



## **SADC Council of Ministers discusses programmes, policies and interventions to consolidate regional integration and development**

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The meeting was held under the 42nd SADC Summit Theme, **“Promoting industrialization through agro-processing, mineral beneficiation, and regional value chains for inclusive and resilient economic growth”**, which takes into account the urgent need to enhance the roll out of the SADC industrialization and market integration programmes in the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

The meeting was officially opened by His Excellency Mr. Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In his Opening Statement, the Prime Minister reiterated the DRC’s commitment to SADC's programmes and projects aimed at achieving the region’s development objectives outlined in the RISDP 2020-2030 and the SADC Vision 2050.

The Prime Minister highlighted the need for enhanced peace, stability and security to create an enabling environment for sustainable investment and economic growth in the SADC region. He expressed the gratitude of the DRC for SADC's continued solidarity and support in finding the lasting solution to the security challenges in the eastern DRC.

On his part, the Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, His Excellency Didier Mazenga Mukanzu, Minister of Regional Integration and Francophonie of the DRC called on Member States to redouble their efforts to eliminate all forms of obstacles that hinder SADC's efforts towards achieving the priorities outlined in the RISDP 2020-2030, particularly in the areas of infrastructure in support of regional integration and industrial development and market integration. He said the removal of these obstacles will enable increased intra-regional trade, job creation and the improvement of the living standards of the people.

The Executive Secretary of SADC, His Excellency Mr Elias M. Magosi presented an overview of the state of the region’s development and the progress towards the consolidation of regional integration and development.

H.E. Magosi highlighted that infrastructure development in support of regional integration remains critical and that there is need for significant resources to implement the priority projects identified in the RISDP 2020-2030. On this note, the Executive Secretary said SADC has an infrastructure financing gap ranging between US\$30 to US\$40 billion per year, while the estimated budget to fund development programmes in the RISDP 2020-2030 is over US\$50 billion. “This scenario calls for innovative ways of financing programmes and projects, including establishing win-win partnerships with the private sector” H.E. Magosi said, and added that the Secretariat was collaborating with the African Development Bank to fast-track operationalisation of the SADC Regional Development Fund, to unlock resources to implement various infrastructure development programmes in the region.

On industrial development, the Executive Secretary updated the Council of Ministers that the Secretariat undertook a regional study on the viability of investment projects to develop energy storage (batteries), as one of the copper and mining inputs regional value chains which identified 20 regional projects spread over 9 of the 16 countries in the SADC region. He said, if implemented successfully, these projects have a potential to replace importation of batteries worth US\$2.3 billion and enhance the development of minerals value chains.

Regarding the youth, the SADC Executive Secretary called for the incorporation of interventions geared towards addressing the challenges being faced by the youth, such as high unemployment and the exclusion of youths in decision-making and leadership positions, to fully exploit the youthful demographic make-up of the SADC region, which according to the current estimates, consists of about 75% who are aged between 35 years and below.

The Council of Ministers observed a Moment of Silence in solidarity with the Republics of Malawi and Mozambique, following the devastating Tropical Cyclone Freddy which triggered heavy rains and flooding and led to loss of lives and extensive damage to infrastructure. In a related development, the SADC Executive Secretary on 18 March, 2023 travelled to Malawi to deliver condolences on behalf of SADC and to appreciate and assess the extent of the damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Freddy.

During the meeting, Council approved an amount of **US\$300,000** towards humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Malawi in response to the declaration of the State of Disaster and the appeal for external support by the President of the Republic of Malawi, His Excellency Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera on 15 March 2023.

**The following are some of the key outcomes of the Council of Ministers meeting.**

- Council approved the SADC Annual Corporate Plan and budget for the Financial Year 2023/2024 to support activities geared towards the implementation of SADC priorities as outlined in the RISDP 2020-2030.
- Council approved the list of prioritised, high impact regional projects aligned to the strategic objectives and outcomes of the RISDP 2020-2030 and contribution to the Regional Integration Agenda. The prioritised projects were identified based on their regional impact, involvement of two or more Member States, and their potential for cross-sectoral impacts and synergies.
- As one way of alleviating the energy challenges that the SADC region is experiencing, Council approved the establishment of the Regional Transmission Infrastructure Financing Facility (RTIFF) as recommended by the Ministers of Finance and Investment. The RTIFF is aimed at channelling and leveraging funding towards priority regional transmission projects is expected to accelerate implementation of priority transmission projects that will interconnect all the mainland states, remove bottlenecks in the grid and allow new generation sources to augment the regional power pool.
- Council urged Member States to fast-track national processes and sign the Memorandum of Agreement amongst the SADC Member States for the establishment of SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC), so that the Centre can become operational and coordinate regional disaster risk preparedness, response and early recovery to support Member States affected by disasters.
- Council affirmed its solidarity to bring lasting solutions to the security challenges in the Eastern DRC and commended Member States for the continued support to the DRC.

The Council of Ministers oversees the functioning and development of SADC and ensures that organisation's policies are properly implemented. The Council consists of Ministers from each Member State, usually from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning or Finance. The Council of Ministers meeting is usually preceded by the meeting of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials, which is a technical advisory committee to the Council of Ministers and acts as a clearing house for the Council agenda.

**Source:** [sadc.int](http://sadc.int)

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