



Press Statement to the SADC Heads of State.

18 August 2021.

“CoRMSA calls for integration and equal access to Covid-19 Vaccine and Treatment for All in SADC Region”.

The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA) is a national network of twenty-six (26) member organisations in good standing whose main objectives and mission are the promotion and protection of the human rights of asylum seekers, refugees and other international migrants in ways that promote the well-being of all in South Africa, the SADC region and globally. CoRMSA's work on migration includes engaging in advocacy and lobbying; coordination and network building; capacity building and training; rights awareness and information sharing.

It is per the above mandate and objective that we are issuing this statement to the SADC Region Heads of State at their 41st Ordinary Summit and Government held in Lilongwe, Republic of Malawi from 17-18 August 2021. Firstly, CoRMSA would like to congratulate His Excellency Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera President of the Republic of Malawi, the newly appointed chairperson of SADC Region for the next twelve months. This year's Summit is being held under the theme *“Bolstering Productive Capacities in the Face of COVID-19 Pandemic for Inclusive, Sustainable, Economic and Industrial Transformation”*.

Under this theme, CoRMSA calls upon all the SADC Region Heads of State to come up with a ***strong and binding resolution from their summit discussion that talks to equitable access to Covid-19 vaccine for all in the SADC region.*** This resolution should take into consideration and address all hardships and challenges faced by asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants, stateless and undocumented persons when it comes to access health care services in their host countries. Practically, these groups of people are often excluded nor afforded an opportunity to access health care service based on their nationality and documentation status. These groups of people must be integrated in any covid-19 health care related and lifesaving mechanism within SADC countries.

CoRMSA further argues that, the above mentioned group of people form part of the larger community in SADC. Therefore, segregating and excluding the said group of people will be a draw back in achieving a SADC society that is equally free and safe from Covid-19. In taking and engaging the above recommendation, SADC Heads of State must and should always remember that Covid-19 affects and impacts on everyone's life equally regardless of one's nationality, race, colour, language, beliefs, sexual orientation and documentation status.

CoRMSA believes that by not “leaving no one behind” through your leadership in SADC, we can effectively contain and curb Covid-19 in the region.

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