SOUTHERN AFRICA TODAY

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Striving for food security

by Kizito Sikuka

THE SUCCESS story of southern Africa's turnaround from being a food deficit region to one producing surplus grain underscores the point that agricultural policies are key to boosting production and improving food security in the region.

Since the adoption of various agricultural commitments such as the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in 2004, most SADC Member States have recorded good harvests every year.

A recent report on the state of vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty in SADC acknowledges that in addition to "the generally good rainfalls" a number of countries are implementing different types of programmes to increase yields.

These strategies include investing more in improved agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizer as well as targeted subsidy programmes that result in farmers accessing agricultural inputs and farm implements at cheaper rates.

Countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe that have vigorously implemented the input subsidy programmes have seen production rising steadily.

For example, in the 2007/08 farming season maize production trebled from about 1.2 million tonnes to 3.4 million tonnes in Malawi. This phenomenal increase in production has saved the country a yearly budget of more than US$120 million that it had spent importing food.

Some SADC Member States have also allocated at least 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture and rural development to improve food security in the region.

This intervention is in line with the African Union declaration that calls for adequate budget allocation towards agriculture.

Efforts have been intensified to improve infrastructure such as roads and rail to promote the smooth movement of food surplus to deficit areas more efficiently and cheaper.

The large size of the region and diverse agro-ecological and climate variations assure good production potential in some parts of the region in any given year, hence the need to move surplus food to areas that may require additional food.

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Striving for food security

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Cross-border trade has played a critical role in this regard, allowing the region to be self-sufficient in food.

Another important intervention that has been employed by SADC to avert food insecurity in the region has been the establishment of agricultural storage facilities such as silos.

Silos have helped member countries to store their surplus cereal crops for use in poor seasons. A recent study by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that most countries in southern Africa lose up to 40 percent of their produce after harvest because of poor storage facilities.

To improve food security in the region, SADC has encouraged countries to continue growing other traditional cereals such as sorghum and millet as well as non-cereal crops such as cassava and plantain.

This shift away from what is a clearly drought-vulnerable staple maize crop has helped southern Africa to avert hunger in the face of persistent droughts that have been worsened by the global financial crisis and the effects of climate change.

According to a SADC report on the state of food security, there has been a 32 percent increase in cereal production between 2005 and 2009. *(See table).*

In period under review, the highest increase was recorded in Botswana (though not a major cereal producer in SADC), thus highlighting how all countries are working towards boosting production and improving food security in their respective countries as well as the entire SADC region.

For the 2010/11 season, cereal surplus in SADC is estimated at 2.3 million tones, and a number of member states are expecting a good harvest.

South Africa estimates a maize surplus of about 6 million tonnes, which can be exported to neighbouring countries that may require additional imports.

However, despite the cereal surplus in the region, the number of people requiring food and non-food assistance in SADC remains a regular feature due to various factors.

These factors include high prices of fuel, agricultural inputs and food as well as low incomes, low prices for some of the cash crops and outbreak of livestock diseases.

SADC is working towards addressing some of these challenges through the input subsidy programmes as well as improved prices for cash crops.

To deal with droughts, SADC member states have intensified efforts to invest in irrigation as overdependence on rain-fed agriculture has impacted on crop production.

Hence it is important that the way forward in promoting sustainable food production centres on the promotion of appropriate irrigation technologies and sound management and efficient use of limited and sparsely distributed water resources.

Thus regional water infrastructure development becomes important as it would not only provide water security for irrigation, but would also be used for other competing demands, including power generation, environment, flood mitigation, domestic water supply and sanitation.

The potential for irrigating land in the SADC region is large as the region is hugely endowed with water courses such as the Congo, Limpopo, and Zambezi.

To boost production, some SADC countries have embarked on land reforms as land is one of the most important primary factors of production for most Member States.

Land is the most constraining factor for attainment of sustainable food security at national and household levels.

Hence guaranteeing access to land and security of tenure have been key conditions for enabling producers to invest in land, improve the productivity of their farms and improving their livelihoods.

The Extra-Ordinary Summit on Agriculture and Food Security, held in Dar es Salaam in 2004, agreed that Member States would accelerate land policy reform initiatives.

However, progress has been slow in some countries due to lack of adequate financial resources for purchasing land at market prices, which are often very high.

SADC Council approved in 2010 the establishment of the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) to coordinate agricultural research, technology generation and dissemination of research information.

The establishment of a sub-regional organisation for this purpose is part of the implementation of the SADC Multi-country Agricultural Productivity Programme (MAPP) whose objective is to promote agricultural production and productivity with the aim of reducing food insecurity in the region.

Agriculture is the backbone of most economies in southern Africa and SADC has identified the sector as a priority for development.

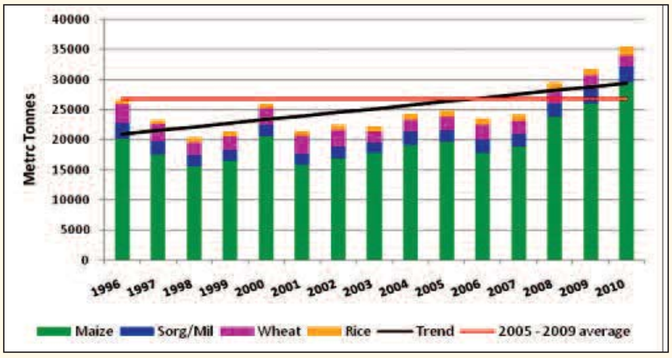
The Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, which has been under review, identifies a number of priority areas on which southern Africa should focus in the short-term (2004-2006) and medium-to-long term (2004-2010) to achieve food security in the region.

Short-term measures included the availability and access to key agricultural inputs for farmers, consisting of improved seed varieties, fertilizers, agrochemicals, tillage services and farm implements.

In the medium-to-long term, southern African leaders agreed to meet the African Union target to allocate at least 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture and rural development.

A recent progress report prepared by SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security said the implementation of the declaration has significantly contributed to food security in the region with some countries experiencing bumper harvests in the last few years. ❒

Cereal production in SADC between 1996 and 2010



Source: State of vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty in SADC

Council approves budget

Members contributions formula based on GDP

THE SADC Council of Ministers has approved a revised formula for the distribution of annual Member States' contributions that comes into effect on 1 April 2011.

Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, Dr. Hage Geingob, said the revised formula was developed in recognition of significant increases in economic growth in Member States as measured by rises in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"The new formula bases the distribution of member states' annual contributions on a moving average of the GDP of the previous five instead of three years in order to smoothen movements in the GDP, and retains the 20 percent ceiling and five percent floor, except for Member States with populations of 500,000 or less," said Geingob who is Namibia's Minister of Trade and Industry.

Since April 2003, budgetary contributions by SADC Member States have taken into account the relative level of their GDP, which is seen as a more equitable and sustainable basis.

Council approved the 2011/12 budget of US$83.5 million for SADC institutions, which is 10 percent higher than the amount set aside for the 2010/11 financial year of US$76.3 million. This budget is aimed at facilitating the implementation of interventions in approved programmes and corporate services.

Towards this budget, Member States are expected to provide US$26 million in annual contributions.

They are also expected to contribute a further US$3.4 million and US$2 million towards the SADC headquarters unitary charges payment, and HIV and AIDS Transboundary Projects, respectively.

