



Review of regional strategy Toward SADC VISION 2050



SADC IS reviewing its regional development strategies and preparing a longer term Vision 2050.

Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, Hon Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, said the review will be one of the top priorities during 2019.

"The review of our flagship strategy, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) is one of the ways through which the region would promote new and better ways of accomplishing our goals and objectives," said Nandi-Ndaitwah who is the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia, and Deputy Prime Minister.

Council has directed that the review process be informed by the need to maximise synergies in the implementation of the two pillars of SADC activities – developmental integration as covered by the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020, and political and security cooperation as identified under the Revised Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO).

This followed the decision by Council at its meeting in August 2018 to task the SADC Secretariat to review progress on the implementation of the Revised RISDP (2015-2020) and Revised SIPO as well as to facilitate the SADC Vision 2050 to guide regional development over the next 30 years.

A team of consultants commissioned by the SADC Secretariat commenced visits to Member States in April to seek the views of government officials and non-state actors on the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of interventions proposed.

The review will consider the results achieved in the implementation of the two SADC strategic plans as well as the challenges encountered and lessons learnt.

The assessment is expected to draw strategic recommendations that will inform the implementation of the remaining period of the plans as well as the SADC Post-2020 Agenda.

During the assessment, the consultants are expected to review key SADC documents, conduct physical consultations at regional and national levels, including with the 16 Member States and the SADC Secretariat.

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A regional validation workshop is expected to be held during the course of the assessment at which the officials of Member States and representatives of the SADC Secretariat and other stakeholders will be invited to verify the findings.

The SADC Council of Ministers, which met in Windhoek, Namibia in March, agreed that the review of the Revised RISDP 2015-2020 and the Revised SIPO, also known as SIPO II, should be completed by mid-2020 in time for approval by the Summit of Heads of State and Government in August of that year.

It was noted that SIPO should not be independent of RISDP because the function of defence and security in the development process is to guarantee that the development plans be realised in a climate of peace and security.

SIPO is a five-year strategic document that establishes SADC's institutional framework for policy coordination and implementation in politics, defence and security cooperation, and was first developed in 2003 and revised in 2012.

The core objective of SIPO is to create a peaceful and stable political and security environment through which the region will realise its objectives of socio-economic development, poverty eradication, and regional integration.

The RISDP was first approved by SADC leaders in 2003 as a blueprint for regional socio-economic integration and development. It was revised in 2015 as part of efforts to align the region's development agenda with new realities and emerging global dynamics.

The review of the RISDP and SIPO is expected to lead to the development of a framework for a post-2020 regional strategy that takes into account SADC values and principles such as the need for sovereign equality and mutual benefit as well as continental and global processes such as Agenda 2063 of the African

Union and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The outcome of the ongoing review process will be a strategic plan covering the period up to 2030 to be called RISDP 2020-2030.

The review of the Revised RISDP and SIPO II comes at a time when the Council of Ministers has directed the SADC Secretariat to expedite the process of developing the SADC Vision 2050 to provide the framework for a long-term vision for SADC as the region seeks to align with global and continental issues such as the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063, climate change, and democratisation of the UN.

The intention is to establish a development agenda that incorporates the dynamics of events and issues affecting the southern African region and the rest of the continent and the world.

The proposal to develop the SADC Vision 2050 was approved by the Summit in Maputo, Mozambique in August 2012, and the SADC Secretariat has convened a number of consultative meetings in recent years to reflect on the future development trajectory for the region.

One of these was a Consultative Conference on the Post-2020 SADC Development Cooperation and Integration Strategy that was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in early 2017.

The purpose of the conference was to obtain expert assessments and analysis of the implementation of the Revised RISDP and the Revised SIPO.

Another consultative meeting was the SADC Strategic Ministerial Retreat on the "SADC We Want" held in Ezulwini, Eswatini in March 2017.

The retreat agreed on measures to strengthen implementation of the integration agenda and promote inclusive participation by citizens in regional programmes.

The ministerial retreat directed the SADC Secretariat to develop effective compliance,

Revised RISDP 2015-2020

THE REVISED Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020 has four main priorities.

Priority A seeks to promote industrial development and market integration through strengthening the productive competitiveness and supply-side capacity of member states as well as improving the movement of goods and facilitating financial market integration and monetary cooperation.

Priority B is on provision and improvement of infrastructure support for regional integration.

Priority D is on promotion of special programmes of regional dimension under clusters such as education and human resource development; health, HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases; food security and transboundary natural resources; environment; statistics; gender equality; science, technology and innovation; and research and development.

Priority C on the promotion of peace and security underpins the Priorities A, B and D.

It is envisaged that the post-2020 SADC development cooperation should provide a framework for a long-term vision for SADC as the region seeks to position itself in the context of emerging global and continental issues such as climate change, democratisation of the United Nations and increasing financial instability. ▢

monitoring and assurance mechanisms to track progress in implementation of SADC programmes as well as compliance to protocols and legal instruments.

Since the transformation of SADC in 1992 from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), a total of 33 protocols have been signed by member states to advance the regional integration agenda, and 26 of these protocols have been ratified and entered into force to date.

The Ezulwini retreat called on the SADC Secretariat to prioritise programmes on infrastructure development, industrialisation and market integration, with peace and security as a prerequisite for economic development.

The SADC Secretariat was also tasked to develop an effective engagement mechanism to strengthen participation of the private sector at all levels. It was noted that the lack of direct involvement of the private sector is a barrier to economic development. ▢

SIPO II

THE MAIN objective of the Revised Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation is to create a peaceful and stable political and security environment through which the region will realise its objectives of socio-economic development, poverty eradication, and regional integration.

The SIPO is, therefore, not an end in itself but rather an enabling instrument for the implementation of other regional documents, including the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation as well as the Revised RISDP and the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap.

SIPO is divided into five sectors – Political; Defence; State Security; Public Security; and Police. ▢

SADC aims to address drug abuse among youth

THE EXTENT and status of drug abuse among the youth is the subject of a regional study as SADC moves to identify methods to curb the practise.

