



POST- COUNCIL MEDIA BRIEFING

BY

**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE HLANGUSEMPHI, MINISTER
OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND AND
CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

LOZITHA PALACE (MANDVULO), MAHLANYA

SWAZILAND

27th AUGUST 2015

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen from the various Media Houses, allow me to express my appreciation to you for joining me for this Post-Council Media Brief this afternoon on the Outcomes of the meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers held during the past two days. The SADC Council of Ministers successfully deliberated on several issues of importance to the region as espoused by the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), noted the good progress made, and took decisions on how best to overcome the challenges faced by the region as well as on how to accelerate implementation of previous Summit and Council decisions.

The Council of Ministers Meeting took place here at Lozitha Palace Conference Centre, on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th August in preparation for the 36th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of States and Government.

You will recall the theme of the Summit, namely, *“Resource Mobilisation for Investment in Sustainable Energy Infrastructure for an Inclusive SADC Industrialization and for the Prosperity of the Region”*, as proposed by the Kingdom of Swaziland, in its capacity as the Incoming Chairperson of SADC, and was considered by the Council of Ministers, which endorsed it and recommended it for Summit approval on Tuesday, 30 August, 2016.

Council received the Report of the Executive Secretary which outlined the progress made with implementation of the activities within the first year of implementation of the Revised RISDP (2015 – 2020) during the last year. Council commended the progress made in the various areas, and noted the, challenges encountered, as well as Success Stories that have been documented by the Secretariat.

Council noted and approved the Costed Implementation Plan for the Revised 2015-2020 SADC Communications and Promotional Strategy, which will be used to communicate the SADC Agenda as well as showcase SADC achievements in the various programmes areas within the RISDP and the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap.

Council noted the progress made with the Review of the SADC Secretariat Organisational Structure which is meant to respond to the Revised RISDP. Council directed the finalization of the study in order for it to render its approval at its next meeting in February/March, 2016, in order for the new positions to be filled and provide leadership for the implementation of the RISDP.

Council approved the Draft MoU between Southern African Development Community and the Russian Federation on Basic Principles of Relations and Cooperation. Council endorsed the decision of the MCO to mandate the Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC) to consider the applications submitted by the Union of Comoros and the Republic of Burundi.

Council received a report on the costing of projects and programmes in the RISDP and noted that an amount of USD 398 billion will be required to implement infrastructure related projects. Council in adopting the report, directed the Secretariat to: map available resources, assess financing modalities, and prepare a coherent financing plan focusing on the preparations of infrastructure projects to bankability, and the convening of an Investment Conference to showcase such projects; and finalize the SADC Regional Resource Mobilisation Framework in order to give further impetus to resource mobilisation efforts for the priority regional programmes/projects.

Council received a progress report on the indicative costs of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Action Plan, and directed the Secretariat to finalise the process in consultation with Member States for consideration by Council and Extraordinary Summit in February/March 2017, to enable the region to solicit investment in identified areas.

Council endorsed that the SADC Industrialization Week be convened annually, alongside the SADC Ordinary Summit and received the Esibayeni Declaration of the Southern Africa Business Forum (SABF) Conference held during the SADC Industrialization Week on the margins of Council in the

Kingdom of Swaziland, for transmission to the 2016 SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

Council considered the list of SADC candidates proposed for various international organisations and continental bodies including the African Union Commission, endorsed all the candidates, and urged Member States to support the candidates from the SADC Member States. On the Candidates for African Union Commission Positions Council endorsed Hon. Dr Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation from the Republic of Botswana as the Southern Africa Region candidate for the position of Chairperson of the AU Commission and urged SADC Member States to support her at the next elections in January 2017. Council further urged the Government of Botswana to share a strategy for the SADC candidate to garner support from AU Member States.

