

MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, 16 JULY 2010, VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

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Ministers responsible for Environment and Natural Resources Management from SADC Member States met on 16th July 2010 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The meeting was attended by Ministers from 10 SADC Member States namely Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, Angola and the United Republic of Tanzania were represented by Senior Officers. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Jose Endundo Bononge, Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism, from the DRC and hosted by Hon. Francis Nhema, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resource Management of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Ministers reviewed the performance of the environment and natural resources sectors, in line with the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and current global developments. Ministers noted progress as follows:

Status of Natural Resources and the Environment

Ministers underscored the importance of biodiversity and natural resources in supporting livelihoods, income generation, and poverty reduction at community level. Ministers noted progress made by Member States in conserving wildlife, forests and management of fisheries resources.

Position for negotiation during the COP 16 meeting

Ministers noted that the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 16) will take place in November 2010 in Cancun, Mexico. The meeting will discuss the future direction of global climate change regime following the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. To this end, Ministers adopted the African common negotiating position for the UNFCCC COP 16 meeting, and called upon the region to support it. Ministers undertook to work closely with the African Union on climate change issues facing the continent. The African position prioritises adaptation to adverse effects of climate change such as droughts, floods and cyclones, which the region is already experiencing.

Common Negotiating Position for Access and Benefit Sharing

Ministers endorsed the African common negotiating position on 'Access and Benefit Sharing' and urged SADC Member States to support it.

Implementation of Protocols

Ministers recognised the critical role of Protocols as overarching policy frameworks for fostering collaboration and cooperation among Member States. To this end, they approved strategies for implementation of Protocols on Fisheries and Forestry, and called upon Member States to implement them.

Ministers observed progress made in achieving sustainable natural resources management and noted that Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, bush fires, human-wildlife conflicts, and uncoordinated management of shared fisheries resources still pose challenges to the region. Ministers called for enhanced collaboration among Member States. In this regard, they approved an Action Plan to implement the SADC Statement of Commitment to combat IUU fishing in the region.

New Programmes in Natural Resources and Environment

Ministers approved new regional programmes on Aquaculture, Fire Management and Co-management of Shared Fisheries Resources of the Zambezi Basin. These programmes will contribute to capacity development, sharing of best practices, income generation and enhanced food security. Ministers then called upon the Member States to implement the approved programmes.

Year of Biodiversity and Commitment to environment and natural resource management

Ministers noted that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and encouraged Member States to observe and celebrate it. Ministers planted trees at Chogam Park in Victoria Falls in recognition of the International Year of Biodiversity. Ministers encouraged tree planting in all Member States as one of the measures for combating deforestation and land degradation.

Ministers re-affirmed their commitment to sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, and called upon all stakeholders to undertake development activities in a sustainable manner.

Finally, Ministers thanked the Government and the people of the Republic of Zimbabwe for hosting the meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to them and their delegations.

Done at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, this 16th day of July 2010