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9 August 2018

38th SADC SUMMIT SAFARI COURT HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SELMA ASHIPALA-MUSAVYI, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

Chief Director for SADC in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, representing the outgoing Chair of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials, Mr. Sandile Schalk

Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax

Heads of Delegation of Senior Officials

Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Deputy Executive Secretaries

Distinguished Delegates

Media Fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is a great pleasure and honor for me as Chair of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials to welcome you all dear colleagues to Namibia and to Windhoek in particular. Please do feel at home and have a wonderful stay here in our capital city Windhoek.

It is here where the Southern African Development Community was birthed and here we have returned, to gauge not only its growth and progression, but more importantly, how SADC has continued to meaningfully touch the lives of our people.

It is not easy to fill your shoes as outgoing Chair. But with his assistance and the collective support of all of you colleagues, I trust that I will be able to steer the work of this Committee and that together we shall continue to elevate our deliberations to high levels of expectation and intended results.

Therefore, on behalf of the Senior Officials, and indeed on my own, I wish to express our utmost appreciation to the outgoing Chair, for the effective manner in which he has steered our work during your tenure as Chair of the Standing Committee of Senior Officials. I look forward continue working with him and benefit from his advice, going forward.

Dear Colleagues
Distinguished Delegates

As a member state, Namibia feels honored and privileged to be assuming the Chairmanship of our Organization, whose objectives are to achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration. These are socio - economic challenges that we are all grappling with and aspirations for which we collectively continue to strive.

It is for this reason that, since 2015, our leaders have decided to accentuate the industrialization of the SADC Region. We have set ourselves targets through various enablers, particularly the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), of which implementation has partly been realized through the choice of themes for the Summits, and subsequent operationalization.

In choosing the theme of the 38th SADC Summit: “**Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development**”, we have carefully aligned it to the preceding themes on industrialization. The theme illustrates that infrastructure development and youth empowerment go hand in hand, and are vital in driving SADC towards industrialization. The theme also speaks to the socio - economic realities of our continent, in the spirit of “The Africa We Want”, as outlined in the AU Agenda 2063, and reflect the general concerns of the Global South as entailed in the UN Agenda 2030.

We therefore have an ample opportunity and should critically look back to the progress we have made so far in implementing SADC Programmes. I am pleased to state that there have been notable progress in many sectors, especially infrastructural connectivity, economic development and trade, as well as in ensuring that peace and security prevails in the region.

However, you might also agree with me that more still needs to be done, in order to achieve our objectives, and therein lies our collective responsibilities. It is crucial that our Organisation implements programmes and strategies that we have commonly adopted, for the benefit of all our people and ensure that they have a better life and a brighter future.

The issues contained in the Agenda before us are pertinent to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the region. Equally, others are about ensuring that our region remains stable and peaceful. We should continue to find lasting solutions to ensure that peace and security prevails in our region, for without peace there would be no regional integration for development.

Dear colleagues
Distinguished Delegates

In conclusion, let me express my deep gratitude and humility for the honor you have bestowed upon me as your Chair, and to wish this meeting fruitful and successful deliberations.

I thank you.