



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ABUJA

PRESS STATEMENT

NO: MFA/PR/2026/229

NIGERIA, SOUTHERN AFRICA REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO DEEPENING COOPERATION

The Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, **Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye**, received a delegation of **Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member Countries** accredited to Nigeria, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja, on Wednesday, 09 September 2026. The delegation was led by **H.E. Ambassador Maxwell Ranga of Zimbabwe, who is also the Dean of the SADC Ambassadors in Nigeria.**

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, Amb. Ranga congratulated Amb. Enikanolaiye on his appointment as the Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. He commended Amb. Enikanolaiye's distinguished career and extensive diplomatic experience, and expressed the delegation's commitment to working closely with him to further strengthen and advance relations between Nigeria and the Southern African region.

The Zimbabwean Ambassador commended the enduring solidarity that had continually underpinned the relations between Nigeria and the region. He acknowledged and appreciated Nigeria's historic involvement, alongside other Frontline States, in the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, which significantly contributed to the independence and freedom of States that had been subjected to colonialism and apartheid in the region.

While exploring the prospects for expanded cooperation between Nigeria and Southern Africa, Amb. Ranga highlighted opportunities for enhanced cooperation in the areas of trade and investment, infrastructure, energy, agriculture and industrial development. He lauded steadily growing people-to-people exchanges between Nigeria and the

region, which he noted could be leveraged for mutual benefit for their peoples.

The Honourable Minister of State, in his response, underscored Nigeria's interest in learning from the experiences and comparative advantages of SADC countries, particularly in **mineral beneficiation, industrial value addition, tourism and agriculture**. He noted that stronger cooperation in these areas could generate tangible mutual economic benefits and foster enhanced institutional partnerships for the translation of economic opportunities into practical initiatives. Ambassador Enikanolayie stressed the need to ensure that visa regimes facilitate greater interaction among citizens, businesses and institutions of Nigeria and the Southern Africa, and not become obstacles to deeper relations.

The Honourable Minister of State stressed the importance of **regular consultations among African countries**, particularly in preparation for major multilateral engagements. He advocated for more frequent ministerial and official-level consultations to facilitate the development of common African positions and strengthen the continent's collective voice at international fora.

He added that the Ministry was reviewing existing **Joint Commission mechanisms** with a view to revitalising dormant agreements and establishing a framework for more regular and comprehensive bilateral consultations. He noted that such mechanisms would provide an effective platform for reviewing cooperation across political, economic, social and other spheres of mutual interest.

The Honourable Minister of State expressed appreciation to the SADC Ambassadors and High Commissioners for the engagement, describing it as an important opportunity to **reignite and further strengthen relations** between Nigeria and the Southern African region. He reaffirmed Nigeria's readiness to maintain open channels of communication and work closely with SADC Member States in advancing shared interests and promoting African unity, integration and prosperity.

Signed:

Oluwafemi Adeniyi

Spokesperson

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Wednesday, 9 September 2026