



COMMUNIQUÉ

2011 MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENDER/ WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

1. SADC Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs met in Windhoek, Namibia on the 2nd June, 2011. The meeting was attended by Ministers and representatives from Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also in attendance were representatives of International Cooperating Partners being the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), UN Women and Southern African Research and Documentation Centre and SADC Parliamentary Forum.
2. The meeting was officially opened by Hon. Marco Hausiku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Namibia, H.E. Hifikepunye Pohamba. In his address, he called upon all SADC Governments to turn their good intentions, demonstrated through the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, into actionable programmes. This approach should enable women to play an active role in different aspects thereby contributing towards the achievement of gender equality in the Southern African region.

3. The Ministers discussed the SADC Regional Gender Programme and reviewed progress made by Member States towards promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. They also discussed progress made in the signing and ratification of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The Ministers noted that thirteen (13) SADC Member States have signed the Protocol, while seven (7) signatories namely Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have deposited their instruments of Ratification with the SADC Secretariat. Ministers congratulated Member States that have ratified the Protocol and urged those who have not yet signed or ratified to facilitate the signing and ratification process. Ministers endorsed a roadmap for the operationalization of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which should provide a systematic approach for implementation at both regional and national levels.

4. Ministers noted progress made by Member States on the status of women's representation in politics and decision making positions. They noted with concern some regression in some Member States that held elections recently; hence emphasis was placed on the need to safeguard achievements made in gender parity over the years. The status of women's representation at Parliament level shows that only four SADC Member States have reached more than thirty percent representation of women at Parliament with South Africa being the highest with 45%, followed by Mozambique at 39.2%, Angola with 38.6% and the United Republic of Tanzania having 36%. Ministers urged Member States to develop innovative measures to fast track equal representation of women in political and decision making positions.

5. In the area of Gender Mainstreaming, Ministers noted progress made in the regional gender mainstreaming initiative especially on capacity building of gender mainstreaming trainers. Ministers emphasised the importance of integrating a gender perspective in climate change policies and strategies. They endorsed the implementation of the resolution on mainstreaming gender into climate change policies and strategies adopted at the 55th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women held in February/March 2011 in New York. Furthermore, Ministers noted progress made to develop the SADC Strategy to address sexual violence against women and girls, particularly in conflict and post conflict situations and the SADC Framework for Mainstreaming Gender within the SADC Peace and Security Architecture.
6. Ministers approved the SADC Advocacy Strategy on Informal Cross Border Trade which provides clear policy and legislative action areas necessary for creating a conducive and enabling environment for women in trade, especially on Informal Cross Border Trade. Ministers received a report on the 2010 Women In Business Trade Fair and Investment Forum held in Windhoek, Namibia in August 2010. The meeting noted the positive results that the Trade Fair yielded, in particular the creation of new business opportunities, expanded markets, new business connections and capacity building for Business Women.
7. The meeting also witnessed the official launch of the SADC region and the Namibian Chapter of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) as well as the SADC Launch of the Africa UNite to end Violence Against Women and Children Campaign by the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, Madam Penehupifo Pohamba.

8. Ministers commended the Government of the Republic of Namibia for hosting the meeting and expressed their gratitude for the warm welcome, great hospitality, excellent logistical arrangements provided to all the participants.
9. Ministers congratulated the SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration, Ms. Emilie A. Mushobekwa for being the first woman appointed at top management level in the Secretariat.
10. Ministers also thanked and applauded Angola, for accepting to host the 2011 Women In Business Trade Fair and Investment Forum in November as well as the next meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs in June 2012.

Windhoek, Republic of Namibia

2nd June 2011