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Mixed economic prospects

PROSPECTS FOR economic growth in southern Africa remain positive albeit reduced against the backdrop of the global financial and economic downturn.

Many southern African countries expect economic growth to retard this year as the tentacles of the current global recession spread far and wide, but the exact extent of its impact will be varied across the region depending on which sectors are drivers of economic growth in each country.

The global economy is suffering the worst financial and economic crises since the great depression of the 1930s. What started as a localized credit crunch in the United States of America has now spread across the globe with far reaching consequences.

Although SADC's financial systems, along with those of the rest of the continent, have been largely unaffected by the negative impact of the global financial crisis, the region has suffered from low commodity prices, declining remittances and a generally depressed external demand.

The good news, however, is that the second half of the year has started with positive developments such as reported signs of recovery in most of the major global economies with few exceptions, while most international commodity prices are on an upward trend.

The impact of the global economic downturn on SADC was acknowledged by a SADC Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration at its meeting in July, and was expected to dominate discussions at Heads of State and Government level at their summit on 7-8 September in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Ministerial Task Force observed that the crisis has had a negative impact on the economies of the region, noting that the mining, textiles and clothing, agriculture and tourism sectors were the most affected.

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Countries such as Angola, Botswana, DRC, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe that rely on mineral exports including oil, diamonds, copper and gold have experienced sharp drops in prices and demand.

Others such as Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Swaziland and the United Republic of Tanzania that rely among other exports on textiles and agricultural products such as tobacco, sugar and cotton suffered the same fate.

Those that rely on marine resources such as fish and prawns, among them Mozambique, Namibia, Mauritius and Seychelles were not as badly affected in that sector.

The spectre of the global recession has not been limited to export earnings. Foreign direct investment inflows from the West, tourism receipts and remittances are declining while trade financing is also drying up, leading to severe shocks on growth and at the same time exacerbating poverty.

For example, Mauritius suffered a 17.7 percent decline in gross tourism receipts in the first half of 2009 as the global economic slump discouraged visitors, according to figures from the country's Central Statistics Office.

With major global economies looking more inward to avert crises at their doorsteps, SADC will struggle to raise crucial billions of dollars needed to finance rehabilitation and construction of new priority infrastructure projects in the region.

As much as US$83 billion is needed to fund priority energy projects for the region to add 57,000 megawatts of electricity to the regional grid.

Africa had initially been seen as isolated from the market and banking turmoil that engulfed Europe and the United States over the last couple of years, becoming more severe towards the end of 2008. This was due to its relatively limited links to the global economy.

However, while the continent's larger economies have been more directly affected by the global financial slump, smaller economies have also been affected, according to Richard Mkandawire of the African Union

South Africa, as SADC and the continent's largest and most diversified economy, was officially confirmed as having entered a recession period by mid-year. This came after the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) slid in two consecutive quarters, the first time this has happened in more than a decade.

The southern African country's economy shrank by three percent in the second quarter, having already seen a major plunge in demand for cars, machinery and other key products that it produces.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) predicts that South Africa's economy will only grow by just 1.1 percent this year, against an average growth rate of five percent over the past five years.

Angola, which has been growing at double digit figures in recent years, is expected to grow by about seven percent, a significant slowdown for an economy that has hitherto enjoyed booming oil and diamond industries.

On its part, Zambia expects a revised growth rate of five percent on the back of recent significant Chinese and Indian investments in the mining sector, which have cushioned the country from reduced copper revenue.

Amid fears of the negative impact of lower prices of copper – the mainstay of the economy – Zambia had initially downgraded its growth forecast to four percent for 2009.

Zimbabwe, whose economy is positively responding to an improved political environment in the wake of the formation of an inclusive government in February 2009, is expected to register a growth rate of just under four percent – which would be a major turnaround from the negative growth rates of the past decade.

Although Zimbabwe's minerals will be exported under the same subdued international commodity prices, the significant improvement in the economy will emanate from renewed international confidence in the country and a return to the formal, rather than parallel, market of the recent past.

However, the global depression will likely reduce remittances from the Diaspora, a significant source of income for countries such as Zimbabwe.

Although money sent home by expatriates is rarely recorded in official data, there is no doubt about the significance of such remittances to the overall economic sustenance of the country as was the case for Zimbabwe when it was excluded from international financing due to sanctions and other restrictive measures.

The current economic downturn has presented a number of new challenges to SADC countries, prompting many to seek increased support through different channels that include support from international financial institutions such as the AfDB and bilateral partners.

Botswana's diamond revenue has allowed the country to enjoy a budget surplus for the last decade or so, a rare feat for an African country. But the global recession has reversed all that.

Towards the end of last year and beginning of this year, Botswana experienced an unprecedented decline in diamond sales, shaking the country out of its comfort zone and prompting it to seek budget support from the AfDB for the first time in 17 years.

In June this year, the AfDB responded favourably to Botswana's request, approving a staggering US$1.5 billion loan for the southern African country to help it respond to the current global recession — the largest such facility ever granted by the Bank.

The Bank said the budget support loan was designed to fill part of the gap in the government's 2009/2010 budget deficit estimated at 13.5 percent of GDP, that arose from falling commodity prices, particularly diamonds.

"The case of Botswana illustrates the impact that the financial crisis is having on even the best managed economies in Africa," said Donald Kaberuka, President of the AfDB, when he approved the loan.

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SADC thematic coordination three years on

COOPERATION BETWEEN SADC and its International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) opened a new chapter in 2006 when the Windhoek Declaration was signed. Three years on, the institutional structure provided for by the Windhoek Declaration is largely in place. *See Figure 1 below*.

The Windhoek Declaration on a New SADC-ICP Partnership adopted at the consultative conference in 2006 was an attempt to translate the Paris Declaration into a Southern Africa context. The Declaration was widely hailed as the foundation for a fresh start to the donor-recipient relationship between SADC and its ICPs.

The declaration was meant to ensure more effective development cooperation, based on principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization and streamlining of operational procedures and rules as well as other practices relating to the delivery of development assistance. The commitments by SADC and by the ICPs were basically a replica of the commitments made in the Paris Declaration.

The Windhoek Declaration established an institutional structure for dialogue on political, policy and technical issues, seeking to improve coordination of efforts between SADC and the ICPs and allow for a Joint Financing and Technical Cooperation Arrangement (JFTCA).

The declaration recognizes the importance of thematic coordination which is intended to evolve in a flexible manner within the context of the Joint SADC/ICP Task Force. Thematic groups were envisaged to cover priority areas that were defined by SADC in accordance with its Common Agenda and as outlined in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO).

As many as nine thematic groups had been initiated by August 2009 *(see Table 1, page 4)*.

In the majority of cases, the various structures have been holding meetings, with the consultative conference, for example, meeting in Mauritius in April 2008.

The Joint Task Force and the core group – which were quite active before Mauritius, had their last gathering through a core group meeting in February 2009. This meeting discussed, among other issues, SADC's Capacity Building Frame-work. Similarly, eight of the nine thematic groups have been established and are functional to the extent that meetings are being held.

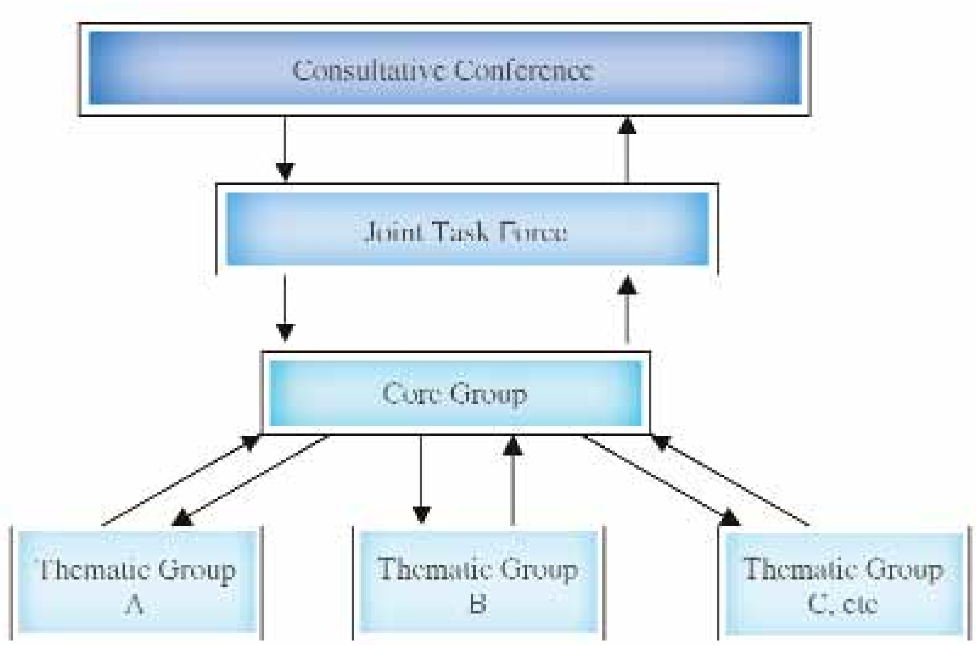
It is worth noting that while various thematic groups have been created and have started meeting, their work has largely centred on networking and information sharing. In the majority of cases, it is yet to move to the level of pooling resources for joint financing and implementation.

There are a few cases where harmonization has moved beyond information sharing. In some cases – notably in Water and HIV and AIDS – two or more donors have pooled resources with one donor managing funding and support on behalf of the others.

Some of the thematic groups such as the Energy Thematic Group have also developed work plans that can provide a framework for donor funding. It is hoped that in the long run, this will facilitate improved alignment and ownership.

(This article is largely drawn from a forthcoming paper by the Formative Process Research on Integration in Southern Africa – FOPRISA). ❒

SADC-ICP Coordination and Dialogue Framework — Figure 1



Source: SADC Secretariat

See also Table 1 on SADC Thematic Groups, page 4 *continued from page 3...*

SADC Thematic Groups Table 1

Areas for Thematic Coordination	Lead ICP	Status in brief
Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment	European Commission (Gaborone)	Formed in 2006, last meeting was in June 2009.
Water	Germany (GTZ) (Gaborone)	Was operational before 2006, most recent meeting in May 2009.
HIV and AIDS	Sweden (SIDA) (Lusaka)	Was operational before 2006, has advanced and are now implementing a Joint Financing and Technical Cooperation Arrangement, most recent meeting in March 2009.
Agriculture and Food Security	UK (DFID) (Pretoria)	Est. in February 2007, most recent meeting in June 2009 held jointly with Natural Resources and Environment.
Natural Resources and Environment	FAO (Harare)	Est. in February 2007, most recent meeting in June 2009.
Transport	UK (DFID) (Pretoria)	Est. in 2008, most recent meeting in April 2009.
Energy	Norway (Maputo)	Est. in 2007, activities at level of networking and information sharing, four meetings so far with most recent one in May 2009.
Peace and security	Austria (Pretoria)	The group is not constituted, but SADC has requested Austria to lead and they have responded favourably.
Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development	SADC andICP Core Group	One meeting since 2008 Mauritius Consultative Conference, meeting was in February 2009.

Source: SADC Secretariat and ICPs

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Although traditional donors such as the G-8 nations have set aside funds to aid developing countries in dealing with the impacts of the global economic downturn, the level of such support has been constrained by the need for the same countries to deal with financial crises in their own backyard.

In addition, the conditionalities often associated with money from the West, either through bilateral arrangements or Multilateral Development Banks such as the IMF, will likely delay most countries from accessing urgent funding.

These constraints may actually bring into prominence the role of emerging powers such as Brazil, Russia, India and China that put emphasis on investment rather than credit financing.

Already China has taken the lead, diversifying its massive budget surplus investment from the toxic international assets into infrastructure and mining investment in African countries such as Angola and Zambia.

While some developed countries have already shown signs of recovery, notably the US, Germany and France, most developing countries including those in SADC may take longer to recover as they were still reeling from the profound impacts of food and fuel shock prices experienced in 2008.

These shocks had already caused fiscal and inflationary prices and balance of payments problems in a number of countries. While food and fuel prices have since declined, experts predict that they could remain too high for the majority of citizens for several years.

As the region grapples with the effects of the current global downturn and the food and fuel price shocks of the recent past, the situation calls for nothing less than a coordinated response.

This was exactly the message from the outgoing SADC chairperson, South African President Jacob Zuma in his statement to mark SADC Day, 17 August.

"We must work together on various issues including on food security, trade, political stability and health. No country can cut itself off from the neighbours," said Zuma. ❐

North-South Corridor to increase trade in SADC-COMESA-EAC

REGIONAL PROJECTS in transport and power identified by SADC, COMESA and EAC along the North-South Corridor will deepen integration and increase trade in Africa.

At a high level tripartite meeting in Lusaka, Zambia in April, the three regional blocs together with development partners pledged US$1.2 billion to upgrade road, rail and port infrastructure and support trade along the corridor, which traverses eight countries in east and southern Africa.

The North-South Corridor is a combination of two existing corridors – the Durban Corridor and the Dar es Salaam Corridor – linking the port of Durban and others in southern Africa to the east African port of Dar es Salaam.

SADC, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (Comesa) and the East African Community (EAC) selected the North-South Corridor for an Aid-for-Trade pilot programme because it is the busiest corridor in the region in terms of value and volumes of freight.

However, poor road and rail infrastructure, and long waiting times at the borders and ports has significantly affected the ability to access regional and international markets.

Therefore, as part of the North-South Corridor project, more than 8,000 km of road will be maintained while about 600 km of rail track will be rehabilitated.

Upgrading of infrastructure at Dar es Salaam port will be carried out with plans underway to increase the ability of the region to boost, generate and distribute electricity both in the short and long term.

North-South Corridor

This will be done through establishing linkages between member countries of the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) and the East African Power Pool (EAPP).

The three blocs agreed to set up at least three new One-Stop Border Posts along the corridor to reduce congestions at ports of entry as well as promote the free movement of goods and services among member states.

If successfully implemented, the project has the capacity to create a vibrant and integrated free trade area for the three regional economic blocs.

The North-South Corridor will unlock the economic potential of Africa, attract investment, increase intra-regional trade and expand regional markets.

The pilot project is expected to be rolled out to other corridors as SADC, COMESA and EAC seek deeper regional integration, as building blocks of the African Union. ❐

Undersea cable to improve telecommunications in Africa

A HISTORIC undersea fibre-optic cable linking Africa to Europe has been switched on in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania by SEACOM.

The 17,000km cable seeks to improve the flow of information throughout the continent as well as connect Africa to Europe via India.

Prior to this development, Africa was not linked to Europe directly but relied on the more expensive satellite links with the rest of the world.

The undersea cable should bring a reduction in broadband charges in Africa, enabling more people to access internet. Access speeds should also improve.

