



STATEMENT BY SADC MINISTERS OF TRADE ON THE IMPACT OF GEOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON TRADE

Ministers of Trade from Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), at the SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade meeting held on 5 June 2025 in Harare, Republic of Zimbabwe, have expressed concern regarding the implications that current geopolitical developments on trade may have, not only for the region but also for the multilateral trading system.

The increasing emphasis on reciprocal trade measures that the world is witnessing calls into question the fundamental basis of multilateral and plurilateral trade agreements, whereby all parties to trade agreements are treated equally under the most-favoured nation principle. The benefits of the multilateral approach to countries such as those in the SADC region are intended to support economic development, particularly in poorer countries that would otherwise be disadvantaged. Increased use of reciprocal trade measures would erode such benefits.

SADC Member States reaffirm their support for the predictable, development-oriented, transparent, fair, inclusive, and rules-based multilateral trading system represented by the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, on which SADC protocols are based. SADC Member States acknowledge the critical role that the WTO has played in fostering global economic growth and serving as a forum for dialogue to help prevent escalating trade conflicts.

The SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade reaffirms its commitment to improving resilience against external trade shocks by enhancing self-reliance on intra-SADC trade in goods and services and collaborating on industrialisation policies to enhance value addition and beneficiation of critical raw materials produced by the region.

In order to safeguard the SADC internal market, SADC Member States commit to ensuring that the principles and obligations under the SADC trade and industry protocols are maintained and fully implemented.

ISSUED IN HARARE, REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

5TH JUNE 2025