



**MAIDEN SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE  
KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SAMUEL NTSOKOANE  
MATEKANE**

**AT THE 43<sup>RD</sup> ORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
(SADC) HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**LUANDA**

**REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA**

**17 AUGUST, 2023**

**YOUR EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT FELIX ANTOINE TSHISEKEDI TSHILOMBO OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND CHAIRPERSON OF SADC;**

**YOUR MAJESTY KING MSWATI III;**

**YOUR EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT HAGE G. GEINGOB, OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE, AND SECURITY COOPERATION;**

**YOUR EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT JOÁO MANUEL GONCALVES LOURENCO OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA, AND INCOMING CHAIRPERSON OF SADC;**

**YOUR EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT HAKAINDE HICHILEMA, OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ,AND INCOMING CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE, AND SECURITY COOPERATION;**

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;**

**YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. ELIAS MAGOSI, SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY;**

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**

At the very outset, allow me to acknowledge with profound humility and appreciation, the privilege accorded to me to address this 43<sup>rd</sup> Summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government, as the new Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

I wish on behalf of my entire delegation, and indeed, on my own behalf , to express our sincere gratitude to our gracious host, His Excellency President Joao Manuel Lourenco, for a warm brotherly welcome, and generous hospitality ,accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Luanda.

The tradition to afford newly elected Heads of State and Government a privilege to deliver their maiden speeches before SADC Summits is one that must be continued. It signifies welcoming new brothers and sisters into the fold. More than that, it is a clear testimony to the solemn conviction, determination and encouragement by our Regional Organisation, to uphold and promote, at all times, the Cardinal Principles of Democracy, Good Governance, the Rule of Law and Respect for Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, which are shared by all SADC Member States.

These Principles serve as a powerful reminder that as we occupy the positions that we are elected into, we should serve and advance the aspirations of our people with honesty, dedication, transparency and selflessness. Put another way, we are elected to serve and not to be served.

In Lesotho, we believe that casting a vote freely in a general election is an inalienable right of every citizen to elect leaders of their own choice. It is a right which is not only sacred, but also an essential ingredient for sustainable peace, stability and socio-economic development. It is a right that must be practiced, respected and protected. Lesotho has demonstrated this reality

### **Excellencies;**

SADC has been a true friend of Lesotho for scores of years now. This organisation has stood with us in bad and in good times. I can only assure you that the efforts of SADC to stabilize Lesotho over the years have not been in vain. Allow me to seize this opportunity on my own behalf, and on behalf of the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho, to sincerely thank SADC for the swift, persuasive and productive role that she played in mediating on the political challenges that we previously faced in Lesotho.

The steadfast and sustained approach of SADC, and in particular, its Facilitator to Lesotho, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa and the

entire SADC Facilitation Team, under the able leadership of the Retired Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke, culminated with my election as the 10<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho and leader of a Coalition Government composed of three (3) political parties, with this being construed as the loudest and clear expression of the will of the people of Lesotho.

I wish to further take this opportunity, to thank all International Elections Observer Missions (EOMs) and other Observer Teams, in particular SADC, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations and the Commonwealth, for the unwavering and valuable support ,and selfless contribution towards the successful holding of our National Elections on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, which were declared peaceful, credible, free and fair by all Observers, including the local Observer Teams.

Our people demanded of us, through the elections, to put behind our political differences, and promptly address the pressing and paramount economic and social challenges facing our country, such as poverty, unemployment, under-development and access to services, particularly health services , to mention but a few.

To this end, as the leadership of the Kingdom of Lesotho, we have expressed our commitment to address these challenges by ushering in the

**“Lesotho that Basotho want”** and indeed the Lesotho that Basotho deserve.

This is, Excellencies, the Lesotho :

- Where we shall always respect that the voice of the People is the WILL of GOD;
- Where Political Leaders are HUMBLE in victory and GRACIOUS in defeat;
- Where there is peace and stability;
- Where corruption as well as the economic and social ills shall be addressed fully and over-come;
- Where accountability at all levels shall be the order of the day;
- Where food self-sufficiency shall lead to export of the surplus;
- Where primary health care services shall be easily accessible to all;
- Where Basotho shall live in peace and harmony amongst themselves irrespective of their political differences;
- Where our economy shall be private sector driven, and open for Direct Foreign Investment; it is in this connection that we will be convening the **“Water and Hydrogen Conference and EXPO** in Maseru in October this year, to which all SADC countries and Business are invited.

I am talking about the Lesotho that:

- Shall no longer be on the Agenda of SADC for all the wrong reasons, and that;
- Shall take its rightful place within the comity of nations including in fully participating in regional peace-keeping efforts;

We are cognizant of the fact that in order to achieve these noble objectives, we need to change the way we do things. It is in this context that we reiterate our unwavering political commitment to the National Reforms process. The Reforms are a national priority that we have a responsibility to ensure are carried forward and finalized. The Government strongly believes that it is through this Programme, that a new era of peace and stability will be achieved in Lesotho. The comprehensive Report on the progress on the Reforms was presented before the Organ Troika of the Summit yesterday.

### **Excellencies;**

Lesotho just underwent a macroeconomic peer review surveillance exercise. I take this opportunity to thank the United Republic of Tanzania who carried out the exercise and presented us with recommendations on areas that require our attention. Despite the recent shocks that attacked the global economy, Lesotho is committed to adhering to the

Macroeconomic Convergence benchmarks that we have set for ourselves as a region. We are not only committed to paying serious attention to the recommendations contained in the recent report by the United Republic of Tanzania, but also to those made in the previous peer review exercises.

Lesotho is also committed to move together with the rest of the region by fully participating in the implementation of the African Free Trade Area Agreement. This agreement is not only a stepping-stone for claiming our share of global market, but it is also an enabler for both regional and global value chains. We are working tirelessly to harness all the potential benefits of the market preferences extended under the African Free Trade Area Agreement. We appreciate all the efforts that the SADC Secretariat is taking to realise this goal.

**Your Excellencies;**

We can achieve the SADC that we want, leaving no one behind if we all remain committed and faithful to the ideals and the main objectives of SADC, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is time to increase investment in our communities in quantum leaps. I, therefore, request that we redouble our efforts in the implementation of the infrastructure development projects contained in our Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan.



We need to reinforce our resource mobilization strategies to enable us boost the financial resources that we inject into the implementation of our regional integration agenda as Annual Member States' Contributions. We have noticed that these are not enough, let alone the fact that it is becoming increasingly evident that the financial burden on our struggling economies is getting heavier year by year. I believe we can do better!

As I conclude my remarks, let me acknowledge with profound appreciation the warm welcome extended to me, by all of you, the Leaders of the peoples of our region. I reaffirm my commitment to work closely with you in realizing the subsisting unity, solidarity and cooperation among our peoples and countries.

**I THANK YOU!**

**OBRIGADO!**