



**COUNCIL OF
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**COMMUNIQUÉ
EU-SADC DOUBLE TROIKA MINISTERIAL MEETING
11 NOVEMBER, 2008
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

OFFICIAL OPENING

The EU-SADC Double Troika Ministerial Meeting was held in Brussels, Belgium on 11 November 2008. The meeting marked fourteen years of EU-SADC Dialogue under the Berlin Initiative, and was preceded by a meeting of Senior Officials on the same day. The meeting was attended by Ministers and representatives of the SADC Double Troika, and the EU Troika. The SADC delegation consisted of representatives of the Republic of South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Zambia, Kingdom of Swaziland, Republic of Angola, and the Republic of Mozambique assisted by the SADC Secretariat. The European Union delegation consisted of the Republic of France, the Czech Republic, the European Commission and the Council Secretariat.

P R E S S

The meeting was officially opened by the Honourable Alain Joyandet, Minister of State for Cooperation and the Francophonie, attached to the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, representing the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Honourable Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa and the Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers.

Regional Integration, Development Cooperation and Economic Partnership Agreement

The EU and SADC reaffirmed the importance of regional economic integration as a factor for development and poverty alleviation and a key element of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and the 2008-2010 Action Plan agreed at the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon, in December 2007. They welcomed the Commission Communication on Regional Integration for Development in the ACP Countries and the organisation on 22 October of the first Summit meeting between COMESA, EAC and SADC which launched the initiative of a grand free trade area.

The Parties emphasized the aid effectiveness principle enshrined in the Paris and Windhoek Declarations of anchoring development cooperation on the strategies of the countries and regions concerned. In this context, they noted that the SADC International Cooperating Partners framework constitutes a valuable instrument for achieving the aid effectiveness objectives of the Paris and Windhoek Declarations and the Accra Agenda for Action and reiterated their support for the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). They concurred that while donors support remains crucial, increasing the SADC Secretariat's capacity and the regional ownership of financing mechanisms are key objectives.

They agreed that needs identified within the RISDP should be prioritised with a view to providing an operational framework and a shared strategy for cooperation involving all donors. The EPA process should assist the Organization to deepen regional integration in line with the RISDP, in order for the region to achieve its overarching goals of economic growth, poverty eradication and the achievements of a sustainable pattern of development. The meeting also noted that concerns expressed by the negotiators on some of the provisions of the Interim Agreement will be addressed adequately. They reiterated their support for the negotiations aimed at signing a final Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) that will be an effective development instrument putting trade at the service of development, supported by appropriate accompanying measures.

The Parties welcomed the entry into force of the 10th EDF, which provides increased financial resources for the period 2008-2013, and the Development Cooperation Instrument 2007-2013, covering the financial cooperation under the EU-South Africa Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement.

The Parties welcomed the perspective that the 10th EDF Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme (RSP/RIP), with an allocation of € 116 M, which is expected to be signed on 15 November 2008 and bring an essential contribution notably to the reinforcement of the SADC Secretariat, including for the preparation of regional infrastructure and other projects, as well as to the implementation of the EPA. About 85 % of the regional envelope is intended for regional economic integration. In addition, it will provide a platform for regional packages for aid for trade for EU Member States and other donors. These instruments will be complementary to inter alia the Infrastructure Trust Fund, the Water and Energy Facilities, the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Investment Bank interventions.

Health

SADC acknowledged the important contribution of the EU in the health sector, including the strengthening of health systems as a key element to help address the burden of disease in the region.

The two parties were pleased to note the excellent cooperation between the SADC and the European Union in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other communicable and non-communicable diseases. The SADC plays a major role as a catalyst and supporter of ambitious national policies to address the seriousness of the HIV epidemic in the region. The progress made so far is substantial, particularly in reducing the prevalence of the virus among pregnant women and lowering the rate of AIDS-related deaths. But these results are still inadequate as the epidemic continues to spread. The SADC and the EU will continue to work together to mobilise leaders in the region to become more involved in strengthening efforts at prevention, by overcoming taboos and the stigma attached to the infection.

