

**OPENING REMARKS BY CONSUL-GENERAL
TSELANE MOKUENA AT A SOUTHERN AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) SEMINAR
HELD AT THE WESTIN GRAND HOTEL MUNICH ON
MONDAY, 25 MAY 2009**

Programme director,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Guten Tag,

Firstly, please allow me to me express my gratitude and honour to all of you for having accepted our invitation to this important seminar. I would like to welcome our guests, Dr Le Pere, Mr Pröbstl and Ms Davina Makhan. Also, please allow me to extend a special thank you to the IHK Munich and Upper Bavaria who have supported this event.

AFRICA DAY

Today, 25 May, is Africa Day. This is one of the most important days for Africans in the continent and in Diaspora. It is a day when we celebrate, with friends of Africa, Africa's achievements whilst acknowledging the challenges that the

Continent is facing. I will not speak further about this auspicious day, Ladies and Gentlemen, because tomorrow there will be a celebration of Africa Day that has been arranged by the Angolan Honorary Consulate under the auspices of all the Munich-based African Consulates and Honorary Consulates. Instead, I shall speak more about the programme we have arranged for you today.

SADC

Ladies and Gentlemen, as the current Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the South African Consulate-General in Munich felt it was important for us to highlight some of the opportunities that our vibrant region brings forth.

One of the goals of the African Union (AU) is to harmonize policies between existing and future African Regional Economic Communities – or RECs - as vehicles of economic integration for the whole Continent. To this end, SADC has agreed on the formation of common market, leading towards one monetary area.

The issue of the RECs has been debated a lot among African Governments in Summits and other important meetings. In a statement he made as the Chairperson of SADC during the launch of the SADC Free Trade Area in August last year, our previous president provided two reasons for regional integration. Firstly, integration offers Africa an opportunity to pool limited resources that it has to build “an economic base to address the challenges of economic growth and development.” Secondly, regional economic integration can create the basis for regional markets and industries to overcome the limits of small national markets, to achieve economies of scale, and enhance competitiveness as platform to participate more effectively in the world economy.” I am sure that the presentations today will give us, perhaps, an idea of how far processes are with regard to RECs. I also hope that the presentations will expose representatives of the business community present here today to the investment potential in the Southern African region – and the African continent - or of the potential for growth for those already present in Southern Africa

Instead of us sitting here and selling SADC to you today, we are honoured to be addressed by several experts. In so doing,

we also hope to hear about the challenges that SADC faces because - as Theodore Levitt once wrote in the Harvard Business Review – *“If thinking is an intellectual response to a problem, then the absence of a problem leads to the absence of thinking”*. In exploring challenges faced by SADC we therefore hope to also learn of innovative ways with which to deal with them.

PROGRAMME FOR TODAY:

First to address us today will be Dr Garth Le Pere, Executive Director of the South African-based Institute for Global Dialogue, his paper is titled: “COMESA, EAC, and SADC Integration: Towards a Single Market”

Dr Le Pere will be followed by Ms Davina Makhan, a Research Fellow at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE). Her paper is titled: “European perspective on regional integration in Africa”

This will be followed by an opportunity for questions and answers, and a short tea break before we call on Mr Siegmund Pröbstl, CEO of Siemens Southern Africa, to give us a first-

hand account of what the business environment in Southern Africa is like. His paper is titled: “Global Perspective and the Business Outlook for Siemens Southern Africa”

CLOSURE

Without further ado, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to once again thank the presenters for having traveled so far to be here today. I would also like to once again thank the IHK Munich and Upper Bavaria for their support in ensuring that the seminar is a success.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this seminar and wish its deliberations a great success.

I thank you.