

## **Media Statement by the Executive Secretary of SADC Dr Tomaz Augusto Salomao on his mission to the Republic of Malawi 24 – 27 March 2006**

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First, let me express my sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Malawi for hosting my delegation and I since we arrived here on Friday evening.

I am in Malawi as part of my familiarization tour of all SADC Member States which I started last year aimed at engaging in dialogue with them at the highest levels as individual Member States on their concerns, views, ideas and to hear their expectations from me and their Secretariat that I am heading.

I purposed to have completed my tour before the end of last year but synchronising available time has not been easy due to commitments both at the Secretariat and in the Member States.

That notwithstanding, Malawi is the 11<sup>th</sup> SADC Member State I am visiting for this purpose. I am pleased to say that my visits have given me greater insight into where this region is going.

This empowered me for my mandate to restore SADC to its original position of respect and visibility amongst its over 214 million citizens and our International Cooperating Partners the world over.

**Members of the Press Corps**, this is where you come in as media practitioners with access to the mass media that can reach our audiences with the relevant information you hold a major stake in the development and integration of our region in this regard.

Our political principals have expressed themselves in, amongst others, Point E of the SADC Declaration and Treaty saying, unless there is popular participation and the region's citizens are the driving force of its integration, it would remain a pipe dream. The question is: how will the popular participate if it is not fully informed?

I invite you to rise to the challenge by partnering us in empowering, through knowledge and information sharing on SADC, its Objectives and Common agenda, at least, the over 11 million citizens of the Republic of Malawi within your sphere of influence to enable them to make informed decisions. You are our natural allies in this and I thank you very much for being here today.

My visit to Malawi was very fruitful. I had the opportunity to meet with several Cabinet Ministers and members of the SADC National Committee. We exchanged views/ideas on SADC programmes and projects at regional and national levels.

I also visited parts of the countryside affected, in sharp contrasts of our climate by floods in one area and drought in another, both characterised by the attendant food insecurity and restricted quality of life.

In spite of these, I have noted with pride how our people are to improvising with the little they have and I see that as a demonstration of our determination for self sufficiency.

Please assure them that, SADC has all our interests at heart and they are not alone in their plight.

To this end, the Council of Ministers during its meeting on February 23 and 24, 2006 in Gaborone, Republic of Botswana has urged Member States to support each other in times of difficulties and emergencies in the spirit of promoting regional solidarity and integration.

### **PRIORITIES**

My current priorities include the implementation of SADC's two strategic road maps for the next 15 years, namely, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan for the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (SIPO).

Another is the stabilisation of the Secretariat in terms of putting into place requisite staff and business plans, as well as the consolidation of the SADC National Committees and strengthening SADC relationships with the International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), and mainstreaming the participation of regional stakeholders in SADC business, in particular the Private Sector and Civil Society.

Strides in this direction are being concretised with a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed early next month between us and the SADC Business Forum. As regards our relations with the ICPs, the SADC Consultative Conference to engage them in dialogue is scheduled to take place on April 26 and 27, 2006 in Windhoek Namibia with an envisaged major outcome being a SADC/ICP New Partnership.

### **Malawi SADC Highlights**

Malawi is one of the nine countries that founded the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), the precursor to SADC and the country has since continued to contribute to the region's socio-economic development in many ways, including, but not limited to the co-ordination of SADC Sector of Inland Fisheries, Wildlife and Forestry before the restructuring process. The abundant endowment of natural resources coupled with the prudent management thereof came to earn this country the accolades of the Warm Heart of Africa.

Various SADC regional integration activities that have taken place in this country, include the signing of various regional legal instruments such as the SADC Gender Declaration in 1997, the Education and Training Protocol in 1994 and others in 2001, including the Protocol on Culture, Sport and Information.

### **Update on the Region's Food Security**

The late start of the rainy season for the last harvest in some areas and erratic poor rainfall during the second half of that season reduced cereal harvests in various SADC Member States including Malawi, which is currently facing food insecurity estimated at cereal deficit of 838,000 tonnes, made up of 781,000 tonnes of maize; 57,000 tonnes of wheat and 4,000 tonnes of sorghum/millet.

During the last Council of Ministers Meeting in February 2006, Malawi registered high transport costs resulting from long road transport and cross border related hiccups as

causes for high food prices in the country. This makes Infrastructure and Services and Food security Malawi's major concerns/challenges.

In the interim, the Secretariat has a proposed strategy to solve the maize and fertilizer transportation for Malawi and we hope it shall be implemented soon.