The two parties also agreed on the need to reinforce joint efforts to respond to the crisis brought about by a lack of healthcare workers in Africa in general and in this region in particular. The experience of the SADC, which has established a working framework to handle internal migrations of healthcare workers, should help to address this issue at the level of the African Union, as proposed in the EU/AU action plan. The European Union has also drawn on the work in progress to produce a code of conduct for the ethical recruitment of healthcare workers from the developing countries. This code will be incorporated into the Green Paper on healthcare professionals within the European Union, in line with the overall policy on immigration, particularly for qualified staff. The EU is aware that the migration of healthcare staff should be beneficial to the migrant themselves, to their countries of origin and to the countries that they migrate to. The two parties also recognise that the issue of migration and the resulting brain drain is complex and requires a comprehensive and global approach.

Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP)

The meeting recalled that in 2003 SADC developed the RISDP which defines the main priorities of regional integration and articulates the main policies and strategies the Organisation's overarching goals of economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

SADC informed the EU on progress made in the implementation of the RISDP including, among others, the achievement of Free Trade Area (FTA), the starting of discussions on the Customs Union, the development of a regional Master Plan for Infrastructure. The EU congratulated SADC on the attainment of the SADC FTA, which is already enforced by a large majority of its Members.

Financial crisis

Both parties expressed their concern about the impact of the world financial crisis on the economic situation of developing countries and on growth prospects as well as on foreign direct investments. In this context SADC expressed concern regarding the risks of seeing diminishing official development aid. The EU confirmed its commitment and priority as regard development aid.

Food and energy prices

The parties reflected on what might be the most appropriate way to respond to the volatility in commodity prices, particularly food, over the medium and long term, which is seriously prejudicial to the stability of economic growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as further deepening existing inequalities. They recalled that in the short term, initiatives have been taken with a view to coping with the effects of volatility in prices for food stuffs and mitigating them, using measures targeting the most vulnerable population groups.

The parties noted that according to the FAO, 34 countries, many of them in Africa are currently in a situation of acute crisis with regard to food supplies. They considered that the international community should respond with a coordinated and comprehensive strategy focussing on increased food production and productivity and the development and strengthening of agricultural value added activities. They reiterated that there was a need to allocate a high level of priorities to policies on agriculture, rural development and food security, notably on the part of the International financial institutions. They called for a global partnership on food and agriculture facilitated by the United Nations.

The SADC welcomed the proposal of the European Commission to establish a 1 billion € food facility for a rapid response to the food crisis in developing countries and urged the European Council and Parliament to approve this facility as soon as possible.

Regional developments

The meeting discussed the political situation in the region and noted that the SADC region is generally peaceful despite challenges experienced in some Member States. Since the last meeting in November 2006, elections were held in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Madagascar, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Zimbabwe, Republic of Angola and the Kingdom of Swaziland.

a) Zimbabwe

The meeting discussed the situation in Zimbabwe following the signing of the agreement, on 15 September, between Zanu-PF and the MDC formations. The meeting noted the outcome of the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit held on 9th November 2008. Both parties expressed deep concern over the delay in forming an inclusive government agreed upon by all parties, essential to implement the economic and social reforms, awaited by the population.

The EU called upon the guarantors of the Global Political Agreement to ensure expeditious and credible implementation of all its elements.

b) DRC

The meeting noted that notwithstanding some improvement in the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since the elections, the EU and SADC are extremely concerned by the security and humanitarian situation in the East of the DRC and the regional impact of the conflict. The meeting welcomed the convening of the 7th November 2008 Nairobi Summit on the situation in the East of the DRC and the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit held on 9th November 2008 demonstrating a more active involvement of African diplomacy in the DRC crisis. They expressed their support for any initiative that will bring about a resolution to the problem on the basis of a political solution.