SADC has an estimated population of 350 million people of which more than 76 per cent are young people aged below 35 years.

The prevalence and abuse of drugs in schools, colleges and universities is a major concern in most SADC countries, and has affected youth participation in various regional activities, programmes and projects.

Poverty, unemployment as well as underemployment and inequality are considered key drivers of illicit drug production, drug trafficking, drug and substance use in the SADC region; and the region is facing these social challenges at significant levels.

Drug abuse has contributed significantly to problems such as the spread of disease, including HIV and AIDS, crime and prostitution.

In order to address the growing problem of drug production, trafficking and use by citizens of the community, SADC is conducting a scoping study to establish the extent and status of illicit drug production, drug trafficking, illicit drugs and substance use among the youth in SADC countries; and provide recommendation for a comprehensive response to the identified challenges.

The study will assess the extent to which the implementation of strategic and policy frameworks for youth empowerment and development are affected by illicit drug production, drug trafficking, illicit drug and substance use among the youth. Some of these initiatives are:

- o SADC Strategy and Business Plan on Youth Em-

powerment and Participation for Sustainable Development;

- o SADC Declaration for Accelerating Youth Empowerment and Participation for Sustainable Development; and,

- o SADC Regional Industrialization Strategy.

SADC leaders have encouraged the participation of youth in advancing the SADC integration agenda, and the theme for the 38th SADC Summit held in Windhoek, Namibia in

August 2018 was "Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development."

However, the successful implementation of these strategies requires the participation of sober youth. □

Strategy for the conservation of animal genetic resources

SADC IS developing a regional strategy that will guide the conservation and utilization of animal genetic resources.

Animal genetic resources refer to the genetic resources of bird and animal species such as poultry, cattle and sheep, which are used for food and agricultural purposes.

According to the SADC Secretariat, the region has an estimated 64 million cattle, 39 million sheep, 38 million goats, 7 million pigs, 1 million horses and 380 million domestic fowl such as chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese, making it one of the most endowed regions on the continent in terms of livestock resources.

These animal genetic resources are a valuable and strategically important asset for food, financial security and socio-cultural benefits to SADC since these are unique and particular to the region.

However, due to a rising demand for food of animal origin in most SADC Member States, there has been a push towards improving productivity per animal and per unit area of land by introducing high-yielding exotic breeds or cross-breeding.

This practise has put the indigenous animal genetic resources at risk from the high-yielding exotic breeds.

Cross-breeding with exotic breeds without a long-term plan on how to maintain a suitable level of "upgrading" and how to maintain the pure indigenous breeds for future may

lead to extinction of some breeds.

To protect and sustain the rich terrestrial and aquatic animal genetic resources in the region, SADC has embarked on a process to develop a regional strategy that will guide the conservation and utilization of such resources.

The strategy will identify priorities and strategic intervention areas for conservation and utilization of relevance to the SADC region in terms of animal genetic resources and the environment, and propose management structures for conservation and utilization of animal resources in the region.

The strategy will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Harmonise the national conservation and utilization strategies for animal genetic resources;
- Address key factors causing threats to animal genetic resources, the dynamics of threats and how to address them; and,
- Establish information and knowledge management for information sharing.

Once approved, the strategy will allow the region to fully utilize and safeguard its animal genetic resources for sustainable development. □

Aligning national strategies to regional industrialization strategy

THE SADC Secretariat is assisting Member States to align their national industrialization strategies to the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap.

Alignment of national strategies to the regional strategy is critical to ensuring the smooth implementation of agreed activities and programmes, thereby promoting socio-economic development and deeper integration.

Director for Industrial Development and Trade, Tapiwa Samanga told a capacity building workshop on aligning the industrialisation strategies held in Johannesburg, South Africa in March that it is important for

Member States to have national policies that are outward-looking and collaborative.

He said another capacity building workshop would be held soon involving other stakeholders such as the private sector.

The Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) was approved by the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit held in April 2015 in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The strategy aims to accelerate the momentum towards strengthening the comparative and competitive advantages of the economies of the region, and is anchored on three pillars, industrialization, competitiveness and regional integration. □

THE SADC Council of Ministers was held in Windhoek, Namibia on 15-16 March. The Council is responsible for supervising and monitoring the functions and development of SADC, and ensuring that policies are properly implemented to advance regional integration. It is mostly made up of ministers responsible for foreign affairs and international cooperation, finance and economic development, state security and home affairs in the Member States. The Council meets twice a year around February/March and August/September to discuss the work programme of the SADC Secretariat. This edition of *Southern Africa Today* presents some of the key issues discussed by the Council meeting in Windhoek.



SADC University of Transformation to spread Centres of Excellence across the region Eswatini to host SADC university administration

THE COUNCIL of Ministers approved a request by the Kingdom of Eswatini to host the Administration Office of the SADC University of Transformation.

Operationalization of the SADC University of Transformation was approved by SADC Heads of State and Government at their 38th Summit held in August 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia.

An initiative of King Mswati III of Eswatini, the university will adopt a virtual model to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to benefit from the institution.

As a virtual university, the SADC University of Transformation will use the internet to deliver classes and seminars – a trend that most institutions are now adopting.

However, virtualization does not necessarily mean that the university will not have an administrative office or a physical location where certain activities are conducted.

The Administration Office to be located in Eswatini will facilitate the development and design of curricula in close collaboration with industry and partner institutions; identify new degree programmes in line with the requirements of the region; and negotiate partnerships with industry in line with the agenda of regional development through rapid industrialization.

Another important component of the SADC University of Transformation is that it will partner with other universities that are based in the 16 Member States so that existing infrastructure is used for the establishment of centres of excellence.

The centres of excellence will help to build capacity for regional training institutions to offer education and training programmes in critical and specialised areas and thereby increase the stock of trained personnel in the region without necessarily having to create a new university.

The establishment of regional centres of excellence will take into consideration the key economic activity of each country.

For example, a centre of excellence in Botswana could focus on diamond mining and cattle ranching, while one in Zimbabwe could specialise on agriculture.