In the long run, the development should spur the growth of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) industry and encourage more telecommunications operators to invest in Africa.

"The arrival of this cable signals the beginning of a new era in the telecommunications sector," the Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete said at the launch ceremony in July. "History has been made."

SEACOM says the undersea cable, when connected to the hinterland, will change the African economy, as the continent will become part of the information superhighway, competing on the same level with other more established economies.

The project cost about US$760 million and is intended to carry information at a rate of 1.23 terabytes a second. ❐

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Global cotton use declines

GLOBAL COTTON consumption has registered a decline of 12 percent in the season ended 31 July 2009, the largest year-to-year slump since at least the 1920s.

Data released by the International Cotton Advisory Council (ICAC) following its 68th plenary held in Cape Town, South Africa, indicated that the decline was likely a direct result of the global financial crisis.

However, world cotton use is expected to rise modestly during the current season, according to ICAC projections, assuming a gradual improvement in global economic growth.

"The Secretariat reported that cotton prices were extraordinarily volatile during the previous season and that the average level of prices had fallen," ICAC said.

"Assuming more normal economic conditions, price volatility may moderate during the current cotton season, but the Secretariat forecasts that the average level of world cotton prices is not likely to increase significantly.

"The cotton industry is becoming increasingly resource-constrained. The committee encourages research and the adoption of new practices that promote productivity."

ICAC noted that cotton production strengthens food security through income security.

"Cash income earned from cotton production allows farmer households, especially those in arid and semi-arid areas where food crops are difficult to produce, to pay for food, healthcare, school fees and other necessities that would not otherwise be available.

"Cotton contributes to food security by providing the means to finance inputs and by enhancing soil fertility and retarding the development of pests and diseases in properly managed crop rotation systems involving cotton and other crops.

"In order for cotton to perform its role as a catalyst for economic development and contribute to food security, farmers must have access to quality inputs, credit, appropriate technologies and assured markets."

ICAC added that disruptions in the supply of inputs as well as low levels of technology adoption and weak marketing systems have resulted in lower returns to growers, and that, together with delayed payments, these are major impediments to smallholder cotton production.

"Recognizing the important social and economic development roles played by cotton companies in Africa, and as part of an overall strategy of support to smallholders, some countries suggested that governments give consideration to covering the deficits of cotton companies," ICAC stated.

Another area of interest to ICAC is the by-products of cotton production, such as cottonseed and stalks, which have received limited attention due to low values relative to lint. However, "with the increase in prices of oilseeds since 2006, by-products now deserve greater attention.

"The Committee reviewed information about a wide range of uses of cottonseed and stalks for vegetable oil, vegetable oil spreads, animal feed, soap, paper, binder in bricks, and other uses.

"New research is expected to facilitate an increased use of cottonseed for human consumption, further expanding the range of uses and value of cottonseed."

The Council reaffirmed the urgent necessity for an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the Doha Round of trade talks with development as its centrepiece, and welcomed the recent impetus resulting from the initiative to convene a World Trade Organisation (WTO) Mini-Ministerial.

"WTO members should contribute to bringing the Doha Round to a conclusion, through negotiations, flexibility and compromise… a conclusion of the Doha Round would facilitate recovery from the global economic crisis and would enable growth *interalia* in demand for cotton and cotton products," the ICAC stated.

"A successful conclusion of the Doha Round would foster broader international cooperation in other pressing areas of the global agenda." *(The Post)* ❒

SADC intra-regional trade on the increase

INTRA-REGIONAL trade in SADC Member States has been on a steady increase from a meagre five percent in 1980 to about 25 percent of total trade by 2007.

The structure of trade in the region has remained unchanged and is concentrated in a few primary commodities, mainly agricultural goods and minerals, according to the *SADC Trade, Industry and Investment Review*.

This is largely because most national economies are not diversifying into other economic spheres but depend overwhelmingly on a single sector, limiting their ability to resist shocks.

Poor infrastructure such as road and rail continue to hinder the free movement of goods across the region while access to raw materials also affects trade.

The main increases have occurred in textiles and clothing, and the sugar sector due to special trade arrangements in those industries that generated business opportunities in the region.

Implementation of the Trade Protocol, which came into force in September 2000, has contributed to an increase in business transactions as the region has begun the harmonisation of customs laws and removal of non-tariff barriers.

Although no concrete figures are available yet for 2008/09, the region expects intra-regional trade to soon reach 40 percent, following the launch of the SADC Free Trade Area one year ago, in August 2008.

SADC Member States, with the exception of Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are party to the FTA agreement.

The SADC FTA creates a regional market worth some US$360 billion with an initial total population of about 170 million. A further US$71 billion and a population of more than 80 million will be added when Angola and DRC join the FTA in 2010.

While there has been a significant progress in trade in goods, the trade in services remains behind schedule mainly due to lack of capacity.

However, a draft legal instrument has already been prepared and negotiations are underway to implement agreements to boost the regional trade in services.

SADC can stimulate intra-regional trade if supply side constraints such as the lack of raw materials are addressed.

This would enable Member States to develop manufacturing industries and add value to its goods, thus reducing imports from outside the region. ❒

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Transmission grids, joint power stations key to regional development

by Kizito Sikuka

TWO MAIN solutions to southern Africa's crippling energy situation emerged from the Power Sector Investors Roundtable held in Livingstone, Zambia, in July.

These are the need to build more transmission interconnections across borders as well as to encourage joint power generation projects.

More transmission lines coordinated through the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) would enable member states to benefit from new generation capacity installed in other countries in the region.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is not fully integrated in this regard as Angola, Malawi and United Republic of Tanzania are not connected to the regional power pool.

This means that any new generation capacity installed in any of the three countries is not available to the other nine SAPP members — Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Ministers Responsible for Energy, Dipuo Peters, told the roundtable that this situation where national utilities work in isolation is not positive as the challenges faced by the region require a much more coordinated approach.

She urged SAPP to continue playing its part towards finalizing the necessary harmonization of technical standards and protocols that would facilitate easier power flow among member states.

"In order for us all to benefit, we need to ensure the availability of transmission interconnections among member countries," said Peters, who is the South African energy minister.

In the period 2007/8, SAPP commissioned about 3,400MW of generation capacity in Angola but due to lack of interconnection, the power is not accessible to any other SADC country although many are experiencing serious energy shortages.

Setting up new interconnections in the region will create new corridors that can support industrial development and improve energy security in other parts of the region without necessarily being stifled by overloads on the existing transmission lines.

New transmission lines such as the Zimbabwe-Zambia-Botswana-Namibia (ZIZABONA) transmission project and the Zambia-Namibia power line are examples of new projects that require financial support and, if implemented, can reduce congestion on the central corridor.

Potential investors present at the Livingstone roundtable said joint power generation projects hold the key to regional growth, adding that many institutions are ready to invest in such projects in southern Africa.

They argued that some of the projects promoted by individual countries are too small to attract investment hence by expanding market size, regional projects could facilitate the mobilization of required funds while at the same time cross-border projects have the advantage of a positive economic effect on the region.

Christine Schmidt, Principal Project Manager of the German Development Bank (kFW), said the bank is willing to fund any power generation projects on green and renewable energy, such as hydroelectric power station construction, to help the region meet its electricity needs.

Schmidt said these projects include the corridors to carry electricity from Zambia to Tanzania and Kenya, from Cahora Bassa to South Africa along the Mozambican Backbone Corridor, and the ZIZABONA Corridor.

Stakeholders at the meeting also urged southern African countries to properly package their proposals to ensure that they entice investors.

