate SADC Day today, we should remain optimistic and resolute in advancing regional integration. We should continue building a region that is united in purpose, resilient in the face of challenges, and steadfast in advancing the prosperity and dignity of all its people. We should build a SADC where peace prevails, economies grow, industries flourish, trade expands, young people thrive, and opportunity reaches every community.

On behalf of the SADC Secretariat, I wish to congratulate His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa as he assumes the Chair of SADC today. We pledge our full support and unwavering commitment to facilitate His Excellency to execute his mandate effectively.

We are confident that, under his decorated leadership, SADC will continue to advance its vision of a peaceful, resilient, industrialised, prosperous, and integrated Southern Africa.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our Member States, cooperating partners, stakeholders, and citizens whose support and contributions continue to strengthen our Community and bring us closer to our shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated Southern Africa. We also extend gratitude to the dedicated staff of the SADC Secretariat, led by my deputies, for their professionalism, expertise, and commitment to implementing Summit decisions and advancing the regional integration agenda.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

I wish you fruitful deliberations and every success in this Summit.

I thank you for your attention! Muito Obrigado! Merci Beaucoup!

Asante Sana!