



## **Press Statement**

### **Joint meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Tourism**

**23-24 November 2017**

**Southern Sun Hotel, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa**

1. SADC Ministers responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Tourism met from 23 to 24 November 2017 in Pretoria, South Africa to review the overall state and performance, as well as new development in the environment, wildlife, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and tourism sectors. These sectors are inter-related.
2. The meeting was attended by 12 SADC Member States, with the exception of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Seychelles, and was co-chaired by Honourable Edna Molewa, Minister of Environmental Affairs; Honourable Tokozile Xasa, Minister of Tourism; and Honourable Senzeni Zokwana, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, from the Republic of South Africa. In her opening remarks, Minister Xasa highlighted that the meeting would deliberate on matters affecting the sectors of Environment, Wildlife, Forestry, Aquaculture and Fisheries and Tourism. She added that the commitments made at the meeting would strengthen SADC's contribution to sustainability, inclusive growth and the realisation of the Sustainable Developed Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063.
3. Honourable Ministers were informed by the Deputy Executive Secretary (Regional Integration), Dr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo, of the progress made towards the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and the importance of ensuring that apart from sustainably managing the natural resources in the region, there is a need to ensure development of sustainable value chains in order to exploit the full benefit that these resources provide for the region.
4. Honourable Ministers were also informed of progress in the implementation of the new organisational structure of the SADC Secretariat which was approved by Council in March 2017 that responds to the strategic focus on industrialisation and integrated sustainable management of natural resources for economic development. Under the new organisational structure, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Directorate now has four programmes, namely, Natural Resources Management, Environment and Climate Change, Tourism, and Agriculture and Food Security.
5. Honourable Ministers noted progress made in the implementation of SADC Protocols on Environment for Sustainable Development, Fisheries, Forestry, Tourism, and Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, and associated strategies, programmes and projects and the areas where implementation was lagging due to limited resources. They directed the SADC Secretariat to mobilise resources for their implementation.
6. Ministers agreed to sign the Charter establishing the Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre in Mozambique. Ministers also approved the establishment of the Regional

Financing Facility for SADC Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) and directed the Secretariat to finalise implementation modalities in collaboration with the Project Steering Committee.

7. Honourable Ministers also noted with concern that the SADC Protocol on Environmental Management and Sustainable development has not entered into force and urged Member States to ratify the Protocol.
8. Honourable Ministers also discussed the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) which Member States are Parties to; such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Convention Combating Desertification (UNCCD). Ministers noted the outcomes of recent meetings of Conference of Parties and their implications to the region. Ministers commended the Republic of South Africa and Member States for successfully hosting the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP 17).
9. Ministers emphasised on the importance of Tourism to the economies of Member States and its interconnectedness with other sectors and welcomed progress made in the activation of the Tourism Coordinating Unit (TCU) at the SADC Secretariat through the Secretariat structure review process. The Unit will ensure effective coordination, harmonisation and implementation of policy, legislation and related issues.
10. Ministers noted that Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) has been transformed pursuant to the decision of Ministers of Tourism at their meeting in July 2016 in Gaborone, Botswana. In this regard, Ministers directed the SADC Secretariat in collaboration with Member States to fast-track the review of the Protocol on Tourism Development in SADC, the RETOSA Charter and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SADC Secretariat and the RETOSA Secretariat to incorporate changes and facilitate transformation and sustainability of RETOSA.
11. Ministers noted the relevance of the TFCA Development Strategy to Tourism development in the region and endorsed the proposal for RETOSA to assume the coordination of marketing of SADC TFCAs as regional tourism products. They directed the Secretariat and RETOSA to incorporate the role of marketing of TFCAs in the review of founding documents (i.e. RETOSA Charter and Memorandum of Understanding between RETOSA and SADC Secretariat).
12. Finally, Ministers thanked His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa and current Chair of SADC, the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa for hosting this important joint meeting of Ministers responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Tourism and for the warm hospitality accorded to them and their delegations.

**SADC Secretariat and the Government of South Africa  
24 November 2017**