



Malawi Judiciary

REMARKS

BY

**THE HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE
RIZINE ROBERT MZIKAMANDA SC, CHIEF JUSTICE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI AND CHAIRPERSON
OF THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA CHIEF
JUSTICES FORUM**

AT

**A FAREWELL DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE
RETIRING, HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE LUKE
MALABA OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

AT

HARARE - ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 14TH May 2026.

1. SALUTATIONS

2. It is not often that a Chief Justice makes remarks on occasion of a farewell dinner in honour of another retiring Chief Justice. As you have heard, in the introductions, I am the Chief Justice of the Republic of Malawi. Let me add that my late mother was borne Rudo Dzikira, a Zimbabwean Lady who married a Malawian man and I was their firstborn child. That should complete my relevance tonight.

3. I am honoured and grateful most profoundly to have been invited to make the remarks I am going to make, representing the Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices Forum of which I am the current Chairperson. It is under the auspices of the Forum that I find myself here tonight, something I must appreciate wholeheartedly. Admittedly, these remarks come after the moving tributes we listened to during the Special Constitutional Court sitting earlier in the day. The tributes were profound indeed.

4. At some appropriate point, I will take a moment to speak on behalf of the Malawi Judiciary of which I am the head and on my own behalf. Over the years, the Malawi Judiciary and the Judiciary of Zimbabwe have curved a special relationship as have the Honourable Chief Justice Malaba and yours truly.

5. The Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices Forum, formed in 2003 in the City of Johannesburg, South Africa, comprises 15 countries of the region, including Zimbabwe. The other countries are Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. There are prospects of Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia joining the Forum in due course.

6. The Forum, abbreviated SEACJF, provides a formal platform, structure and framework through which the Chief Justices of the Region are able to collectively reflect on critical issues confronting our

Judiciaries in the delivery of justice and judicial services. The membership in many respects adopts action plans to address the issues in a systematic and sustained way in order to enhance and strengthen delivery of justice and judicial services in our Region. Over the years, the Forum has been able to make critical interventions to resolve some of the challenges individual Judiciaries were confronted with.

7. We consider the Forum to be a high-level body of the top leadership of our Judiciaries that bring us together for the common good of advancing the administration of justice and acts as a single authoritative voice on matters concerning our Judiciaries. In the past year, the Forum attained a legal personality status when it became registered as a company limited by guarantee in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Zambia where our Secretariate is domiciled.

8. I must say that the Forum is committed to the ideals of constitutionalism, democracy, good governance, the rule of law as well as judicial

independence and accountability. The membership fully recognise that the Judiciaries of our Countries play an important national role as the bulwark of these ideals. There is a recognition that these ideals are prerequisites for building strong foundations for peace and socio-economic development of our peoples.

9. Distinguished friends, I have unapologetically taken time to dutifully introduce and market to you the Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices Forum because of the critical role the Forum plays in our Region and, more relevantly, because of what I will say next about Honourable Chief Justice Luke Malaba, an iconic and an almost indispensable figure in our Forum. Should you be interested in finding out more about the Forum, please turn to our website <https://seacjforum.org>.

10. We in the Forum are in no doubt at all about how an exceptional jurist Chief Justice Luke Malaba is because we witnessed first hand his fine and insightful contributions through sound expression of wisdom, vast experience and passion

for excellence in what he knows best. We were so fortunate to have him as an active member who loved the Forum, and wished nothing but success for it at every turn. Many of his contributions, whether during serious business or some of our lighter moments, were impactful and have left indelible marks on the Forum.

11. Distinguished friends, to say that Honourable Chief Justice Luke Malaba has been one of the most consequential members of the Forum is no exaggeration at all. He has been a faithful, loyal and active member who was willing to sacrifice his all for the realization of the ideals of the Forum. He was an ever present and respectful word of courage, wisdom and insightfulness that over the years steered to Forum to numerous successes.

12. Three examples would illustrate the exceptional leadership of the Chief Justice Malaba. The first is that he was instrumental in the Forum's adoption of the Lilongwe Principles on Appointments and Selection of Judicial Officers in 2018. The overriding purpose of the Lilongwe

Principles was to safeguard the independence and integrity of the judiciary, while ensuring public confidence and trust in the administration of justice. Crafting the Lilongwe Principles required the wisdom, courage, vast experience and insightfulness that Chief Justice Malaba demonstrated at all times. The Lilongwe Principles are available on the website of the Forum.

