



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

SADC – EU MINISTERIAL PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

15 MARCH 2025

HARARE, REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

Introduction

1. A Ministerial Partnership Dialogue between the European Union (EU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was held on 15 March 2025 in Harare, Republic of Zimbabwe. The meeting was co-chaired by Hon. Prof. Amon Murwira, Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Zimbabwe, and Hon. Radosław Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, on behalf of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. The Ministerial Dialogue was preceded by a Senior Officials meeting.
2. Both sides acknowledged that the dialogue provides an excellent platform to engage on issues of mutual interest, including peace and security, human and sustainable development, climate change, environment, trade and investment. The regional priorities of SADC are informed by the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020-2030), including identified priority projects approved by SADC Council of Ministers in March 2023. The RISDP is based on a firm foundation of peace, security and democratic governance, and is premised on industrial development and market integration; infrastructure development in support of regional integration; social and human capital development; and crosscutting issues such as gender equality, youth, environment, climate change; and disaster risk management.
3. The political engagements between the European Union and SADC contribute to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Union's partnership with Africa. In this context, both sides welcomed the intention of holding the European Union - African Union Ministerial Meeting and Summit in 2025.

Political and Security Situations in the SADC and EU Regions

4. Both sides exchanged updates on the political and security situations in the SADC and EU regions and expressed their commitment to collaborate in addressing global, continental and regional challenges related to peace and security. Both sides acknowledged that peace, security and good governance is a chief enabler of sustainable development and regional integration and has been identified as a foundation pillar in the RISDP 2020-2030. In this context, both sides reconfirmed their joint commitment to uphold human rights for all and enhance democratic processes in the SADC region and in the EU.

5. SADC and the EU have an established and commendable cooperation towards the consolidation of peace, security and good governance. The previous Support to Peace and Security Programme in the SADC (SPSS) under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) produced tangible results of which both sides are proud. As the programme came to a close, the gains were carried forward through the programme *Enhancing the Capability and Effectiveness of SADC's Peace and Security Architecture* (ECESPA) of EUR 13 million adopted in June 2024. The programme supports SADC's mediation and conflict prevention capacities, notably through an integrated Early Response Mechanism to support regional initiatives to prevent, mitigate and resolve violent conflicts and political crisis.
6. Both sides restated the importance of maintaining peace and security globally and regionally and that all states must act in a manner consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter in its entirety. In line with the UN Charter, all states must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state. Both sides re-affirmed that all parties in conflicts must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They reconfirmed the need for peaceful resolutions of disputes through diplomatic means. They highlighted the need for continued global cooperation to minimise the global consequences of the current geopolitical context.
7. Both sides, guided by these principles, agreed to support efforts towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and other major wars and conflicts around the globe. The ongoing war is causing immense human suffering and is exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy. It is constraining growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening food insecurity, and elevating financial stability risks, as well as threatening energy security and liquidity of global energy markets.
8. On the situation in Gaza, both sides called for the implementation of the ceasefire and hostage-release agreement, and for an improvement of the humanitarian situation by increasing aid and facilitating access to it. They noted that the EU has announced initial EUR 120 million humanitarian aid for Gaza for 2025. Both sides reiterated support towards a two-state solution.
9. SADC informed the EU of the deteriorating political and security situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) characterised by a humanitarian crisis of displaced populations and severe threats to human security. The EU reaffirmed its commitment to continue contributing to SADC's efforts to reinforce institutional stability, promote socio-economic development and restore security in the sub-region. The two sides condemned the ongoing offensive of the M23 armed group supported by Rwanda, including its own troops, in North and South Kivu, as a blatant violation of the territorial integrity of the DRC and prior commitments reached under the Luanda process. SADC and the EU called for a rapid implementation of the decisions of the EAC-SADC summit of 8 February 2025 and stressed the importance of securing humanitarian relief to the population, ensuring the respect of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and urgently negotiating a political solution to the ongoing conflict. They encouraged the acceleration and coordination of diplomatic efforts in pursuit of peace and security for Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes Region. The two sides stressed the need for 'African solutions to African problems.'
10. SADC informed the EU that an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government was held on 13 March 2025 which deliberated on the security situation in the DRC. Summit terminated the mandate of the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC) and directed the immediate commencement of a phased withdrawal of SAMIDRC troops from the DRC. SADC will focus on a diplomatic process towards facilitating lasting peace. SADC noted the need for comprehensive humanitarian support to the internally displaced persons and refugees from the DRC in the region and called on the international community, including the United Nations, and

the African Union to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of the DRC. Both sides reaffirmed their full support to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2773 (2025) concerning the situation in the DRC.