Following the opening of the SADC headquarters in November 2010 by Heads of State and Government, Member States have assumed an additional financial obligation on a recurrent basis for the next 15 years.

Development partners are expected to contribute US$51.5 million towards the approved budget for the fiscal year 2011/12 or 72.36 percent of the amount sought for the coming financial year.

All Member States except Madagascar are up to date on their annual membership contributions to SADC.

Madagascar has outstanding contributions for the years 2009/10 and 2010/11.

"The SADC Secretariat continues to engage Madagascar on the matter because, though under suspension pending its return to constitutional normalcy, Madagascar is still a SADC Member State and SADC continues to expend its resources towards assisting Malagasy people in resolving the situation currently prevailing in their country," Geingob said.

He said Council has directed the Secretariat to continue engaging Madagascar and report back to the ministers at their next meeting in August.

The Council of Ministers was established by Article 11 of the SADC Treaty to oversee the proper functioning and development of SADC, implementation of its policies and execution of its programmes.

This includes advising Summit on matters of overall policy, the efficient and harmonised functioning and development of SADC, approving of policies, strategies and work programmes as well as coordinating and supervising the operations of SADC institutions subordinate to it. Council currently meets twice every year, first around February/March to review the implementation of its previous decisions, including financial expenditure of SADC institutions as well as to approve the budget of the same institutions for the following fiscal year, commencing annually on 1 April.

Council meets again in August to prepare for the annual ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, including deliberating on strategic regional integration issues. ❒

Role of Consultative Conference to be reviewed

COUNCIL HAS mandated the Double Troika to review the "role and functioning modalities of the Consultative Conference" following the challenges that led to the postponement of the conference that was scheduled for Lesotho in 2010.

In August 2010, Council had approved that the Consultative Conference of SADC and its International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) should be held in Maseru in October last year under the theme "Global Financial and Economic Crisis: Impact on and Lessons for SADC Regional Economic Integration".

However, the ICPs, through the European Union Delegation in Gaborone, requested for a postponement of the conference from October 2010 to a date to be agreed upon in 2011.

"Having considered all the challenges that led to the postponement of the Consultative Conference we mandated the Double Troika – Senior Officials and the Secretariat – to review the role and functioning modalities of the Consultative Conference within the context of the Windhoek Declaration and to submit a report with recommendations for consideration by Council in August 2011 in order to determine the way forward," Council chairperson Hage Geingob announced at the close of the Council meeting in Namibia in March. ❒

SADC economies to grow in 2011

SOUTHERN AFRICA continues to make a steady recovery from the global financial crisis that affected most of the world since 2008.

Economic forecasts made by most SADC Member States reveal that the regional economy should once again experience a growth in 2011, as key sectors of agriculture, mining and manufacturing begin to recover from the economic downturn.

For example, Angola has predicted that its economy will grow by 7.6 percent this year. Finance Minister Carlos Alberto Lopes cited the high price for petroleum on the international market as a major contributor to the economic growth.

Angola pumps about 1.9 million barrels of oil a day, and last year surpassed Nigeria as the largest oil producer on the continent.

Botswana has forecast an economic growth of about 6.8 percent in 2011 and 7.1 percent the following year.

Finance Minister Kenneth Matambo said the recovery of the mining sector and a stable growth outlook in the rest of the economy made the economic prospect for Botswana look good.

"Diamond sales in 2010 were 33 percent greater than in 2009. We expect improved diamond sales for 2011 and beyond, with recovery of the diamond market to pre-recession levels by 2013," he said.

He was however, quick to point out that the growth in Botswana's economy is in the medium to long term still largely dependent on the mining sector, and urged the country to continue with its efforts to diversify into other sectors.

Available data show that those countries that diversified into other sectors were not as badly affected by the global financial crisis, and SADC Member States would benefit more if they broaden their economic base to ensure long-term sustainability.

Another SADC country that has predicted an increase in economic growth in 2011 is Malawi with the target set at 6.2 percent.

Last year, the increase was 7.2 percent and Finance Minister Ken Kandodo said the slight decrease is due to a slowdown in manufacturing and telecommunications.

Consecutive bumper yields and a growing manufacturing sector have helped Malawi boost its economy in the last few years.

Mauritius is also expecting an economic growth of more than 4 percent in 2011. The island country depends heavily on tourism, textile and sugar exports, although it also has a burgeoning offshore financial centre and is diversifying into other sectors such as information technology.

This diversification has helped to cushion the impact of tourism as this was one of the worst hit sectors by the economic crisis. Tourism generates about 10 percent of Mauritius' GDP.

Mozambique has forecast a growth of 7.2 percent this year with Prime Minister Aires Ali saying the growth will be driven by a better agricultural performance.

He said the country intends to raise about US$2.4 billion from exports, an increase of 15 percent.

SADC's largest economy, South Africa, has made an economic growth forecast of 3.4 percent this year.

The United Republic of Tanzania has said its economy would grow by 7.2 percent this year from an estimated 7.0 percent in 2010.

A latest report by the National Bureau of Statistics cites massive improvement in construction, transport and communications sectors as major contributors to this increase.

An impressive transport and communications performance is attributed to the increase in the volume of goods handled, particularly at border posts such as the port of Dar es Salaam.

Zambia and Zimbabwe are the other two SADC countries that have predicted an economic growth in 2011.

Zambia expects a growth of about 6.5 percent on the back of a rally in copper prices and improvements in agriculture.

Mining Minister Maxwell Mwale expects production of copper to rise to 850,000 tonnes this year from just below 750,000 tonnes last year due to the expansion of some of the mines.

Zimbabwean Finance Minister Tendai Biti announced in his 2011 national budget that the country's economy is expected to grow by 9.3 percent this year.

The economy grew in 2009, for the first time in a decade, by 4.7 percent. In 2010 the increase was expected to be 8.1 percent.

Biti cited increased production in the mining and manufacturing sectors, high agricultural output especially the cash crop tobacco, as well as record high prices for gold on the international market as major contributors to this increase.

However, analysts said that economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the United States and the European Union have significantly derailed the country's economic turnaround programme.

Based on these economic projections by SADC countries, the region is emerging from the global financial downturn, and the task now is to ensure that this recovery is maintained if sustainable development is to be achieved in the region. *sardc.net* ❐

North-South Corridor to boost trade in east and southern Africa

THE NORTH-SOUTH Corridor infrastructure development initiative being implemented by COMESA, EAC and SADC is making good progress.

Under this initiative, the three regional economic communities will rehabilitate key infrastructure such as roads, rail and border posts in eastern and southern Africa.

More than US$1.2 billion has been raised initially to implement the North-South Corridor project. Plans include the construction of more than 8,000 km of road, rehabilitation of 600 km of rail track and upgrading of the Dar es Salaam port in the United Republic of Tanzania – one of the biggest and busiest ports in Africa.

At a meeting in Zambia last year, the heads of road development agencies or departments of roads in COMESA, EAC and SADC identified 19 priority road projects that were submitted to the Tripartite Taskforce for funding by the Tripartite Trust Account.

The funding requirements would bring the entire road network up to a good condition along its entire length between Dar es Salaam and Durban, and then to maintain the road in this condition until 2030.

The initial (first year) costs of maintenance and rehabilitation are estimated at about US$1.25 billion, as significant levels of backlog rehabilitation and maintenance need to be done.

However, once the initial backlog is addressed, costs of annual maintenance fall significantly for the next 20 years.

In the second year, maintenance costs of the entire network (excluding South African roads) is estimated to be about US$75 million.

As additional periodic maintenance needs to be done, the costs rise such that by the sixth year maintenance costs will be about US$600 million, falling to about US$450m in the seventh year.

Progress has also been made in rolling out the One-Stop-Border concept that aims to reduce the amount of time wasted by individuals and truck drivers while clearing goods at border posts in the region.

Under the one-stop border post scheme, travellers would be cleared just once for passage into the next country in contrast with the current situation where travellers have to be sanctioned on both sides of the border.

The Chirundu one-stop border post between Zambia and Zimbabwe was formally opened in December 2009, a benchmark for regional integration among SADC Member States.

Chirundu was one of the border posts selected for the pilot phase of the one-stop border initiative that aims to facilitate trade and free movement of goods and services among the 15-member regional community.

One of the major constraints to economic development, poverty alleviation and job creation in the three regions is the high cost of doing business across borders. The cost of transport is directly linked to the cost of goods to the final consumer.

It is estimated that the average charge for a haulage truck waiting to complete clearance formalities at a border post in SADC, EAC or COMESA region is between US$400 and US$500 a day. Some trucks take up to five days to clear a border, which adds to the ultimate costs of transporters and importers.

Another major concern for the SADC-EAC-COMESA tripartite is that rehabilitation of transport infrastructure has traditionally been done in isolation, meaning that there is no coordination of projects to improve the road networks.

The North-South Corridor concept aims to address this shortcoming by having a number of projects that are inter-related and which address road and rail infrastructure, reducing time taken to cross border posts, port infrastructure and, later, energy and ICT infrastructure. ❒

Samora Machel Bridge reopens for business

THE REHABILITATION of the Samora Machel Bridge over the Zambezi River in the western city of Tete in Mozambique guarantees that the bridge will last another 30 years, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Francisco Pereira, said at the reopening ceremony on 30 January.

The bridge is part of the main road between Zimbabwe and Malawi, and was closed in 2008 for renovations. However, due to its importance to the regional economy, certain conditions were put in place to ensure that the bridge was not wholly closed for traffic.

The total cost for the repair is estimated at about US$23 million. On average, about 800 trucks use the bridge each day. *AIM* ❒

South Africa to spend R800 billion on infrastructure

SOUTH AFRICA will spend more than R800 billion over the next three years on new power stations, road networks, dams and water supply pipelines, rail and ports facilities, schools, hospitals and government buildings, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan has said.

Priority projects include the Medupi power station which has the capacity to produce about 4,700 Megawatts of electricity. Others are the Transnet multi-product pipeline, which will secure inland fuel supplies and a freeway improvement scheme, which has already significantly eased congestion on Gauteng roads. *BuaNews* ❒

SADC Tourism Investment Promotion Forum

Full tourism potential needs infrastructure development and joint promotion

SOUTHERN AFRICA has the capacity to realize its full tourism potential if the necessary investment is made in key infrastructure such as roads to promote the smooth movement of people and goods across the region.

The SADC Director for Infrastructure and Services, Remi Makumbe, told a recent SADC Tourism Investment Promotion Forum in Brussels that a vibrant, seamless infrastructure base is possible if there is a paradigm shift in the financing of tourism infrastructure and services.

The "promotion of regional tourist packages based on joint marketing of SADC as a single destination" is also crucial to boosting arrivals into the region, Makumbe said.

"It is imperative that we commit ourselves fully to the development of the necessary enabling infrastructure to unlock the opportunities into the different exotic resorts," he said, adding that "this will no doubt enhance our competitiveness bearing in mind that the global scramble for tourists remains a reality."

This shift could be achieved through the establishment of strong Public Private sector Partnerships (PPPs), which are critical to sustainable development as they promote a win-win situation for both the public interest and the private partner.

Makumbe said while physical infrastructures such as roads "facilitate smooth, seamless and affordable access to our treasured tourist resorts," there is also need for SADC to intensify its efforts to improve on the "soft aspects relating to visas, immigration and cross border facilitation."

SADC has identified a number of facilitation projects to boost arrivals. However, various challenges hinder the implementation process.

These initiatives include plans to launch a SADC Universal Visa (Univisa), which would enable tourists from outside the region to obtain a single visa to visit all SADC countries.

Five Member States are spearheading the implementation process -- Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

Other initiatives are investment in tourist facilities, with special emphasis on Trans Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs), marketed under the "Boundless Southern Africa" brand, which was the anchor project for the SADC South Africa World Cup Soccer 2010 Tourism Strategy.

The SADC 2010 Investment Promotion Pro-gramme that was launched by the SADC Summit in 2009 is another project, as well as the implementation of cross-border efficiency projects and the introduction of seamless border posts through the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) concept.

Makumbe called for more cooperation between SADC and the European Union as the Euro Zone "remains the key source market for tourism in SADC. We urge our European partners to consider conferring a 'preferred destination status' to our region."

The SADC region will continue to focus on marketing southern Africa as a single branded destination, Mukumbe said, "as we seek to maximize our opportunities based on collectivity as a region."

"We continue to showcase our tourism products, which are characterised by unique products, unequalled splendour and a hearty welcome with lasting impressions. Our expectation is for tourism to change the pace and course of the 15-nation SADC economies and that tourism becomes the epicentre of resurgence of our economic growth, guided by our common vision, values, destiny and a shared future."

Tourism is a factor in the economies of most SADC countries, and the region is endowed with numerous attractions.

These include the Victoria Falls between Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Namib Desert in Namibia, Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Cape Town in South Africa, historic sites such as Great Zimbabwe and Mozambique Island, pristine coastal beaches, game parks and reserves teeming with wildlife, dramatic scenery, and the rich traditional culture throughout the region.

The SADC Tourism Investment Promotion Forum, held in mid-February, was organized on behalf of Member States by the SADC Secretariat with support from the SADC Ambassadors Group in Belgium.

Other partners were the EU, ACP/EU and PROCINVEST. Relevant stakeholders such as the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) took part in the forum. ❒

SADC in tourism image-building

THE REGIONAL Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) says the region is working towards improving individual country images so as to improve tourist inflows into SADC.

Executive director Francis Mfune said this during a courtesy call on Zimbabwean Vice-President Joice Mujuru in Harare.

He said some Member States were faced with image challenges which are hindering the growth of tourism despite the natural tourist attractions and the rich culture on offer.

He said member countries should improve their image through participation in regional and international carnivals and tourism expos such as the one held in Seychelles.

Celebrations at the Seychelles Carnival

The Seychelles Carnival was held on 4-5 March and attracted numerous countries from the region. ❒

Regional energy trading system active

THE RECENTLY launched competitive regional power-trading system aimed at boosting the pooling of electricity across the region is making gradual progress with more member countries trading amongst themselves.

The Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), which coordinates the planning, generation, transmission and marketing of electricity on behalf of Member State utilities in the SADC region, said significant activity has been experienced since the Day Ahead Market (DAM) opened for live trading on 15 December 2009.

A total sale of 367,704 Megawatt hours (MWh) and 156,787 MWh buy bids have been received on the DAM trading platform as of January. *(See table)*

SAPP said 41,519 MWh was matched on the DAM trading platform. However, only 26,040 MWh was traded, which is approximately 1 percent of the market share.

"A total of 15,479 MWh was matched but could not be traded due to transmission constraints. This represents 37.3 percent of what was matched," SAPP said.

SAPP said revenue performance was good adding that market cross were achieved generally for more than 60 percent of the time and for an average of around 20 hours in a day.

On some days, the market cross was achieved for 24 hours and the average price was 14USc/KWh.

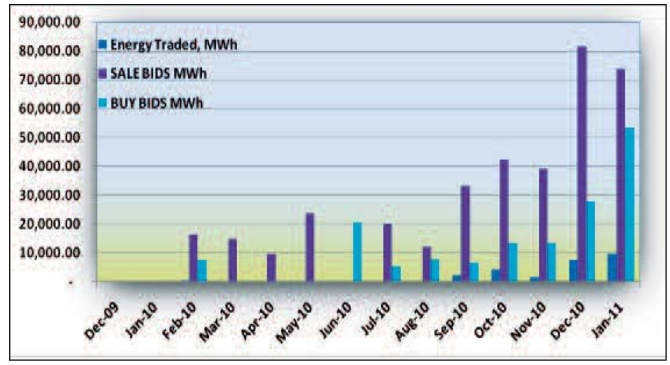
Trading prices are set by the seller and administered by SAPP. The rest of the trading is exchanged via bilateral long-term contracts with fixed tariffs.

Prices are also set based on demand and supply between the utilities in the countries where the power pool operates.

SAPP said participation by member utilities has gone up to eight from five in September 2010 and six of the utilities are active on a daily basis. More utilities are expected to come on board soon.

However, various challenges have been noted on the DAM trading. These include price gaps between buyers and sellers, low and inconsistence participation by members and balancing of national priorities. Other constraints include the sudden migration affecting the trading from a cooperative to a competitive pool. ❒

Summary of bids submitted as of 31 January 2011



Source: SAPP

SAPP to commission 1,250 MW in 2011

SOUTHERN AFRICA expects to commission six energy projects that will add about 1,250 Megawatts (MW) of electricity to the region in 2011.

The power will come from South Africa, which aims to commission a total of 530 MW and Zimbabwe 300 MW.

Angola will weigh in with 150 MW, the Democratic Republic of Congo with 80 MW while Botswana will add about 90 MW and Namibia about 20 MW.

However, about 1,110 MW of the new power will be added to the regional grid as Angola is not yet connected to the grid, which is managed by the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP).

In 2010, SAPP added about 1,110 MW of electricity. In the year 2009, SAPP was able to add a total of 2,187 MW against a planned target of 2,400 MW.

Member State utilities have identified a number of priority projects for commissioning over the next few years to address the crippling energy situation in the region. *(See table)*

For example, between 2011 and 2015, SAPP expects to commission projects that would add about 16, 870 MW of electricity to the regional grid, allowing the region to match supply and demand.

The SADC region has been experiencing power shortages dating as far back as 2006 due to a combination of factors including the diminishing generation surplus capacity against increasing growth in demand.

The current shortages are despite the enormous generation potential that exists in the region ranging from hydro, wind, gas to solar power. ❒

Rehabilitation and new projects

No	Country	NEW GENERATION CAPACITY, MW					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
1	Angola	150	0	260	260	0	670
2	Botswana	120	600	-	-	300	1,020
3	DRC	75	430	25	150	-	680
4	Lesotho	-	25	-	110	-	135
5	Malawi	-	-	64	150	100	314
6	Mozambique	-	-	150	600	750	1,500
7	Namibia	23	83	103	-	800	1,009
8	RSA	530	288	3,105	1,721	2,890	8,534
9	Swaziland	-	-	-	-	300	300
10	Tanzania	60	160	-	740	600	1,560
11	Zambia	-	6	360	120	34	520
12	Zimbabwe	290	-	20	55	355	720
	TOTAL	1,248	1,592	4,087	3,906	6,129	16,962

Source: SAPP

Energy Security and the Quest for Self-sufficiency

1.0 Introduction

SOUTHERN AFRICA has over the past two decades outlined its energy strategy and policy in several documents such as the SADC Protocol on Energy (1996), the SADC Energy Cooperation Policy and Strategy (1996) and the SADC Energy Activity Plan (2000).

Although now out of date and already under review, the policy framework does at least encourage a regional approach to the development of the energy sector. However, this approach has hitherto not been backed by actual actions on the ground as Member States often opt for what may seem easier options in the short term in light of current shortages, options that could actually be insufficient in terms of addressing the long term energy needs of the region.

2.0 The Prevailing Context

The Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) advised as early as 1999 that demand for power in SADC was increasing faster than the growth in generation capacity. It warned that the region would face crippling shortages by 2007 unless immediate action was taken to invest in new generation capacity.

SAPP's counsel came against a backdrop of no major investments in southern Africa's power sector in the last 20-30 years.

Regional average electricity demand growth is currently estimated at about five percent per annum against a low off-take of projects to boost power generation. This has resulted in load shedding in most SADC countries.

Electricity demand growth in SADC

No.	Country	Utility	2009 Peak Demand [MW]	2010 Peak Demand [MW]	Demand Growth [%]
1	Angola	ENE	668	724	8.4%
2	Botswana	BPC	503	553	9.9%
3	DRC	SNEL	1,028	1,081	5.2%
4	Lesotho	LEC	116	121	4.3%
5	Malawi	ESCOM	260	260	0.0%
6	Mozambique	EDM	435	501	15.2%
7	Namibia	NamPower	451	449	-0.4%
8	South Africa	Eskom	35,850	36,705	2.4%
9	Swaziland	SEC	200	204	2.0%
10	Tanzania	TANESCO	705	802	13.8%
11	Zambia	ZESCO	1,498	1,500	0.1%
12	Zimbabwe	ZESA	1,403	1,469	4.7%
TOTAL SAPP			43,117	44,369	2.9%
Total Interconnected SAPP			41,484	42,583	3.1%

Note: ZESA had suppressed demand, otherwise its peak should be 2000MW

Source: SAPP

As a stop-gap measure, SAPP has promoted the use of demand-side management (DSM) policies that have to some extent succeeded in restraining overall demand in the region. For example, the growth in peak demand was minus one percent in 2008 as compared to 2007.

On the basis of current load forecast, and barring any DSM measures, the SADC region is set to continue with the precarious generation deficit until 2014 when the situation should ease, provided planned generation projects are implemented on time.

Besides DSM measures, SADC has also pushed for energy infrastructure investment and development over the past few years.

Most energy projects have a long lead time, especially the bigger, regional ones that can take anything up to seven years from when construction of plant commences to when users can switch on lights in their homes.

3.0 The Challenges and Opportunities

The lengthy period it has taken before meaningful investment has gone into power projects of regional significance and the start-and-stop pattern of projects identified so far would suggest that there are numerous challenges facing a regional approach to energy development.

Quite evidently, the biggest such challenge has to be the national versus regional interest conundrum. This can manifest as a result of many factors. Power shortages can easily be a political hot potato, especially around election time. Thus as consumer pressure mounts at home, the tendency is often to be inward looking, going for the smaller projects that are less complex and have a shorter lead time. But is that always the best option?

In a proposed Pool Plan based on different scenarios and with a planning horizon stretching to 2020, SAPP has underscored the benefits arising from pursuing projects collectively as a region rather than as individual Member States.

Going this route would not only result in better coordination and optimization but total cost savings of up to US$48 billion over the planning horizon.

The second challenge is lack of the much-needed political champions and a mismatch of prioritization among the Member States involved. Implementation of identified projects has been slow to the extent that some have become moribund due to a number of political hurdles.

For example, the Malawi-Mozambique interconnector which has been a priority project for many years and had secured funding from the World Bank eventually had the funding withdrawn in 2010 due to a mismatch of prioritization on the part of the two countries involved.

The 3,500 Megawatt (MW) Westcor Power Project which was initiated by five countries -- Angola, Botswana, DRC, Namibia and South Africa -- to draw power from Inga in DRC was fraught with many legal and political hurdles until it was eventually terminated in 2010.

A third challenge for regional power projects is related to concerns over contract security and transmission security, that is, from the source of the power or over the wheeling infrastructure in third countries. Paying for power from a neighbouring country is one thing, getting it as and when it is exactly needed can be another thing altogether as this is subject to several other factors.

Electricity-deficient countries usually have no control over the transmission infrastructure in other Member States but through which their own imports pass. For example, South Africa cannot control what happens along the regional grid when it imports electricity from the DRC, although it is presupposed that this is the responsibility of SAPP.

The recent guidelines developed by the Regional Electricity Regulators Association (RERA) and approved by energy ministers in Angola in 2010 provide a viable opportunity to smoothen cross-border power trading in the region. Although SAPP has so far satisfactorily dealt with wheeling imbalances as and when they have arisen, Member States need to implement RERA guidelines if most of the transmission-related concerns are to be holistically addressed.

A fourth challenge is that of off-take agreements in a market that is dominated by ESKOM. An off-take agreement ensures that a buyer is willing to purchase future power produced by the supplying company or utility. Many times suppliers in the energy industry use off-take agreements to ensure that their investments in power plants are guaranteed sustainability. And off-take agreements are a necessity to secure outside financing.

A case in point is the Mmamabula Power Plant in Botswana. Originally meant to be a regional initiative initially expected to add 1,200 MW of power to the SAPP grid through the construction of a coal-fired plant near the border with South Africa, the project has now taken a rather narrow national focus. Due to complexities associated with off-take agreements and stung by power shortages at home, Botswana has for now down-sized the project to produce 300 MW for the domestic market only.

Last but not least, another challenge impeding a regional approach to energy projects is to do with legal hurdles relating to financing of the projects. This is partly to do with the fact that different Member States have vastly different regulatory environments and that there is no regional entity in southern Africa that can sign financial agreements on behalf of Member States involved in any given regional project.

A case in point is the Zimbabwe-Zambia-Botswana-Namibia (ZiZaBoNa) transmission line which links the four countries. While SAPP is currently providing management and coordination roles, the responsibility to raise financial resources has been left to the four individual governments. The success of the project is therefore at the mercy of the capacity of the individual Member States to raise the needed resources.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Overall, the quest for regional energy security in SADC has always involved a delicate balance between national and regional interests. Amid acute shortages, Member States have tended to take the sovereign route of attempting to attain national self-sufficiency, rather than depending on supply from another country.

The attraction is usually the shorter gestation period for national projects compared to the larger regional energy facilities that often include several countries and involve elaborate negotiations among the beneficiary states and with potential financiers.

However, this approach which is solely motivated by parochial interests is against the spirit of regional integration and therefore not in the long term interest of the region.

4.2 Recommendations

- The SADC Secretariat should be more proactive and be capacitated to play a more catalytic and mediatory role in regional power project implementation to shake off political bottlenecks as well as anticipate and deal with such hurdles before they become too serious;
- The SADC Secretariat and SADC institutions such as SAPP and RERA should be mandated to enforce compliance with regional commitments, including penalties for non-compliance;
- Member States need to speed up power sector reforms including adopting common regulatory frameworks to address concerns about transmission infrastructure security and make contractual enforcement easier for cross border trading; and
- As with all regional endeavours, regional power projects need political champions if they are to be stirred through political hurdles and successfully implemented. ❐

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Renewable energy: The way to go

SOUTHERN AFRICA like the rest of the world is slowly turning to renewable energy as the need for cleaner and alternative energy sources gains momentum.

This is also in realization that fossil fuels and other forms of energy such as coal will not last forever, hence the need to prepare for the future. According to a recent study by the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), the SADC region will continue to require more energy in the future for its developmental needs.

Member State utilities through SAPP have identified a number of priority projects for commissioning over the next few years to address the energy situation in the region. Most of these projects are targeted at renewable energy sources such as solar, hydro and wind – which are less polluting to the environment compared to other forms such as coal thermal.

These projects include the Mphanda Nkuwa hydropower project in Mozambique, Itezhi Tezhi hydropower in Zambia and the Kudu gas project in Namibia.

Other projects are the Medupi/Kusile power projects in South Africa and the Inga hydropower project in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Inga project has the potential to produce about 40,000 Megawatts (MW) of electricity, enough to meet the current power needs for the entire SADC region.

The Mphanda Nkuwa power plant has capacity to add about 1,500 MW of new electricity on the regional power grid.

Some of these projects are contenders for carbon financing under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), although not all have qualified due to the complex nature of applying for this funding.

Based on an analysis by SADC, a total of 19,000 MW of generation projects could be commissioned under the CDM in the region.

However, according to available data, southern Africa has benefited the least among all the regions of the continent from the US$7 billion annual CDM market.

South Africa accounts for the majority of the projects followed by the United Republic of Tanzania, DRC, Madagascar, Mauritius and Mozambique.

Some of the leading renewable energy projects in SADC include the wind power project in South Africa. The country plans to commission at least 400 MW of wind power by independent power producers by 2013.

Most of the plants will be located along the West Coast that has the potential to generate about 10,000 MW of electricity. Eskom, the national power utility, believes that the wind revolution in the country has the capacity to generate 10 times the official wind energy estimates.

Namibia has announced plans to build a wind farm at Walvis Bay to generate 300 MW of electricity by year-end.

In Tanzania, there are plans to build a 50 MW wind farm in the central region of the country while Mozambique also plans to invest more in wind energy.

With regard to solar, Botswana plans to build a 200MW solar plant. The plant has the capacity to address a significant portion of the energy needs of the country as its national power consumption needs stand at just about 450MW.

This follows a success story in Madagascar that saw the island nation embarking on a small-scale exercise to harness solar and provide power to the rural population which is not connected to the national electricity grid.

Rural clinics and hospitals were equipped with solar technologies such as small solar panels to produce their own electricity and in the process enabling them to store vital vaccines and other medicines.

While renewable energy projects are yet to be implemented on a large scale in other SADC countries, efforts are underway to explore ways to harness the clean form of energy in line with international standards. ❐

Solar power is an alternative source of clean and renewable energy.

Energy a key target in new Mozambique FDI

MOZAMBIQUE AIMS to attract US$4 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) this year, which would double last year's figure, according to the Mozambique Investment Promotion Centre (CPI).

General director Lourenço Sambo said that his agency would market the country's energy and mining sectors as well as agriculture and infrastructure, to foreign investors from India, China and Europe.

"Our major target is to have more than US$4 billion of foreign direct investments in 2011, up from US$2 billion last year when the global financial crisis swept across the world resulting in the downward trend of investments."

Sambo said a government delegation led by Prime Minister Aires Ali is expected to visit India this year to seek investors.

"We will not deliver a political speech there, but will tell the Indian firms to come and invest in our energy, mining and agriculture sectors where we have potential, and also to improve our trade corridors such as ports and railways," he said. ❐

Green economy critical for sustainable development

by Neto Nengomasha

THE ADVERSE effects of climate change on environmental sustainability and human wellbeing has forced most countries to move away from the "brown" or traditional economy to the "green" economy – a viable option for sustainable development.

The concept has been described by environmentalists as a powerful new paradigm in the 21st century offering creative solutions to multiple global challenges by linking people, the planet and prosperity.

Green economy is considered as one that results in "improved wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities."

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), green economy comes against the backdrop of serious crises in climate, biodiversity, food, fuel and water, and more recently, the financial crises which has all been characterized by gross misallocation of capital while being exacerbated by existing polices and market incentives.

A recent report by UNEP titled "Towards a Green Economy" states that sustainable development can only be achieved if there is an economic transformation that promotes resource and energy efficiency and reduces environmental degradation.

"It is time to catalyze and embed the green economy transition across the globe from the international level down to the local community. The green economy can – if brought into the cabinet rooms, boardrooms and town hall chambers – offer a viable alternative to the unsustainable status quo," Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, Achim Steiner, said.

The African Union has fully endorsed adoption of the green economy as a vehicle for sustainable development.

"It is not only relevant to more developed countries but also a catalyst for growth and poverty eradication in developing countries too," said Patrick Mwesigye, the Regional Industry Officer with the United Nation's Environment Programme (UNEP).

Speaking at the inaugural Green Economy Summit in Johannesburg in 2010, South African President Jacob Zuma said the green economy requires integrated strategies and plans that balance economic, environmental and social development objectives with carefully crafted policy and institutional frameworks to ensure sustainable development.

"Ecosystem failure will seriously compromise our ability to address our social and economic priorities. Natural resources are national economic assets, and our economy depends heavily on energy and mineral resources, biodiversity, agriculture, forestry, fishing and tourism," he said.

The green economy is in line with what was agreed at the 16th Conference of Parties (COP 16) held last year in Cancun, Mexico.

Climate experts agreed to set up a Climate Green Fund intended to assist developing countries to adapt to the effects of climate change and adapt their economies and infrastructure to the changing climate.

The green economy will be one of two themes of the Rio+ 20 conference to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. This marks 20 years after the Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992. ❐

South Africa prepares for COP17

SOUTH AFRICA has established an inter-ministerial committee to lead preparation for the forthcoming climate change negotiations set for Durban later this year.

The Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation will head the committee. South African President Jacob Zuma said in his State of the Nation address that the conference should be used as a rallying point to inform and mobilize communities around issues of the environment.

"We are humbled by the confidence shown in Africa's ability to host this meeting again after Kenya successfully hosted it in 2006."

Zuma said Africa would take advantage of COP17 to highlight the devastating effects of climate change on the continent as well as responses "we are implementing."

The resultant climate change has had devastating effects such as increased frequency and severity of droughts and floods, especially in Africa – yet the continent is the least contributor of greenhouse emissions that cause climate change.

"We will take forward the good work done by Mexico and will approach COP17 in a spirit of comprehensive and open consultation with all parties and stakeholders."

"This will enable us to work towards an outcome that is comprehensive and acceptable to all parties," said the South African president. ❐

Commission on the Status of Women

Towards gender equality

THE 55th COMMISSION on the Status of Women (CSW) met in New York recently to review implementation of various action plans that seek to promote gender equality.

A number of resolutions such as improving access to education and mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS were adopted at the meeting.

In a communiqué released after the meeting, the commission urged national governments and all stakeholders to mainstream a gender perspective in legislation, policies and programmes within all sectors, including education, training, science and technology in order to address unequal access and participation of women and girls in education.

There was a call to strengthen capacities to ensure that science education policies and curricula are relevant to the needs of women and girls.

"Stakeholders should incorporate systematically a gender perspective into budgetary policies at all levels to ensure that public resources in education, training, science, technology and research equally benefit women and men, girls and boys, and contribute to the empowerment of women and girls," the commission said.

The commission added that there is need to ensure women and girls have full and equal access to quality formal, informal and non-formal education and vocational training at all levels, including to free and compulsory primary education, and provide educational opportunities.

Southern Africa has assured its support toward the successful implementation of agreed resolutions saying cooperation among all stakeholders will yield positive results.

Namibian Gender Equality and Child Welfare Minister, Doreen Sioka, who represented SADC at the meeting, said the theme of the 55th session of the CSW was critical as the provision of education and science are key to the emancipation of women.

The priority theme for the session was "Access and Participation of Women and Girls in Education, Training, Science and Technology, including for the Promotion of Women's Equal Access to full Employment and Decent Work."

"SADC recognizes that science, technology and innovation can be a tool with which to accelerate the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and Millennium Development Goals," Sioka said, adding that technology could, for example facilitate the eradication of poverty, climate change, and diseases.

She said SADC has identified technology and education as some of the most important tools to equip its peoples as well as address gender imbalance, and has ratified the SADC Protocol on Education and Training.

"Today there is an accelerating trend towards qualification frameworks as an instrument to develop, classify and recognize formal learning across the African continent," she said.

Sioka said the region also adopted in March 2010 the SADC Regional Qualification Framework that seeks to harmonize the education system in southern Africa.

The African continent noted that while significant progress has been made to advance gender equality, there is still more that is needed to ensure all barriers to gender equality are addressed.

Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the UN, Daniel Antonio, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group said, "In the past decades much progress has been made by Africa in expanding access to basic education for girls."

"Nevertheless, a lot is still to be done in order to make science and technology attractive to women."

The 55th session of the CSW was held on 22 February to 4 March. The CSW is a principal global policy-making body of representatives of member states who gather to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. ❒

SADC celebrate international women's day

SOUTHERN AFRICA joined the rest of the world in celebrating the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day Celebrations on 8 March.

In a message, the SADC secretariat said "2011 is special as it marks this important anniversary and also the birth of 'UN Women', the UN entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women."

"These are important developments that require deep reflection of where we are as a region and how we intend to improve our efforts in implementing gender and development commitments."

The statement said the region continues to uplift the principles of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in accordance with the various SADC treaties and protocols, including the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, already in force, and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, expected to be ratified this year.

The secretariat said it is pleasing to note that the region has made significant advances towards its goal to achieve gender equality in education.

"Literacy rates in the SADC region are higher than elsewhere on the continent. However, women still have lower literacy rates than men."

"There is need to increase literacy drives for both men and women with targeted approaches to adult basic education to bridge the gender gap. Measures to review policies on school fees, making education free and compulsory must be employed." ❒

China to write off half TAZARA rail debt

CHINESE VICE-MINISTER of Commerce Zhong Shan has signed an agreement with counterparts from Zambia and the United Republic of Tanzania to write off 50 percent of the debt from Chinese loan used to build the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA).

The Chinese government took the action because of the traditional friendship between China and Africa, Zhong said at the signing ceremony in Lusaka, adding that the Chinese people want to do their best to support African people's development.

He said the Chinese government hopes that the railway operating with less debt will boost the regional economy and benefit the two countries.

China financed construction of the railway line at the request of the leaders of Tanzania and Zambia in 1970, starting work in 1973 and handing it over after completion in 1976.

The Chinese government provided an interest-free loan of 988 million yuan to complete the project, and continued to provide loans and technicians to ensure its operations.

The TAZARA was built to carry Zambian commodities to the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam after the closure of Zambia's border with Southern Rhodesia before Zimbabwe's independence.

This was an essential lifeline, built in record time of less than three years and funded by soft loans, at a time when the northern development agencies refused to engage in this initiative. *China Daily* ❒

Sino-Africa cooperation to broaden

CHINA WILL continue to improve economic and trade relations with Africa by increasing investments in agriculture, finance, environmental protection and those areas that concern livelihoods, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce has said.

"The Chinese government will continue to promote Sino-African ties under the principles of equality, effectiveness, mutual benefit and common development, no matter how the world changes," Ministry spokesperson, Yao Jian, said.

He said China will actively promote trade liberalisation between China and African nations, and encourage Chinese enterprises to invest more in Africa's agriculture, manufacturing, finance, trade and environmental protection sectors.

China is Africa's largest trade partner and Africa emerged as China's fourth largest overseas destination for investment last year.

China-Africa trade totalled about US$126.9 billion in 2010, compared to US$10 billion a decade ago. In the same year, Chinese investments in Africa topped US$1 billion.

Chinese aid to African nations will focus more on sectors that concern people's livelihoods, such as poverty reduction, agriculture, education, medical care and safe drinking water, Yao added.

China will also work with African nations to create a more transparent, fair and predictable business environment for both Chinese and African enterprises. *Xinhua* ❒

BRICS to promote South-South relations

BRICS NATIONS are committed to cooperation with developed countries, not confrontation, China's Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi, has said.

"Cooperation among the BRICS countries is open and inclusive. It is an important part of the South-South cooperation and an important bridge for North-South cooperation," Yang told a recent press conference in Beijing.

He said China will in mid-April host a meeting of leaders of BRICS, which includes the major emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and hoped the meeting would produce positive results.

Yang said it is very important to enhance dialogue between the leaders although the historical and cultural backgrounds of the two countries are different.

He said China welcomes South Africa to join in the group, and President Jacob Zuma has agreed to attend the meeting.

BRICS nations have played an important and constructive role in tackling the global financial crisis, and climate change, and facilitating economic recovery.

"I believe the BRICS nations will play a bigger role in those areas as a result of the meeting," Yang said. "We hope the meeting will innovate and promote our cooperation to bring more benefits to our people."

BRICS nations have also achieved effective cooperation in environmental protection, business and commercial and think tank communication. ❒

Highlights of the China-Africa Action Plan (2010-2012)

CHINA AND Africa met in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in November 2009 for the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and agreed on an action plan for 2010-2012 which focuses on a number of issues, among them the need to:

- Deepen China-Africa cooperation and set an example of South-South cooperation;
- Strengthen exchanges between political parties and enhance experience sharing on governance;
- Support reforms aimed at improving the authority and efficiency of the United Nations;
- Work together in tackling climate change;
- Prioritize agriculture and food security in their cooperation;
- Promote the conclusion and implementation of bilateral agreements on investment promotion and protection, and create a sound environment with a view to scaling up mutual investment;
- Increase investment in infrastructure development;
- Promote trade between China and Africa;
- Increase flights and shipping links between China and Africa;
- Share experience in poverty reduction;
- Strengthen the health sector;
- Boost tourism and culture exchanges; and
- Implement a China-Africa joint research and exchange plan to strengthen cooperation and exchanges between scholars and think tanks. ❒

Seychelles presidential polls set for May

SEYCHELLES WILL hold presidential elections in May in which incumbent President James Michel will face the challenge of four other aspirants.

According to a list released by the Indian Ocean archipelago's Election Commission, the presidential elections will be a race pitting incumbent President James Michel, main opposition leader Wavel Ramkalawan of the Seychelles National Party (SNP), Ralph Volcere of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and independent candidates Philippe Boule and Marston St. Ange.

President James Michel and four others will contest presidential elections in Seychelles.

The commission set aside 19-21 May as the dates for the presidential elections. According to the commission, 21 May will be the "main day" for voting. Due to the distances across the archipelago, the outer islands will start voting on 19 and 20 May to allow the exercise to be completed in time and the ballots delivered back to the main island of Mahe.

The tallying of the votes and final result announcement will take place in Mahe. Michel is going to run for a second term of office on a Parti Le Pep (LP) ticket and is widely expected to be re-elected for another five-year term. His running mate will be the incumbent Vice President Danny Faure.

Ramkalawan has teamed up with Nicholas Prea, the legislator for North Mahe's Bel Ombre Constituency, to represent the SNP.

Volcere has announced his intention to contest the elections while Victoria-based lawyer Boule and tourism operator St. Ange complete the list of candidates.

The last presidential elections in the Seychelles were held in July 2006 that saw Michel defeating Ramkalawan and Boule.

The President is elected by an absolute majority vote through a two-round system to serve a five-year term. ❒

South Africa in local government elections

SOUTH AFRICANS will go to the polls on 18 May to choose councillors in the country's third local government elections since the end of Apartheid in 1994.

Acting Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister, Nathi Mthethwa proclaimed the election date in March.

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) held its final voter registration on 6 March and was targeting 1.5 million new registrations ahead of the municipal elections.

The IEC has set 18 March for the certification of the voters' roll to be used for the election, with 25 March being the deadline for all political parties and independent candidates to notify the commission of their intention to participate in the election.

"The election timetable gives clarity on every aspect of the electoral process and its key activities as well as the dates and times by which they must take place, the timetable is legally binding and there are no discretionary provisions as far as cut-off dates and times are concerned," IEC Chief Electoral Officer, Pansy Tlakula said.

More than 160 political parties had registered with the IEC for the upcoming election, with Tlakuka saying a final list of the candidates contesting was expected to be published on 12 April.

Under IEC regulations, a political party contesting elections in all municipal elections could field a maximum of 9,086 candidates for direct elections and would have to part with a deposit of up to R633,000 (about US$90,000). The deposit is refundable if a party manages to win at least one seat in the municipal council or if its candidate received at least 10 percent of the total number of votes cast in the ward.

"Voters living in metropolitan municipalities will have two votes each, one for their ward candidate of choice and one for party of choice. In local councils, they will cast three votes, one for ward and one for party of choice and one for a candidate in the district council," added Tlakula.

For the first time since the dawn of democracy in 1994, South Africa has this year introduced special votes for local elections.

Special voting is reserved for pregnant women and the sick. These will be allowed to cast their votes a day before Election Day but will have to apply before 3 May in order to qualify for special voting.

Tlakula said on 17 May IEC officials will embark on home visits for registered voters who qualify to cast special votes and these include heavily pregnant women and those who cannot walk to their nearest voting station as a result of poor health.

In another first for the SADC region, the IEC also introduced mobile phone registration of voters. ❒

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Southern African Development Community
SADC Secretariat, SADC House, Private Bag 0095, Gaborone, Botswana
Tel +267 395 1863 Fax +267 397 2848/318 1070
E-mail registry@sadc.int Website www.sadc.int

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EDITOR
Munetsi Madakufamba

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Kizito Sikuka, Joseph Ngwawi, Egline Tauya, Leonissah Abwino-Munjoma, Neto Nengomasha, Phyllis Johnson, Agatha Njanike

EDITORIAL ADVISOR
Head of Corporate Communications Unit, SADC
Leefa Penehupifo Martin

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Correspondence about this publication should be addressed to

Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
15 Downie Avenue, Belgravia, Box 5690, Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel +263 4 791 141/791 143 Fax +263 4 791 271
E-mail sadctoday@sardc.net
www.sardc.net Knowledge for Development

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EVENTS DIARY April – June 2011

April 1, Namibia	**SADC Meeting of Ministers for Justice** The meeting is expected to discuss various legislative issues in the region. Key on the agenda will be recommendations on the role and functions of the SADC Tribunal.
1, South Africa	**IPP World Africa** Independent Power Producers (IPP) World Africa will seek solutions for power producers, utilities, investors and government on how to increase power capacity through IPPs.
14, China	**BRICS Heads of State Summit** This year's summit will see South Africa joining the BRICS group of emerging markets, which comprises Brazil, Russia, India and China.
17-21, Namibia	**4th African Union Conference of Health Ministers** The conference to be held under the theme "The Impact of Climate Change on Health and Development in Africa", will explore ways in which the continent can address the effects of climate change in Africa.
TBA, South Africa	**2nd COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit** Heads of State and Government from the three regional economic communities will convene for their second summit to discuss ways to promote deeper integration among Member States. The main highlight of the summit will be the approval of a plan of action to launch the Grand Free Trade Area encompassing 26 countries in eastern and southern Africa by 2012.
May 4-6, South Africa	**World Economic Forum Africa** African leaders and the international business community will meet in South Africa to discuss challenges and opportunities for growth in Africa.
19-20, Ethiopia	**4th African Union Meeting of Ministers for Justice/Attorneys General** The meeting will deliberate on various issues that include the transformation of the African Union Commission into the African Union Authority.
26, Botswana	**SADC Ministers for Energy** SADC Ministers responsible for Energy meet to review the regional energy planning programme to complement the energy recovery roadmap established to address the power shortages facing the region.
May 30 – 3 June, Namibia	**SADC Ministers for Education and Training** The meeting will discuss ways of harmonizing the education system in the region to ensure that Member States are able to compare and recognize qualifications.
June 13-16, Namibia	**SADC Gender Ministerial Meeting** The meeting is expected to track progress on the implementation of various plans of action aimed at promoting gender equality and women empowerment, including progress toward ratification of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.
13-17, Zambia	**SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ** The organ will deliberate on a number of issues aimed at promoting peace and security in the SADC region.
14-16, France	**Africa Energy Forum** Energy experts will explore ways of how Africa as one of the fastest emerging markets in the world can meet the increased demand for energy to ensure sustainable development.
20-23, South Africa	**Africa Investment Summit** The summit will provide opportunities for the continent to look at ways of attracting investment in various sectors such as energy, infrastructure, mining and agriculture.

2002

2002

Angola marks the end of war

APRIL 4 marks the ninth anniversary of the official end of Angola's civil war in 2002 and is celebrated as Peace and Reconciliation Day.

One of the most important dates on the Angolan political calendar, the day commemorates the signing of the agreement between the Angolan government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita). The agreement ended three decades of civil war in Angola.

Angola became independent from Portugal on 11 November 1975 following a protracted liberation struggle by the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

The coup d'etat by the progressive Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA) in Lisbon the previous year had ended the dictatorial system in Portugal that had viewed the "overseas territories" as an integral part of Europe's poorest country.

The trigger for action by the MFA was their frustration and increasing rejection of the wars in the overseas territories, and their action ushered in a process of democratisation in Portugal and negotiations with the former colonies.

After independence, Angola entered a dark period of a bloody civil war between the three main political groups – MPLA, Unita and the smaller National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA).

The Angolan conflict drew the attention of the United States and the Soviet Union, becoming a country where the superpowers chose to confront each other by armed local allies.

MPLA had been in government in Angola since independence, while Unita, led by the late Jonas Savimbi, had fiercely and militarily opposed the government with the help of apartheid South Africa until the end of apartheid in 1994 and Savimbi's death in February 2002.

Unita soon gave up its weapons and joined politics, becoming the main opposition party in Angola. The ceasefire was formalized with a peace agreement that was signed by the government and Unita on 4 April 2002.

April 4 is thus a day of hope in the reconstruction of the country and consolidation of the peace process between the political parties.

Various cultural and sporting events are held across the country to celebrate this day.

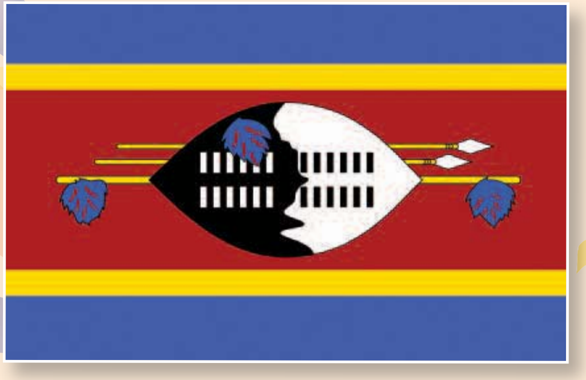
In the capital Luanda, there are various official events that involve the participation of the government and politicians.

In the nine years of peace, the Angolan government has been active in trying to fulfil its commitments, in particular in the social reintegration of the former military foes, provision of shelter, support and other assistance for internally displaced people and former refugees.

The government of Angola has since the end of the civil war outlined various strategies to guarantee the recovery of the economy, the reconstruction of main infrastructure destroyed by the war, the fight against poverty, consolidation of the national reconciliation and the deepening of democracy.

Angola is now Africa's largest oil producer.

NATIONAL FLAG Day on 25 April is a public holiday in Swaziland. The national flag symbolizing Swaziland's royal heritage and long history was officially adopted in 1968 when Swaziland gained independence from Britain. The flag consists of three horizontal stripes -- a blue stripe at the top and bottom separated by a red stripe edged in yellow. Placed centrally on the red stripe is a traditional black-and-white Swazi shield with two spears and a staff decorated with feather tassels. The blue colour of the flag stands for peace, while the tassel symbolizes the monarchy, and the yellow colour represents the mineral wealth of the country. Red symbolizes the battles of the past. Flags are hoisted in cities and towns in Swaziland on 25 April, and traditional celebrations include parades and other public activites.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN SADC

April – June 2011

4 April	Day of Peace & Reconciliation	Angola
	Heroes Day	Lesotho
7 April	Women's Day	Mozambique
18 April	Independence Day	Zimbabwe
22 April	Good Friday	SADC except Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique
23 April	Holy Saturday	Zambia
25 April	Easter Monday	Angola,
	Botswana,	Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
25 April	National Flag Day	Swaziland
26 April	Freedom Day	South Africa
30 April	Youth Day	DRC
1 May	Workers Day	DRC, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe
	Labour Day	Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland
2 May	Public Holiday	All SADC
4 May	Cassinga day	Namibia
14 May	Kamuzu Day	Malawi
17 May	Liberation Day	DRC
25 May	Africa Day	Angola, Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe
	Africa Freedom Day	Zambia
1 June	International Children's Day	Angola
2 June	Ascension Day	Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Swaziland
5 June	Liberation Day	Seychelles
12 June	Whit Sunday	Madagascar
13 June	Whit Monday	Madagascar
16 June	Youth Day	South Africa
18 June	National Day	Seychelles
25 June	Independence Day	Mozambique
26 June	Independence Day	Madagascar
29 June	Independence Day	Seychelles
30 June	Independence Day	DRC