Lyson Muwila, Principal Investment Officer of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), noted that while the SADC region has viable energy projects, a number of countries are failing to properly present them resulting in their failure to secure investment.

Lack of investment in the energy sector, as well as the fast expanding economies in the region and low electricity tariffs, are some of the main factors that have contributed towards the current power deficit in southern Africa.

However, the region is endowed with vast energy resources such as solar, wind, hydro and gas, which if harnessed could help SADC to address its power shortages. *sardc.net* ❒

Energy developments in Sou

Zimbabwe banks on the Kariba South Extension power plant

by Kizito Sikuka

THE KARIBA South Extension on the north-eastern border of Zimbabwe is one of the country's top energy projects over the next three years, according to ZESA Holdings Chief Executive Officer, Eng. Ben Rafemoyo, speaking at a Power Sector Investors Roundtable in July.

The US$200 million project has the capacity to produce about 300 Megawatts (MW) of electricity, which would go a long way in addressing the country's energy shortages.

Zimbabwe, like most SADC countries, is experiencing energy shortages that have affected national growth.

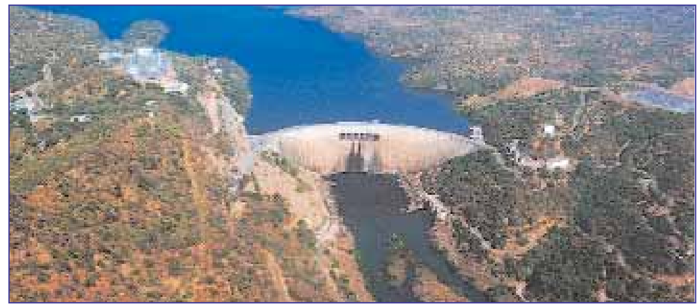
Eng. Rafemoyo urged investors to support the project to assist the country to tap its huge hydropower potential.

The Zimbabwe Power Company, a subsidiary of ZESA Holdings, is leading the implementation process.

Environmental Impact Assessments have been carried out with results showing that the project is viable. Water for power generation will be sourced from the Kariba Dam.

To ensure the new power generated at the Kariba South Extension plant is accessible countrywide, a 330kV substation will be built to transmit the new capacity installed.

Other major energy projects identified by Zimbabwe over the next three years include the Gokwe North Power Station and the Hwange Power Station Extension. Both projects have the capacity to produce about 2,000 MW of electricity. ❐



The Kariba South-Extension is an example of projects being implemented to address energy shortages in the region.

Mozambique to build 500MW power station

MOZAMBIQUE IS planning to construct a 500 Megawatts (MW) power plant, the Benga Thermal Station, in the Tete province.

The plant, which will be built in stages, will see the second phase increasing the power capacity to about 2, 000 MW.

However, this increase will depend heavily on the progress of the Mozambique Backbone Transmission project that aims to boost the country's capacity to transmit electricity.

The Mozambique national power utility says the project will cost US$1.3 million, and that work is underway to ensure the plant is operational by 2011. The station will deliver power directly to the national transmission grid at the Mutambo substation and sell it to Eskom in South Africa.

The project is expected to boost Mozambique's energy exports and to help the region to address its power needs.

Mozambique is one of the few countries in the SADC region that has surplus energy and a huge resource base of untapped energies, including solar and hydro.

Itezhi Tezhi hydro station to generate 120MW

ZAMBIA IS planning to install a 120MW hydropower plant to harness the potential of the Kafue river.

The Itezhi Tezhi power plant will be located downstream of the Kafue river and about 230 km from the existing Upper Kafue Gorge Hydro power station.

The new station, valued at about US$230 million, will generate power using the head available at the dam and flow being released or spilled.

Zambia identified the project to boost power production and reduce imports as the mineral-rich country spends millions of dollars on importing electricity.

The national power utility ZESCO will implement the Itezhi Tezhi power plant on behalf of the Zambian government.

At a Power Sector Investors Roundtable held in Livingstone, ZESCO invited investors to partner in constructing the station.

The plant is expected to be commissioned in 2012 after the completion of contracts covering infrastructure, the power plant itself and electromechanical works.

Zambia's mines, which are rich in copper, cobalt, gemstones and precious minerals, are having to trim outputs because of inadequate power supplies hence the new plant will provide more electricity for the mines. ❐

South Africa plans to build three biodiesel plants by 2013

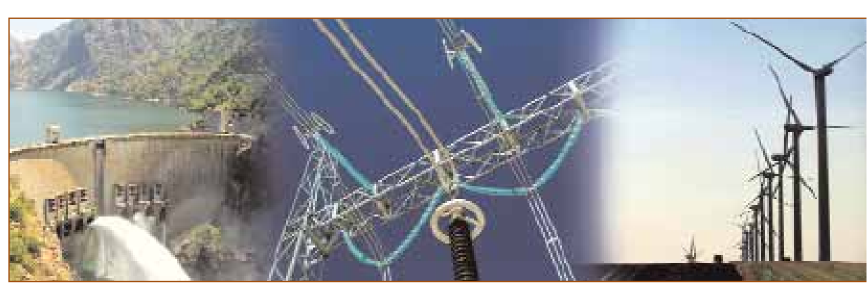
A SOUTH African company is planning to build three biodiesel plants in the country by 2013, at a cost of R1.5 billion.

The plants, in Richards Bay and Cape Town, will use surplus vegetable oil as feedstock.

The funding structure is being finalized for the first plant, expected to be operational by 2011. The other two plants will be built from 2012, each with a capacity of 100 million litres per year.

The plan will be built in Europe and shipped to South Africa, where it will be constructed in 2010 at a cost of about R350 million, and is expected to create 100 direct jobs and 5,000 indirect jobs for area residents.

The target sectors are the mining, forestry, fisheries, and agricultural industries because of offered rebates and carbon credits. ❐



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Southern Africa

Mini-hydro stations developed for southern Africa

THREE REGIONAL countries are set to benefit from mini-hydro power stations being developed by a local non-governmental organization.

Practical Action has started pilot projects in Manicaland, Zimbabwe to ensure communities and farmers in marginalized areas have access to electricity.

The project involves generating power from small sources of water such as waterfalls and perennial rivers.

This is a regional programme aimed at benefiting Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique, and was developed after realizing that energy is a major challenge in most communal areas with some areas failing to access conventional electricity.

The project manager, Fungai Matahwa, said Manicaland was identified as the most suitable area because of its terrain and availability of perennial rivers.

"The project uses localized electricity transmitted over a short distance, making it cheaper than conventional electricity or even generators that require fuel.

"It is costly for people in these mountainous areas to have electricity so we want to ensure the communities benefit from local natural resources in their areas.

"The hydro-energy source is environmentally friendly and renewable," Matahwa said.

He said the project had resulted in the electrification of local boarding schools, clinics and households with some people now able to operate their grinding mills using the power.

"The response from the community has been overwhelming. In Zimbabwe we have three projects in Nyanga, Cashel Valley and Nyamarimbire and we are looking forward to starting a new one in Chipendere in Mutare.

"The people are so much interested in irrigating their crops, processing them and storing them under refrigeration and this can only be made possible by the availability of power," he said.

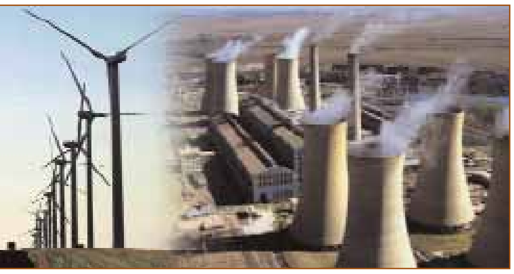
Matahwa said the introduction of the projects had led to developments in the area and improvement in health and education delivery systems. The project manager said he hoped the programme would be expanded and commercialised.

"We would want to see a situation where the community continues to generate the energy source and even sell it to other nearby areas.

"In countries such as Peru and Nepal, rural communities generate electricity from the minor sources of water and sell it to urban communities, improving their livelihoods in the process."

The beneficiaries of the projects pay a tariff, which goes into a fund that is used for development of the communities.

Local people can borrow from the fund to develop their enterprises. "We also want to venture into training of the local people to manufacture parts of the machine used for the power generation such as turbines and this is set to create employment for the community." *(The Herald)* ❐



SADC region must tap renewable energy to boost electricity supply

THE POTENTIAL for cleaner and cheaper power generation options in SADC remains unexploited despite an abundance of renewable energy in the region.

Stakeholders attending a recent Power Sector Investors Roundtable in Livingstone Zambia urged southern Africa to harness its huge reserves of renewable energy to ease power shortages in the region.

The Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Ministers Responsible for Energy, Dipuo Peters, said renewable energy has emerged as the most lucrative source of carbon financing and the region should increase its uptake.

"We all recognise the need for diversity of the primary energy sources that we use. To that extent, the abundance of renewable energy sources that we have in the region must be optimized and exploited for the benefit of our peoples," said Peters, the South African energy minister.

She said southern Africa should in the next few years witness more investment in wind, solar water-heaters, photovoltaic generation, mini-hydro schemes, bio-energy schemes and other innovative programmes and interventions to tap renewable energy.

The Chief Executive of the Regional Electricity Regulatory Association (RERA), Siseho Simasiku, agreed, adding that the region should create a conducive environment to attract investment to the energy sector.

Inga Phase 3 in the Democratic Republic of Congo with a potential to generate about 4,300MW and the Kariba North Bank Extension in Zambia, are some of the renewable energy projects in the SADC region.

However, low electricity tariffs, political instability and long tendering procedures in some countries hinder investment in the region.

Lawrence Musaba, the Coordination Centre Manager of the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), stressed that the region is fast running out of power and needs to generate more electricity to ensure development.

The new power, he said, could only come from the renewable energy sources lying untapped in the region.

"The demand for power in SADC is increasing and if we implement all our projects, particularly those on renewable energy, we will be able to meet the demand," Musaba said.

Other participates at the roundtable urged the region to collectively work together on energy projects to attract investment, saying bigger projects are attractive to investors rather than small ones.

The Power Sector Investors Roundtable brought together potential investors, regional utilities and other relevant stakeholders to find ways of attracting investment in southern Africa. ❐

"Renewable Energy: Shaping Our Future"

Solar World Congress 2009 set for South Africa

THE 2009 Solar World Congress will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa later this year.

Under the theme "Renewable Energy: Shaping Our Future", the biannual congress will bring together regional and international solar and energy experts to find better ways to harness solar power to boost production and meet demand.

The Sustainable Energy Society of Southern Africa and the Foundation for Professional Development are organizing this year's Congress, to be held for the first time in South Africa.

A renewable energy Expo will run concurrently, focusing on solar, renewable, sustainable, alternative and efficient energy resources, products, services and developments.

Among presenters to the meeting are SADC energy ministers as well as energy and solar experts from within and outside the region.

Solar energy is regarded as one of the most reliable and clean forms of energy that does not pollute the environment, compared to other forms such as thermal.

Most of Africa is endowed with sunshine throughout the year, which can be tapped to produce solar power.

A number of initiatives are already in place to harness solar energy to help the continent meet its growing demands for power supply, including the 200MW solar plant in Botswana. The solar power plant in Botswana has the capacity to address most of its energy needs as national power consumption requirements are about 450MW.

Another solar initiative is the $555.3 billion Desertec project in North Africa designed by a consortium of German companies.

Desertec presents the view that if some 0.3 percent of the Sahara desert is covered with solar panels, it could power the entire African continent as well as other parts of the world, and if desert coverage were increased to one percent, this would power the entire world and address the shortages experienced by most regions. ❐

Botswana solar power dream taking shape

A PRE-FEASIBILITY study commissioned by the Botswana Power Corporation has confirmed expert opinion that the country has good solar irradiation capable of supporting a 200-megawatt solar thermal power station.

The study identified five ideal sites for the construction of the solar power station, at Jwaneng, Selebi-Phikwe, Morupule, Orapa or Maun.

Of these sites, Jwaneng and Orapa receive the highest irradiation annually. All potential sites are near the national grid, making connectivity relatively simple and cost-effective.

Each of the sites has comparative advantages: Jwaneng could power the Debswana mine there, while Selebi-Phikwe would enable connectivity to the Phokoje interconnector. In Orapa, the power station would be sited near the AK06 diamond mine, while in Maun, it would power a copper mine.

BPC Chief Executive Officer, Jacob Raleru, said the BPC was now moving on to a bankable feasibility study for the solar thermal power station.

It is expected that the solar thermal power station would consist of 4 x 50 megawatt units, with the possibility of Indepen-dent Power Producers playing a big role in its development.

Raleru also revealed that the BPC has plans for a national off-grid PhotoVoltaic (PV) project.

The PV project is part of BPC's rural electrification project based on renewable energy, a collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility, however the plant is expected to be developed by a private company.

BPC has issued a call for Expressions of Interest from potential partners. An estimated 50,000 rural end-users are expected to benefit from the project.

BPC Lesedi will own all PV systems in Botswana and operate as a franchise, with six to eight franchisees taking the PV services countrywide.

These franchisees will install, operate and maintain PV systems and will collectively have between 20 and 30 subfranchisees which will be empowered with area development contracts.

BPC Lesedi will offer solar power PV for rental, rechargeable lanterns and improved stoves for rural households.

The solar power PV product is targeted at households presently using paraffin and Liquefied Petroleum Gas earning between 400 Pula and P1,000 per month. BPC Lesedi will rent the solar power system and pay only for service.

BPC, together with its partners in the renewable energy-based rural electrification project, will subsidize the cost of solar home systems reaching a potential 72,000 rural households.

The rechargeable lantern product is targeted at households presently using candles and paraffin and earning between P200 and P400 per month. BPC Lesedi will sell lanterns and batteries to the households and charge customers per recharge.

The rechargeable lanterns provide light, radio and cellphone recharge power. It is estimated that 55,000 households could take up this project.

The improved stove product is targeted at households presently using wood for energy and earning between P200 and P1,000 monthly. BPC Lesedi will sell improved stoves capable of reducing the amount of wood required. It is estimated that 194,000 households could take up the improved stoves.

Prior to the BPC Lesedi project, challenges to setting up a national renewable energy project have included low market density, difficult logistics to rural areas and high set-up costs. These are expected to be resolved through the BPC bringing its decades of experience and government backing, as well as the input of a strategic partner.

The Government of Botswana and the UNDP kick started the Renewable Energy-based Rural Electrification Project in November 2006 with both parties injecting a total of US$6.64 million. BPC was appointed the implementing agency for the project, which is due for completion in October 2010. (*AllAfrica.com*) ❐

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Irrigation technology key to agricultural sector

by Egline Tauya

INVESTMENTS IN irrigation technology can reduce vulnerability to adverse weather conditions forecast for southern Africa, yet the region is far from fully exploiting its irrigation capacity as many dams hold vast volumes of water while some people go without food.