The SADC and the EU called upon the parties concerned to respect the cease fire and to make every effort to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid to people in need. They also called upon all the protagonists in the conflict to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law, especially the cessation of sexual assaults on women.

The EU and the SADC invited the United Nations Secretary General to reinforce MONUC, particularly by increasing its human and material resources and by reorienting its action to focus more on the Kivus, so as to help the MONUC implement the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Peace and security

The Joint EU-Africa Strategy provides a historic opportunity to enhance Africa's and the EU's cooperation to anticipate and respond in a timely and adequate manner to threats to security which directly condition sustainable development and to unite their efforts in order to address global challenges. SADC and the EU will continue to work in close collaboration on the basis of the Joint Partnership "Peace and Security".

The two parties are aware of the need to strengthen relations between the African Union (AU) and SADC with a view to continental integration. The current harmonization processes adopted by the AU and SADC Institutions with a view to fully completing the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) will be fully taken into consideration and encouraged as part of the development and implementation of that integration. Identifying the principal SADC training centers within the Africa Standby Force and their civilian and military needs is one of the principal challenges to be met in this connection.

The two parties have exchanged views on the peace and security situation in the region. Debates focused chiefly on regional capacity-building and the operationalization of the SADC Standby Force, as well as on SADC priorities as reflected in its conflict-prevention mechanism and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.

The EU side encourages SADC to strengthen its Planning Element (PLANELM) in order to be able to involve it in planning exercises with other regional elements of the African Standby Force (ASF) or with other partners present in the area.

Finally, the EU congratulated SADC for the progress it has accomplished in that area. This progress will in particular help strengthen SADC capacity to anticipate and respond to regional crises, help consolidate democracies in the region, and provide support within the framework of post-conflict reconstruction. The EU will maintain and strengthen its support to SADC for conflict prevention, peace keeping and capacity building for peace and security.

Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO)

The meeting noted that SADC adopted the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO) which underscores the realisation of a stable and peaceful region. SADC informed the meeting of progress in the implementation of the SIPO including the Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, the Mutual Defense Pact and the SADC Principles and Rules Governing Democratic Elections.

The meeting also noted that although there has been much progress in a number of areas, there are still challenges that impede the realisation of the objectives of SIPO.

In the sector of Politics and Diplomacy, the meeting noted that there are effective mechanisms to be used by the region as tools to guide the region in resolving disputes and potential conflicts. In this regard a number of missions have been deployed to observe electoral processes.

Capacity building of SADC within the framework of the AU

The EU commended SADC on the operationalisation of the SADC Brigade, joint military training programmes including Peace Support Operations. The EU further noted progress on joint training, law enforcement, exchange of crime intelligence, crime management and participation in international programmes for Peace Support Operations within SADC.

The parties welcomed the perspective of further strengthening of the EU support to African-led Peace and Security efforts within the Strategic Africa – EU Partnership on Peace and Security, notably through an enhanced dialogue and cooperation towards operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). They underlined the importance of the support provided to African-led Peace operation and APSA, both bilaterally and through the African Peace Facility (440M EUR since 2004). They welcomed the upcoming renewal of the Facility, with an allocation of 300M EUR for the next three years (2008 – 2010) to support the priorities of the Partnership on Peace and Security.

Closing remarks

The meeting was closed by Honourable Alain Joyandet, Minister of State for Cooperation and the Francophonie, attached to the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, representing the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and by the Honourable Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa, Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers. They reaffirmed the fundamental principles and the objectives of the Berlin Initiative and called for continuation of dialogue and partnership between SADC and the EU.

The next Ministerial Troika Meeting will take place in the SADC region at a date to be determined by the parties.

SADC Co-Chairperson

The Hon. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of South Africa
Chairperson of SADC Council of Ministers

Brussels, November 11, 2008

EU Co-Chairperson

The Hon. Alain Joyandet
Minister of State for Cooperation
and the Francophonie, attached
to the French Minister of
Foreign and European Affairs

Brussels, November 11, 2008