



MEDIA STATEMENT

ON THE OUTCOMES FROM THE MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

23 JUNE 2017, EZULWINI, KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

The SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation held a joint meeting in Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland during the period 22-23 June 2017. The governments that were represented by Ministers include Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. Namibia and Zimbabwe were represented by Deputy Ministers while Lesotho and Seychelles were represented by Senior Officials. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the African Union Commission, United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), International Council for Science Regional Office for Africa (ICSU-ROA), SADC Centre for Distance Education (SADC CDE), Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio), Southern African Network of Water Centres of Excellence (SANWATCE), Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), MIET Africa, Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) and representatives from the Diplomatic corps.

Ministers took decisions on key policy and strategic instruments of cooperation and regional integration in the areas of education and training, and science, technology and innovation (STI) in the context of the revised SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020, and in support of the implementation of the SADC

Industrialisation Action Plan (2015-2063) which was approved by Council in March 2017 in the Kingdom of Swaziland. The meeting was jointly chaired by Honourable Ministers- Hon. Dr Phineas Magagula, Minister of Education and Training and Hon. Dumsani Ndlangamandla, Ministers for Information and Communications Technology. The meeting was opened by His Excellency, the Right Honourable Dr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, who emphasised that the world economy is now in the era of the industrial revolution and therefore the role of education and training and science, technology and innovation is important to drive development and industrialisation.

Welcoming Remarks were made by the Hhhho Regional Administrator, Prince Tshekedi who also highlighted that the investment in education is key to drive development of nations. Remarks were delivered by the following partners: UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa represented by Dr Peggy Oti-Boateng, Commissioner from the African Union Commission (AUC) His Excellency Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga (Commissioner for Human Resources Science and Technology), Dr. Tichaona Mangwende from NEPAD and Dr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo, Deputy Executive Secretary Regional-Integration from the SADC Secretariat. All speakers underscored the importance of Education and Skills development and Science, Technology and Innovation in supporting of the Industrialization efforts in the region. The speakers reiterated that successful industrialization and value chain development will require investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills at all level of the education system, increased investment in research and development, collaboration with the private sector and other operators such as academia.

Ministers in their deliberations focused on areas that add value to industrialization including, development and implementation of relevant skills programmes for industry; promotion of investment in R&D and Innovation; establishment/strengthening national and regional innovation systems; establishment and strengthening of industrial Centres of Excellences; development of regulations to facilitate movement of skills and business people and establishment of enterprises; and promoting digital technologies.

Ministers urged Member States to invest in high end skills in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), entrepreneurship, innovation and green education/skills at all levels of the education system in close collaboration with other sectors in the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Action Plan. Ministers also urged Member States to implement recommendations to improve STI Policy development, implementation and review as provided by the Study that was commissioned by the Secretariat in 2016.

Some of the recommendations include the need to establish a regular policy reflection forums to facilitate sharing of experiences among STI policy experts in the region; establishment of a regional technology capacity and competence building programme to upgrade and modernise indigenous knowledge and technologies so as to bring STI closer to Poverty Reduction Strategies by upgrading and modernising commonly used traditional technologies; and establishment of an intensive Human Capital Development programmes in STEM. The meeting also commended Member States who ratified the Protocol on Science, Technology and Innovation which has now entered into force.

Ministers noted progress made by Secretariat in partnership with the Southern African Regional and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) in implementing the regional research and innovation management capacity building programme in order to develop the research and innovation management capacities in the region. Ministers commended the Government of the Republic of South Africa for providing financial support over a period of three years towards implementation of the Regional Research and Innovation Management. Ministers urged Member States to provide the necessary support their research and technology and higher learning institutions to establish well-resourced and fully functional research and innovation management offices and technology transfer programmes.

With regards to Education and Training the Ministers urged the Secretariat to expedite the regional study to inform the concept paper on the establishment of the SADC University of Transformation.

They established structures aimed at enhancing access, equity and retention to quality education and skills training these include: a Task Team for developing the draft regional framework for teacher's standards and competencies which will report to the Technical Committee on Higher Education, Research and Development; and establishment of a Technical Committee for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning. The Ministers meeting led by Hon. Dr Phineas Magagula, Minister of Education and Training officially launched the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF).

The SADCQF is a regional mechanism for comparability and recognition of full qualifications, credit transfer, creation of regional standards and facilitation and quality assurance. It consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardized terminology intended to:

1. Ensure effective comparability of qualifications accross SADC ;
2. Facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States ;
3. Facilitate credits transfer ;
4. Harmonise qualifications ; and
5. Create acceptable regional standards.

Minsiters noted and commended Member States for the good progress made since the approval of the SADCQF in 2011, which includes the following:

1. Establishment of the SADC Qualifications Verification Network that will facilitate easy verification of qualification.
2. Generation of mobility statistics (data on verification of qualifications).

3. Piloting alignment of National Qualifications Framework (NQFs) with the SADC Qualifications Framework by the following countries namely: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Mauritius, Seychelles.

South Africa and Zimbabwe expressed their support to enhance the science, technology and innovation human resource capacities at the Secretariat by committing to second technical staff to support the Secretariat.

Ministers ended their meeting on a high note, expressing their heartfelt gratitude to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland for their warm reception and the hospitality extended to them during the course of the meeting. The meeting also observed a moment of silence for the passing of the former President of Botswana His Excellence Sir Ketumile Masire.

The meeting welcomed the offer by the Government of the Republic of South Africa to host the next Joint Ministerial Meeting on Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation in 2018.

Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland

June 23, 2017