



MEDIA RELEASE

SADC to convene a Solidarity Conference with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)/Western Sahara

18 March 2019, Gaborone, Botswana – The Southern African Development Community (SADC) will convene a Solidarity Conference with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) from 25 to 26 March 2019, which will be hosted by the Republic of South Africa in Pretoria.

The 38th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of SADC approved the convening of a Conference on Solidarity with the Saharawi people. During the Solidarity Conference, the SADC Heads of State and Government will express the region's support for decolonisation and self-determination for Western Sahara on the basis of the values and principles that have guided the quest for independence throughout Africa.

SADC's collaboration on and with Western Sahara has been informed by the region's own decolonisation experiences and the quest for liberation and self-determination. The Solidarity Conference is expected to conclude with the adoption of a SADC Regional Strategy and a Declaration, which will, among others, establish:

- mechanisms to engage relevant stakeholders and partners, including Morocco, to observe the spirit of African Union (AU) decisions and United Nations resolutions in order to expedite the resolution of the Western Sahara matter
- support to the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic's (SADR) right to self-determination and independence based on the principle of self-determination and decolonisation, through the holding of a referendum
- support for the self-determination of the SADR based on the following principles:
 - a) multilateralism and international legality in seeking a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination and independence of the people of Western Sahara
 - b) sanctity of inherited colonial borders in Africa and the right of peoples of former colonial territories to self-determination and independence as contained in the Constitutive Act of the AU
 - c) respect of international human rights law in the occupied territories, notably the right to freedom of association, assembly, movement and expression and respect of international humanitarian law
 - d) an end of the illegal exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara in the illegally occupied territory and the discouragement of the involvement of foreign companies in such activities.

#SADCSaharawiSolidarity

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About SADC

SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980. The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy.