



PRE-COUNCIL MEDIA BRIEFING

MARCH 04, 2015

HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media, thank you for to this morning's Pre-Council information sharing session.

As it has become customary to SADC, we invited you to share information with you on the upcoming meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers scheduled to take place here from Friday to Saturday March 06 – 07, 2015, and its preceding meetings that have been underway here as follows:

- 22 - 23 Feb - 4th Meeting of the Revised RISDP Task Force
- 24- 25 Feb - Experts of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration
- 26 Feb - Senior Officials of the Task Force on Regional Economic Integration
- 28 Feb - 1 Mar - Finance Subcommittee
- 2 March - Standing Committee of Officials
- 3 March - Finance Committee
- 4 March - Preparation/ Adoption of Annotated Agenda for Council
- 5 March - Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic

The Council will receive progress report on the implementation of plans for 2014/2015, implementation of Council Decisions since last August and to deliberate on priorities and plans for 2015/2016.

SADC continued to place attention on strengthening peace, security, and on the consolidation of democracy and good governance in the region. In this regard, since August 2014 after your last Council of Ministers meeting, SADC has observed general and Presidential elections in the Republics of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Mauritius, Lesotho and the Presidential By-elections in Zambia. SADC commends the Governments and peoples of these Member States for holding peaceful, credible and free and fair elections through which the will of the people was democratically expressed.

At the last Council meeting held in Victoria Falls, the Secretariat was directed to prepare an Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap, and present it to the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Integration in February, 2015, and thereafter to the Extra-Ordinary Summit in April 2015, development of the Strategy is ongoing. The interim report was presented to the Ministerial Task Force on regional Economic Integration at its meeting held on 24th and 27th February, and 5th March, 2015. The interim report on Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap will be presented to the Council of Ministers during its meetin on 6 - 7 March 2015.

SADC appreciates and thank the member States for their support and commitment to this noble course, and for their timely responses. Member States have designated national experts who are working with regional experts. Furthermore, SADC expresses gratitude to the national and regional experts for their hard work, and to UNECA and GIZ for their support. Special gratitude goes to UNECA, for its expeditious response and willingness to partner with SADC in the realization of the Summit Decision.

Within the framework of the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan, the Project Preparation Development Fund (PPDF) has been

operationalised during the year under review, with one project being approved for Grant financing, namely the Mozambique-Zimbabwe-South Africa Transmission Interconnector and seven more projects admitted in the pipeline and are being appraised. In addition, through support from partners, water supply and sanitation projects have been prepared and are at an advanced stage of due diligence and preparation to bankability. Following a comprehensive process of institutional development, the Zambezi Basin Commission was launched and is currently hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe in Harare, Zimbabwe.

In the area of ICT, commendable progress has been made with the roll out of Digital Terrestrial Migration equipment given the looming ITU switch-over deadline of 17 June, 2015.

The key focus in terms of energy has been to coordinate implementation of power projects within the RIDMP framework to ensure that the Region attains self-sufficiency in power generation by 2017/2018 given that power demand currently surpasses available capacity.

In terms of transport, the key focus has been on operationalization of interim arrangements for the SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (SASO) to be hosted by the Kingdom of Swaziland, coordination of the on-going feasibility which include the Navigability of Shire-Zambezi Waterways, Nacala Corridor Project as well as the Tripartite Transport and Trade Facilitation Programme.

In the area of Water, focus is on completion of the Lomasha-Namaacha and the Kunene Transboundary Water Supply projects.

During the period under review, significant progress has also been recorded in the area of trade, industry, finance and investment. Notable progress was realized in the area of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), as during the year under review, the EPA was initialed between the EU and the SADC EPA Group. The text is currently undergoing legal vetting leading to eventual signature, ratification and implementation. In the area of finance and investment, progress has been realized in connecting

the national payments and settlements systems to the regional system, that is, the SADC Integrated Regional Electronic Settlement System (SIRESS).

With regard to the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Secretariat continued to develop, promote, coordinate and facilitate harmonisation of policies and programmes aimed at increasing agricultural and natural resources production, productivity and competitiveness, in order to support industrialisation, trade and food security and sustainable economic development in the region. The major focus was on the development of the Regional Agricultural Policy and the SADC Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy. In addition, the Secretariat continued to operationalize the implementation of the harmonized Seed Regulations in the SADC Region. The SADC Variety release system was launched on 26 November 2014.

Going forward, the SADC Secretariat will continue to facilitate the operationalization of the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) by the Member States. The RAP Investment Plans will be developed during the 2015/16 Financial Year to kick start and develop programmes and projects to support implementation of the RAP.

The food security situation in the region is expected to be less than satisfactory during the 2015/16 marketing year as a result of poor rains in most parts of the Region, dry spells in some areas, and floods in other areas. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation and support early warning for food security and vulnerability assessments in the Member States.

During the financial year 2015/16, the focus will be placed on, among others, consolidation of peace and democracy; finalization of the Review of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and its implementation plan, and development of an organization Structure needed to operationalize the reviewed RISDP and SIPO; finalization and operationalization of the Industrialisation Strategy; Infrastructure development to leverage Industrial development and in support of regional integration.. Other priorities, include facilitation of the operationalization of

Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP); implementing Tripartite Trade Agreement initiatives, and continental FTA negotiations; enhancing trade facilitation; and monitoring implementation of obligations in the trade protocol.