The idea is to ensure that the centres will be spread across the region so that SADC is able to exploit its comparative advantage in resource intensive industries through beneficiation and value addition.

The transition towards the full operationalization of the SADC University of Transformation will thus be done in phases.

In the initial stages, a special administrative committee will be established to steer implementation and to design and develop the curricula as well as identify institutions that will serve as Centres of Excellence.

So far at least 12 priority areas that fall under the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap adopted in 2015 will form the focus of curricula for the university.

The SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap seeks to engender a major economic and technological transformation at the national and regional levels within the context of deeper regional integration.

In its formative stages the SADC University of Transformation will focus on four degree programmes while other programmes will be considered in the future in line with SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap.

The four degree programmes are Mining, Agriculture, Pharmacy and Engineering.

The SADC University of Transformation will, therefore, adopt a more transformative approach for rapid regional industrialization, rather than the current set-up where most tertiary education in the region is structured to equip students with skills to fit the job market.

One of the quick spin-offs of this structured education will be the transfer of technological knowledge created by the university to the industry.

Over time, education will be aligned to the development needs and goals of SADC, thereby allowing the region to fully harness its human capital for sustainable growth.

With respect to funding, the SADC University of Transformation will initially be sustained by contributions from Member States. As the university expands, financial support will be sourced from regional, continental and international partners, including institutions and various public-private partnerships. □

Regional mining vision and action plan

SADC IS preparing a regional Mining Vision and Action Plan to maximize the developmental impact of the vast mineral resources in the region.

Working with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the SADC Secretariat is finalising a draft SADC Regional Mining Vision and Action Plan whose objective is to maximize the developmental impact of mineral resources extraction within the context of the African Mining Vision and the SADC industrialization Strategy.

SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, said work on the development of the mining vision has reached an advanced stage, with the document now under review by Member States.

"We believe that, come next Council, the mining vision will be approved," Dr Tax told the post-Council media briefing in Windhoek.

She said a mining vision is critical as the SADC region takes steps to transform itself from a resource-based economy to a technology-driven economy.

"This is in view of the fact that mineral beneficiation is critical for industrialization and for us to be able to achieve that, we need to have a mining vision as a region," Dr Tax said.

The Draft Mining Vision was presented to the private sector in September 2018 for input and following revisions, it has now been submitted to Member States for final comments before consideration by the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration.

The vision is expected to provide a high-level framework to guide increased mineral beneficiation as outlined in the Industrialization Strategy. □



Annual AU coordination meeting for Regional Economic Communities

THE INAUGURAL African Union-RECS Coordination Meeting is set for July in Niger as the continental body and its building blocks review progress in the implementation of the continental integration agenda.

The coordination meeting is part of the broader African Union (AU) institutional reform agenda adopted in January 2017 and further refined during the 11th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in November 2018.

Among the outcomes of the extraordinary session was a decision to have only one summit of AU heads of state and government per year, usually in January/February.

The traditional second AU Summit, which was usually held between May and July, would be replaced by a meeting of the AU Commission and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The AU-RECs Coordination Meeting, scheduled for 7-8 July in the capital Niamey, will focus on the economic integration agenda and will bring together the Bureau of the AU Assembly, REC chairpersons and chief executives or executive secretaries, as well as the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

The meeting is expected to provide an opportunity for the AU Commission and RECs to assess progress towards the African continental integration agenda as outlined in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (the Abuja Treaty).

SADC and other RECs are expected to present reports on the status of integration in their respective regions.

The report on the Status of Integration in the SADC Region was approved by the Council of Ministers meeting in Windhoek, Namibia in March.

The report outlines the key achievements/successes made by SADC in the area of regional integration, as well as the challenges encountered.

The reports by the different RECs are expected to feed into the AU Commission report on the status of integration on the continent.

Motivated by a desire to transform its vast economic potential into reality, Africa has over the past few decades aimed to unleash its economic might through a coordinated development approach modelled around RECs.

SADC is one of the eight recognised AU RECs. Others are the Arab Maghreb Union, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States, East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States, and the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development.

One of the challenges is to rationalise the operations of the economic communities to avoid overlaps and conflict of interest. Most of the RECs have identical sectoral programmes while several member states belong to more than one economic bloc.

The AU has embarked on a programme to rationalise and harmonise programmes and commitments of the RECs. The programme will ensure that there are uniform commitments by all RECs and try to eliminate the challenges of dual membership, and some of the RECs have already embarked on a process to harmonise their integration agendas.

In one such case, COMESA-EAC-SADC have agreed to establish an integrated market covering more than half of the countries in Africa.

Commonly known as the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), the integrated market comprises 27 countries from the three RECs.

When operational, the enlarged market is expected to dismantle the trade barriers between African countries but also deepen integration through improved infrastructure development, investment flows, and enhanced competition.

The establishment of the TFTA is a decisive step to achieve the African vision of establishing the African Economic Community, including the African Continental Free Trade Area, which aims to facilitate the smooth movement of goods and services across borders, as well as allowing member states to harmonize regional trade policies to promote equal competition.

The RECs are the essential building blocks of the African Economic Community (AEC) whose overall objective is to pro-

mote economic development and integration, social and cultural development as well as to increase self-sufficiency.

The AEC further aims to promote cooperation and development in all aspects of human activity, with a view to raising the standard of living of Africa's people, maintaining economic stability and establishing a close and peaceful relationship among member states.

The AEC Treaty, also known as the Abuja Treaty, came into force after the requisite number of ratifications in May 1994. □

SADC anthem at all regional events

COUNCIL ENDORSED the recommendation from the Ministers of Information and Communication Technologies and Public Information for Member States to introduce the singing of the SADC anthem together with national anthems during SADC meetings.

The recommendation by the ministers included a decision that Member States should hoist the SADC flag alongside national flags during all SADC meetings and national events in order to strengthen awareness of the SADC identity, brand, and community-building symbols.

Council called on the Secretariat to explore other ways of popularising SADC and bringing SADC to SADC citizens. □



Towards a Regional Parliament Task force to look into proposed transformation of SADC PF

SADC COUNCIL of Ministers has directed the Secretariat to establish a task force to carry out an analysis of the proposed transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a regional Parliament.

The Chairperson of Council, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah said the task force will comprise members of the Double Troika who will be supported by officials from the Secretariat and the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF).

"The Secretariat will present progress to Council in August 2019," said Nandi-Ndaitwah, who is the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

The SADC Parliamentary Forum is an autonomous institution of SADC established in 1997 as a regional inter-parliamentary body made up of 14 national parliaments, representing over 3,500 parliamentarians in southern Africa.

The member parliaments are from Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The parliamentary forum has, however, not been able to fully contribute to policy making that is important for regional integration because its formal role on SADC matters has not been realized.

This has seen the forum embarking on a process over the years to develop a working relationship with the SADC Secretariat to create space for parliamentarians to participate more formally in regional integration processes.

Speaking during the 38th SADC Summit held in Windhoek, Namibia in August 2018, President Hage Geingob of Namibia strongly support the proposed transformation of the SADC PF into a regional parliament, saying this will further "entrench democracy in the region."

He said the establishment of a regional parliament will bridge the gap between citizens of southern Africa and regional integration processes.

"We believe that the SADC Parliament will not only help to buttress the governance architecture of the region, but will also be a key driver of our integration and development efforts."

This was supported by the outgoing SADC Chair, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa who told the 2018 Summit that, "Parliamentary democracy is at the centre of our collective mission to give expression to the will of the people. The establishment of a SADC Parliament is, therefore, a matter to which we need to give due consideration."

South Africa is host to the Pan-African Parliament.

In its proposal for transformation, the SADC PF has argued that the establishment

of a SADC Regional Parliament would facilitate more extensive debate on regional issues and thus accelerate the implementation of SADC protocols that need to be ratified and domesticated into national legislation.

The proposed regional parliament would be expected to facilitate the ratification and domestication of SADC protocols and other legal instruments as well as continental and international treaties or agreements.

However, the proposed regional Parliament will respect the sovereignty of member parliaments and structurally will fall under the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, which will maintain formal and legal relations with other SADC institutions under the authority of the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The argument is that the regional parliament will not impede on the sovereignty of Member States as SADC bodies do not have autonomous powers to legislate on matters that do not have prior consent of the Member States.

The regional parliament will have an advisory function and limited mandate, with its deliberations being presented as recommendations that are non-binding on Member States.

On funding of the regional parliament, the argument by the forum is that it will have no financial implications for Mem-

ber States since the SADC Parliamentary Forum is already operational as an assembly modelled on a parliament.

However, some Member States argue that it is premature to have such a body at this stage of the SADC regional integration agenda as the establishment of a regional parliament within the framework of a Regional Community is the last stage of integration under the linear approach in which the region has been targeting to move from a Free Trade Area (FTA) to a Customs Union, followed by a Common Market and a Monetary Union.

Although it achieved FTA status in 2008, SADC has not pursued this stepped approach to regional integration. Rather seeking first to consolidate the FTA, SADC has pursued a developmental approach to integration that focuses on sectoral cooperation, industrialisation and infrastructure development.

To this effect, SADC has been implementing programmes and projects across all the stages of regional integration.

The task force is expected to "advise on, among others, the governing legal framework; structure; functions and powers; inter- and intra-relationships with other branches of SADC, like Summit and SADC Administrative Tribunal, national Parliaments and the Pan African Parliament; international law obligations; and financing arrangement." □



Harnessing energy efficiency, innovation to promote industrialization

ENERGY EXPERTS from southern Africa will meet in May to discuss ways of harnessing and stimulating industrial competitiveness through promoting energy efficiency and innovation.

Organized by the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE), the meeting is expected to highlight the status of industrial energy efficiency within the region, share results and best practices and outline investment prospects.

Industrial competitiveness and development has been recognized as one of the priorities for SADC in its integration agenda.

The SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) identifies energy as a key enabler for industrial competitiveness of the region.

Therefore, harnessing energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to support

industry in overcoming these barriers, improving their competitiveness and addressing climate change.

Investments to improve industrial energy efficiency can deliver large energy savings, improve productivity, and reduce environment pollution. Energy costs in most SADC countries are quite significant, representing about 20-35 percent of the production costs of industries.

To address these challenges, the region has developed the SADC Industrial Energy Efficiency Programme (SIEEP) as a driver of Industrial Competitiveness

The SIEEP was developed by the SACREEE in 2018 to support the region to attain industrial competitiveness.

The programme is designed to address barriers to energy efficiency in industry through six pillars:

- Formulation of comprehensive EE policy, regulatory

and institutional frameworks;

- Capacity building and skills development;
- Demonstration projects and awareness raising;
- Financing interventions for EE/RE Initiatives;
- Application of EE/RE in industries; and
- Domestication of EE/RE technologies in the SADC region.

Some of the key activities to be implemented as part of the SIEEP include the setting of minimum energy performance standards for EE equipment, implementation of energy audits and energy management systems, and accreditation of EE service providers.

The forthcoming conference, scheduled for 16-17 May in Windhoek, Namibia is, therefore, one of the ways of implementing the SIEEP roadmap and engaging with the wider stakeholder group. □

BRICS bank supports Eskom renewable energy project

THE NEW Development Bank has signed a US\$180 million loan agreement with South African power utility Eskom to support a project to integrate power generated at renewable energy plants into the national grid.

The New Development Bank's Project Finance Facility (PFF) will be used to support the development of grid connection infrastructure, which is vital for the development of renewable energy projects.

According to NDB, the project will integrate a total of 670 megawatts of renewable energy into the Eskom grid as well as to augment the power utility's transmission infrastructure.

Modern grid connection infrastructure will be used for renewable energy projects and augmentation of the Eskom transmission network to the identified areas.

The project will also help increase electricity supply to the targeted areas for sustainable development.

In addition, the PFF will support renewable energy development and reduce South Africa's reliance on fossil fuels. More than 70 percent of the power generated by South Africa is from coal-fired plants.