Malawi participates in various programmes and projects facilitated by SADC in the area of **Infrastructure and services**, both directly and collectively with other Member States. These include Energy, Transport and Communications, Water and Tourism some of which are highlighted here below.

**Energy:** Malawi's energy balance is dominated by biomass with an estimated 1 billion metric tonnes of bituminous coal reserves. Hydropower has an estimated potential of over 900 MW, mainly on the Shire River.

Malawi also participates in the **Regional Energy Planning Network (REPN)** to strengthen the competence of national energy planning institutions and to develop the necessary technical and human resources to enhance and enrich the interaction among SADC Member States has been under implementation since 2000 with the following achievements across the region.

Standardised methodology for Member States to manage their databases adequately compatible and useful formats for energy policy in all SADC countries; the REPN Working Procedures Operations Manual; availing of a computer and printer to departments of energy in all Member States and the implementation of a Staff Development and Training Programme for energy specialist.

Malawi also participates in the **Rural Energy Planning and Environmental Training Programme REPEM** is ongoing since 1994 and which contributes to the building of sufficient human resources for sustainable rural energy development, utilisation and environmental management in the region. The regional significance of this project is that SADC countries share concerns of sustainable energy development and use.

It is implemented in partnership with the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Minerals and Energy Education and Training Institute (MEETI) of South Africa, the Mananga Centre of Swaziland and the Mondlane University in Mozambique.

#### **Southern African Power Pool (SAPP)**

Malawi, along with Angola and Tanzania are not yet connected to the SAPP grid whose benefits include reductions in required generating capacity; in fuel costs and improved use of hydroelectric energy from other Member States and SAPP Member Utilities. However, the Regional Electricity Investment Conference held in September 2005 agreed that, SADC and SAPP should prioritise the generation and transmission projects and secure funding for them. Accordingly, the Malawi-Mozambique Interconnector, Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya Interconnector and the WESTCOR project were rated of high priority.

The signing of the Revised Inter-Governmental MoU during the last Council of Ministers Meeting to bring other players on board shall surely add impetus to this.

**In the area of Transport Communications and Meteorology** we have the Shire and Zambezi rivers Navigation waterways project as a major priority for Malawi. Preliminary assessments established the potential of the waterways as an alternative gateway to the sea for the landlocked SADC Member States.

The Government of Malawi has already submitted it for consideration under the NEPAD framework in April 2005 and the SADC Secretariat has also formally submitted the proposal to NEPAD Secretariat for inclusion into the list of regional projects.

To fast track the implementation of this project, there is need to re-establish the steering committee comprising Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as to have an agreement in place. I am pleased inform you that Malawi and Mozambique are ready to sign the initial MoU soon. I am also pleased to inform you that there are several ICPs, including Japan who have shown interest in this project.

The **Mtwara Development Corridor** Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) falling within Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique is envisaged to uplift the economic status of poor regions of the four countries by better integrating road, lake, port, and air transport to reduce transport costs and to support development along the corridor. In Malawi, the corridor development programme includes upgrading the Kasama-Isoka-Katumbi-Rumphi road linking Zambia and Malawi; Upgrading Nkata Bay Port and port side facilities and upgrading the Mzuzu Airport.

The SADC Secretariat considers the corridor of importance as it can contribute directly to the achievement of some MDGs. The SADC Development Finance Resources Centre has also been promoting the development of the corridor.

**The Nacala Development Corridor** seeks to increase the significantly under-utilised natural resources present in Malawi and Mozambique and benefit on economies of scale in developing requisite infrastructure, marketing production, and utilising the inherent natural resource based development potential that exists in the two countries.

With key transport infrastructure in the corridor being: port, railway line and various roads, its primary aim is to develop an economic corridor linking Malawi to Nacala, its nearest port in Mozambique.

The improvement of this Corridor is expected to offer substantial benefits to Malawi that currently has to import/export most goods through the distant ports of Dar-es-Salaam, Beira and Durban.

The success of this is hinged on focusing on various priority aspects of handling capacity improvement at Nacala; rehabilitating the 77km long Cuamba – Entre Lagos railway line to Malawi as well as strengthen bridges in both countries to increase axle loads and operating speeds and conducting a *feasibility study for the road between Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique along the railway line*.

The SADC Secretariat has secured funding for the rehabilitation of the road from Milange to Mocuba in Mozambique under the EDF 9 EU Regional Indicative Programme.

