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Press Release

SADC SUCCESS ENABLES VITAL NEW SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

On 20 March 2013, on the occasion of the Political Dialogue framework between the European Union (EU) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in Maputo, Mozambique, an important new funding agreement was signed. The Contribution Agreement will start on 1 April 2013 and consists of 20 million Euros of EU funding to SADC for the Regional Economic Integration Support programme. The programme supports SADC's efforts to reduce poverty through promoting accelerated economic growth and development in the region, and by encouraging deeper levels of regional economic integration and political cooperation.

Ambassador Gerard McGovern, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Botswana and SADC stresses: *'This package would certainly allow the volumes of trade within the SADC region and between SADC and Europe to increase. This would stimulate the economic growth in the region and create employment. Ultimately it would address the poverty in which too many in this region are still living. For both our organisations the eradication of poverty is the final objective of our cooperation.'*

A Contribution Agreement of this kind is possible because of a significant Success Story which was achieved by the SADC Secretariat in 2011. Following several years of intensive work by dedicated staff, the SADC Secretariat was formally recognised as having achieved compliance with the accepted international standards of good practice in management. These international standards are essential requirements before any international organisation can enter into partnership agreements with the EU, and reaching them represents a major achievement for SADC.

The SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Tomáz Augusto Salomão said that the recent institutional reforms at the SADC Secretariat and the signing of the REIS Contribution Agreement are milestones worth celebrating. He referred to the old adage that says: *"If a tree falls in the forest, and nobody hears or talks about it, then it has not fallen. With this I mean that we, far too often, focus our energies on challenges and shortcomings and make only a little effort to celebrate our achievements"*. Dr. Salomão added that the signing of the REIS Contribution Agreement was a true demonstration of the friendly relations between the EU and SADC, and of the SADC Secretariat's institutional readiness to manage programmes and projects using its own systems and processes.

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