



PRESS STATEMENT

MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS AND SOCIAL PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR 10TH JULY, 2014, “A” ZAMBEZI RIVER LODGE VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

The Extra-Ordinary Meeting of SADC Ministers and Social Partners responsible for Employment and Labour took place on 10th July, 2014 at “A” Zambezi Hotel, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The meeting was attended by all SADC Member States (except Mauritius, Madagascar and Seychelles), representatives of Southern African Trade Union Council (SATUCC) and representatives of the SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF). The International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration(IOM) and the Africa Regional Labour Administration Center(ARLAC) also attended the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Honourable Henry Mussa (MP), Minister of Labour of the Republic of Malawi.

The Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Honourable Joyce T. Mujuru opened the meeting and welcomed the Honourable Ministers, Social Partners and Representatives of Cooperating Partners.

In her Official Opening Address, The Honourable Vice President encouraged Member States and Social Partners to work towards the standardization of labour practices in the region as the foundation of economic integration. She singled out the issue of youth employment and implored on the region to prioritise employment creation. The Vice President challenged the Ministers and Partners to make sure that the ELS plays a leading role in improving the lives of the people of the SADC Region.

In this regard, she called upon the Member States and Social Partners to work together in the context of a shared vision at both national and region levels to improve the lives

of the people of the region. The Vice President also commended the role being played by cooperating Partners, in particular the ILO, in the implementation of the SADC Programme through financial and technical backstopping.

The meeting reviewed and provided strategic forecast for the next five years in the Employment and Labour Sector with a view to improving the economic and social status of the SADC citizens. In this regard, Ministers and Social Partners approved the draft Labour Migration Policy Framework which seeks to promote sound management of intra-regional labour migration for the benefit of both the sending and receiving countries as well as migrant workers. In the same vein, they approved a common mechanism aimed at promoting decent and productive employment, ensuring fundamental labour standards and rights at work, social protection and social dialogue for improved labour productivity in the region.

At the core of their discussions, Ministers and Social Partners considered the draft Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) (2015 - 2020), which highlights achievements, challenges and recommendations regarding the implementation of SADC's prioritized programmes. In particular, they noted with satisfaction the remarkable achievements of the RISDP in the area of Employment and Labour. The achievements are as follows:

- (i) significant efforts in providing decent employment and conducive working environment by adopting international labour standards, and in the process achieving 100% ratification status of the eight core/fundamental Labour Conventions;
- (ii) development of the Protocol on Employment and Labour;
- (iii) establishment and operationalisation of a Regional Tripartite Forum to facilitate policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, and consolidation of industrial harmony;
- (iv) development of a SADC Labour Market Information Systems to provide labour market information to stakeholders to facilitate evidence based policy

formulation, access to information and effective planning as well as utilisation of human and material resources in the labour market;

- (v) development of a SADC Decent Work Programme (2013-2019) to guide Member States towards promotion of employment creation, labour standards, social dialogue and social protection in the region.

The Ministers and Social Partners endorsed the draft Revised RISDP (2015-2020) which presents priorities of regional cooperation and integration in the SADC Region. The key focus for the Employment and Labour Sector will be on effective implementation of the SADC Employment and Labour Protocol, Youth Employment Promotion Policy, and domestication and implementation of global and continental commitments. They also expressed their commitment in addressing the high unemployment levels especially among women and the youth in the Region through the identified priority areas of focus.

The Ministers and Social Partners expressed their appreciation to the Government of Zimbabwe for hosting the extra-ordinary meeting and for providing excellent facilities to ensure that the meeting was successfully held. They also expressed appreciation to the Government of Malawi for offering to host the next Employment and Labour Sector meeting of Ministers and Social Partners in 2015.

*SADC Secretariat
Victoria Falls, Republic of Zimbabwe
July 10th, 2014*