The NDB was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) in 2014 to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries.

To fulfill its purpose, the NDB supports public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments. □

Access to energy information is key to regional integration

ACCESS TO reliable and accurate information on the energy sector is critical to regional development and integration as it allows policymakers, investors and other stakeholders to come up with appropriate and necessary interventions aimed at ensuring that energy supplies continue to meet demand.

To contribute to the provision of energy knowledge and information in southern Africa, the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) through its Regional Economic Development Institute has been implementing the Communicating Energy Project in Southern Africa to raise regional awareness among stakeholders about key regional energy issues.

This intervention, supported by the Austrian Development Agency/Austrian

Development Cooperation (ADA/ADC) since 2014, has resulted in the production of various communication tools with a very positive response from users.

These publications produced with the SADC Secretariat, include:

- ♦ *SADC Energy Monitor 2018* that highlights some of the changes in the legal and institutional environment, as well as other developments taking place in the energy sector;
- ♦ *SADC Energy Investment Yearbook 2018*, which captures the current range of investments in the various energy sub-sectors during the past year;
- ♦ *Efforts and Benefits of Mainstreaming Gender in the SADC Renewable Energy Sector*, which addresses the in-

clusion of women in the management of energy resources, and the benefits; and,

- ♦ Several policy briefs and factsheets on related issues.

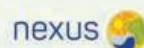
In addition to this, SARDC has initiated a SADC Energy Portal that is maintained to provide a platform for information and knowledge-sharing among various partners involved in the energy sector, such as the SADC Energy Thematic Group (ETG), to promote coordinated approaches to bilateral and multilateral support for energy activities, programmes and projects in southern African.

The SADC ETG consists of representatives of the SADC Secretariat, SADC subsidiary organisations, International Co-operating Partners, and SARDC as knowledge partner. □



Water Energy Food Nexus

SADC moves to address interconnected developmental issues



Water, Energy and Food Security are Key Priority Areas for SADC

The SADC WEF Nexus Operational Framework is expected to provide overall guidance and tools to make decisions, coordinate between different sectors and facilitate Nexus investments in the SADC region.

By Eglise Tauya

AS SOUTHERN Africa braces for looming water, energy and food shortages, the region has made significant progress towards an integrated, or Nexus, approach to unlock the full potential of the region's resources in order to address these challenges.

In line with the SADC Council decision in August 2018, which called for stronger collaboration between the Water, Energy and Food (WEF) sectors, a governance framework that will guide implementation of the Nexus approach is being developed by the Secretariat.

The framework is expected to demonstrate the linkages between the sectors of water, energy and food. As the three sectors are inextricably linked, uncoordinated development and management in one area has the capacity to negatively impact on others.

Food production requires water and energy. Food can be used to produce energy in the case of sugar cane, while water extraction and distribution require energy, and energy production requires water.

This water, energy and food security Nexus therefore demands that Member States should develop innovative and integrated approaches to the management of these sectors to optimize the use of resources, manage the competing demands, and maximise the benefits.

The region has realised that any strategy that focuses on one part of the water-energy-food Nexus without considering its interconnections can cause serious, unintended consequences that can impact most seriously on the youth.

In this context, the 9th Water Dialogue, held Johannesburg, South Africa in March, focused on the involvement and empowerment of youth in strengthening water security, energy security and food security in the SADC region.

This is imperative considering that the region has a young population, who make up more than 60 percent of the total population, without sufficient opportunities for employment and livelihoods.

The focus of the dialogue was anchored on the 38th SADC Summit theme of "Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development."

The development of frameworks for collaboration to guide the achievement of water security, energy security

and food security while maintaining the integrity of the environment is based on this premise – that youth empowerment and involvement should be at the centre to increase ownership and address generational challenges.

SADC has embarked on a process to develop a framework for Nexus governance and investments to provide critical guidance to regional planning.

Other processes taking place in the region include country assessments to identify existing and potential applications of the WEF Nexus approach.

Reports so far indicate that most of the potential areas of application are in multi-purpose projects that include the retrofitting of existing dams such as Kariba on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as in the planned projects for Inga Dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the irrigation and hydropower project in the Shire River Basin, and the Batoka Dam along the Zambezi River.

The recent dialogue noted the need to promote a WEF Nexus at all levels, including small-scale projects.

Chipendeke micro-hydro and irrigation scheme, which is being driven by communities in Zimbabwe, is a good example that should be replicated. In this intervention the communities are able to balance the competing demands of water for irrigation that is allocated during the day and for hydropower generation which is allocated during the evening.

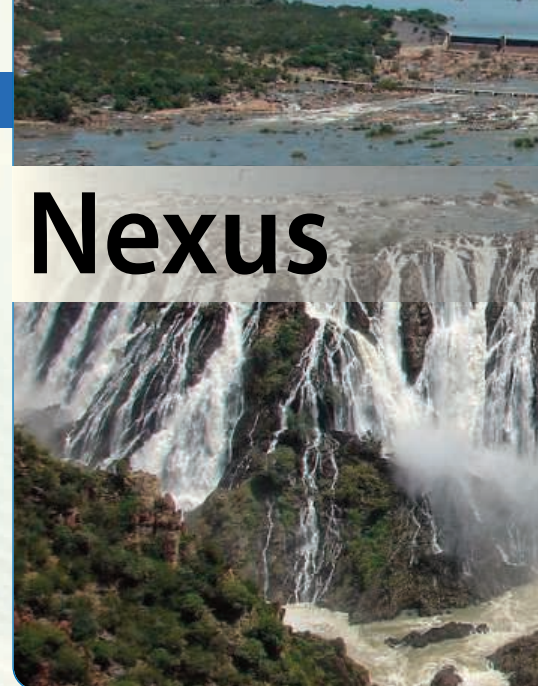
The Dialogue called for a coordinated and holistic approach to balance the competing demands and address the existing challenges of water, energy and food insecurity in some parts of the region.

