

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**WELCOMING REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 38TH
SADC SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

AUGUST 17, 2018

WINDHOEK

Your Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of SADC;

Your Excellency João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and Chairperson of the Organ;

Your Excellency Paul Kagame, Chairperson of the African Union;

Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia;

Esteemed First Spouses;

Your Excellencies Former Heads of State and Government;

Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Her Excellency Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Executive Secretary of SADC;

Honourable Ministers;

Honourable Speakers of the Parliaments of Angola and South Africa;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Distinguished Delegates;

Esteemed Invited Guests;

Media Fraternity;

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia, it is my pleasure to welcome Your Excellencies, First Spouses and your distinguished delegations, to the 38th Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, being held here in our capital city, Windhoek.

It is a moment of great pride, as a country, to host the 38th SADC Summit in the very same hall which hosted the signing of the Windhoek Declaration and

the Treaty 26 years ago, marking the transformation of our organisation from a Coordinating Conference into a Development Community (SADC).

That historic occasion gave our organization a legal character and set forth a vision and foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community.

It is exactly this vision and foundation that commits us today and in future to work towards achieving economic growth, as well as promoting employment and enhancing the standard and quality of life of our people, through industrialization. It is this vision and foundation that commits us to work tirelessly in order to ensure freedom, social justice, inclusivity, peace and stability in our region.

Namibia is a Child of Pan – African Solidarity, owing its freedom to the critical role played, by our fellow African brothers and sisters towards the liberation of our country, starting with the Frontline States, which offered a reliable rear base to our people, as they prepared to fight against the brutality of the Apartheid system. We therefore welcome you to your second home, the home that you helped liberate.

As Namibia assumes the Chairmanship of SADC, be rest assured that we have been working closely with South Africa to ensure a smooth and efficient transition. I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chair of SADC, for his exemplary and sterling leadership, in directing our organisation towards regional integration.

Equally, we acknowledge the role played by the former President of South Africa, Comrade Jacob Zuma, for his achievements in advancing the SADC agenda and his impeccable work as Chairperson of our organization.

Your Excellencies, Namibia will continue in earnest to promote the SADC Agenda of Industrialisation and Regional Integration, which is paramount to sustainable development and poverty eradication. We shall endeavor to create a conducive environment for economic development and prosperity in the region.

Your Excellencies

We are convening this Summit under the theme *"Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development."*

The SADC Region needs requisite infrastructures in all sectors in order to enhance economic growth and regional integration. The youth constitute a significant percentage of the population in our countries. It therefore within our interest to ensure that our youth, who will be the leaders of the industrialized SADC we envisage, are equipped with the necessary tools required to govern industrialized nations. In this regard, the theme speaks to our aspirations of infrastructure development and youth empowerment.

We recognize that infrastructure includes regional transport and communications systems, which are fundamental to development in the SADC Region.

Energy, water and sanitation, and meteorology are also critical components of regional infrastructure. To fast-track infrastructure development, we should also consider dovetailing our regional programmes and plans with

continental ones, in particular the AU Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa and Agenda 2063.

In terms of youth empowerment, it is imperative that we achieve sustained economic growth in the region in order to create sufficient employment opportunities for our young populations. We all have to be cognizant of the fact that to unleash the enormous potential of our youth and harness the demographic dividend, we must create, within our economies, the necessary opportunities for social and economic transformation.

I believe that SADC's renewed focus on industrialisation, especially through beneficiation and value addition, will enhance the region's competitiveness, create opportunities for young men and women to participate fully in the exploitation of the region's abundant natural resources, as well as enabling young people to be architects of their own socio-economic development.

We expect our youth to make valuable contributions to our development agendas as political and social actors, scientists, innovators, entrepreneurs and academics, to mention but a few.

Our vision, as SADC Member States is of, *"a Common Future, a future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the people of Southern Africa"*.

Namibia believes in this vision. Ours is a nation rooted in Democracy, Unity, Peace, Stability and the Rule of Law. Not only are these principles necessary for social cohesion and nation building, but they are also prerequisites for industrialization and economic growth. We have put in place a robust governance architecture characterized by effective processes, systems and

institutions. We hold regular free and fair elections of which the outcomes are rarely contested due to those processes and systems we have in place. However, on those rare occasions when election results are challenged, we resort to our institutions, the courts, to resolve these disputes.

All these things are done, not to win approval from others, but with a clear belief that it is only through adherence to strong governance principles, that we will be able to improve the standards of living and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa.

Your Excellencies,

As we prepare to meet, let us evoke the Pan-African spirit which helped us overcome the tyranny, racism and brutality of colonialism. Let us evoke the spirit of unity in purpose, which helped guide our founding fathers on the path towards liberation.

Let us evoke the spirit which lead to the establishment of our organization, in 1992, to serve as a vehicle for the development and integration of our region.

Once again, Your Excellencies, First Spouses and distinguished guests, the people of Namibia warmly welcome you and wish you all a very productive Summit.

I thank you.