The role of traditional technologies needs to be evaluated and modern water distribution technologies, such as sprinkler and trickle irrigation, reviewed.

Low-cost irrigation systems, including such innovations as the use of treadle pumps and drip-kits should be promoted in smallholder irrigation farming.

Apart from developing the region's irrigation capacity, drought-tolerant grain varieties can be promoted to counter the effects of climate change.

Sorghum and millet are better at tolerating moisture stress than maize. A short-season variety seed, which shortens the growing season for irrigated crops, allows farmers to harvest two or more times a year.

A well-designed technology that is appropriate and affordable for the local farming and manufacturing systems should be employed.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organi-sation (FAO), the average rate of irrigation development for the sub-Saharan Africa region over the past 12 years is 43,600 ha/year — an average of 1,150 ha/year for each country.

South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe have average rates of irrigation development over 2,000 ha/year.

If the current rate continues over the next 25 years, then an extra 1 million ha of irrigation could be brought into production increasing the total area presently under irrigation by 50 percent, according to FAO.

Irrigation has long been seen as an option to improve and sustain rural livelihoods by increasing crop production. It can reduce dependency on rain-fed agriculture in drought-prone areas and increase cropping intensities in humid and tropical zones by "extending" the wet season and introducing effective means of water control. ❐

Increasing irrigation capacity can counter the effects of climate change.

South African water resources down

Planning and management of water resources needs review

SOUTH AFRICANS may have to start paying more for water if they do not manage their water resources efficiently, according to a recent study showing that South Africa has less natural water resources than previously believed.

The report, released by the Water Research Commission of South Africa, says the country's natural water resources are four percent less than measured in the last study 14 years ago.

This difference in measurement of water supply has been attributed to improved research techniques and technologies.

Project director of the study, Brian Middleton, said if South Africa continued using and allocating water according to the higher estimates (of water resources) made in previous studies, there will simply not be enough water to meet the country's future needs.

"The difference is small overall, but what it does mean is that the planning and managing processes and usage of water must be re-looked at. The demands of the future will play an important part," said Middleton.

This means that even though the water resources are marginally less than previously believed, the demands for water in the future will play an important role in the price of water.

"Water prices may increase and may need to so that we manage the water resources differently. If it becomes costly to move or transport water, industries may use less water or may find alternate ways of using water. (We will have to) manage our demands."

The new water data may mean that a wide range of sectors — including agriculture, electricity generation, industry and municipalities — will have to start using less water.

"How we manage demand in agriculture, forestry, industrial sectors and all other sectors must be addressed. They need to use less water and to use it efficiently," said Middleton.

The study also found that the water quality of South Africa's rivers is deteriorating. Middleton said that water is becoming undrinkable because of increasing incidents of sewerage spills and industrial pollution.

If this continues then South Africans will face greater water shortages in the future. "The water quality in our taps is very high but the quality of the water in rivers is not," Middleton said.

According to Middleton, there would be greater need to use more purification methods as the water quality becomes worse.

He said: "We will need more purifying plants and better purifying systems to ensure that the water in our taps remains of a high quality. We will need to treat the water more, increasing the costs of the country."

Middleton pointed out that groundwater (water accessed via boreholes) is used in probably 75 percent of the country - mainly in small towns and villages - while larger urban areas use mostly surface water (water found in rivers, lakes and dams).

"The study's results suggest that there is merit in considering the conjunctive use of both sources (surface and ground water). When surface water is available, we need to consider drawing on this more efficiently, allowing our groundwater reserves to build up for droughts."

The data collected covered South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry declined to comment on the findings until they read the report. *(IPS)* ❐

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Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia prepare for elections

PREPARATION FOR elections in Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique has reached top gear with registration of voters and political parties unveiling their manifestos.

The three countries are among at least six SADC Member States expected to hold elections between September and December this year.

Angola, Mauritius and the Democratic Republic of Congo are yet to announce their polling dates, and elections there could still be postponed.

In Botswana, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has promised to continue to work on improving the living standards of the population.

The BDP has never lost an election since independence in 1966 and will this October aim to maintain its record in the parliamentary elections. In Botswana, the parliament acts as an electoral college following the elections, and selects the President, currently Seretse Khama Ian Khama, leader of the BDP.

The opposition Botswana Congress Party and its partner, the Botswana Alliance Movement, have pledged to broaden the country's economic base by diversifying the economy through agriculture development and manufacturing.

Voters waiting to cast their ballot and counting of votes during Namibia's last elections.

In Mozambique, the elections have been called for late October ahead of the summer rains that hampered voters in the previous elections in 2004. Nominations closed for presidential candidates in July.

A total of nine candidates put their names forward to contest the presidency with President Armando Guebuza, who is completing his first term in office representing the party in government, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo). These nominations are still being scrutinized by the National Elections Commission, the CNE.

The main opposition candidates are Afonso Dhlakama of the Mozambique Resistance Movement (Renamo) and Daviz Simango of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM).

In the parliamentary and provincial elections a total of 29 parties and coalitions have submitted papers to take part in the October polls, for consideration by the independent electoral commission.

Campaigning in Namibia has started in earnest with the governing party, the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) urging the electorate to vote for them during the November presidential and parliamentary elections.

SWAPO has been in power since independence in 1990 and President Hifikepunye Pohamba, completing his first term as President, will again lead the party into the elections.

Opposition parties such as the Congress of Democrats and the United Democratic Move-ment are set to contest the country's fourth general elections since Independence. ❒

Madagascar, hope for a solution

MADAGASCAR COULD be on the road to recovery following a peace agreement signed between ousted President Marc Ravalomanana and opposition leader Andry Rajoelina in Maputo, Mozambique in early August.

The agreement, which calls for a transitional government leading to fresh elections within 15 months, was sealed under the auspices of SADC negotiation.

Former Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano is mediating in the talks after SADC leaders appointed him the chief negotiator in June following the collapse of African Union and United Nations sponsored talks.

The political turmoil in Madagascar emerged again earlier this year after opposition leader Andry Rajoelina seized power from President Marc Ravalomanana in a public demonstration backed by the military, similar to the method used by Ravalomanana when he seized power a few years earlier from his predecessor, Didier Ratsiraka.

A number of regional and international organizations such as SADC, AU and the UN responded to this development by either imposing sanctions or suspending Madagascar from membership.

The Maputo meeting was attended by two other former Madagascan presidents, Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy.

As part of the deal, Ravalomanana, who is living in exile in South Africa, is to be allowed to return to Madagascar to contest elections without fear of being arrested by the interim government that had convicted him in his absence for corruption charges.

Ravalomanana and Rajoelina both expressed satisfaction at the deal that cleared key points of contention, for a constitutional referendum, and legislative and presidential elections in 15 months.

However the structure of the transitional government is still under discussion with fears that this could take long to address and could even be a breaking point for the fragile truce.

Said Ravalomanana, "I am satisfied about the outcome of this reunion," adding that he will soon return to Madagascar.

Rajoelina said the agreement was a "victory for all Madagascans. It is in the wider interest of the nation, which has come out the winner."

SADC has pledged to continue mediating in the talks until a solution is found to resolve the political situation in Madagascar.

SADC is working closely with the AU, UN and the International Organization of the Francophone (French-speaking countries) on the peace process. ❒

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Algeria hosts 2nd Pan-African Cultural Festival

ONE OF the best kept secrets on the African continent this year was the 2nd Pan-African Cultural Festival of Algiers, which took place in the north African country 40 years after it hosted the first one.