Member States were urged to avoid the "sectoral silos" thinking and adopt a multi-sectoral Nexus approach that can bring more benefits to developmental interventions.

The approach promotes sustainable patterns of production, investment and consumption together with enhanced resource efficiency, and reduction of waste, food losses and pollution.

The Dialogue noted the need to broaden awareness on the WEF Nexus approach as well as ensuring the mainstreaming of women, men boys and girls in management and decision-making, including the physically disadvantaged groups.

More sensitization on the Nexus thinking required, and capacity-building for Nexus analysis.





The past four SADC Water Dialogues and the Ministers Meetings Responsible for Water Energy and Food Security have deliberated on the Nexus approach.

These deliberations and expert studies have informed the SADC conclusion that Member States could achieve short- and long-term benefits through integrated and coordinated operations of existing and planned hydropower facilities, cooperative flood management, and irrigation development.

With full cooperation of the Member States, a reasonable balance between hydropower and irrigation investment can result in firm energy generation of some 30,000 Gigawatt hours per year and 774,000 hectares of irrigated land.

The overall hydropower potential in SADC region is estimated at about 1,080 Terawatt hours per year (TWh/year) but the capacity being utilised at present is just under 31 TWh/year.

As for agriculture, the potential arable land for irrigation is estimated at 20.2 million ha at regional level. Of this total potential land only 6.7 million ha is already equipped for irrigation, leaving 13.4 million ha to rain-fed agriculture.

The water, energy and food security challenges are linked to reduced rainfall that has lowered the water levels in reservoirs, the changing climate and the increasing demand due to the growing population and desires for higher living standards.

Predictions by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicate a decrease in annual precipitation as much as 20 percent by 2080 in most parts of the region while the duration of the rainy season will shorten.

About 70 percent of the population in SADC depends on rain-fed agriculture for crop production, and large segments of rural population are engaged in subsistence farming, livestock herding and artisanal fishing.

Demand for water, food and energy in the region is expected to rise by 30-50 percent in the next two decades.

For example, current available total operating generation capacity for the region stands at 46,959 Megawatt (MW) against demand of 52,542 MW. This gives a regional capacity shortfall of 5,593 MW.

Regional energy demand is expected to rise to more than 77,000 MW by 2020 and to over 115,000 MW in 2030, with an economic growth rate of eight percent per annum.

Water withdrawals for irrigation are projected to increase by 10 percent by 2050, while 60 percent more food will be needed

to feed the region in 2050. This is expected to increase the demand for energy and water.

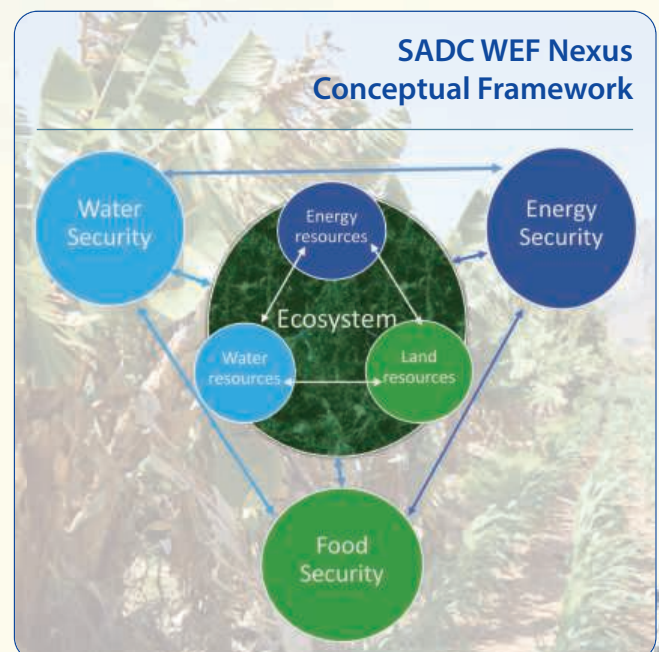
With the build-up of the Nexus approach and knowledge from the water dialogues as far back as 2013, as well as special meetings of Joint Ministers of Water, Energy and Food Security, it was confirmed that a long-lasting solution in addressing the challenges can only be realized when the related sectors find a truly collaborative arrangement.

The 6th Water Dialogue held in Lusaka, Zambia in 2013 initiated the WEF Nexus approach for regional development. The dialogue noted that the Nexus approach can increase water, energy and food security by increasing efficiency in production systems, reducing trade-offs, building synergies and improving governance.

The 7th Dialogue held in Windhoek, Namibia in 2015 focussed on the central role of water in driving industrialization, with the realisation that water attains its true value when it has optimised the contribution to other productive sectors of the various industrial value chains, such as energy and agro-food processing.

The 8th Water Dialogue held in Boksburg, South Africa in 2017 focused on fostering regional value chains and job creation through the Water-Energy-Food Nexus approaches.

These processes contribute to the implementation of the SADC Regional Strategic Action Plan on Integrated Water Resources Development and Management Phase Four (RSAP IV) 2016-2020, which has the Nexus approach as one of its main programmes. □



SADC response to Cyclone Idai

SADC MEMBER States reacted swiftly in providing support to Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe after the three countries were hit by a Tropical Cyclone that left devastation and disaster in its wake.

Tropical Cyclone Idai, which was accompanied by heavy rain, winds and storms, killed hundreds of people and displaced thousands of others in the three affected countries and could be ranked as one of the worst disasters to affect southern Africa.

The tropical cyclone has left a trail of destruction to land and infrastructure, affecting accessibility and provision of health care, food and welfare to the affected communities.

According to a report released by the National Institute of Disaster Management in Mozambique, more than 1.5 million people had been affected by the cyclone and at least 602 people had been confirmed dead as of 7 April.

In Malawi, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs puts the number of people affected at more than 850,000 and at least 60 deaths have been recorded.

Preliminary assessments in Zimbabwe indicate that at least 250,000 people have been affected while more than 260 deaths have been confirmed.

The cyclone affected southern Malawi, central Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe, which all rely on the port of

Beira in Mozambique as a trade route.