Council also received a report on the three High Level Ministerial Multi-Stakeholder Workshops on namely, (i) Poverty Eradication and Food Security, (ii) Energy and Water Crisis, and (iii) Illegal Trade in Wildlife. The Workshops accorded Ministers an opportunity to exchange ideas on how best to address challenges in all these areas, as well as agree on practical solutions towards addressing these challenges.

Council directed the Secretariat to operationalize the recommendations of the workshops and align them with RISDP activities going forward. Council recommended to Summit to commend the Outgoing SADC Chair for his timely intervention and for having successfully convened the workshops.

Council received the Annual Performance Report covering the implementation of the approved Corporate Plans, and noted that both physical implementation and budget utilization had increased from last year's threshold, and directed the SADC Secretariat to continue strengthening organizational capacity in order to further improve on delivery of the SADC mandate.

Council reviewed and approved the Audited 2015/16 SADC Secretariat financial statements. Council adopted the Board of Auditors Report on the external audit of 2015/16 SADC Secretariat financial statements, and commended the Secretariat for achieving unqualified audit report and directed the Secretariat to expedite the implementation of identified financial controls.

Council received a Report on the Operationalisation of the SADC Regional Development Fund and endorsed the Roadmap for the establishment of the Fund, including the Member States contributions towards the fund over a period of three years.

Council reviewed the Food Security and Drought Situation in the Region and recommended to Summit to commend His Excellency Lt Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, Chairperson of SADC and President of the Republic of Botswana for his timely Declaration of a Regional Drought Disaster and the launch of a Regional Appeal on 26th July 2016. Council further noted that the Humanitarian Appeal shows that the Region requires US\$2.9 billion to cover the humanitarian needs of about 40 million vulnerable people, out of which US\$393.7 million (approximately 14%) has so far been raised by Member States and their Cooperating Partners. This leaves a regional humanitarian gap of US\$2.5 billion.

Council requested Member States to introduce special drought relief cross-border permits to drought relief transport operators, introduce expedited customs clearance procedures for drought relief cargo; waive cabotage restrictions and suspend third country rule for drought inputs/exports; and provide safe transit for rail and road convoy and security at logistics hubs where necessary.

Council approved that youth development and empowerment be considered as part of the progress report on the implementation of the RISDP to ordinary meetings of Council and Summit; and that 15th July of each year be recognised as a Youth Skills Day in SADC to be celebrated by Member States.

Council commended all Member States that have achieved high representation of women both in political and decision making positions in the public service and private sector and urged all Member States to strive towards reaching the gender parity target at all levels.

Council noted and approved the Roadmap on the recruitment of the SADC Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary – Regional Integration.

Council reviewed the status of Signature, Ratification and Accession to Current Protocols and urged Member States that are still not Parties to Protocols that have entered into force to accede to them; and to ratify the Protocols that have been adopted and signed but are not yet in force.

Council endorsed the following draft legal instruments and recommended them to Summit for adoption and signature:

- Draft Agreement Amending the SADC Protocol Against Corruption
- Draft Agreement Amending the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation
- Draft Agreement Amending Annex1 to the SADC Protocol on Finance and Investment
- Draft Annex on Cooperation in Financial Matters
- Draft Agreement Amending Article 3 (1)(c) of the SADC Trade Protocol
- Draft Agreement on the Operationalization of the SADC Regional Development Fund and
- Draft Agreement Amending SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

I wish to conclude this media briefing by congratulating you our Journalists for your continued support in disseminating information on Pre-Summit events that have taken place so far in the Kingdom of Swaziland, such as the Diplomats briefing, the Public Lecture by His Excellency Jakaya Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, briefings by SADC Directors and Heads of Units; Launch of the SADC Industrialization Week and Subsequent activities, and the Senior Officials and Pre-Council meetings.

Your efforts in disseminating information on what is happening throughout this Summit period on the SADC activities in the region are greatly appreciated. We encourage you to continue with the good work that you are doing in informing the region about SADC programmes, policies and activities even after the Summit.

I now welcome you to ask any questions regarding the outcomes from Council.

I thank you.