11. Regarding the situation in Cabo Delgado, the EU noted SADC's withdrawal of its Mission in Mozambique in July 2024. SADC extended appreciation for the support provided through the EU-AU Early Response Mechanism and in the framework of the EU integrated approach, through the European Peace Facility and the EU Training Mission, as well as through the current EU Military Assistance Mission, in close coordination with local authorities and international missions on the ground. In addition, the EU highlighted that it will continue providing humanitarian assistance. Both sides noted that SADC remains seized with addressing the prevailing political and security situations in the region and commended the spirit of solidarity displayed by the SADC Member States, non-SADC countries and International Cooperating Partners, including the EU.
12. SADC highlighted that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, after its peaceful elections in 2022, remained committed to prioritising the implementation and completion of the comprehensive national reforms process.

SADC and the EU recognized the importance of strengthening conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the SADC region and expressed interest in having a dialogue on these matters. Both sides recognised the threat of terrorism globally and committed to further collaborate in the fight against terrorism.

13. In line with its Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, in 2024 SADC deployed election observation missions to the Republic of Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. The EU deployed an electoral observation mission to Mozambique and expert missions to Comoros and South Africa. Both sides stressed the need to keep promoting inclusive, credible and transparent elections in a conducive political environment, and respect for international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.
14. SADC informed the EU about its Declaration on 25 October 2024 regarding the removal of sanctions imposed on the Republic of Zimbabwe. The EU informed of its decision in February 2025 on the delisting of the remaining entity and the renewal of its framework for restrictive measures containing the Arms Embargo. SADC reiterated its call for the EU to remove the Arms Embargo.

Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development: Global Gateway Africa – Europe Investment Package

15. To facilitate regional and continental integration, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to uphold the development aspirations of African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals towards eradicating poverty, facilitating growth and development and improving livelihoods. In this regard, the EU Global Gateway aims to mobilize up to EUR 150 billion in investments for Africa, as announced at the 6th European Union - African Union Summit held from 17-18 February 2022 in Brussels Belgium. This Africa-Europe Investment Package is an opportunity to boost public and private investment aligned with the priorities and needs of the African countries through flagship investments initiatives in sectors such as education, research, health, transport, digital transformation, climate neutral energy and green transition, in both mitigation and adaptation as a way to advance towards a social, green and digital transition. It also includes critical sectors such as sustainable food systems, transport, water and critical raw materials value chains. Both sides recall the importance of supporting regional energy interconnectivity, and the importance of the Southern African Power Pool as a tool to further help the decarbonisation of the region.

16. Both sides acknowledged that Regional Economic Communities (RECs) remained paramount in coordinating the implementation of regional integration and served as crucial building blocks for continental integration. In this regard, both sides committed to upholding the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, which guide the implementation of national, regional and continental programmes in support of regional programmes.

Implementation of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa

17. The Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument- Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe) has brought important changes in the strategic policy orientation, financial architecture, geographical configuration and implementation arrangements and modalities of EU support. In light of the transition from European Development Fund (EDF) to NDICI-Global Europe, both sides committed to promoting the principle of ownership in the designing and implementation of multi-country and regional programmes, including recognition of the role of RECs in that respect. The regular programming dialogues between RECs and the EU have provided more insights into the political intention of achieving more results, enhanced impact and increased harmonisation and coordination in the implementation of regional programmes.
18. The two sides noted the progress in implementing the EUR 12 billion 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programme for Sub Saharan Africa (MIP SSA) which supports regional priorities, including regional integration, and has strengthened cooperation between the sides. The following MIP SSA priority areas are aligned with SADC's RISDP 2020-2030: human development; democratic governance, peace, security and culture; green transition; digital science, technology and innovation; sustainable growth and decent jobs; and migration and forced displacement.
19. SADC extended appreciation to the EU for the continued assistance in the financing and implementation of the RISDP 2020-2030, notably including actions supporting peace and security, institutional capacity building, promoting trade facilitation and regional economic integration increasing the sustainability of food systems, tackling biodiversity loss and supporting digital transformation and connectivity. Both sides committed to continue cooperating in areas of mutual priority in the future.
20. Both sides noted the expansion of the EU-Africa health partnership to enhance equitable access to safe, qualitative, effective and affordable health services and products. This is key to reaching SDG-targets such as achieving Universal Health Coverage. EU support includes areas such as manufacturing and access to vaccines and medicines, digital solutions for pandemic preparedness support to public health. Both sides noted the adoption of amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) and the extension of Pandemic Agreement negotiations. Both sides further noted that in August 2024 Mpox was declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO) and as a public health emergency of continental security by the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Consequently, SADC Health Ministers met on 4th September 2024 and agreed to take measures to mitigate the spread of Mpox in the Region, working closely with International Cooperating Partners.
21. Both sides reaffirmed the important role of Non-State Actors, including the private sector and civil society in both SADC and EU regions. The EU congratulated SADC on the ongoing work towards operationalizing the SADC Non-State Actors Engagement Mechanism, a laudable effort towards participatory implementation of regional integration, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The EU further commended SADC for the private sector engagement platforms that are coordinated through the SADC Business Council. Such initiatives reinforce