Although Beira is vulnerable to floods that occur almost every year, the situation this time is worse compared to previous years as most of the deaths in Mozambique took place in Beira, with 90 percent of the city destroyed.

The SADC Chairperson, President Hage Geingob of Namibia expressed his appreciation to Member States for the support they have provided to Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

"SADC appreciates the overwhelming support extended to the communities by some Member States, cooperating partners, and most importantly by citizens of the three countries who combined efforts to assist their fellow nationals," he said.

President Geingob further revealed that SADC has so far contributed a total of US\$500,000 for humanitarian assistance, with US\$200,000 going to Mozambique; US\$150,000 to Malawi; and US\$150,000 to Zimbabwe.

Most of the assistance from Member States was provided in cash or in kind, with support given to each of the three countries depending on the need.

The United Republic of Tanzania, for example, was among the first to send a plane to Zimbabwe carrying a donated consignment of drugs and medical supplies, while Malawi re-

ceived 200 metric tonnes of maize and medical supplies to assist communities in the southern part of the country.

Commenting on the assistance provided by Tanzania, the Deputy Director of the Disaster Management Affairs of Malawi, Levi Manda said the humanitarian donation "is a clear manifestation of the strong cordial relations that exist between the two countries which share a lot in common."

The Ministry of Agriculture in Malawi said "around 420,000 metric tonnes of maize had been lost, representing roughly 12 percent of the country's forecast output of 3.3 million metric tons in the 2018/19 farming season."

The government of Botswana, through its Ministry of International Affairs and Co-operation, announced that the country will provide emergency humanitarian relief assistance to the three countries in the form of water purifying solutions, non-perishable food-stuffs and blankets.

As part of its contribution, President Geingob said Namibia will provide fish to assist communities affected by the tropical cyclone in all the three countries.

The government of Angola extended support to Mozambique through the provision of food items and medicines, in addition to sending its military and medical teams to assist in search and rescue efforts as well as fighting the possible

outbreak of waterborne diseases.

South Africa extended support to the three countries in various ways, including the deployment of the army to all three countries to manage the unfolding crisis.

The South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation indicated that it has so far sent out donations that include financial assistance, clothes, water purifiers, non-perishable food items and blankets to the affected countries.

Zimbabwe received R75 million from South Africa to assist communities affected by Cyclone Idai in Chipinge and Chimanimani in Manicaland province as well as in parts of Masvingo.

South Africa also provided Zimbabwe with police sniffer dogs and handlers to help search for those who are missing and others presumed dead.

Support for Cyclone Idai-affected countries has not only come from the SADC region but from other parts of the world.

In addition to financial assistance rendered to the three countries, the Chinese government has offered to assist in the reconstruction of infrastructure such as schools and clinics that were badly damaged by the cyclone.

The United Nations has launched a humanitarian assistance appeal to raise funds to assist the three SADC Member States to recover from the effects of the cyclone. □

disaster



SADC launches humanitarian appeal for Cyclone Idai victims

SADC HAS launched an international appeal to support the affected Member States to cope with the impact of Tropical Cyclone Idai that hit parts of Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe in March.

An estimated three million people in the three countries were affected by Cyclone Idai, which has been recorded as one of the worst tropical storms to affect Africa and the southern hemisphere.

The cyclone claimed hundreds of lives and left a trail of destruction in the three countries, including key infrastructure such as roads, bridges, schools and clinics.

To support the humanitarian needs and disaster response for recovery of the affected countries, the SADC Chairperson, President Hage Geingob of Namibia launched an appeal for US\$3.2 million on 11 April. The appeal is expected to complement the efforts at regional and national levels to address the situation.

Speaking at the launch of the appeal held in Windhoek, Namibia, Geingob said the intensity and gravity of the cyclone emphasised "the need for collaborative efforts and support from partners to improve our preparedness and enhance the capacity to respond to the negative impacts of climate change and other disasters."

"I wish to emphasise that through our joint efforts, in response to disasters in the past,

we were able to overcome the challenges," he said.

"It is for this reason that I am launching the SADC Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance to save lives and alleviate human suffering of all the affected communities."

President Geingob urged the international community to continue to assist in rebuilding the livelihoods of the affected communities in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax agreed, saying a collective approach to addressing the impacts of Cyclone Idai will yield positive results.

"Allow me to thank Member States and our international co-operating partners for rendering support to alleviate the suffering of the affected communities during the floods and the period immediately after, until now," Dr Tax said.

"Your support has gone a long way in saving lives and livelihoods, and will be remembered by the affected communities for a long time to come."

She said that in the past few years the region has experienced extreme weather conditions and events, including the increased frequency of floods, cyclones, and droughts that have had devastating impacts on SADC.

Therefore, it is critical for the region to develop viable and innovative measures to enable Member States to adapt and

cope with the challenges posed by climate change.

"There is a revelation that as climate change intensifies, Cyclone Idai will be remembered as a relatively insignificant weather event," she said, adding that "the era of superstorms and cyclones is just around the corner."

"Therefore, the earlier we undertake measures to reduce global warming, lessen the impacts of climate change and variability, and be better prepared for the impending disasters, the better."

She said the region's response to the impacts of Cyclone Idai had highlighted

shortfalls in the disaster management capacity, including in early warning, preparedness, response and recovery that the region needs to address as a matter of urgency.

In recognition of this, Dr Tax said the SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with Member States, is in the process of developing a strategy for effective co-ordination of responses to disasters.

The SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy when finalized will provide suitable response mechanisms and adequate resources for the effective management of disasters. □

FOLLOWING THE devastating impact of Cyclone Idai, the SADC Chairperson, President Hage Geingob of Namibia, mandated the Secretariat to develop a regional appeal for support to the affected communities and Member States – Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The appeal is a collaborative effort of the affected Member States and the SADC Emergency and Resilience Technical Working Group composed of a multi-sectoral team at the Secretariat working collaboratively with United Nations agencies based in the region, international non-governmental organizations and national disaster management offices.

The development of the Regional Disaster Appeal is a key milestone in responding to the impacts of the cyclone, as it documents the resource needs and gaps.

