



# AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

## MEDIA RELEASE

13 September 2012

### **Australia and SADC sign Memorandum of Understanding**

Australia is strengthening cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). SADC Executive Secretary Dr Tomaz Salomão and Australian High Commissioner HE Ann Harrap signed the MOU at the SADC Headquarters on Thursday 13 September.

Ms Harrap, who is Australia's High Commissioner to seven SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland), welcomed the signing.

"Australia has strong political, diplomatic and commercial links with all SADC countries and our partnerships have grown significantly in recent years. Our development cooperation with the various countries in the region for 2011-12 was over \$100 million," Ms Harrap said.

"Australia is also keen to do more with the SADC organisation itself in key areas of priority interest. This MoU provides a strong framework for future cooperation in a range of areas identified as priorities by SADC, including sustainable development; peace and security; climate change adaptation and mitigation; agriculture and food security; and human resource development", she said.

"Australia recognises the primary role that SADC plays in promoting peace, security and democracy in the southern African region. Through this MOU, we have committed ourselves to sharing information and ideas so that both our respective regions can contribute to the resolution of global and regional challenges."

"I was, for example, very glad to receive the Executive Secretary General's briefing on SADC's efforts in Zimbabwe and Madagascar. Australia supports the work of SADC in both these countries and the information will help to shape our own policy approaches to regional issues," Ms Harrap said.

The Australian Government provides assistance to the SADC Transboundary Water Management Program. The \$17.5 million program aims to provide millions of people with safer drinking water, improve water supplies and help reduce conflict. Australia's support for this important initiative is provided in partnership with the German and British governments.

In October 2012, a delegation from the Limpopo Water Course Commission, together with two officials from the SADC Water Division, will visit Australia. The delegation will attend the International River Symposium and meet with relevant counterparts to share ideas on policy approaches to transboundary water management.

Ms Harrap said that Australia was also interested in seeing how the *Australia Awards* Scholarships program, which currently provides 1000 scholarships and professional development opportunities to African students every year, could be utilised by the SADC organisation.

For media enquiries or to request an interview with High Commissioner Harrap, please contact Ms Natalie Mendelsohn (cell +27 83 409 3619) or Mr Will Butler (email [will.butler@dfat.gov.au](mailto:will.butler@dfat.gov.au) - tel +27 12 423 6188)