the great strides towards effective cooperation and sustainable development.

22. Both sides welcomed the transformative decisions at COP29 held in Baku on the new post-2025 goal on climate finance that secures efforts of all actors to work together to scale up finance to developing countries to USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2035, emphasizes the leading role of the developed countries and Multilateral Development Banks on the goal of USD 300 billion per year by 2035, and identifies the needed reforms to enhance accessibility and effectiveness. They welcomed the historic conclusion of the rulebook for carbon markets at UNFCCC COP29, providing an agreement to an enhanced framework of transparency and accountability for bilateral cooperation on markets, and an ambitious new benchmark for international crediting under the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism. Both sides reaffirmed that the first Global Stocktake (GST) at COP28 was a key milestone to enable all Parties to collectively identify how to close the existing ambition and implementation gaps. They reiterated the urgency of climate action guided by the UAE consensus COP28 GST and took note of the GST findings that the world is not on track to keep the 1.5°C limit. In this regard, COP30 is expected to be a key milestone in the enhancement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Both sides recognized that countries are expected to put forward more ambitious NDCs to bridge the gap between current commitments and the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. The organization of the first Africa Climate Summit, by Kenya as Chair of the Committee of Africa Heads of State and Government (CAHOSCC), with African Union (AU), on 4-6 September 2023, was welcomed as an important milestone to reinforce Africa's voice on climate action. SADC stressed the need to address challenges relating to the Carbon Market. SADC is working with other partners, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to establish the Southern Africa Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance. The alliance aims to tackle matters related to capacity building, share experiences, and make efficient use of resources available for enhanced market participation.
23. Both sides recalled the outcomes and recommendations adopted during COP29 and other provisions of the Paris Agreement, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of the different national circumstances. In this regard, both sides committed to collaborate in the implementation of the Regional Revised Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan which aims to guide national and regional work in strengthening climate change adaptation and mitigation and building climate resilience, to ensure sustainable development of the region. EU's support to SADC to address climate adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk management has been developed in the context of the SADC Climate Strategy. Both sides reiterated their commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and they took note on the progress of implementing regional and international biodiversity frameworks including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
24. Both sides agreed to collaborate towards the effective implementation of the Revised SADC Biodiversity Strategy, SADC Sub-regional Action Programme to Combat Desertification (SRAP) (2015-2025), the SADC Great Green Wall Strategy and the SADC Trans-frontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) Programme 2023-2033. On ocean protection, both sides underlined the importance of the historic Treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. In efforts to tackle plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, the EU and SADC intend to work together towards an ambitious and legally binding global plastics treaty. Given the global water crisis and lack of progress on SDG6, both sides committed to pursue enhanced multilateral governance on water, including the regular UN Water Conferences and globalization of the UN Water Convention.
25. SADC reiterated that the issue of climate change is exposing the region to devastating impacts that have manifested through the El Niño induced drought and floods. To this end, SADC Heads of State and Government launched a SADC Humanitarian Appeal on 20 May 2024, aimed at augmenting domestic resources of the affected Member States, including efforts for resource

mobilisation from national, regional, and international partners. Both sides committed to collaborate and strengthen cooperation towards initiatives on mitigation and adaptation.

