

SPEAKING NOTES FOR SADC SECRETARIAT

OPENING REMARKS **Lesotho Success Stories Launch**

Date: 05 July 2023

Venue: Avani Lesotho, Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho

SALUTATIONS

SADC National Contact Point and Principal Secretary – Lesotho Ministry of Finance and Development

Senior Officials and delegates from SADC Member States present,

Representative of the German Embassy to South Africa, Eswatini and Lesotho

Representatives of GIZ Botswana and SADC

Representatives of Regional and National Non-State Actor Organisations

Distinguished delegates

Introduction

On behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary, H.E Elias M. Magosi, it is a great pleasure for me to deliver this speech as we launch the SADC Success Stories- Lesotho Edition.

As we reflect on the progress made, SADC continues to deepen the integration aspirations of the region in various priority areas. Strengthening communications in the region remains the Secretariat's main priority, as reflected in the Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

Today marks another milestone in our quest to strengthen the regional and national linkages and achieve our goal of Taking SADC to The People. As we all are aware, SADC Belongs to the People and it is through initiatives such as SADC Success Stories that we will be able to create awareness among the citizens of this regional about the positive impacts that the SADC Regional Integration Agenda.

The economic benefits expected from Regional Integration, as shown elsewhere around the world, include increased market size, improved intra-regional trade and investment flows, and increased transfer of technology and experience. However, over the years, it has become apparent that the citizens of the Member States are not fully aware of the existence of the various initiatives, protocols, programmes and projects which are aimed at facilitating better life for them. The SADC Success Stories are, thus, meant to communicate with the masses and enhance awareness about the positive impacts of these initiatives, protocols and agreements.

The SADC Secretariat takes pride in the fact that the Kingdom of Lesotho has undertaken concerted efforts to ensure that SADC becomes visible at the national level. It comes at a very relevant time when the Kingdom has so much to showcase in terms of how they have continued to benefit from the initiatives, protocols, and agreements at regional level.

Lesotho continues to make remarkable progress in the implementation of the regional agenda. Towards trade and infrastructure that supports trade, Lesotho knowing that effective trade translates into economic growth, the Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) implemented the Coordinated Border Management (CBM) project late in 2019. This is in line with the SADC Protocol on Trade, which encourages developments that enhance trade between Member States.

Through the Protocol on Finance and Investment, SADC has encouraged cross border financial inclusion for people. Lesotho was one of the first countries in the region to implement a Cross Border Money Transfer Project between itself and South Africa. Hailed as one of the cheapest cross-border products in the world, the Project has become a significant game-changer and a well-established formal channel of sending money from South Africa to Lesotho. The values have grown so big that policy makers would like to see this service digitized and replicated to other Member States.

And finally, through the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, which aims to foster closer cooperation among SADC Member States for protection, management, and use of shared watercourses in the region. Since 2000, the Lesotho government has embarked on the development of the Lesotho Lowlands Water Supply Scheme to ensure adherence and compliance to the human right of reliable access to clean water and sanitation.

These brilliant stories and more, form part of this publication and most importantly it is indeed a reflection of how important it is to tell these stories of hope and impact, that will ultimately cultivate a better understanding of the work our governments are doing, through the support of SADC. These incredibly stories are not for us to keep, just as the projects featured, they are for the people of SADC, and I hope this publication will be a fitting information dissertation tool to the people of the Kingdom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to our hosts – the Kingdom of Lesotho. I also wish to thank you distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen, for your commitment and dedication towards strengthening implementation of the SADC regional integration agenda. I wish to also thank our partners representing the Government of Germany and GIZ for our transformative partnership.