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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON GENERAL COOPERATION,

Hereafter referred to as

Pact of Regional Apex Organizations:

Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCISSA), hereafter referred to as *churches*; Southern African Development Community Council of Non Governmental Organizations (SADC-CNGO), hereafter referred to as *NGOs*; and the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC), hereafter referred to as *trade unions*

ARTICLE 1 Preamble

We, the Parties to this Pact of Regional Apex Organizations on political, social, environmental and economic issues, being representative organizations of civil society operating in the SADC Region (Civil society in this context refers to churches, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and trade unions);

Recognizing the political, social, environmental and economic challenges facing our region;

Pursuant of our common desire to work together to eradicate poverty, inequalities and to achieve social justice;

Further recognizing the provisions of Article 16A and Article 23 of the SADC Treaty where SADC Member States solemnly commit themselves to, inter-alia, involve fully the peoples of the region and key stakeholders in the process of regional integration and development;

Cognizant of the need to harness the initiatives of the peoples of the region through their representative organizations, that is:- churches, NGOs and trade unions towards the fostering of closer relations amongst the communities, associations and peoples of the region;

We therefore acknowledge that although independent from each other and carrying different mandates: our collective experiences, knowledge, strengths and capacities will help us achieve more.

ARTICLE 2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the Pact of Regional Apex Organizations are as follows:

- a) To provide a framework for cooperation amongst civil society organizations operating in the SADC Region.
- b) To enhance cohesion and coordination of civil society voice when engaging with SADC, other continental and international bodies on issues of common interest.
- c) To promote cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of our programmes at both regional and national levels in order to maximize civil society participation and influence on regional integration and development.
- d) To demonstrate solidarity and commitment in working together as a united civil society.
- e) To strengthen the civil society voice and maximize common positions when engaging with business and or governments.

ARTICLE 3 General Cooperation

- 3.1 We commit ourselves to work together in contributing towards people-centered regional integration and development.
- 3.2 We agree to collectively engage SADC Organs and Member States on issues of common interest such as poverty eradication, promotion of democracy and good governance and rule of law.
- 3.3 We also commit to promote civil society participation in processes and structures of SADC at national and regional level.
- 3.4 Furthermore we commit to actively mobilize our constituencies for action towards social, political, environmental and economic justice as well as poverty eradication.
- 3.5 We further agree to abide by the following when convening joint events:
 - 3.5.1 National preparatory workshops shall be a joint collaboration of the civil society,
 - 3.5.2 Parties to this Pact of Regional Apex Organizations will mobilize their constituencies to participate effectively in these processes and should feedback to their respective structures.

3.6 We further commit to coordinating our operations, at both national and regional level, in order to maximize impact and optimize use of resources.

ARTICLE 4

Principles of cooperation

- 4.1 In working together, we shall be guided by the following principles:-
- 4.1.1 Respect for diversity, equitable participation and tolerance
 - 4.1.2 Mutual respect, independence and autonomy
 - 4.1.3 Complementarity, solidarity and collaboration
 - 4.1.4 Economic and social justice, equity and mutual benefit
 - 4.1.5 Respect for democracy, human rights and good governance
 - 4.1.6 Accountability to the people
 - 4.1.7 Transparency
 - 4.1.8 Commitment to service to the people
 - 4.1.9 Gender equality and integration

ARTICLE 5

Civil society space

- 5.1 The Pact Partners will:-
- 5.1.1 Work together to create, defend and deepen civil society space at national and regional level;
 - 5.1.2 Provide solidarity and support to each other;
 - 5.1.3 Complement each other;
 - 5.1.4 Mobilize their constituencies to participate effectively in national and regional policy and integration processes.

ARTICLE 6

Implementation

- 6.1 The Regional Secretariats of the Parties to the Pact of Regional Apex Organizations shall be jointly responsible for the implementation of the Pact.
- 6.2 The national leadership of the affiliates to the apex organizations shall be responsible for coordination, collaboration and implementation of the Pact at national level in consultation with the regional secretariats.
- 6.3 The regional secretariats shall periodically report progress to their respective governance organs.
- 6.4 Where differences arise among the pact members these shall be resolved through dialogue.
- 6.5 The Pact of Regional Apex Organizations shall be jointly reviewed when need arises.

ARTICLE 7
Commencement and duration

- 7.1 This Pact of Regional Apex Organizations shall enter into force on the date of signature by all of the Parties hereto.
- 7.2 This Pact of Regional Apex Organizations shall be valid from the date of its entry into force and shall remain in force until terminated by mutual consent.

ARTICLE 8
Signing

We, representing the three parties to the Pact sign as follows:

SIGNED on behalf of SADC - CNGO by:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

SIGNED on behalf of FOCCISA by:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

SIGNED on behalf of SATUCC by:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date: