



OPENING REMARKS

SADC Macroeconomic Convergence Statistics Working Group Meeting 21–25 September 2026

Distinguished Representatives of SADC Member States,
Chairpersons and Members of the Technical Working Groups,
Colleagues from the SADC Secretariat,

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the SADC Secretariat, to welcome you all to the SADC Macroeconomic Convergence Statistics Working Group Meeting, taking place from 21 to 25 September 2026.

We are particularly pleased to convene this important meeting at a time when the availability of timely, reliable, comparable and harmonised macroeconomic statistics has become increasingly important for supporting regional economic integration, macroeconomic surveillance and evidence-based policy formulation.

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to all Member States for their continued commitment and participation in the work of the SADC Macroeconomic Convergence in particular the regional statistics. It is an honor to welcome you experts who were part of the 2025 capacity building process have contributed to the Technical Working Groups covering National Accounts, Consumer Price Statistics, Government Finance Statistics, Balance of Payments and Monetary and Financial Statistics.

This meeting provides an important opportunity to take stock of the progress made since our previous engagements, particularly since December 2025, and to translate the work undertaken into concrete regional actions and deliverables.

Purpose of the Meeting

The programme before us is both substantive and ambitious.

During the course of this week, we will consider the findings of the regional macroeconomic statistics initiative, identify remaining statistical gaps and agree on appropriate remedial actions. We will also review progress in the migration towards agreed international statistical standards and manuals, including SNA 2008, GFSM 2014, MFSMCG 2016, CPI 2020 and BPM6.

An important focus of our deliberations will be the implementation of harmonised data collection and output templates. This work is critical to ensuring that data produced by Member States can be compiled, compared and used effectively for regional macroeconomic surveillance and peer review processes.

We will also consider how input and output templates can be appropriately mapped and linked, while strengthening data management and dissemination arrangements.

Strengthening Regional Coordination

The success of the SADC macroeconomic convergence framework depends not only on the availability of statistics, but also on the quality, consistency, comparability and timeliness of those statistics.

For this reason, our discussions should go beyond identifying technical challenges. We should seek practical solutions that can be implemented at national and regional levels, with clear responsibilities, realistic timelines and appropriate mechanisms for monitoring progress.

The parallel Technical Working Group sessions provide an opportunity for experts to engage in detailed technical discussions. The subsequent plenary sessions will allow us to consolidate those discussions and identify areas where regional agreement or further coordination is required.

I therefore encourage all participants to approach the discussions in a spirit of technical openness, collaboration and constructive problem-solving.

Emerging Issues and Modernisation

Another important dimension of this meeting is our consideration of emerging issues and risks affecting macroeconomic statistics.

The statistical environment is changing rapidly. Technological developments, digitalisation, fintech, new data sources and evolving information needs are creating both opportunities and challenges for national statistical systems.

At the same time, developments such as geopolitical changes and climate-related risks are increasing the demand for timely and relevant economic information.

Our statistical systems must therefore continue to modernise while maintaining the fundamental principles of quality, methodological soundness, consistency and comparability.

In this context, the transition and modernisation roadmaps, including preparations associated with SNA 2025 and BPM7, will require careful consideration. Regional coordination will be particularly important to ensure that Member States are adequately supported as they progressively modernise their statistical systems.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

We also recognise that harmonisation and modernisation cannot be achieved without adequate capacity.

Capacity-building, technical assistance, knowledge sharing and peer learning must therefore remain integral components of our regional programme.

The meeting provides an opportunity to identify specific capacity constraints and to develop practical capacity-building and technical assistance programmes that respond to the needs of Member States.

In doing so, we should also maximise opportunities for countries to learn from one another and share experiences, tools, methodologies and good practices.

Strategic Priorities for 2027–2029

A key outcome of our discussions will be the development of the MSWG Regional Strategic Priorities and Work Programme for 2027–2029.

This is an important opportunity to ensure that our future programme of work is focused, realistic and aligned with the broader requirements of SADC macroeconomic convergence and regional integration.

The work programme should provide a clear pathway from the identification of statistical gaps to implementation, monitoring and reporting. It should also clearly reflect priorities relating to harmonisation, data quality, modernisation, capacity development and dissemination.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of this meeting, we should aim to have a clear and agreed set of outputs, including:

- a **Regional Implementation Matrix of Recommendations;**

- an agreed assessment of the **status of macroeconomic statistics, statistical gaps and remedial plans**;
- **harmonised data collection and output templates**;
- strengthened arrangements for **data management and dissemination** in support of macroeconomic surveillance and peer review;
- an **Emerging Issues and Risks Matrix**;
- appropriate **capacity-building, modernisation and transition plans or roadmaps**; and
- the **MSWG Regional Strategic Priorities and Work Programme for 2027–2029**.

These outputs should ultimately contribute to strengthening the evidence base for macroeconomic surveillance and supporting informed decision-making across the SADC region.

Closing

Distinguished Participants,

The quality of the outcomes from this meeting will depend greatly on the expertise, commitment and active participation of all of us.

I therefore encourage Member States and the Technical Working Groups to engage fully throughout the five days, to share experiences openly, to identify practical solutions to common challenges and, where possible, to reach clear regional understandings.

Let us use this meeting not only to review where we are, but also to establish **where we need to go and how we will get there**.

On behalf of the SADC Secretariat, I once again welcome you all and thank you for your continued commitment to strengthening macroeconomic statistics and supporting the SADC macroeconomic convergence agenda.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful meeting.

Thank you.