



## **Statement by the Executive Secretary of SADC, H.E Mr. Elias M Magosi on International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing on 5 June 2023**

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) joins in the commemoration of this year's **International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing** which falls on 05 June 2023, with a call for urgent actions to address IUU fishing in the SADC region to be taken/implemented. This includes better monitoring and control measures, such as tracking vessels, implementing stronger regulations, and increasing collaboration between governments and other stakeholders.

Fortunately, SADC Member States are working tirelessly in strengthening cooperation to fight IUU fishing, guided by the SADC Protocol on Fisheries which is implemented through the work of the SADC Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC), recently established in Maputo, Mozambique, following entry into force of the Charter establishing the MCSCC on 08 April 2023. The MCSCC's mandate is to coordinate measures to improve fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to combat IUU fishing in the SADC region. Some of the measures coordinated by the MCSCC include a regional fisheries MCS data and information sharing services, a regional fishing vessel register and monitoring system; provision of regional fisheries surveillance, observer coordination and port State measures support services; provision of fisheries law enforcement and legal support services; and help to support improvements in the capacity of national MCS systems.

During this year's commemoration, SADC Secretariat in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) will host a Webinar to highlight the Journey that the region travelled to establish the MCSCC in Maputo, and highlight success stories and challenges in protecting regional fisheries.

Equally, on 05 June we also commemorate the **World Environment Day**, whose theme for this year focuses on solutions to plastic pollution (**#BeatPlasticPollution**). Plastic pollution is one of the biggest environmental problems that has drastically impacted the health of aquatic ecosystems in the SADC region, including those supporting fisheries resources. This situation calls for all stakeholders in the SADC Member States and partners to work together to ensure that all threats facing our fisheries stocks are addressed through cooperation and collaboration. By working together, we can help build sustainable fisheries and protect the health and well-being of the aquatic creatures and the overall ecological balance of our region.