ZIMBABWE

HANDOVER REMARKS FOR HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS,

PROF. dr. AMON MURWIRA,

ON THE OCCASION OF 46TH SUMMIT, ORDINARY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS,

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

AUGUST 2026

SALUTATIONS

- Interim Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, **Honourable Ronald Lamola;**

- **Honourable Ministers;**

- His Excellency, the Executive Secretary of SADC, **Mr. Elias Magosi;**

- Chairperson of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials and Deputy Director General for Africa in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, **Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo;**

- **Distinguished Senior Officials;**

- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. We must pause and ask ourselves a fundamental question: **Who are we as a people?** then we must ask another: **Are we merely neighbours bound by the lines on a map, or are we a family bound by an eternal covenant of shared destiny?** We are a people defined by the profound philosophy of **Ubuntu**; the recognition that **"I am because we are"**.

2. In this SADC family, **there is no "other"; there is only "us".** Our **integration** is the sacred ground upon which we build **a home** for all our people, **a space** where the warmth of our **shared humanity** ensures that no brother or sister ever feels like a stranger within our borders. Our strength lies in a unity so profound that the **prosperity and security** of one Member State is inseparable from that of the entire SADC family. Instead of walls, we build bridges; instead of distance, we choose the closeness of a community where every individual is valued as a vital part of our collective soul.

3. Let us stop and **paint our common future**, for our future must look like something tangible and inspiring. Our common future is anchored on the four pillars of our SADC blueprint, which form an **integrated package** that we must embrace in its entirety; (1) **Peace and Security** as our foundational rock, (2) **Industrialisation** as the engine that transforms our raw heritage into wealth, (3) **Infrastructure Development** to connect our markets and our hearts, (4) **Social and Human Capital** to ensure our people are the true authors of their development. None of these pillars can stand alone, and no nation can walk this path in isolation.

4. It is a landscape where **human needs are fulfilled**, where the indignity of poverty is eradicated, and where the potential of every child in our region is unlocked by our collective will. This future points towards a singular, unyielding horizon; **Regional Integration**. As we navigate this path, we must

constantly ask if our tools and our decisions are truly moving us in that direction.

5. SADC is not a mere administrative exercise, it is a **grand project** of our people. As SADC we have perfected how to structure governance, but there are no programmes to execute, supported by this good governance. We must never forget why SADC was formed. SADC was created for independence and not dependence.

6. Guided by this vision, our interventions over the past year have demanded a decisive shift from planning to **actual implementation**:
7. **On Industrialisation and Trade:** We must move beyond commitments to the **Protocol on Trade**, removing every barrier that hinders our own producers. Minerals are not wealth until knowledge transforms them, and agriculture is not prosperity until science enhances it. We must become a

competitive hub of production rather than a mere supplier of raw materials.

8. **Financial Sovereignty:** The **Regional Development Fund (RDF)** is an indispensable imperative for our sovereignty. We must accept that **SADC is ours to fund**. We must move towards **collective sovereignty** through core investments and common programmes that bring our people together.

9. **Health and Social Welfare:** The **SADC Pooled Procurement Services (SPPS)** is a milestone for our people's health. Its success depends on the **efficient movement of products** across our borders and the elimination of logistical barriers that undermine our competitiveness. Member States must work towards eliminating unnecessary regulatory and logistical barriers that increase the cost of medicines and undermine the competitiveness of regional suppliers.

10. **Peace and Security:** We must safeguard the principle of **collective responsibility**. Financing for our peace operations must remain predictable and driven by Member States, for there is no stability without collective self-defence. Our neighbourhood must be place of peace.

11. **Institutional Excellence:** Our Headquarters is a **symbol of our solidarity**. Its resilience reflects our own. We demand clear accountability and **consequence management** in our systems to ensure our resources are used judiciously for the benefit of our citizens.

12. As we navigate toward deeper integration, let us speak with one voice, the **language of integration**. Let us resolve our challenges as family matters, through dialogue and mutual support, standing together in unyielding solidarity.

13. Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, we express Zimbabwe's profound appreciation for the confidence bestowed on us through our election as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2027-2028. Zimbabwe regards this responsibility as a regional mandate to advance the collective interests and aspirations of Southern Africa and the African continent. We shall continue advocating for Africa's priorities, amplifying Africa's voice within the global peace and security architecture, and championing the reform of international governance institutions.

14. It is now my distinct honour and privilege to formally **hand over the Chairmanship of the SADC Council of Ministers** to my dear brother, **Honourable Ronald Lamola**. We entrust you with this vision, confident that under the leadership of the Republic of South Africa, our regional flame will burn brighter than ever. **I thank you.**