

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**OPENING REMARKS BY HONOURABLE NETUMBO
NANDI-NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
COOPERATION AT THE DINNER TO INTRODUCE
THE SADC ELIMINATION 8 INITIATIVE, ON 15
AUGUST 2018**

AVANI HOTEL

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, SADC Executive Secretary
Dr. Richard Kamwi, SADC Malaria Elimination 8 Initiative
Ambassador,
Heads of Delegation;
Officials from Malaria Elimination Office;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I welcome you all to this dinner, jointly organised by the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia and the Office of the SADC Malaria Elimination 8 Initiative. As malaria elimination is one of the main targets of SADC, we found it appropriate that while a number of SADC member states are in Windhoek for the 38th Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government, we would use the opportunity to share information on the Malaria Elimination 8 Initiative. I therefore, thank all of you for having found time to be here tonight.

In reinforcing the message of appeal by His Majesty, King Mswati III of the Kingdom of eSwatini, as Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), for us to take charge and address one of the deadliest diseases in Africa today, Malaria. SADC Heads of State and Government have decided to make malaria elimination one of the priority projects in the region. As you may recall, the Africa Malaria Elimination Campaign, launched in 2007 by the African Union (AU) Conference of Ministers of Health, committed to a gradual movement

from malaria control to elimination, beginning with the sub-set of countries where elimination was considered most feasible, in order to eliminate malaria on the continent by 2030. Subsequently, SADC pledged to eliminate malaria from southern Africa and identified six countries that are well positioned to begin the orientation towards elimination. These countries are Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, eSwatini, Madagascar and Tanzania with the focus on Zanzibar.

Recognizing that the progress or failure of one country's efforts to eliminate malaria is connected to the success of other countries in the region, the SADC Elimination 8 (E8) Regional Initiative was established to coordinate a collaborative effort, led by the Ministers of Health in eight (8) countries. In March 2009, those countries held the first of a series of high-level coordination and consultation meetings intending to lead the elimination of malaria by 2030. Leading these discussions was then Minister of Health and Social Services for Namibia, Dr. Richard Kamwi.

The meeting has brought together three (3) key partners, namely, the World Health Organisation, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (*a global institution established jointly by WHO and UNICEF to champion malaria elimination and galvanize resources*) and the University of California, San Francisco, (UCSF). That meeting resolved that a sub-regional initiative would be established to end

malaria through strengthening border collaboration, collectively working together as Member States and share experience.

It was at the March 2009 meeting that Namibia was nominated as founding Chair of the SADC Elimination 8 Initiative. The meeting also resolved that the Chairpersonship of the Initiative would be held for a period of 3 years, and meetings will be held annual. Further a decision was taken for the SADC E8 Secretariat to be hosted in Namibia. This Secretariat started with 3 staff members in 2015 and has since grown to a staff compliment of 25 people, with various expertise in epidemiology, entomology and advocacy.

Dear colleagues, we all know that malaria claims more lives in sub-Saharan Africa than any other disease, and yet we do know that malaria is both preventable and curable. Therefore, why should we continue to allow the most vulnerable members of our society, especially children under 5 and pregnant women to die from a disease that we have the means to eliminate? If we work together, we can certainly achieve more.

With these remarks, please join me in welcoming to the podium, SADC E8 Ambassador Dr. Richard Kamwi, former Namibian Minister of Health and Social Services, an expert malariologist himself, driven by the passion to see this disease eliminated off the continent of Africa.

I thank you.