The culture festival, held from 5-20 July 2009, was an official function of the African Union, authorized at the highest level, by Heads of State and Government with a view to adoption of a Pan-African cultural charter.

The festival, with the theme of The African Renaissance, showcased a wide spectrum of African cultural heritage from all parts of the continent: performing arts such as music, dance and theatre; literature and books; film, photography, painting, sculpture, fashion, and other visual arts and crafts.

The two-week festival featured thousands of artists from Africa and the African diaspora, and attracted more than 100,000 local people to Algiers, to celebrate Africa's artistic renaissance.

The Algerian government invited and supported the participation of artists from most African countries, including many from southern Africa.

The culture minister, Mrs Khalida Toumi, said the festival offered new opportunities for Africa to show the diversity of its people and its creativity in all cultural and artistic fields.

This followed the adoption of the Charter of Cultural Renaissance of Africa by the African Union summit in Sudan in January 2006 and the selection of Algeria to host the festival.

This renaissance comes 40 years after the first Pan-African Cultural Festival of Algiers, held in July 1969, and that period has witnessed revolutionary political changes on the continent, with almost all countries now independent of colonial rule.

Algeria gained its independence from France in 1962 following a liberation war that claimed more than a million lives, and subsequently continued to actively support the liberation movements in other countries, notably in southern Africa.

"In 1969 the call of the hour was liberation, because many an African country was not yet free and those who were had just obtained their liberation. It was a value," Toumi told the Pan African News Agency, PANA.

"Today if I refer to the member states of the African Union, of the 53 countries, 52 are independent. Only one is not independent. Otherwise we would say Africa has liberated itself."

She said the festival was a celebration of the revival of Africa's artistic greatness and every African art form was welcomed.

"Africa is in full renaissance. A renaissance at full swing. This is why the slogan of the second Pan African Culture Festival is The African Renaissance, which we called literally in English, Africa is back," Toumi said.

"This fair had both aspects, material and intangible, as well as the visual arts, paintings, culture, art, photography and including the fashion, since there is a whole movement in Africa of the creation of the fashion art, which is being developed."


Part of the performing arts at the Pan-African Cultural Festival

Her ministry launched a website dedicated to the 2nd Pan-African Cultural Festival that can be accessed at www.panafalger2009.dz

The Social Affairs Commissioner for the African Union, Bience Gawanas from Namibia, said the cultural festival is a statement of Africa's resurgence.

"It is part of our very, very broad mandate, and that is to create an image of Africa, an image of Africa that does not only speak of conflicts, an image of Africa that does not only speak of diseases, but an image of Africa as the cradle of humankind," Gawanas said.

Media directors and representatives of African media who met in Algiers earlier this year for the first Africa Media meeting, pledged to generate wide awareness of the event within and outside the continent by images, sound and writing to make the event "an African pride and a global success".

Algeria, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the African culture ministers' conference, has expressed the hope that a Pan-African Cultural Festival will be scheduled more frequently in future, through the African Union, and not something that happens only after 40 years. *sardc.net* ❐

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Africa heads to Angola for the first part of the 2010 soccer fiesta

by Patson Phiri

ANGOLA WILL host the Africa Cup of Nations soccer tournament in January-February 2010, exactly five months before the first ever Soccer World Cup to be staged on African soil kicks off in South Africa in June.

The oil-rich southern African country will be hosting its first major international sporting event since independence from Portugal in 1975 and the subsequent civil war that ended in 2002.

The soccer tournament is expected to attract 16 national competitors from across Africa, thus uniting the rest of the continent with Angola, which was isolated for three decades due to the war.

The Angola organizing committee says preparations for the Africa Cup of Nations are going on well, and the country is refurbishing infrastructure such as stadiums, hotels and roads as part of its preparations.

Refurbishment of stadiums is expected to be complete by September, according to the organizing committee. Construction of stadiums is taking place in the provinces of Luanda, Benguela, Cabinda and Lubango in preparation for the games.

The Director for Marketing and Communication of the organizing committee, Manuel Mariano, said the stadiums will be officially opened on the Independence anniversary, 11 November.

The celebrations will include a national soccer tournament to mark the completion of the stadiums as well as to test the four venues.

Issa Hayatou, long-time President of the Conference of African Football (CAF), who toured the stadiums in July, was optimistic about Angola's preparedness for the soccer event.

Marketing of the grand African tournament has reached top gear with the organizing committee showcasing Angola at events in neighbouring countries such as the Zambian Agricultural and Commercial Show in Lusaka.

The committee took advantage of the show to generate awareness of the Africa Cup of Nations tournament with its display stand showing pictures of the four stadiums and illustrating what Angola can offer to visitors.

As the host nation, Angola automatically qualifies for the finals while the remaining 15 participants are still engaged in a qualifying round to select participants in the biannual event. ❒

Eco-tourism park to be completed by 2010

AN ECO-TOURISM park at the Tshikuyu village in the Limpopo province of South Africa will be completed in January 2010 just in time for the thousands of soccer fans who will descend on the country for the World Cup soccer spectacle.

Wildlife to be foundat eco-tourism parks include kudus, zebras and impalas.

The R30 million project, which started in 2007, will play a vital role in providing accommodation to tourists visiting the Kruger National Park during the 2010 FIFA World Cup and beyond.

The park will consist of modern and stylish chalets, an administration block, a conference hall, swimming pools, a restaurant, bar and a curio shop.

The Local Economic Development Manager at the district municipality, Mukundi Mushaphi, said the project has created many jobs for locals.

"The project has already created 93 temporary jobs in construction and it will further create 200 more jobs in the fields of security, cleaning, game ranging, maintenance and other services."

Herbivorous wild animals such as kudus, impalas and zebras will be conserved at the park, except the big five.

A cultural village will be established where different types of cultural dances will be performed to entertain tourists. Paintings, sculptures and other types of art creation will be sold at the cultural village. *BuaNews* ❒

Countryside prepares to host visitors to the world cup

CONSTRUCTION OF bed and breakfast facilities has begun in some deep rural areas of Limpopo in preparation for visitors during the 2010 FIFA World Cup to be held in South Africa in June-July next year.

The R15 million European Union-funded project has started in several villages outside Tzaneen, in the Mopani district municipality.

The site where these accommodation establishments are being constructed is a 30-minute drive from Polokwane, where some of the World Cup matches will be played.

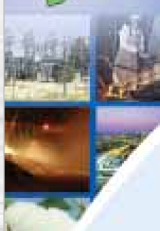
Project Manager Elvis Ntlwane hailed the initiative as one of the municipality's local economic development projects, which aim to improve the livelihood of poor communities through tourism.

The project has already created short-term jobs for more than 300 builders and labourers, including women and disabled people.

Mr Ntlwane said the project was being implemented to cater for the 2010 Soccer World Cup and beyond.

The rural district boasts some famous natural and cultural tourist attractions, including the home of South Africa's most famous "mystic", the Rain Queen Modjadji, outside Modjadjiskloof. The area also has the largest concentration of a single cycad species in the world.

