



**WELCOME REMARKS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. LAZARUS McCARTHY CHAKWERA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**ON THE OCCASION OF OPENING OF THE
41ST ORDINARY SUMMIT OF SADC HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT**

LILONGWE, MALAWI

17TH AUGUST, 2021

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Lilongwe 3.**

- **Your Excellency, Felipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and Outgoing Chairperson of SADC;**
- **Your Excellency, Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, and Outgoing Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation;**
- **Your Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Incoming Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation;**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government**
- **All the Representatives of Heads of State and Government;**
- **Honourable Eisenhower Nduwa Mkaka, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;**
- **All the Cabinet Ministers from the SADC Region;**
- **Your Excellency, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, SADC Executive Secretary;**
- **Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;**

- **Your Excellency Dr. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;**
- **Your Excellency Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank;**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of Regional and International Organisation**
- **Your Excellencies, Head of Mission and Members of Diplomatic Corp;**
- **Distinguished Delegates, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;**
- **All Protocols observed.**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates to Malawi, **“the Warm Heart of Africa.”** We are deeply honoured to host the 41st Ordinary Session of the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). As we say in Malawi when we welcome special guests, Takulandirani!

I am really happy to see all of you, Excellencies, here in Lilongwe despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. Your attendance of the Summit signifies your strong commitment to the Region’s development agenda. Malawi is your home, and it has to be, as this is what our founding fathers envisioned when they decided to establish SADC as a ‘community’. When we gather like this, we gather as elders of the same village, whose people draw water from the same well and sit for meals under the same hut.

Excellencies;

This year’s Summit is of particular significance as it comes at a time when the SADC Region, just like any other part of

the world, has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic has either stalled or reversed the progress we had made in our regional integration agenda, gains that took years and sweat to achieve, we gather here with a shared sense of urgency to revitalise our economies.

As we seek to do this, we must redouble our efforts in the areas where we can register quick gains. Chief among them is the fostering of an environment for the creation of jobs for young people across the region, which we must do as a matter of urgency. Toward that end, our convergence here must result in revitalized trade across our borders, enhanced industrial production within our border, and accelerated recovery of key sectors like tourism in the wake of the pandemic.

But we must remember that the pandemic is not merely a challenge to be navigated, but a problem to be resolved. The revival of our economies depends on our collective ability to dispose of this existential threat. It is therefore imperative that we keep up and step up the efforts we are making as SADC to comply with the guidelines we already have for stopping this pandemic in its tracks. Because we

have a long history of overcoming serious challenges together, there is no reason we cannot overcome this challenge and build our region back better. And this Summit is precisely the occasion to which we must rise and come up with lasting solutions to this challenge and its adverse effects on our peoples and economies.

One such solution is the successful rollout of a region-wide vaccination programme. The efforts made thus far by member states are worthy of applause, but we all know that we are far from the desired goal of reaching herd immunity and reducing high transmission rates. We must therefore tackle the roadblocks standing in the way of our quest to reach this goal. One critical roadblock we must confront is the toxic nationalism that is causing some nations in the world to hoard millions of vaccine doses and deny other nations access to the same. Similarly, we must confront the toxic nationalism that is causing some regions in the world to deny other regions like SADC the rights to produce vaccines for their own populations. This pandemic is a global health crisis, not a national one, and as SADC, we must stand united in opposing all forms of “vaxscrimination” hampering our ability to recover from it.

As you already know, this pandemic has exacerbated the effects of yet another existential threat to our regional integration agenda we have been facing for years, namely climate change, which now accounts for many a natural disaster in our region. I have in mind disasters like Cyclone Idai, which claimed thousands of lives and defeated our efforts to eradicate poverty, food insecurity, and infrastructural underdevelopment. As we speak, unusual climate patterns continue to displace communities and destroy crops, causing great suffering to our peoples. As SADC, we must speak with one voice and employ a common strategy to address this threat, especially as we approach Cop 26 in November, 2021.

Excellencies;

A third threat to our regional integration agenda we must collectively be vigilant against is regional insecurity. If we are going to have sustainable and inclusive development as a region, the entire region must be peaceful and secure. This is why we as SADC are right to be proactive in taking bold steps to arrest any emerging pockets of instability.

We must never apologize for being decisive in this matter or for addressing the peace and security of all member states with the urgency we accord to our own. However, we need to remember that maintaining our region's peace and security goes beyond remedial efforts to end pockets of conflict. Rather, it requires the sustenance of democratic norms, the protection of human rights, and the strengthening of governance institutions. These are the soils in which the seeds of peace and security flourish. For this reason, the pattern of peaceful transitions of power we have been seeing in our region in recent years, the Republic of Zambia being the latest member to embody that, are worthy of global acclaim and our applause. To all the leaders and people of Zambia, we say Thank you.

Excellencies;

I mention these three threats to regional integration efforts to motivate you to stay the course. The key pillars of regional integration must be pursued and the goal of regional integration must be attained. We all agree that if we truly want inclusive and sustainable economic

transformation across SADC, then regional integration is non-negotiable. We must enhance cross-border trade and investment in our region through the existing SADC mechanisms and where need be, introduce new ones. We must fully embrace industrialization as the most effective means of achieving the main goals of SADC namely: increased economic productivity; stronger regional integration; and reduced poverty for people living in the region. We must facilitate the free movement of our peoples in a manner commensurate with our shared conviction that we are truly a community of shared values and shared interests.

Excellencies, it is therefore in that spirit of community that I once again welcome you and all delegates to **“the Warm Heart of Africa.”** This is your home. Please enjoy the warmth and friendliness of our people.

I can assure you that the Government and people of Malawi are delighted to host you here, and we are at your disposal to ensure that your stay is pleasant enough to make you want to come back. For my part, I not only wish you all a successful 41st Ordinary Session of the Summit of the

SADC Heads of State and Government, but also fruitful deliberations towards the SADC we want.

Thank you for your attention

Muito Obrigato

Merci Bougue

Asante Sana

Zikomo Kwambiri