



## **REMARKS**

**BY**

**H.E. DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX  
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**DURING OFFICIAL OPENING OF**

**VIRTUAL ORGAN TROIKA SUMMIT PLUS FORCE INTERVENTION  
BRIGADE TROOP CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES (FIB-TCCs) AND  
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

**05 AUGUST 2020**

H.E. President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation,

Your Excellencies Members of the SADC Organ Troika Summit,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the Force Intervention Brigade Troop Contributing Countries, and the Democratic Republic of Congo,

Hon. Lt. Gen. (retired) Dr. Sibusiso Moyo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation,

Honourable Ministers [...],

Distinguished Senior Officials, Chiefs of Security Institutions and Delegates [...],

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Ladies and Gentlemen

**Good afternoon,**

I am greatly honoured to welcome Your Excellencies to this meeting of the Organ Troika Summit Plus Force Intervention Brigade Troop Contributing Countries (FIB-TCCs) and the Democratic Republic of Congo. I wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for your participation in this meeting. Despite the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, and the unprecedented impacts that the pandemic has had on our region, Your Excellencies have found time within your busy schedules to attend this meeting, **this demonstrates Your Excellencies** commitment to ensure that our region reaps the benefits of sustained peace, security and stability.

**Due to COVID-19, our economies are operating under very difficult and challenging times in which the socio-economic fabrics of countries and the Region at large have been negatively impacted and brought under severe stress, requiring extra-ordinary measures. We thank Your Excellences for rigorous measures put in place that are yielding positive results in containing the spread of COVID-19, and at the same time cushioning Member State economies and lessening**

**the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of our people. As a united regional body, we are rising up to the multiple challenges and limitations imposed on us by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you so much, and we long for a day when the pandemic will be history.**

**Your Excellencies,**

Before I proceed, allow me to convey our deepest condolences to the Mkapa family, the government and people of Tanzania following the demise of His Excellency Benjamin William Mkapa, the 3rd President of the United Republic of Tanzania who passed away on 23 August, 2020. The late President Mkapa had a very strong passion for regional cooperation and economic integration, a leader who fought for the independence, development, and sustenance of peace, security and stability of our region and the continent at **large. [...] May** his soul rest in eternal peace, Amen.

The main agenda of your meeting today is the reconfiguration of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) under the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) Mandate. On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019 the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2502 extending the mandate of the MONUSCO for a period of one year until 20 December 2020. The resolution followed the strategic review of the MONUSCO Mandate that was conducted by the United Nations Independent Review Team in October 2019, a process to which SADC submitted its common position. However, in the process of implementing the new mandate, the UN has indicated its intention to undertake a reconfiguration of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) by replacing some of the SADC Troops with Troops from Non-SADC Member States, a decision that is not in line with SADC common position. SADC has consistently emphasized that the FIB should not to be tampered with, but rather be strengthened, with dedicated enablers to enhance its combat capabilities. In the engagements with the UN, SADC has **also** on a number of occasions presented its concern that, the inclusion of non-SADC Troops in the FIB has the potential of undermining FIB's operational effectiveness and unity of command. This notwithstanding, it appears that the United Nations is determined to proceed **[...] with the reconfiguration without taking into account SADC's position.**

## **Your Excellencies**

In view of the impending changes, which in our view have serious repercussions to SADC regional efforts to support the Government of the DRC to stabilise the eastern part of the country through the FIB, the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) during its meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020, though it was important for SADC to get a firm position from the DRC on SADC position, specifically on the FIB not to be tampered with, by repatriating one FIB battalion for the purposes of accommodating non-SADC troops into the FIB. To this effect, the MCO mandated me to advise the Chairperson of the Organ to consider holding a consultative meeting between the Organ Troika, FIB-Troops Contributing Countries, and the DRC, at the highest level, to consider the matter. The outcomes of your deliberations are, therefore, expected to strengthen our position on this matter and enable the region move in cohesion, as we find effective ways of implementing Resolution 2502 of the United Nations Security Council, and participate in the forthcoming review of the MONUSCO Mandate in December 2020.

## **Your Excellences,**

As I conclude, I wish reiterate **our** appreciation to SADC Member States for the tireless efforts aimed at attaining sustainable peace and security in the DRC, and in SADC as whole. **[...] Peace** and security remain critical ingredients for sustainable development. Allow me to quote the wise words of the late President Benjamin Mkapa when he said, “None of our lofty aspirations can materialize sustainably if we do not ensure that the entire SADC region remains a zone of complete peace and security.” **May we cherish his legacy and remain guided by his aspirations.**

**May I also thank and** commend the FIB Troop Contributing Countries for their enormous sacrifices and unwavering commitment to peace, security and stability in the region, as evidenced by their deployment of their sons and daughters in the DRC. We pay tribute to Troops personnel for their dedication and sacrifices made for our region. **May [...] we** remain seized with developments in the region, and continue supporting each other, especially sister Member States with specific needs.

I now have the honour to invite His Excellency Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, to address us

and officially open the meeting of the **Summit [....] Your Excellency, Sir**

...

**Thank you very much!**

**Muito obrigado!**

**Merci Beaucoup!**

**Asante sana!**