The **Association of Southern African National Road Agencies (ASANRA)** was formed in March 2001 as one of the strategic transport sector associations with the main goal to enhance regional policy coordination and enhance the management of the region's road infrastructure.

Its three person secretariat is based here in Lilongwe, Malawi. The current President of ASANRA is the chief executive of the South African National Roads Agency while the Vice-President is the Director-General of ANE in Mozambique.

Tourism programmes implemented at a regional level benefit all SADC Member States, for example the increased tourist visits accrued from exposures and tourism promotion by RETOSA, through the annual Regional Tourism Directory "*The Essence of Africa*" showcasing SADC countries tourist attractions and the SADC Tourist map of Member States both distributed world wide.

Malawi also participates in various **water project** outlined in the SADC Regional Strategic Action Plan on Integrated Water Resources Management and Development (RSAP-IWRMD). These include the Zambezi River Basin Action Plan (ZACPLAN) and Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa Sub-basin Initiatives and the SADC Hydrological Cycle Observing Systems Project.

**In the area of Trade, Industry, Finance And Investment**, Malawi became signatory of the Protocol on Trade in August 1996 and through its implementation Malawi enjoys market access to products to the rest of SADC the Agreement on Trade in Sugar and on Textiles and Clothing (MMTZ) with SACU, Malawi has market access for these products to that market under special dispensation negotiated. Malawi also benefits from capacity building and training in the area of Customs Cooperation and Trade facilitation.

**As regards Finance And Investment** Malawi actively participates in the negotiation and preparation process of the Finance and investment Protocol (FIP) and other finance and investment related areas such as activities under the Committee of Central Banks Governors (CCBG) and in the existing technical Sub-committees.

**As regards Social, Human Development and Special Programmes**, Malawi actively participated in regional cooperation activities and programmes implemented by the Secretariat culminating in the signing of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training in September 1997 and remained committed to the implementation of the Protocol including participating in development of the first Protocol on Education and Training Implementation Plan in 1999 and the revised Implementation Plan in 2005.

Malawi demonstrated committed to the implementation of Education For All (EFA), especially at the primary level where the payment of school fees was abolished in 1994 leading to an increase of 68% in enrolment. The gender parity is also high with nearly 50% of the illiterate population being women.

**In Public Health**, Malawi ratified the Protocol on Health before it entered into force in August 2004.

The main goal of SADC Public Health Programme is to attain an acceptable standard of health by promoting, coordinating and supporting the individual and collective efforts of Member States in areas of care, support and access to treatment.

The main priority here is the development of strategies at regional level to combat the emerging and re-emerging diseases such as HIV & AIDS, STD, TB, and Malaria and improved health systems.

Malawi has recorded significant progress in implementation of the malaria control programme and TB/HIV initiatives. The country has changed its treatment policy with disease surveillance continuing with increased drug consumption, supported by the Targeted nutrition and various other programmes.

**HIV and AIDS** continue to be one of the major challenges for Southern Africa. There is consensus that over and above the national programmes there should be regional initiatives to compliment the activities of SADC Member States.

The Secretariat has organized initiatives at the regional level to benefit Member States. These include regional training workshops on mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS, Nutrition, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) and behaviour change.

A platform has also been created for Member States to share best practices through the regional and national AIDS Forums wholly funded by the SADC Secretariat and Malawi has participated in these fora.

The impact of interventions in the region is generally reduced by delays in the disbursement of approved funds from ICPs for the implementation of agreed on projects, but also by the lack of systematic evaluations that would enable us to have a reference point of their effectiveness.

Through SADC/EU Initiative, Malawi has been supported to pilot some initiatives and studies in areas of building partnerships on HIV and AIDS and mobile population in Southern Africa, improving professional and personal conditions of nurses and midwives affected and infected by HIV and AIDS, networking advocacy and community mobilization for prevention of stigma and discrimination and monitor and documenting the SADC multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS. In addition the SADC/DFID Project is supporting SADC activities beneficial to all SADC Member States to the tune of about US \$2,951,802 million.

As regards **gender equality**, Malawi is one of the countries that have a number of achievements including the national gender policy and a National Gender Plan of Action. Areas the Gender Unit has been collaborating with Malawi include the study to assess the capacity needs of the National Machineries for Gender Equality in Malawi, the monitoring and Evaluation of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, Regional Regional Consultative Conference on Gender and Development, Consultations on the development of then Regional Policy on Gender

Thank you very much

Muinto o brigado

Merci bubu

Zikomo kwambili