



Signing ceremony Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) – World Food Programme (WFP) Memorandum of Understanding – 28 April 2026

Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa

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Strategic significance

- It is a privilege to mark the renewal of the MoU between SADC and WFP, a partnership that has grown into a practical platform for strengthening food security, resilience, preparedness and regional cooperation across Southern Africa.
- This renewal comes at a critical moment. The region is facing more frequent climate shocks, rising food insecurity, displacement pressures, fiscal constraints and increasing demands for stronger regional preparedness and response systems.
- Almost 45 million of the 318 million food insecure people globally are based in Southern Africa. 7.7 million children under 5 are suffering malnutrition. The region also hosts over 10 million internally displaced persons and over 1 million refugees.
- For WFP, this agreement is not simply a cooperation framework. It is a strategic vehicle to support SADC and its Member States in translating regional policies and commitments into operational systems, tools and capacities that can better protect vulnerable communities.

Building on a strong foundation

- The previous MoU delivered important regional results.
- Together, SADC and WFP advanced regional vulnerability analysis, school feeding, social protection, food fortification, local procurement, market systems, anticipatory action, logistics preparedness and disaster risk management.
- The partnership supported the strengthening of the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis, including stronger integration of nutrition, HIV, gender and food security evidence into regional analysis and advocacy.
- In school feeding, SADC and WFP helped advance Home-Grown School Feeding across Member States, supported national action plans, and contributed to SADC joining the Global School Meals Coalition. Today, national school meals systems across Southern Africa reach around 22 million children.
- The partnership also supported regional food fortification standards, indigenous food value chains, food safety systems, post-harvest management and local procurement.
- In disaster risk management, WFP's support to SHOC, emergency response training, GIS, emergency telecommunications, simulation exercises, drones, ICT equipment, logistics preparedness and anticipatory action has helped lay the foundation for a stronger regional emergency preparedness architecture.

Strategic direction for the next phase

- The next phase of the MoU should move beyond individual activities towards a more strategic focus on systems strengthening, regional public goods and support to Member States to operationalize SADC frameworks at national and local levels.
- The MoU should be positioned as a practical contribution to the implementation of the RISDP 2020–2030, the SADC Regional Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Action



Plan, the Regional Resilience Framework, the Regional Agricultural Policy, and the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

- A key priority should be to strengthen the link between regional policy frameworks and national systems, particularly in early warning, anticipatory action, disaster risk reduction, adaptive social protection, school feeding, logistics, strategic grain reserves, climate resilience and local procurement.
- Disaster Risk Management should remain a flagship area of cooperation. The operationalization of SHOC offers a major opportunity for SADC to strengthen regional coordination on preparedness, response, information management, supply chain coordination and anticipatory action.
- WFP's comparative advantage is not only in food assistance, but also in its role as a system enabler. WFP can bring operational expertise in supply chains, logistics, aviation, emergency telecommunications, data systems, food security analysis, vulnerability assessment and support to government-led shock-responsive systems.

Priority areas under the renewed MoU

- WFP and SADC can further strengthen RVAA methodologies, expand urban vulnerability analysis, align RVAA with INFORM and anticipatory action systems, and improve the use of evidence for preparedness, contingency planning and early action.
- The partnership will continue supporting Home-Grown School Feeding, adaptive social protection, school feeding policy implementation, and stronger links between school meals, nutrition, local procurement and digital education.
- Through this partnership food fortification, indigenous foods, climate-resilient agriculture, strategic grain reserves, local procurement and regional food systems transformation can be elevated.
- WFP and SADC will be able to give priority to strengthening the SADC Humanitarian Operations Centre operationalization, simulation exercises, logistics prepositioning, cross-border humanitarian logistics, early warning, emergency telecoms, GIS, and situation analysis.
- The two organizations can also deepen work on impact-based forecasting, scenario planning, contingency planning, trigger harmonization and early action systems linked to the SHOC Situation Room.
- Regional logistics prepositioning and cross-border humanitarian logistics arrangements will also be enhanced to improve speed and efficiency during emergencies.
- The renewed MoU provides an opportunity to position the SADC-WFP partnership as a strategic platform for regional resilience, stronger preparedness, food systems transformation and support to Member States.
- WFP remains committed to working with SADC to reduce vulnerability, strengthen regional systems and ensure that Southern Africa is better prepared to anticipate, respond to and recover from future shocks.