

8/11/2002 – 1900 H

**COMMUNIQUE
OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE BETWEEN
THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) AND THE
EUROPEAN UNION (EU)**

Official Opening

1. The Fifth SADC-EU Joint Ministerial Conference was held in Maputo, Mozambique from 7th to 8th November, 2002. The Conference was attended by Ministers from Member States of SADC and the EU, the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Prega Ramsamy and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr. Poul Nielson. The Conference was co-chaired by the Honourable Dr. Ana Dias Lourenco, Minister of Planning of the Republic of Angola and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers and the Danish Minister for European Affairs and President of the Council of the EU, Mr. Bertel Haarder.
2. The Conference was officially opened by His Excellency Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique. Opening statements were also made by the Honourable Dr. Ana Dias Lourenco, Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers and Minister of Planning of the Republic of Angola, the Danish Minister for European Affairs and President of the Council of the EU Honourable Bertel Haarder, the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Prega Ramsamy and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr. Poul Nielson.

Review of the Berlin Initiative

3. When adopting the report on the review of the Berlin Initiative¹, the two sides reaffirmed the fundamental principles and objectives of the Initiative and the importance they attach to the respect for human rights, protection of minorities, fundamental freedoms and the principles of democracy. The Conference agreed that the Berlin Initiative was a unique vehicle for frank, open and in-depth dialogue between the two regions. The Conference reaffirmed commitment towards building, consolidating and strengthening democracy founded on accountability, transparency, good governance and the rule of law. The Conference acknowledged that regional organisations a play special role in conflict prevention, resolution, and peace keeping and that this role should be reinforced.

¹ Contained in annex I

4. The Conference expressed the desire to enhance political dialogue outside regular meetings to tackle issues as and when they arise. In this regard the Conference recalled and reaffirmed the joint institutional framework adopted at the 2nd SADC-EU Ministerial Conference on 14-15 October 1996 in Windhoek, Namibia, which makes provision for Ministerial Meetings when necessary.
5. The Conference agreed on the need to clarify the form of participation of NGOs in the future SADC-EU dialogue. The importance of an on-going dialogue with civil society and the business sector was stressed.

Democracy, Peace and Security

6. The Conference welcomed the return of general peace to the SADC region, as a result of cessation of hostilities in Angola and the DRC. The Conference noted the signing of the cease-fire agreements between the Angolan Government and UNITA, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the DRC and the signing of cease-fire and powersharing Agreements amongst the parties to the conflict in the DRC. However, the Conference stressed the need for an end to hostilities in the Eastern part of the DRC. The Conference called on the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to Angola and the DRC and to support the two countries in the process of reconstruction and reconciliation.
7. The Conference noted that the EU intends to finalise enlargement negotiations at the European Council in Copenhagen in December 2002. This has the potential to improve trade conditions especially for developing countries, including SADC and to work towards improved conditions for international agricultural trade – including better market access – through negotiated outcome, according to the WTO Doha development agenda agreed in November 2001.
8. The Conference noted that countries in the SADC region have held regular multiparty elections but emphasised that in order to further strengthen democracy in the region there is need for increased voter education, the right infrastructure within which to hold elections, and the strengthening of independent electoral commissions.
9. The Conference emphasised that democratic principles should not only apply within individual countries but also to international institutions and organisations.
10. The Conference urged all countries that have not done so to ratify and implement the Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

11. The Ministers welcomed the restructuring of SADC institutions aimed at strengthening its capacities. In this regard, the EU welcomed the formulation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the process of regional integration as the basis for future EU support. In this respect the Conference welcomed the signing of the Regional Indicative Programme between the European Commission and the SADC Secretariat during the Conference and the ratification by Greece of the Cotonou Agreement.
12. The Conference expressed its concern about the food and humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa. The Conference welcomed the commitment of the European Commission and EU Member States to continue to provide humanitarian relief in response to the UN/SADC consolidated humanitarian appeal. The Conference stressed that stakeholders should not use food aid and other humanitarian assistance as an instrument for political and economic pressure.
13. The Ministerial Conference expressed deep concern about the HIV/AIDS prevalence in Southern Africa, which is an obstacle to poverty eradication and sustainable development in the region. The EU reiterated its strong commitment to support the SADC countries' efforts in developing and implementing efficient responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
14. The Conference fully subscribed to the Millennium Declaration as the basis for common values and stressed the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which require joint actions by all partners.
15. The Conference welcomed the launch of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this regard, the Conference noted that NEPAD provides for the African Peer Review Mechanism which is a self-monitoring mechanism for African leaders to identify problems and to take corrective measures to ensure sustainable growth and development.
16. The Conference called for new methods of controlling cross border crime, illicit drug trafficking and the proliferation of small arms in order to ensure safe environment for the citizens of the two regions.
17. The Conference condemned all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, irrespective of their motivation, forms or manifestations. Ministers reiterated their full support for UN Security Council Resolutions 1373(2001) and 1377(2001) and their commitment to implement these resolutions.
18. On the question of Zimbabwe, SADC and EU could not reach an agreement.

Cooperation towards Poverty Eradication

19. The Conference noted that one of the main objectives of SADC is poverty reduction and its eventual eradication. The Conference welcomed the decision by the EU to increase its ODA towards the 0,7% target, and the commitment to increase ODA from 0,33% to 0.39% in 2006, including increased ODA for Africa.
20. The Conference further observed that there were endogenous and exogenous factors which exacerbate poverty in the SADC region such as civil strife, droughts, floods, other natural disasters, disease, violence and economic instability and shocks.
21. The Conference noted that the debt burden, market access and supply constraints represent obstacles to poverty reduction. In this regard, the Conference called for increased commitment in the intensification of debt relief efforts for the SADC region within the context of Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC).
22. The Conference acknowledged the commitment by SADC to remove intra regional barriers under the SADC Trade Protocol and the commitment by both the EU and SADC to work towards the removal of barriers to international trade.
23. The Conference noted the need to speed up negotiations on the Economic Partnerships Agreements with the context of the Cotonou Agreement in order to facilitate the smooth integration of ACP countries into the global economy.
24. The Conference acknowledged the development of a regional poverty reduction strategy which should take into account equitable income distribution in order to ensure access by the poor to income generating assets. The target should be to attain and sustain economic growth rates of at least 7 percent annually through the mobilisation of the required investment resources in order meet the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015.
25. The Conference expressed deep concern about the HIV/AIDS prevalence in Southern Africa, which is a threat to poverty eradication and sustainable development in the region. The Conference noted that vulnerable groups such as women and the disabled bear the brunt of poverty which in the case of women is exacerbated by HIV/AIDS. In this respect the Conference welcomed the commitment of the EU to support the SADC Multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and other regional efforts to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

26. The Conference called for increased investment in Agriculture and the transfer of technology particularly for small-scale farmers in order to increase productivity.
27. The Conference underlined the important role of civil society in the fight against poverty.

Any Other Business

28. The Conference agreed to hold the 6th Ministerial Conference in 2004 on a date and at a place to be mutually agreed upon.
29. The Conference expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Mozambique for the hospitality extended to the delegates and for the excellent arrangements and facilities provided for the Conference.