



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

H.E. MR. ELIAS MPEDI MAGOSI

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SADC

AT THE

28TH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF THE

SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY

COOPERATION

16 JULY 2026

SALIMA, REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

Honourable Dr. George Thapatula Chaponda MP., Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation;

Honourable Mr. Ronald Lamola, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Honourable Senator Pholile Shakantu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Eswatini, and Incoming Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Honourable Prof. Amon Murwira, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Outgoing Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers;

Honourable James Kinyasi Millya MP., Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, and representing the Outgoing Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ;

Honourable Ministers and Members of the MCO;

Mr. Chauncy M.K Simwaka, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi, and Chairperson of the Senior Officials of the Organ of the MCO;

Distinguished Senior Officials, Chiefs of Security Institutions and Delegates from SADC Member States;

Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, Professor Kula Ishmael Theletsane;

Staff from the SADC Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Malawi;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

It is my distinct honour and pleasure to welcome you to the 28th Meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) on Politics, Defence and Security

Cooperation, here in Salima, the Republic of Malawi. We extend my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, as well as to the Government and the warm and welcoming people of Malawi, for the excellent hospitality and arrangements made for this meeting. Malawi's renowned spirit of hospitality, which has earned her the title of the "Warm Heart of Africa," has once again been demonstrated through the gracious reception extended to all delegates.

We also extend our gratitude to all Honourable Ministers and distinguished delegates for making time to participate in this Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ. Your presence here today demonstrates our shared commitment to advancing peace, stability, security, democratic governance, and integration across the SADC region.

Malawi has long championed the values of regional integration, peaceful coexistence, solidarity, and collective security that underpin the SADC Community. It is therefore fitting that we meet here in Salima, on the shores of Lake Malawi, a symbol of connection, of cooperation, and of shared destiny as the peoples of Southern Africa. Bound by common aspirations and a commitment to improving the lives of our citizens, SADC Member States continue to draw strength from unity and collective action.

We also wish to congratulate the Republic of Zimbabwe on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2027–2028 term. This is a testament to the confidence and trust that the international community places in Zimbabwe's commitment to multilateralism, peace, and international cooperation.

On a sad note, this morning I learned of the passing of former Vice President of Zambia, Dr. Guy Scott. I wish to express my heartfelt and sincere condolences to His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema, the Government and people of the Republic of Zambia, and the bereaved family. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those mourning this loss, and may the soul of Dr. Guy Scott rest in eternal peace.

Honourable Ministers,

As we meet today, we do so with both pride and purpose. Pride, because our region remains one of the most peaceful and resilient regions on our continent. And purpose, because peace, security, and prosperity can never be taken for granted. They require constant vigilance, cooperation, and regional solidarity. They can never, therefore, be left to chance.

In this regard, the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo remains a matter of profound concern. We extend our deepest condolences to the families and communities that have lost their lives as a result of the ongoing conflict as well as the humanitarian crisis, both of which continue to cause immense suffering and displacement.

Despite the sustained diplomatic engagement under the Africa-led Mediation Architecture, insecurity persists in some parts of eastern DRC, undermining peace efforts and worsening humanitarian conditions. The continued suffering of civilians is a stark reminder of the urgency for all of us to achieve a durable political solution. At the same time, recurring outbreaks of Ebola Disease have placed additional strain on the affected communities and health systems, underscoring the complex challenges confronting the country and the wider region. We stand in solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and reaffirm our support for efforts aimed at restoring peace, protecting civilians, and strengthening resilience against public health emergencies.

Honourable Ministers,

Political developments in the Republic of Madagascar have equally demanded our close attention. SADC responded swiftly through the deployment of missions to Madagascar and through intensified engagements by the SADC Secretariat, the Mediation Reference Group, and the SADC Panel of Elders.

I am pleased to report that the SADC Panel of Elders and the MRG conducted a Fact-Finding Mission, followed by several shuttle diplomacy initiatives aimed at advancing dialogue, building trust, and establishing hope for lasting peace. These actions reflect our collective commitment to preserving peace, democratic governance, and constitutional stability throughout our Community. I wish to commend Her Excellency Dr Joyce Banda, former President of the Republic of Malawi, for her leadership, dedication, and tireless efforts in promoting dialogue and supporting Madagascar's process of national reconciliation.

As Madagascar continues her journey of reform and renewal, we must remain steadfast in our support. Sustainable peace can only endure where there is inclusion, accountability, respect for human rights, and meaningful participation by all citizens. Without these foundations, stability remains vulnerable to future tensions. The region should therefore keep a close eye on the progress the country is making to get back to constitutional rule. That is our commitment to the Malagasy people.