The district's eastern-most town, Phalaborwa, is one of the busiest entrances to the Kruger National Park, which now forms part of the Great Limpopo Trans Frontier Conservation Area together with national parks across the border in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. *BuaNews* ❒



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2009 Events Diary

September 05-06, Democratic Republic of Congo	**SADC Council of Ministers** Council comprises ministers of foreign affairs, international cooperation, economic development or planning and finance from each Member State. Council precedes the summit and prepares policy recommendations for adoption by SADC Leaders.
07-08, Democratic Republic of Congo	**SADC Summit** The Summit of Heads of State and Government is the ultimate policy-making institution of the SADC. The Summit in Kinshasa will see the official handover of the SADC rotating chair from President Jacob Zuma of South Africa to President Joseph Kabila of DRC.
14-18, Democratic Republic of Congo	**SAPP Meetings** The Southern African Power Pool will hold its 33rd annual meetings in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Member states are expected to attend.
21-24, Namibia	**21st African Hydro Symposium** The 21st African Hydro Symposium will be held in Windhoek at Safari Hotel/ Court Conference Centre. Papers to be presented on a range of topics that cover hydro-power generation and use from developing hydropower to training.
October 16, Botswana	**Parliamentary Elections** Botswana will hold parliamentary elections to elect 58 Members of Parliament who will in turn elect the President. Botswana uses the constituency system of First Past The Post.
19 - 23, Uganda	**Special Summit on Refuges, Returnees Internally Displaced Persons in Africa** AU Heads of State and Government are expected to adopt and sign the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and the Kampala Solemn Declaration which should considerably change the lives of displaced persons by refraining from, prohibiting and preventing arbitrary displacement of populations. The summit will run under the theme, "African Union addressing the challenge of forced displacement in Africa".
28, Mozambique	**Presidential and Parliamentary Elections** Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be held in Mozambique, advanced from the traditional days of December and now being held before the onset of the summer rains. Parliamentary elections for National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies. Mozambique electoral system is Proportional Representation.
November 27- 28, Namibia	**Presidential and Parliamentary elections** Namibia goes to the polls for Presidential and Parliamentary elections, using a system of Proportional Representation.

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Chief Albert Luthuli stood for equality and dignity

THE NAME of Chief Albert Luthuli epitomizes the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

The late President of the African National Congress (ANC) was determined that, when the political war is won, South Africa and Africa should stand together and fight for total liberation that allows black people to determine their own destiny.

His dream was for Africa to be free, to overcome the legacy of economic underdevelopment, restore the dignity of black people and have ownership of the continent's rich resources.

Luthuli, born in 1898, cautioned that, "There is a growing number among us who see in apartheid the prospect of becoming affluent slaves.

"What a shame that there should be those who accept the position and, worse, offer the people counsel of despair by presenting white rule as impregnable. What false prophets they are!"

Luthuli died in 1967 after a train struck him near his home. So tragic was his death that the ANC decided not to fill his position until the war for freedom was won.

It was only in 1985, 18 years after his death that the late Oliver Reginald (OR) Tambo agreed to lead the ANC and the struggle for independence.

Luthuli is described by those who knew him as a profound thinker, a man of powerful logic with a keen sense of justice, a man of lofty principles, a bold and courageous fighter and a statesman, who should be remembered by all South Africans and people across the African continent.

When he took up his post as ANC leader he said, "What the future has in store for me I do not know. It might be ridicule, imprisonment, concentration camp, banishment and even death.

"I only pray to the Almighty to strengthen my resolve so that none of these grim possibilities may deter me from striving, for the sake of the good name of our beloved country, to make it a true democracy and a true union in form and spirit of all the communities in the land."

He said it is important for one to stand firm for one's rights in spite of all the evils as "freedom comes after much suffering and sacrifices."

Police intimidation and banishment should not deter but should spur us forward to greater deeds, he said, adding that "we must with grim determination re-dedicate ourselves to the noble cause for peace."

During one of his treason trails in 1960, Chief Luthuli said the struggle for freedom in South Africa is not about the colour of the skin but about equal rights.

"The African National Congress is not working for the overthrow of the ruling classes. It is working to be given an opportunity to participate in the government of the country," he said.

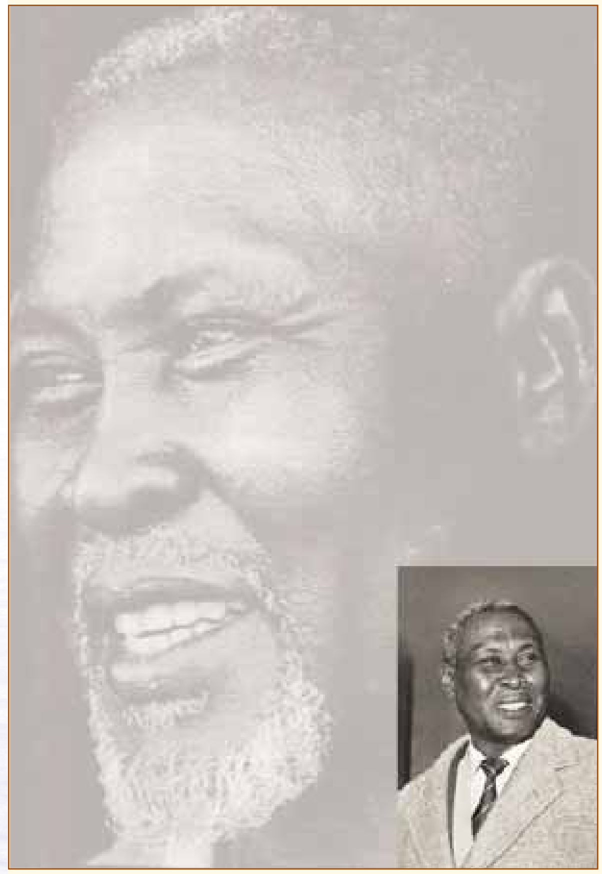
Luthuli was recognized through numerous international awards including the Nobel Prize for his fearless fight against apartheid. The Nobel Prize, bestowed upon him in 1961, was the first to be awarded to an African.

South Africa has named a national monument and a park in his honour.

Speaking at the Chief Luthuli centenary ceremony in 1998, South Africa's first black president, Nelson Mandela, said although Luthuli is gone, his works will live forever.

"His memory will last forever to us who worked with him and followed in his footsteps. This giant chose persecution, including the fate of being deposed as an elected chief by a regime that despised everything African and democratic," Mandela said.

"In doing so he taught us the lesson that real leaders must be ready to sacrifice all for the freedom of their people."



Chief Albert Luthuli

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN SADC

August - October 2009

1 August	Parents Day	DRC
3 August	Farmers Day	Zambia
8 August	Peasants Day	Tanzania
9 August	National Women's Day	South Africa
10 August	Public Holiday	South Africa
10 August	Heroes Day	Zimbabwe
11 August	Defence Forces Day	Zimbabwe
15 August	Assumption Day	Madagascar
15 August	Assumption of Mary	Seychelles
17 August	SADC Day	All
26 August	Heroes Day	Namibia
3 September	President Dr Levy Mwanawasa Day	Zambia
6 September	Somhlolo Day Independence Day	Swaziland
7 September	Public Holiday	Swaziland
7 September	Victory Day	Mozambique
17 September	Founder of the Nation & National Heroes Day	Angola
20 September	Eid-ul-Fitr *	Mauritius, Malawi, Tanzania
24 September	Heritage Day	South Africa
25 September	Armed Forces Day	Mozambique
30 September	Botswana Day	Botswana
1 October	Public Holiday	Botswana
4 October	Independence Day	Lesotho
5 October	Public Holiday	Lesotho
4 October	Peace Day	Mozambique
14 October	Mwalimu Nyerere Day Climax of the "Uhuru Torch Race"	Tanzania
16 October	Mother's Day	Malawi
17 October	Divali	Mauritius
24 October	Independence Day	Zambia

* Depends on the sighting of the moon