



POST- COUNCIL MEDIA BRIEFING

BY

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**GRAND PALM
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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the media. I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you all to this briefing session on the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Ministers held during the past two days. The SADC Council of Ministers fruitfully deliberated on several issues of significant importance to regional integration and development, and made decisions on how to overcome challenges faced by the region and how to accelerate implementation of previous Summit and Council decisions.

The Council of Ministers reviewed implementation of its decisions; approved the SADC budget for the 2016/2017 SADC activities of US\$71,987,435, and reviewed progress made on the implementation of 2015/2016 Plan and budget.

Council took specific measures to mitigate natural disasters, particularly drought and food security. In this regard, Council approved the Declaration of the Regional Drought Disaster and issuing of Statement of Appeal for assistance by Summit through the Chair of SADC in consultation with Summit Members. Council also approved the establishment of a regional Logistics Team to coordinate a regional response in close collaboration with Member States and International Cooperating Partners. Furthermore, Council invited Member States to provide immediate relief to meet the food and non-food requirements of more than 28 million vulnerable populations who are affected by the previous poor season; provide preliminary data on cereal and other food requirements for the 2016/17 marketing year by 30 March 2016 in order to facilitate planning logistics and resource mobilisation; and scale up appropriate climate smart technologies on agriculture, energy, water and other relevant areas in order to adapt and mitigate against the impact of climate change.

Council approved the proposed timelines for the finalisation of indicative investment costs to implement the Revised RISDP 2015- 20 for submission to Council at its next meeting in August 2016. This is in line with the implementation of priorities outlined in the revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2015-2020, which prioritises industrialization and

market integration; infrastructure development to support regional integration; peace, security and political cooperation; special programmes of regional dimension. In this regard, Council urged Member States to submit reports on the implementation of the RISDP and other SADC Programmes/Projects by 30 May 2016. A consolidated Progress Report on the implementation of the RISDP will be submitted to Council in August, 2016.

Council approved the SADC Trade Facilitation Programme which will be mainstreamed in the RISDP implementation plan to support trade integration, industrialization, and mobilization of resources. In this regard Member States have been urged to align national and regional instruments with the provisions of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; and Member States who have not ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement have been urged to do so.

On progress on preparation of the costed implementation plan of the SADC Industrialisation strategy and roadmap, Council directed the Secretariat to expedite the finalisation of the Draft Costed Action Plan. Council also urged Member States to ensure that national level interventions are clearly mapped out in the Action Plan to facilitate effective implementation by Member States.

On the Tripartite Free Trade Area, Council urged Member States to expedite conclusion of outstanding Phase 1 negotiation issues, which include rules of origin, trade remedies, and finalization of tariff negotiations in order to fully operationalize the Tripartite Free Trade area and endorsed the proposal by the Tripartite Task Force to convene a Tripartite Council of Ministers, preceded by the Sectoral Ministerial Committee meeting on 9-14 May 2016 to facilitate unlocking of all outstanding Phase 1 issues; and directed the Secretariat as current chair and coordinator of the Tripartite Task Force to facilitate the legal scrubbing of all completed Annexes before the proposed Sectoral Ministerial Committee; and mobilization of resources for Phase 2 TFTA issues.

On the combating of poaching of wildlife, Council approved the proposal by Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources for the convening of a

meeting of the Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources and Ministers of Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, to discuss the implementation modalities for the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-poaching Strategy; and the establishment of a SADC Wildlife Crime Prevention and Coordination Unit and that this should be considered as part of the restructuring process of the SADC Secretariat.

Council has directed the Secretariat to submit a proposal to the Ministerial Committee of the Organ regarding the translation of all volumes of the Hashim Mbita Publication in all SADC official languages.

Council endorsed the candidature and nomination of Hon. Walter Mzembi by the Government of Zimbabwe to the position of Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation

Council expressed its gratitude to the government and people of the Republic of Botswana for the hospitality extended to all delegates and the excellent facilities placed at the disposal of delegates, making the Council of Ministers meeting a resounding success.

I thank you.