MINISTERIAL MEETING STATEMENT

Joint meeting of the SADC Ministers Responsible for Education & Training, Science, Technology and Innovation 22 June 2018 Zimbali Resort, Durban South Africa

The SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training, Science, Technology and Innovation convened for their Joint Meeting on the 21-22 June 2018 at Zimbali resort, Durban, Republic of South where twelve Member States were in attendance namely: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The meeting of the Ministers was preceded by the Joint Meeting of Senior Officials responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation from 18-20 June 2018. On the 20 June 2018 a Ministerial Policy Dialogue was held under the theme: “Digitization and Industry 4.0-Implications for STI and Skills Development”.

The Joint Meeting of Senior Officials reviewed progress and implementation of new and on-going programmes and initiatives in the related sectors in relation to education and training and science, technology and innovation for consideration by the Ministers meeting.

The Ministers considered key policy and strategic instruments of cooperation on regional integration in the areas of education and training, and science, technology and innovation (STI). The role of education and skills development and science, technology and innovation is key in contributing to the advancement of the SADC Industrialization Agenda through building the necessary skills and capacities and investments in research, development and innovation for modern, knowledge economies.
The following policies and programmes were reviewed by the Ministers:

- Draft Framework and Guidelines on establishment and strengthening of Centres of Excellence and Centres of specialization,
- Proposed establishment on SADC University of Transformation,
- Draft SADC Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) Framework and Guidelines,
- Draft SADC Innovation and Technology Transfer Framework and Action Plan,
- Signing of Charter on Women in Science, Engineering and Technology,
- Draft Framework for Professional Teacher Standards and Competencies,
- Draft Common Nomenclature on Vocational Education and Training in the Region.
- Draft Revised Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategic Framework.

In her opening remarks, the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the Joint meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation, Honourable Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor stated that in its efforts to implement the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2015-2020 and the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2016-2063, the SADC region needs to focus on value-added industrialisation in the context of the current economic and policy conditions prevailing in SADC Member States. Minister Pandor also underlined that the SADC region aims to move up the value-chain from producing and exporting basic manufactured and semi-finished goods, to producing final consumer and industrial goods. She also thanks SADC Member States for supporting South Africa’s nomination to the United Nations Security Council.

The SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, Dr. Themkinkosi Mhlongo said that the Joint Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training, Science, Technology and Innovation attests to the importance that the region attaches to the values and ideals of SADC goals most importantly the policy frameworks that guide work including the revised RISDP and the SADC Industrialisation Strategy.
The Director of the International Labour Office (ILO) for East and Southern Africa, Dr. Joni Musabayana also addressed the Ministers, and underscored that technological innovation, globalization, climate change, shifts in the organization of work through platform-based economies, digital technologies and artificial intelligence are rapidly transforming the world of work, therefore, investments in skills development and training systems are more important than ever. He also emphasised the need for the Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, and Labour sectors to engage in a joint dialogue to address current emerging policy issues such as the Future of Work and its implications for the economy.

In efforts towards bridging a gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in the SADC region, Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa & Tanzania signed the SADC Charter on Women in Science, Engineering & Technology (WISETO). The Charter promotes women in science, engineering and technology in the SADC Region with the aim of enhancing their full participation in the socio-economic development of their respective countries through the application of scientific knowledge and technological innovation.

The Ministers reviewed key policy and strategic documents aimed towards the contribution of the industrialization of the region, and the work to be undertaken over the next years towards the implementation of the regional frameworks that will culminate in fuller and better regional integration.

SADC Secretariat
Durban, South Africa

22 June 2018