

OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS

By

*Deputy Executive Secretary – Regional Integration SADC ,
Gaborone, Botswana*

On the Occasion of

*The Official Opening of the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for
Transport and Meteorology*

On

03 November 2017

*Bingu International Centre
Lilongwe, Malawi*

- Honourable Minister responsible Transport and Honourable Minister responsible for Meteorology for the Republic of Malawi;
- Honourable Ministers responsible for Transport and Meteorology from the SADC Region
- Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors
- Senior Officials from the SADC Member States;
- Representatives for Regional, Continental, International Organizations and our Implementing Agencies;
- Colleagues from the Media;
- Distinguished delegates, Invited Guests, ladies and Gentlemen
- All Protocol Observed;

I would like to express our gratitude through you, Honourable Minister of Transport and Public Works of the Republic of Malawi, Honourable Jappie MHANGO, MP, to your Government and the people of the Malawi for agreeing to host this important Meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Transport and Meteorology. Honourable Minister, we are indeed honoured by your presence, mindful of your busy schedules, but still took time out to participate in this auspicious occasion, which is clear testimony to your commitment to regional integration, regional cooperation and poverty reduction. The legendary hospitality extended to all of us since our arrival in this beautiful town of Lilongwe and the facilities that have been put at the our disposal has no doubt provided the needed conducive environment for us to conduct the business of the SADC Ministers

Responsible for Transport and Meteorology. I particularly like the commemorative shirts and dresses that you gave us. I will definitely keep mine as a souvenir [*but I will ask my sister Ms Mapolao to hand hers to the Executive Secretary as she might not appreciate my style!!*]

Honorable Ministers

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I wish to extend to you and all the distinguished delegates, warm greetings from Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, our Executive Secretary who would have wanted to be with you in person but due to other SADC agenda, she has delegated me to stand for the Secretariat.

Honorable Ministers

During the 37th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which was held at OR Tambo Building, Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) in Pretoria, in the Republic of South Africa on 19th and 20th August 2017; Summit endorsed the 37th SADC theme of “**Partnering with the Private sector in developing industry and regional value-chains**” as the 2017 Summit Theme. Furthermore, Summit Urged Member States to operationalize the 2017 Theme through implementation of projects which are in line with focus areas of Agro-processing, Mineral

Beneficiation, Energy, Pharmaceuticals, boosting skills to enhance regional integration and create a mechanism for the involvement of the private sector. To do so, there is no need to emphasize that Transport and Meteorology are the underlying success factors for the achievement of the 2017 theme. Indeed, the implementation of the cross-border infrastructure projects should be a major preoccupation of the SADC's political leaders, policy makers and other stakeholders because it may compromise the targeted regional integration, industrialization and structural transformation agenda of our community. It is expected that improved regional infrastructure such as it is embedded in the revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2015 - 2020 (RISDP) and detailed in the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP), will enable the full realisation of SADC's goals for the benefits and well-being of our population, through the reduction of poverty and sustainable development in the region.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman!

The current approach to managing regional transport infrastructure programmes does not sufficiently emphasise the importance of national ownership of the regional projects. This is critical to the implementation of the projects, without national ownership regional programmes are orphans wandering in wilderness. The secondary purpose of this meeting of Ministers is also to analyse the causes for slow implementation of the cross-border infrastructure projects

through the lens of national ownership of the regional programmes. In light of the above, the assumption is that national ownership of regional projects is a key success factor. Many observers have argued that political will and ownership of regional programmes are lacking at national level. Evidence to support this includes the non-domestication of regional agreements, failure to include reand budget for regional projects in national development plans and budgets and poor support to common institutions that we have created to coordinate and jointly manage regional programmes. Member States should be fully involved in decision-making on regional projects which should be integrated into national plans and be assigned budgets.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman!

Partnership is the main strategy to implement these regional projects owned by Member States. Amongst the stakeholders involved in the partnership are: The Secretariat, Member States, Private Sector and International Development Cooperative Partners. Shared ownership is well established as an essential ingredient of effective partnership. The regional organisation with the financial and technical support of development partners spearhead the implementation of the regional programme owned by the countries.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman!

The importance of sound infrastructure for sustained economic growth and development is well recognized all over the world. Regional cross-border infrastructure, particularly in the areas of transport, and meteorology, has the potential to facilitate intra-regional trade and investment; unlock national and regional comparative advantages; and address the special needs of landlocked countries to access the rest of the world.

During the period under review, the Transport and Meteorology sectors continued to implement programmes and achieved milestones aimed at enhancing facilitation and coordination with a view to transform the region into an integrated economy by promoting the provision of adequate, interconnected and efficient regional infrastructure.

The importance and necessity of regional cooperation is increasingly understood by our Member States. Regional cooperation plays a vital role in enabling Member States to achieve common goals set out by them, as well as specific goals set out under the main objective of the Transport and Meteorology Programme is to facilitate the deepening of the SADC regional integration as well as to address the overarching objective of Poverty Reduction. Our political leadership carries the hope and aspirations of our people, who continue to look up to them to lift the quality of their lives until poverty is completely eradicated.

The region has embarked on initiatives aimed at addressing challenges arising from the lack of availability and access to sound, cost effective, efficient transport infrastructure necessary to strengthen intra-SADC trade. Major focus remains on the development of SADC Regional Corridors, recognising the need for an integrated transport policy framework to achieve regional integration.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman!

The SADC Climate Services Centre (CSC) continue to provide services and timely outreach products in weather and climate monitoring and prediction for the benefit of the SADC Member States and regional and international institutions. I wish, in particular, to single out those institutions dealing with Early Warning for Food Security, Disaster Preparedness, Health and Water Management sectors. For instance, the Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) products and CSC facilitated improved planning for climate-driven disasters. The last Council Meeting held in Pretoria, August 207 has approved in the new SADC Secretariat structure the option 2 of your proposal on strengthening the capacity of SADC CSC to optimally operate and deliver firstly the early warning message and services. Indeed the importance of this Centre was underscored by His Majesty King Mswati III during his visit to the Secretariat in Gaborone.

In Civil Aviation we are happy to reports that ten (10) out of the sixteen (16) Member States have attained Quality Management Services as per International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)/ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) requirement for improved safety for air navigation, since the deadline of November 2012. We salute them.... **[Lets give them a round of applause]** The remaining six (6) still continue to face challenges with regards to Quality Management System (QMS) for aeronautical meteorological services and are running the risk of being flagged high risk countries and loosing revenues collected at the airport on airplane taking off and landing operations. There is need to assist them by recovering the cost for the delivery of aviation meteorological services, in order to setup QMS audit schemes which require financial support.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman!

Let me end my remarks by appreciating the Leadership provided by our principals, in particular our Heads of State and Government, on whom we continue to rely for guidance and direction in the implementation of all our programmes. As alluded to above, Partnership is the main strategy to implement regional infrastructure on Transport and Meteorology. And shared ownership is a core attribute of successful partnership. Prioritizing the projects of regional programme at the national level is therefore a critical link in the implementation of the regional initiative. It is when regional projects are treated as national priorities that complementary funds are likely

to be raised by regional organization for their implementation. Hence, The Secretariat should therefore, focus its attention on mainstreaming regional projects in national development plans. Furthermore, I wish to commend the Senior Officers for their diligent work in preparing for your meeting during the last two days. I would also like to thank my colleagues from the Secretariat, your own products as Member States, for the good facilitation of your programmes and wish to urge them to remain committed and focused.

Thank You