



Remarks by Ambassador Stephen J. Nolan  
Launch of Southern Africa Trade Hub  
Gaborone Sun Conference Center  
Thursday, November 18, 2010

### **Acknowledgements**

SADC Executive Secretary Dr. Tomaz Augusto Salomão

USAID Southern Africa Mission Director Jeffrey Borns

Trade Hub Chief of Party Dr. Robert Kirk

### **Remarks**

It is a real pleasure to join you this afternoon to participate in the launch the Southern Africa Trade Hub.

As you know, USAID originally established the Trade Hub in Gaborone in 2002.

So, today is not just a "launch," it is a renewal of a US Government project that already has a long track record of success.

I strongly believe that increased trade is key to achieving greater economic growth and poverty reduction. It is particularly important to address the challenge of food security in many countries. I am confident that this expanded engagement by the United States in promoting competitiveness and regional trade will have a deep, long-lasting, and positive effect.

The new Trade Hub project will build on the solid foundation laid down over the last eight years through the excellent work of the previous teams.

The Trade Hub's key purpose is to address the challenges of economic growth and poverty reduction faced throughout the SADC region.

The Trade Hub's focus will be on increasing international competitiveness, intra-regional trade, and food security in the SADC Region as the new team takes the program to an even higher level of effectiveness.

This four year, eighty million dollar project is to be implemented by AECOM International Development under the leadership of Dr. Robert Kirk, who brings over 25 years of experience in regional trade policy work to his new assignment.

The regional and international experts on his Trade Hub team will deliver targeted technical assistance to governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations throughout the SADC region. The aim is to help stakeholders strengthen regional and global trade linkages and support export-oriented business development.

We are, of course, delighted that Gaborone remains the Trade Hub's home base. It is here primarily because Gaborone is also the home of SADC's headquarters.

I think it is appropriate as we launch the new Trade Hub to say a special word of congratulations to His Excellency, Dr. Salomao, as he will formally open the new SADC headquarters building on Saturday. Dr. Salomao, I hope you will tell all the visiting heads of state about the fine work of the Trade Hub in supporting SADC's efforts to increase trade, economic development and regional integration.

In recent years, the Trade Hub has supported implementation of the SADC Free Trade Agreement. It has assisted in modernizing customs procedures and improving the flow of goods along transport corridors. It has helped countries to develop bond markets and remove regulatory barriers to greater investment in the energy sector. I am sure even greater achievements lie ahead.

SADC's 15 members represent a vibrant and growing market of 240,000,000 people with a collective GDP that is rapidly approaching the trillion dollar level.

SADC's own vision of establishing a common market with common regulatory institutions is the real key to unlocking the tremendous potential of this important market. The Trade Hub will help to make that vision a reality.

Thank you.