



**PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI**



**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE JOYCE CHITSULO, MP AT THE  
CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON  
SADC REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

**UFULU GARDENS, LILONGWE**

**Parliament of Malawi**

**Lilongwe 3**

**August, 2022**

- **The Director of ceremonies**
- **The Chairman and Board members of CYECE**

- **Distinguished participants from various CSOs**
- **Members of the Press**
- **Ladies and gentlemen**

Allow me from the outset, on behalf of Right Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi, to welcome you all to this very important workshop at which you will be discussing issues surrounding your role in the regional integration of Sadc from a youth perspective,.

Distinguished participants let me also take this opportunity to convey apologies from the Right Honorable Speaker who, due to other equally important prior engagements, she is not here to grace this workshop.

As an ardent believer and champion for the youth participation in CSOs in this country, she has requested me to represent her and to state that she wishes you all the best and fruitful deliberations.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, SADC has, since 1980 when it used to be called SADCC (Southern Africa Coordination Conference) moved towards achieving regional integration economically and politically. This process accelerated further and culminated with the treaty of Windhoek in 1992 which heralded the formation of SADC as we know it today.

The formation of SADC signaled our desire in Southern Africa to work together as a 14 member block towards regional integration aimed at pooling together regional efforts and synergies towards economic development of this region.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen some quarters have lamented the fact that the voice of CSOs in the effort to integrate the region is not as forceful as expected.

As CSOs and particularly those focusing on the youth, you need to come out to effectively assist the integration process. As Parliament our efforts are within the legislative and oversight mandate bestowed on us by the constitution. We accede to the fact that we have the mandate to legislate on this. However Parliament must work hand in hand with CSOs to educate our citizens on what entails regional

integration so that when Parliament is moved to legislate, our informed citizens would not have difficulties in accepting and embracing the regional integration drive.

Ladies and gentlemen it is therefore critical that the efforts which you display as CSOs on national issues should also be the same at regional level. As a country Malawi cannot afford to remain silent at regional level. Let us harness all our efforts towards ensuring that Malawi and its partners in collaboration with CSOs, in the region work effectively and efficiently towards the achievement of regional integration.

Fortunately, it is pleasing to note that already there is a general understanding among the CSOs that through various platforms you can and are playing your role towards this goal. For example during the 10th Anniversary of Civil Society Forum held in Abidjan in May 2019, participants noted the need to include CSOs in country negotiating teams on regional trade policies, socio economic policies etc.

For example, and I am sure we are all aware of the challenges which our cross-border traders particularly women face. These challenges can be resolved when CSOs are involved from the onset of negotiations towards regional trade protocols. In addition as CSOs you are at liberty to demand from government information on how much progress is being made towards integration and raise alarms where you observe challenges or where you feel not much is being done. I am convinced that with such an approach from CSOs in all 14 SADC countries regional integration can be achieved faster and effectively.

As for Parliament, we are more than ready to ensure SADC embraces the integration process. As most of you are aware, Parliament of Malawi is an active member of SADC Parliamentary Forum. This is the SADC organ that has been entrusted with legislative agenda of the regional integration process. For us to be successful we call upon you to come forward, provide advice and suggestions e.t.c. on how best Parliament can assist in enhancing the SADC integration process. On our part we pledge to be working with you towards the achievement of the goal especially now with the 2063 Agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen Malawi is a developing country. I need not belabour the point on how poverty is affecting this country. Various strategies have been put in place by our government at different times. This time around we are now talking about the 2063 Agenda aimed at uplifting Malawi to a middle income country. It is a fact that fast growing population, natural disasters, food shortages, diseases e.t.c. are all having a negative effect on the development front. We need to overcome this if we are to achieve the 2063 vision. I therefore call upon you to have a candid discussion on how best you could influence Malawi's position in SADC so as to minimize or even eradicate these challenges as we move towards vision 2063.

Lastly distinguished participants the SADC PF wishes you all the best in your deliberations and looks forward to receiving a record of your proceedings and recommendations.

In conclusion and on behalf of the Speaker of Parliament, Right Hon. Catherine Gotani Hara MP, I wish to sincerely

thank you for organising this workshop and to invite Parliament to grace this workshop.

I thank you for your attention and God bless Malawi.