



PRESS RELEASE

SADC, EU and Germany step-up cooperation towards regional response to COVID-19

Gaborone, 10th August 2020: As part of the on-going regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Her Excellency Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax and His Excellency Mr. Jan Sadek, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Botswana and SADC, have signed a new agreement worth EUR 3.6 million to facilitate cross-border transit of essential goods during the COVID-19 crisis.

The 3.6 million Euro for the Tripartite Transit and Transport Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) under the SADC Secretariat, is geared at developing a special Corridor Trip Monitoring System (CTMS) to facilitate transit of essential goods that include food, fuel and medicines across the borders during the constraints of the COVID-19 epidemic. Recently, SADC adopted revised Regional Guidelines on Harmonization and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region, and Regional Standard Operating Procedures for the Management and Monitoring of Cross Border Road Transport at Designated Points of Entry and Covid-19 Checkpoints.

The revised guidelines, will also facilitate the implementation of SMART corridor trip monitoring system for management of the registration of cross border trips through, recording, monitoring and surveillance of driver wellness; tracking of vehicles loads and drivers; contact tracing; queue management; as well as statistical analysis and reporting.

Ambassador Sadek said that the EU support will contribute to the easing of movements of essential goods and services across the borders within the SADC region.

On the same occasion, His Excellency Mr. Ralf Andreas Breth, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Botswana launched the implementation of the German Government support to 'measures on the prevention and management of the negative effects of COVID-19 in the SADC region' worth EUR1.53 million, which will assist in the development of policy guidelines to harmonize and ease cross-border trade of professional medical services and strengthen the digital infrastructure of the SADC Secretariat and Member States.

"COVID-19 is a global challenge which calls for collective solidarity through strengthening existing partnerships amongst Germany, EU and SADC. This collective response will not only impact positively on short term regional response to the pandemic but will undoubtedly boost the long term availability of medical goods and services in the SADC region," noted Ambassador Breth.

These new allocations are part of a package of measures put in place by the EU and Germany (**@Team Europe**) to support SADC's regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the EUR 3.6 million for the TTTFP programme, the EU and SADC also revised the ongoing joint portfolio, worth EUR 145 million, and resolved to redirect some activities of projects to address the emerging needs derived from the COVID-19 crisis.

Under the Support to Industrialisation and Productive Sector (SIPS) programme, which is jointly implemented by SADC Secretariat and GIZ, the EU has redirected EUR 2 million while Germany redirected EUR 1 million to address the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and key medical supplies within the region while strengthening the capacity of local manufacturers and developing regional value chains.

Through the EU-SADC Support to Peace and Security (SPSS) programme, the EU is supporting SADC to monitor and address the escalating trends of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) arising from movement restrictions put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The EU and SADC have allocated EUR 361,000 to the EU-SADC Regional Agriculture Policy (RAP) programme to support Regional and National Early Warning Systems. In addition, the EU and SADC have allocated EUR 180,000 to the Global Climate Change Alliance Programme (GGCA+) to improve availability and access to high value nutritious agricultural produce using Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) technologies in Eswatini, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe targeting food insecure and vulnerable communities impacted by COVID-19.

Ambassador Sadek added that, “the EU wants to be relevant to SADC and stands in solidarity with SADC Heads of State and Governments, and the SADC Secretariat to support the regional response both to the health crisis as well as economic recovery. COVID-19 can only be defeated if we act united through a coordinated global effort”.

The SADC Executive Secretary highlighted that, “the collaboration between SADC and the International Cooperation Partners in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will assist to facilitate trade and ensure sustained movement of essential goods and services, enhance capacity of local manufacturers of PPEs and medical supplies, boost food and nutrition security of vulnerable communities and address Gender-Based Violence. With unity and joint efforts of all stakeholders, we will defeat COVID-19”.

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