



MEDIA RELEASE

ON THE MARCH 2014 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS PREPARATORY MEETINGS

Since March 03, 2014, the Bingu International Conference Centre (BICC) has been a hive of preparatory activities for the meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers scheduled to take place from March 10 to 11, 2014 at the same venue.

The preparations included meetings of the SADC Finance Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee, the Committee of Ministers of Justice/Attorney-General and these were followed by the meeting of the Standing Committee of Officials that started here today and will continue for the next three days.

The Standing Committee of Officials is a technical advisory Committee to the Council of Ministers established under Article 13 of the SADC Treaty to serve as the clearing house of the Council agenda before each meeting, thus, preparing for Council's smooth deliberations.

As the clearing house of the Council agenda, the Standing Committee of Officials deliberates on the budget and work plan of SADC institutions, at which point it transforms itself into the Finance Committee, advised by its Finance Sub-Committee, which comprises seven (7) Member States at a time on a rotational basis.

Article 13 (1) provides for the Standing Committee of Officials to comprise of one Permanent Secretary or an official of equivalent rank from the Ministry that is the SADC National Contact Point in each Member State.

This Committee is one of SADC Institutions, established by Article 9 (1) and (2) of the SADC Treaty as, the Summit of Heads of State or Government, the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, the Council of Ministers, Sectoral and Cluster Ministerial Committees, Standing Committee of Officials, the Secretariat, the Tribunal and National Committees (NCs). Article 9 (2) provides that other institutions may be established as necessary.

With the exception of the NCs, the Secretariat and the Tribunal, all the SADC institutions operate on a troika basis comprising of the chair, outgoing and incoming chairpersons of SADC Summit, or double troika when combined with the chair, outgoing and incoming chairpersons of the Organ.

The Council is responsible for overseeing the functioning and development of SADC including approving SADC policies, strategies, work programmes and their implementation.

During this sitting, Council will deliberate and approve the 2014/15 Plan and Budget of the Organisation and take stock of the status of implementation of the 2013/14 Plan and Budget and of its previous decisions.

The SADC Secretariat is the executive arm and it comprises of an Management Team consisting of the Executive Secretary, two deputy Executive Secretaries and eight (8) directorates, namely, Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation; Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment; Infrastructure and Services; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Social and Human Development and Special Programmes; Policy, Planning and Resource Mobilisation, Budget and Finance and Human Resources and Administration. There are also five stand-alone units responsible for the cross-cutting issues of Gender & Development, Internal Audit, Legal Affairs, Public Relations and Information Communications Technologies.

It is the secretariat that drives the SADC agenda's execution and facilitation of its implementation.

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**Issued by the SADC Secretariat
Lilongwe, Malawi**

March 06, 2014