26. SADC thanked the EU for its continued role of International Cooperating Partners (ICP) Chair through the EU Delegation in Botswana. This self-coordination of ICPs is in line with the principle of harmonization and ensures that development cooperation is undertaken coherently promoting ownership, accountability, mutual trust and respect, and transparency in the implementation of the regional integration agenda. SADC further recognized the key role of the EU in co-chairing the Transport and Peace and Security Thematic Groups.

Economic Growth and Development: Trade and Investment

27. The global economy has been resilient despite a slowdown of global growth over the last years and inflation leading to tighter monetary policies, as most countries increased interest rates to rein in inflation. Both sides recognized that global economic growth and development remained impacted by the effects of high inflation and rising price levels for many essential commodities, such as energy, fertilizers and food, and the remaining effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Trade and investment remain the primary catalyst for facilitating the necessary economic relief and creating a path towards sustainable economic recovery, stability and harnessing green growth opportunities. In this regard, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to use all avenues possible to strengthen and diversify their economic and trade relations, and to stimulate regional integration.
28. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) is of paramount importance for facilitating the free flow of goods and services across the continent and boosting the trading position of Africa in the global market. With the financial and technical support of EU-TAF, SADC is in the process of finalizing its regional SADC-AfCFTA Implementation Plan, with the objective of guiding and supporting all regional interventions towards smart utilization of the preferences of the continental market. The EU remains fully supportive of this continental flagship project. Despite enormous opportunities, the status of SADC intra-regional trade remains low, averaging 18.6% in 2021, with a slight improvement in 2022 up to 23%.
29. The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) stands as an important stage to complement the intra-African trade, the respective agreement has come into force since July 2024, with the ratifications from 14 Member/Partner States. The preparations are in progress to convene the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government to launch the operational phase of the TFTA.
30. The EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) remains highly relevant to national and regional trade as well as industrial development of the SADC EPA States. The EU-SADC EPA grants duty-free and quota-free access to all goods originating from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia. South Africa receives such treatment for 96% of its exports to the EU. The SADC EPA States have undertaken substantial tariff liberalization and complementary measures to enhance trade with the EU, leading to an increase in EU-SADC EPA trade flows. Since the EPA started applying in 2016, EU imports from SADC EPA states increased by 50% and its exports by 26%.
31. Both sides noted Angola's progress in adhering to the SADC Trade protocol, which can further boost intra-SADC trade and pave the way for Angola's accession to join the EU-SADC EPA. To this end, on 26 July 2022, the EU-SADC EPA Joint Council adopted a decision approving the launching of accession negotiations with Angola. Both sides also noted the entry into force of the EU-Angola Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement (SIFA), the first EU agreement of this kind, and the advancement of negotiations between the EU and five States of Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA5) - Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and

Zimbabwe, on the deepening of the existing interim EPA.

32. SADC commended the EU for the ongoing support under the 11th EDF Trade Facilitation Programme that addresses some of the challenges encountered by SADC States. The Programme has contributed to implementing the SADC Protocols on Trade and Trade in Services. Under the 2021-2027 MIP SSA, the EU is supporting trade initiatives in the SADC region in crucial areas such as trade in goods, trade in services, intellectual property rights and digital trade. Therefore, the EU assists SADC Member States and their private sector to conform to standards and technical regulations on efficient testing, certification and accreditation, including targeted support to enhance SMEs' value addition and export capacities in strategic value chains, as well as to address physical and non-physical barriers to trade, including for small-scale cross-border traders. All this support aims to enhance the business environment and improve the investment climate, which is essential to attract more investment needed to diversify SADC States' economies and add value to their exports.
33. The EU noted that the SADC region is in an advanced stage of finalizing the description of actions of the Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access Programme (ATCMA) SADC Regional Programme, to be implemented by United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the International Trade Center (ITC). The project aims to increase sustainable intra-African and EU-Africa trade, by enhancing market access for selected value chains, as well as export competitiveness for MSMEs in selected value chains.
34. Both sides agreed to continue engaging in a dialogue on any potential impacts of the EU Green Deal legislation.

Next Ministerial and Senior Officials Partnership Dialogues

35. It was agreed that the next Ministerial Dialogue will take place in Brussels in 2027, to be preceded by a Senior Officials Dialogue that will be convened in the SADC region in 2026. The Senior Officials Dialogue will take stock of the progress made in the implementation of ministerial resolutions and programming and will prepare for the next Ministerial Dialogue.