



34TH ORDINARY SUMMIT OF SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT PRECEDING MEETINGS UNDERWAY IN VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE



L-R: Ms. Emilie Ayaza Mushobekwa, SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration, Dr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo, SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, Dr. Stergomona Lawrence Tax, SADC Executive Secretary, Ambassador Joey Bimha, Chairperson of the SADC Standing Committee of Officials, Ms. Mookho Moeketsi, Chairperson of the SADC Finance Sub-Committee, Mr. Edwin Zvandasara, Chairperson of the SADC Audit Committee

The 34th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government is preceded by preparatory technical meetings that are currently underway since August 8 at the Elephant Hills Resort Conferences Centre at Victoria Falls, in the Republic of Zimbabwe. The ongoing meetings include the Finance Sub-Committee, the Finance Committee and the Standing Committee of Officials.

On August 10, 2014, Outgoing Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Officials Mr. George Mkondiwa, Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi handed over the Chairpersonship of the Committee to Ambassador Joey Bimha, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Handing over the Chairpersonship, Mr Mkondiwa thanked his counterparts and the Secretariat for rendering him the support and cooperation during his tenure of office. He informed the meeting that the implementation of his country's theme: **"Agriculture Development and Agri-Industries: Key for Economic Growth and Poverty Eradication in the SADC Region"** during their tenure Mr Mkondiwa noted the progress made.

"I am pleased to report that we have made progress in the development of the SADC Strategy on Food and Nutrition Security for 2015-2025, focusing on the empowerment of women and the youth," he said.

In accepting the Chairpersonship, Ambassador Bimha thanked his predecessor, Mr. George Mkondiwa, for having steered the Committee during the past year,

notwithstanding the daunting task of presiding over the proceedings during a critical period for the organisation which included the review of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), among other issues.

Emphasising the Mid-Term Review of the RISDP as pivotal to the region's integration agenda, Ambassador Bimha expressed the hope that the finalisation of the review would give more focus and direction to SADC programmes, as some activities have been put on hold pending the finalisation of the review.

"...let us remain cognisant of the fact that without the finalisation of the RISDP, there would be inertia in our programmes," he said, adding that the priorities stipulated in the revised RISDP shall provide appropriate guidance to SADC Member States, the Secretariat, Key Stakeholders and International Cooperating Partners.

The Standing Committee of Senior Officials winds up its business on 13 August, 2014, after which the Council of Ministers Meeting takes place on 14 – 16 August, 2014, culminating with the SADC Heads of States Summit on 17 – 18 August, 2014.

The Standing Committee of Officials is one of the the Eight (8) SADC Institutions established under Chapter Five, Article 9 (1) (a-h) of the SADC Treaty. The other SADC Institutions are the Summit of Heads of State and Government; the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, the Council of Ministers, the Sectoral and Cluster Ministerial Committees; the Secretariat, the Tribunal and SADC National Committees.

The compositions of the Standing Committee of Officials is provided for by Article 13 (1) provides as at least one Permanent Secretary or an official of equivalent rank from each SADC Member State.

The Committee is a technical advisory body to the SADC Council of Ministers, serving mainly as its clearing house by deliberating on and approving documents before they are submitted to Council.

The Council of Ministers is the policy and strategic decision making body which approves work programmes of SADC and oversees its functioning and development. It is also the role of Council of Ministers to clear the agenda of Summit, including, amongst others, recommending the establishment of directorates, committees other SADC institutions and organs, and persons for appointment to the posts of Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretaries.

The SADC Council of Ministers meeting will be taking place here on August 14 and 15, 2014, starting with the exchange of its Chairpersonship from Malawi to Zimbabwe.

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**ISSUED: SADC SECRETARIAT, VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE
AUGUST 12, 2014**