



## STATEMENT

### Meeting of the SADC Committee of Ministers of Employment and Labour and Social Partners

SADC Ministers responsible for Employment and Labour and Social Partners met on 5 March 2020 at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, to review progress in the implementation of their commitments to advance decent work in the region. The meeting, held under the theme “Promoting labour market stability and harmonious industrial relations for sustainable development”, was attended by 14 SADC Member States namely, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also in attendance were representatives from SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF), Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC), the International Labour Organization and International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The meeting was officially opened by Her Excellency Mama Samia Suluhu Hassan, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who underscored the need for the SADC Employment and Labour Sector to address the challenges and opportunities posed by the future of work noting in particular the need to maximise the job creation potential of ongoing technological transformation. She highlighted that job creation was one of the means to fully address poverty and inequality, observing that concerted action was needed in addressing the youth unemployment challenge. Mama Samia Suluhu Hassan proceeded to launch the Tanzania Youth Internship Programme, which provides valuable opportunities for young graduates to be attached at work places in the public and private sector for them to gain practical skills and work experience. With the active cooperation of public and private sector enterprises, the internship programme has opened a window of opportunity for more than 2000 young graduates to successfully transition to the workplace. She called upon all SADC Member States to deepen interventions to equip youth with skills that are relevant to the ever-changing world of youth through similar programmes.

Her Excellency Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, the Executive Secretary of SADC, mentioned that employment and labour issues continued to receive top priority in the Member States, highlighting that the region was moving in the right direction through interventions to strengthen social dialogue and labour market stability, which are crucial for investment and job creation. She underscored the need for Member States to enhance multi-sectoral engagement and coordination involving all key sectors and actors to promote full and productive employment in line with the 39<sup>th</sup> SADC Summit theme of

*“A Conducive Environment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, Increased Intra-Regional Trade and Job Creation”*. In this regard, she explained that SADC Secretariat is coordinating the development of the comprehensive employment and labour policy framework to address decent work deficits the region. The Executive Secretary further said the policy development exercise is coinciding with the formulation of the Vision 2050 and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030, and called upon the sector to align its interventions to the visioning process for the region.

Ministers and Social Partners approved the development of a new Protocol on Employment and Labour to accelerate progress towards a harmonised and coordinated regional labour market that can deliver on the decent work agenda.

Ministers and Social Partners approved the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan (2020-2025) and urged Member States to commit funds towards implementation of the Plan. The Plan is premised on the notion that well managed labour migration is mutually beneficial and can facilitate greater development and economic stability for all countries in the SADC region. The Ministers and Social Partners commended the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for having mobilised financial resources for the Plan.

Ministers and Social Partners directed the Secretariat to expedite finalisation of the SADC Employment and Labour Policy Framework for consideration by the Ministers and Social Partners at their next meeting.

Ministers and Social Partners noted the Report of the Forum on Dispute Prevention and Resolution, directed the Secretariat to develop draft Guidelines on labour dispute prevention and resolution in SADC and to report on progress at their next meeting.

Ministers and Social Partners noted the approval by Council of the tripartite joint sector meeting of Ministers responsible for Employment, Finance and Trade, as well as Social Partners, to discuss employment creation.

Ministers and Social Partners noted the reports submitted by social partners, the SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF) and Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC), and directed the Secretariat to convene a regional workshop on minimum wage setting. Ministers and Social Partners urged Member States to facilitate greater social dialogue at the national level.

Ministers and Social Partners requested the ILO to support the Secretariat in developing a youth focused project document for consideration by the Ministers and Social Partners at their next meeting; and also requested the SADC Committee of Statistics to prioritise production of labour market data.

Ministers and Social Partners adopted the proposed Guidelines on Probability of Social Security Benefits in SADC and urged Member States to consider them in bilateral and

multilateral cooperation on social security. Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe volunteered to pilot implementation of the Guidelines.

Ministers and Social Partners noted the ratification status of SADC's prioritised ILO conventions and urged Member States that are still to ratify them to do so, with special consideration for Convention nos. 81 on Labour Inspection and 144 on Tripartite Consultation, that are near universal ratification. Ministers and Social Partners commended Madagascar for being the first Member State to ratify all SADC prioritised ILO conventions and urged other Member States to do so.

Ministers and Social Partners noted the Troika report on the status of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment highlighting that the Instrument remains the basis for reforming the ILO governing bodies. They requested Namibia and Zimbabwe, working with the Secretariat, to develop a Strategy Paper for the African region to achieve the objectives of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment and to present the paper at the next meeting of the Joint Tripartite Technical Sub-Committees (JTTS).

Ministers and Social Partners requested the African Union Commission to place on the agenda of the next AU Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment an item for discussion of concerted action and strategies by the African region to achieve the objectives of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment.

Ministers and Social Partners noted the decision of the AU Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Social Development, Labour and Employment (SDLE) requiring the AU Commission to consider facilitating consultations on an African candidate for the position of ILO Director General. Ministers and Social Partners requested the SADC Council of Ministers to endorse the proposal to have a single African candidate for the position of ILO Director General and to request the African Union Commission to facilitate the selection of a single African candidate.

Ministers and Social Partners expressed gratitude to the United Republic of Tanzania for successfully hosting the 2020 meeting of Ministers and Social Partners.

**Done in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, 6th March 2020**