POST-COUNCIL MEDIA BRIEFING

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WINDHOEK, REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

SATURDAY, 16TH MARCH 2019
1. The Executive Secretary of SADC, Your Excellency Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen from the various Media Houses, I thank you for coming to this afternoon’s Post-Council Media Briefing. I would like to share with you the outcomes of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers Meeting which I hosted during the past two days here at the Safari Hotel and Conference Centre, Windhoek, Namibia from 15th to 16th March 2019.

2. The SADC Council of Ministers successfully deliberated on several issues of importance that are aimed at fostering regional economic growth and development, peace and security, and regional integration in relation to our priority programmes contained in the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020; the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO II); and the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063.

3. Council received progress on the implementation of the Corporate Plan and Budget for the 2018/19 for the SADC Secretariat and approved the Secretariat’s Corporate Plan and Budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year.

4. Council, further, received progress on operationalisation of the Theme for the 38th SADC Summit which is: ‘Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development; noted a number of youth-focused activities that have been implemented, among others, dissemination of youth-targeted messages, convening of the SADC youth forums, which generated discussions on youth involvement in business fora, entrepreneurship as well as strategies on youth employment. Other theme-related activities included the amplification of youth voices during the 2018 Industrialisation Week and the Secondary School Essay Competition which seeks to explore how youth-focused programmes can contribute to sustainable socio-economic development in our region.

5. Council noted the progress on the implementation of the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) which is built on four pillars namely: Industrialisation, Competitiveness, Regional Integration, and Cross-cutting issues; and noted that an updated progress report on the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap will be submitted to its meeting in August 2019 after consideration by the Ministerial Task Force (MTF) on Regional Economic Integration in June 2019.
6. Council noted the progress made in the preparations for the SADC Solidarity Conference with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, which will be held on 25\textsuperscript{th} – 26\textsuperscript{th} March 2019, in Pretoria, South Africa; and endorsed the conference programme which includes Working Group discussions to be led by H.E Olusegun Obasanjo former President of Nigeria and H.E Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania. During this conference, the SADC Heads of State and Government will express the region’s support for decolonisation and self-determination for the Western Sahara.

7. Council noted the progress made by the Union of Comoros on signing, ratifying and/or acceding to SADC legal and policy instruments, as well as the undertaking to honour other obligations and directed the Secretariat to follow-up with Comoros and provide an update to Council in August 2019.

8. On the proposed transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Parliament, Council directed the Secretariat to constitute a Task Force comprising of Double Troika Members, supported by the SADC Secretariat and the SADC Parliamentary Forum Secretariat to carry out a thorough analysis on the transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and advise on, among others, the governing legal framework; structure; functions and powers; inter- and intra-relationships with other branches of SADC, like Summit and SADC Administrative Tribunal, national Parliaments and the Pan African Parliament; international law obligations; and financing arrangement. Secretariat will present progress to Council in August 2019.

9. Council endorsed the recommendation from the Ministers of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Public Information for Member States to introduce the singing of the SADC Anthem together with national anthems during SADC meetings and the hoisting of the SADC flag alongside national flags during all SADC meetings, and national events in order to enhance popularisation of the SADC identity, brand, and community building symbols.

10. Council approved the request from the Kingdom of Eswatini to host the Administration Office of the SADC University of Transformation, a virtual University designed to contribute towards capacity building, and deliver
educational training using the vocational education training model.

11. Council also noted the dates for the Inaugural African Union and Regional Economic Communities (AU-REC) Coordination Meeting to be held from 7 to 8 July 2019 in Niamey, Niger, during which the Status of Integration in the SADC Regional Report will be represented.

12. On the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States of the European Union, Council directed the Secretariat, in collaboration with the SADC Ambassadors accredited to the EU to continue tracking progress in the Post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement negotiations and submit regular reports on progress to Council meetings.

13. Council expressed condolences to the Republics of Malawi and Mozambique on the loss of lives, following floods that left a number of people dead, and displaced thousands. SADC stands in solidarity with the affected families as the two Member States recover from the negative effects of the floods.

14. Ladies and Gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to thank our International Cooperating Partners for their continued support in our drive towards regional integration and development.

15. Let me also extend my special thanks to you, distinguished members of the Media for your efforts in disseminating information on the programmes of our regional organisation, SADC. We greatly appreciate and encourage you to continue with the good work that you are doing in informing the region about SADC programmes, policies and activities even after this meeting.

16. What I have presented to you are just highlights of issues discussed during the meeting of the Council of Ministers, there is a lot happening in the promotion of regional integration and development and you, as media, are a key partner in this regard. I thank you for your attention, and we are here to take any questions on the issues raised in this brief.

I thank you.