

SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO MEET ON 29TH MAY 2020 TO CONSIDER ISSUES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION, AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The Council of Ministers of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) will hold a virtual meeting on 29th May, 2020 to consider a range of regional development and cooperation issues, including taking a regional coordinated action to address the impact of COVID-19 in the region.

The meeting will be chaired by Hon. Prof. Palamagamba John Kabudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers with support from the SADC Executive Secretary, Her Excellency Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax.

Ahead of the Council of Ministers meeting, the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials kicked off their meeting on 27th May, 2020 to review and clear documents in preparation for the Council of Ministers meeting.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting of the SADC Standing Committee of Senior Officials, which precedes the Council of Ministers meeting, H.E. Ambassador Colonel Wilbert Augustine Ibuge, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Chairperson of the Standing Committee SADC Senior Officials, urged the Senior Officials to thoroughly deliberate issues in preparation for the meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers.

During the meeting, the Ministers will consider the progress of the implementation of the theme for the 39th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, A Conducive Environment for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, Increased intra-Regional Trade and Job Creation, which was adopted in August 2019 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. The Ministers will also review the progress in the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) and the status of the SADC intra-trade and SADC Industrialisation.

In the context of COVID-19, the Ministers will take collective regional action to address the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SADC Region. According to the preliminary findings of the SADC Secretariat's analysis of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in the SADC region, the pandemic will have short, medium and long-term negative impacts on all social and economic sectors, given its cross-cutting nature.

The Ministers will review the regional Guidelines for the harmonisation and facilitation of movement of critical goods and services across the SADC region during the COVID-19 pandemic which Council adopted on 6th April, 2020. In the same vein, the Ministers will discuss the need to accelerate implementation of regional strategies and instruments that are aimed at responding to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Regional Development Fund; the Preparedness and Response and Disaster Fund; and the Regional Resilient Strategic Framework 2020-2030.

This will be the third virtual meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers since the outbreak of COVID-19. The mandate of the Council of Ministers, which consists of Ministers from each Member State, usually from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning, or Finance, is to oversee the functioning of the SADC institution and ensure that its policies and decisions are implemented.

Source: sadc.int