



MEDIA STATEMENT

SADC Consultative Forum for Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) of Orphans, Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Youth in SADC

The SADC Secretariat held a Consultative Forum for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (MER) of Orphans, Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Youth in Gaborone, Botswana from 17 to 19 March 2015.

The Meeting was attended by Senior Experts overseeing MER and Statistics in Ministries responsible for Youth, OVC and Education; National Statistics Organisations; and National Youth Coordination Bodies from Member States. The meeting was also attended by Development Partners such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), Pan African Youth Union, USAID, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNAIDS, Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), Southern Africa HIV/AIDS Documentation Services (SAfAIDS), Health Economics and HIV & AIDS Research Division (HEARD) of the University of Kwazulu Natal, Children's Institute-University of Cape Town, World Vision International, Child Rights Network Southern Africa, MiET-Africa, Save the Children International and SADC Parliamentary Forum among others.

The meeting was convened to facilitate planning among Member States and regional stakeholders in SADC in preparation for the implementation of the initiative to "Strengthening MER Systems for OVC and youth in SADC" at national and regional levels. This is a new four year initiative, 2015-2018, coordinated by the SADC Secretariat with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC). The main emphasis of the initiative is to contribute towards enhancing the capacity of Member States and the SADC Secretariat to generate and use data, document and share lessons learnt and experiences to inform policies and programmes on OVC and youth. The forum noted that this initiative will build on ongoing efforts by Member States, national partners and other regional stakeholders to improve service delivery and MER of OVC and youth.

The meeting noted that while significant efforts are being made at national level, MER in SADC is characterised by a number of gaps and challenges among which are:

- Lack of harmonisation between different sectors and stakeholders ,
- Less prioritisation of MER for OVC and youth leading to limited resources
- Poor disaggregation of data and targeting of vulnerability of children and youth in national statistics
- Weak documentation and sharing of good experiences and lessons learnt

The meeting discussed the situation of coordination of MER of OVC and youth in different Member States and made recommendations that this should be improved through some of the following ways:

- Establishing or strengthening multi dimensional coordinating mechanisms.
- Designating Ministries or departments such as Planning Commissions and National Statistics Bureaus to coordinate MER and Statistics on OVC and youth.
- Establishing national forums for regular engagement, consultation and review of MER and Statistics of OVC and youth between all the stakeholders
- Establishing common national databases that manage multi-sectoral data on OVC and youth that is easily accessible and useable .

Delegates expressed their appreciation to the SADC Secretariat for convening the forum. The meeting ended on a high note with delegates expressing their commitment to participate and facilitate implementation of the Initiative to strengthen MER of OVC and youth in SADC.

Issued on 19 March 2015

Gaborone, Botswana