13. Second, Chief Justice Malaba was also instrumental in the Forum's adoption of the Gaborone Principles and Guidelines on Judicial Financial Independence in Africa in October, 2025. The Gaborone Principles and Guidelines were developed with the help of experts in recognition that judicial independence remains a core and critical part of the effectiveness of any judiciary. In developing the Gaborone Principles and Guidelines, the Forum appreciated that judicial financial autonomy and independence are cornerstones for the independence of the Judiciary, a constitutional imperative in our jurisdictions and a public good. There was an acknowledgement that

various regional instruments provide for and to some measure guarantee judicial financial independence and autonomy of courts and judiciaries. The Gaborone Principles and Guidelines go further than all others in consolidating and reinforcing the independence and accountability of our Judiciaries. These principles and guidelines appear to have found expression in Seychelles' current efforts to legislate on Judicial Financial Autonomy.

14. Third, Honourable Chief Justice Malaba owed us all at a meeting in the Seychelles about three weeks ago where we discussed Technology and Innovation in strengthening the delivery of justice across Southern and Eastern Africa. Chief Justice Malaba told the amazing story of technological advancements that the Judiciary of Zimbabwe made and produced for all to see a compelling report about these advancements. His Lordship's grasp of the fine details of the implementation of e-Justice in Zimbabwe and appropriate use of AI in the Judiciary turned out to be an important lesson

for all the Chief Justices gathered at the meeting. We all admired the progress made and are desirous of emulating the example in our jurisdiction – probably mentorship at work here.

15. Distinguished friends, we are honouring a Chief Justice of impeccable credentials who is retiring at a time when the Region needs more of him and at a time he appears not to be tired but bubbling with lots of energy. The continental body of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa made up of 49 countries, with an additional 4 of Observer Status, of which Chief Justice Luke Malaba is President, cannot let him go at least not until the coming October. When Chief Justice Malaba speaks on constitutionalism and constitutional matters, he speaks with rare authority. He speaks with rare authority when he speaks on Judicial independence and judicial accountability. He speaks with rare authority when he speaks on matters of judicial administration. He speaks with rare authority when he speaks about court technology and use of AI in the judiciary. He speaks with rare authority on matters of e-Justice.

He speaks with rare authority on matters of commerce and regional trade, especially with his experience at the COMESA Court.

16. Need I say more about Honourable Chief Justice Luke Malaba to convince you that he is a rare breed of career jurist whom you would want to have around and consult even in his retirement. His Lordship surely leaves behind a legacy of excellence and integrity worth of us celebrating and emulating.

17. The Malawi Judiciary is equally thankful to the Chief Justice. It continues to cherish those memorable benchmarking visits made to the Judiciary of Zimbabwe where the hosting was simply superb. The staff say that the hosting was out of this world. We continue to implement some of the important and innovative lessons we learnt from here under Your Lordship's Leadership. The lessons were invaluable indeed and the benefits are visible.

18. On a personal note, it was reassuring and validating that an older person like Your Lordship,

endowed with so much wisdom, vast experience and authority to allow yourself to curve a special relationship with the younger and humble yours truly. It is a matter of personal pride that I could rub shoulders with such an icon, with a distinguished career, and even share some light moments that appeared to obliterate the age gap. You have left an indelible mark in my professional journey. I thank you.

19. The message I have is that the Southern and Eastern Africa Chief Justices' Forum owes Your Lordship a huge debt of gratitude for the immeasurable contributions and sacrifices you made to raise its profile. You are truly an illustrious jurist of impeccable credentials and the Forum would expect that you will be available for it in some form of arrangement convenient to both sides.

20. As I conclude, for conclude I must, otherwise I will outlive my welcome, allow me to express my profound appreciation to the Honourable the Chief

Justice of Zimbabwe for so generously inviting me to this momentous event. I must thank the Secretary for the Judicial Service Commission and the entire Judiciary of Zimbabwe for according us a warm welcome and exceptional hospitality. The facilities placed at our disposal are excellent. The SEACJF Secretariate must be thanked for facilitating my travel to Harare to join in the celebration and deliver the message from the Forum. To the people of Zimbabwe, thank you for lending Hon. Chief Justice Malaba to the Forum and the Region for the betterment of Regional affairs.

Thank you all most kindly for your attention.