



STATEMENT

BY

**SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE
TAX**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 16TH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL
COMMITTEE OF THE ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND
SECURITY COOPERATION (MCO)**

SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA

24 JULY 2014

- Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Namibia and Chairperson of SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (MCO);
- Honourable Ministers;
- Distinguished Heads of National delegations;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my humble honour and privilege to address this opening of the 16th Meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation (MCO); here in Swakopmund, Republic of Namibia.

Allow me this opportunity to convey our gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to all delegates since our arrival in this resort town of Swakopmund. I also wish to commend the senior officials for the job well done in preparing the working documents to be used by the Ministers at this meeting.

This meeting provides an opportunity and platform to take stock of the implementation of the Organ activities during the past twelve months since the last MCO ordinary meeting that was held in Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, on 13 July 2013.

Prior to this Ministerial meeting, the Senior Officials met as Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC) and Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), and had fruitful discussions, resulting into recommendations which are now being presented before you for consideration; marking yet another cycle of twelve months of Organ activities comprising the period 2013-2014 – 2014-2015.

Honourable Chairperson,

During the period under review - 2013-2014, the political and security situation in the region has remained stable. With regard to the consolidation of democracy and strengthening democratic institutions in the region, Member States held regular peaceful, free, fair and credible elections, which SADC observed in accordance with the 'SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections'. In this regard, credible elections were held in the Republic of Madagascar, Swaziland, South Africa and Malawi. In the course of the last quarter of 2014, elections are scheduled to take place in Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia.

As part of democracy enhancement, the Secretariat is currently undertaking an assessment of the SADC Observation Missions. The outcome of the assessment is expected to inform the ongoing revision of the 'SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections'. Notwithstanding its benefits, it worthwhile to note that consolidation of democracy is a dynamic process with diverse challenges.

In the quest for sustainable peace and stability in the DRC, SADC has been collaborating with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). In this regard, a number of achievements have been attained, including the conclusion of the Kampala Dialogue on the conflict in the Eastern part of DRC on 12 December 2013, following the signing of the Nairobi Declarations by M23 rebels, and by the Government of the DRC, committing to the 'Eleven Points of the Kampala Dialogue'.

In the context of elimination of negative forces, as part of implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework on the DRC and the Region, the M23 was defeated by Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and other forces have been surrendering voluntarily and engaging in a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process in the Eastern DRC.

Honourable Chairperson,

The implementation of the SADC Roadmap to restore constitutional normalcy in Madagascar was successfully achieved. The First President of the 4th Republic was democratically elected and sworn-in on 25 January 2014, marking the end of the SADC mediation in that Member State. The new government and National Assembly are in place. Suspension of Madagascar was lifted by the AU Peace and Security Council, and by the SADC Summit, in January 2014.

During the year 2013-2014, and in line with the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO), a number of activities have been carried-out in the five sectors, namely: i) Political Sector; ii) Defence Sector;

iii) State Security Sector; iv) Public Security Sector and v) Police Sector. Other activities were also undertaken under the Planning Element (PLANELM) of the SADC Standby Force (SADC SF); the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) and Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO).

Honourable Chairperson,

In line with the Council directive, SIPO objectives are being mainstreamed in the ongoing review of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and we are in a process of preparing an implementation structure that will respond to the SIPO pillars and strategic objectives. In line with this, and in order to operationalise the SIPO systematically and as such deliver the intended objectives, the Secretariat is finalising an implementation plan of SIPO, which will; be submitted to the MCO.

Notwithstanding progress made in the execution of the mandate of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, a number of challenges have been encountered. The major challenge which continues to face our activities in implementing our politics, defence and security undertakings, is resources constraints, characterized by high dependence on support by the International Cooperating Partners. Currently the ratio of the funds allocation is 21% from Member States and 79% from ICPs.

Honourable Ministers, this is a worrisome situation which requires an in-depth reflection, and a proper strategic way forward.

As we all agree donor contributions should only supplement our own efforts and should not be the mainstay of our regional integration and development programmes. As long as donor contributions are the major source of our funding, it will be hard for us to independently realise our objectives – without pandering to the whims of others. This disturbing situation requires immediate attention.

In conclusion, let me recall the importance of our ever-lasting political will that propelled this region from being a colonial asset to freedom and independence. That political will, based on unity of purpose and action, continues to be necessary as it has always been.

The reality of our mandate, as enshrined in the Treaty, is that regional integration is not a choice or a probability: **IT IS A MUST!!!** It can be done. Let us pull together towards a common destination, that is beneficial to SADC citizens.

I thank you