Turning to the Republic of Mozambique, we are encouraged by significant positive developments. The signing of the Political Commitment for an Inclusive National Dialogue marked a progressive step towards reconciliation, unity, and nation-building. It reflects the determination of Mozambicans to resolve their differences through peaceful and democratic means. The region should do all it can to support and anchor the country to reach the finish line. We know the process is complex but must be tackled, nonetheless.

While isolated terrorist incidents continue to affect parts of the Cabo Delgado Province, the gradual return of displaced communities and the revival of economic and social activities signal encouraging progress. These gains must now be consolidated through continued support, vigilance, and investments that address the root causes of insecurity while promoting inclusive development and opportunity.

Honourable Ministers,

It is important to highlight that our security landscape extends beyond traditional threats. Climate change, public health emergencies, food and energy insecurity, transnational organized crime, terrorism, cybercrime, and shifting geopolitical dynamics increasingly affect our collective stability and development. Responding effectively requires stronger cooperation, enhanced resilience, and innovative solutions by the region.

Your meeting today provides an opportunity to review progress in the implementation of programmes under the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. It will also consider measures to further strengthen regional cooperation in mediation, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, defense and public security, migration management, anti-corruption, counter terrorism, and humanitarian response. These are not merely agenda items; they are the building blocks of a safer, more prosperous, and more integrated Southern Africa.

As we pursue this vision, we must also preserve and honour our shared history. The Mechanism in Honour of the SADC Founders continues to register notable progress. The research documenting the contributions of all nine Founding Fathers has been completed, and preparations are underway for the publication and launch of a comprehensive compendium that will preserve and celebrate their enduring legacy for future generations. This initiative is not simply about remembering the past. It ensures that future generations understand the sacrifices, courage, and vision that laid the foundations of our Community.

We are equally encouraged by a growing support for the regional commemoration of Southern Africa Liberation Day on 23 March each year, a powerful reminder of our shared identity, solidarity, and liberation heritage.

Honourable Ministers,

Regional integration must be accompanied by greater mobility and connectivity among our people. We are encouraged by progress towards operationalizing the SADC Tourism UNIVISA, an initiative aimed at simplifying cross-border travel and promoting SADC as a single tourism destination. The UNIVISA will enable visitors to travel across multiple participating SADC countries using a single visa, thereby enhancing regional integration and tourism competitiveness. Together with the increasing adoption of the 90-day visa facilitation by fifteen of the SADC Member States, these developments should boost tourism, stimulate economic growth, facilitate trade, and enhance people-to-people connections throughout the region.

At the same time, we must confront the governance challenges that threaten our progress. Corruption continues to undermine development, weaken institutions, and erode public trust. The proposed review of the SADC Protocol Against Corruption presents an opportunity to strengthen our collective response and align our frameworks with evolving regional and global realities.

Beyond corruption, transnational organized crime remains a growing threat. Drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, illegal mining, the proliferation of illicit weapons, cybercrime, and attacks against critical infrastructure demand stronger cooperation, enhanced intelligence-sharing, and coordinated action. I therefore commend Member States for their ongoing efforts and urge continued commitment to implementing regional strategies aimed at combating organized crime and strengthening collective security.

Honourable Ministers,

The challenges before us are significant, but they are not insurmountable. The strength of our Community has always resided in our unity, our solidarity, and our determination to act collectively in pursuit of our common aspirations.

I am confident that through our deliberations, we will continue to build a region that is secure, resilient, prosperous, and responsive to the aspirations of our people.

Together, we can ensure that the story of Southern Africa continues to be one of unity, resilience, progress, and hope.

As I conclude, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ, Honourable Dr George Thapatula Chaponda, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi, for his leadership and commitment to advancing peace, security, and good governance across our region.

I also commend the Senior Officials of the Ministerial Committee of the Organ, under the stewardship of Mr Chauncy Simwaka, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi, for their diligence, and dedication in laying a solid foundation for our deliberations today.

To my colleagues at the SADC Secretariat, led by Professor Kula Ishmael Theletsane, Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs, I extend my sincere gratitude for your hard work, dedication, and close collaboration with the Chair and Member States in preparing for this meeting.

As we move forward, the SADC Secretariat remains fully committed to supporting the implementation of the decisions and directives arising from our deliberations. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I Thank you for your attention!

Merci beaucoup! Muito Obrigado! Asante Sana! Zikomo Kwambiri!