The appeal also highlights the early recovery actions, and further recommends on humanitarian and resilience efforts, but most importantly it emphasizes the process of drawing lessons for better preparedness, response and coordination at both national and regional levels.

The appeal aims to complement the efforts that Member States, civil society organizations and international cooperating partners have made towards the addressing the impacts of the disaster. □





Climate resilient regional infrastructure the way forward for protection of life and property

by Kumbirai Nhongo

THE TRAGIC deaths and widespread destruction caused by Cyclone Idai in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe point to the need for development of resilient infrastructure that can withstand the adverse weather conditions and impacts of climate change.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) defines climate resilient investments as those that are “climate-proof” because they take into account predicted changes in climate during planning, design and implementation.

In the aftermath of the cyclone, the UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mami Mizutori, emphasised that apart from effective early warning systems, there is need to invest in resilient infrastructure to break the disaster-response-recovery cycle.

Flooding has affected nearly 3 million people in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe since rains began in early March and Cyclone Idai struck March 14 and 15. The death toll in the three countries exceeds 843 people and rising, as hundreds of people are still missing.

Apart from the loss of human life and the displacement of communities, there has been extensive damage to the region’s residential, healthcare, educational, water, farming, transport, industrial, energy, ICT and tourism infrastructure within the affected areas. The storm wiped out roads, bridges and dams.

World Vision’s Cyclone Idai response director, Jeff Wright, says, “Cyclone Idai has shown just how vulnerable people are to these kinds of disasters that tear down homes, destroy crops, displace hundreds of thousands of people, and force untold numbers of children out of schools

that are damaged or become evacuation centres.”

The UN Children’s Fund estimated the cost of infrastructure destroyed at more than US\$1 billion, with more than 100,000 homes damaged or destroyed, and at least 1 million acres of crops.

In a statement on the effects of Cyclone Idai, the SADC Chairperson, President Hage Geingob of Namibia underscored the need to “reduce the impacts of climate change and variability, while stepping up efforts to enhance adaptive capacities of developing countries in line with the spirit of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and Article 8(4) of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.”

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change aims to limit global warming while the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement signed in 2015 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly, which seeks to reduce disaster risk in signatory countries by 2030.

The development of climate resilient infrastructure is one of the global targets of the Sendai Framework in terms of substantially reducing disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities.

In addition, the Sendai Framework seeks to significantly reduce the global disaster mortality, the number of people affected and the direct economic loss arising from such disasters while also strengthening early warning systems.

Cyclone Idai has come at a time when the SADC region is implementing policy programmes such as the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP), designed

to build, rehabilitate and modernise infrastructure by 2027, in order to provide the appropriate foundation for sustainable economic growth and development in the region.

The destruction of infrastructure by the cyclone is a major setback to regional targets. In Mozambique for example, a report by Medicines Sans Frontières shows that following the cyclone, the area around Beira had been left 90 percent damaged, with roads, electricity and communications cut off.

Healthcare facilities in Beira as well as the city’s water supply system had been severely damaged, compromising the ability of people to access medical assistance and safe drinking water.

The Beira Port could only be accessed by sea and air as bridges and roads were destroyed or flooded. This made the Beira Corridor very difficult to use especially for landlocked countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, thus hampering intra-regional trade during this period.

In Malawi and Zimbabwe, there are similar reports of extensive damage to homes, schools, healthcare, water reticulation and transport infrastructure, with medical staff warning of increased cases of waterborne and vector-borne diseases in the areas affected.

As the region recovers from the cyclone and as Member States continue to implement infrastructure development projects under RIDMP, it is an opportune moment to factor in

climate resilience so as to reduce the human and economic losses arising from such disasters.

A 2018 report by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) describes southern Africa as a climate change Hot Spot likely to experience an increase in the frequency and intensity of climatic events.

At the continental level, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with development partners, has launched the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility (AFRI-RES), a fund whose objective is to strengthen the capacity of African institutions, such as those in SADC and Member States, to plan, design, and implement investments resilient to climate variability and change in selected sectors.

In adopting climate resilient solutions to the region’s infrastructural challenge, SADC could explore the hard, soft and natural approaches that have been used in other parts of the world.

Hard climate-resilience investments are structural measures put in place to increase resilience to climate impacts, whereas Soft climate-resilience investments are management adaptation measures and include investments in early warning systems or disaster risk insurance to address the humanitarian and financial consequences of climate variability.

Natural climate resilience investments are nature-based adaptation solutions such as reforestation or watershed restoration. sardc.net □

CYCLONE IDAI made landfall in central Mozambique on March 14 and 15 as a Category 2 storm. Cyclone Kenneth came ashore in northern Mozambique on April 25 with hurricane-force winds and heavy rains, arriving just six weeks after Cyclone Idai devastated a broad area about 1,000 km to the south. These are the strongest cyclones on record in the Southern Hemisphere. □



Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change

Science, Innovation and Technology should be inclusive of women and men

by Nyarai Kampipili

GLOBAL EFFORTS to promote and increase the use of science, innovation and technology in sustainable development should be inclusive to target both women and men.

This was the message from the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax on International Women's Day. Celebrated annually on 8 March, Women's Day provides an opportunity for the global community to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, while taking note of the barriers that hinder the acceleration of gender equality.

The theme for this year's commemoration is "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change".

Dr Tax said the theme recognizes the role of innovation in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

It should be noted the participation of women in innovation and science still remains low, yet skills in science and technology are becoming an important part of basic literacy in the knowledge economy.

The gender digital divide and under-representation of women in the field of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and design has prevented women from developing and influencing gender-responsive innovations to achieve sustainable development.

"Women and girls globally, including in our region, continue to be less engaged and under-represented in technology and innovation, and this creates a missed opportunity in terms of their influence and

ideas in transforming our society," Dr Tax said.

"This calls for everyone to do things differently if we are to achieve transformative and better development outcomes for women, girls, men and boys in our society."

Dr Tax said SADC has developed various measures and initiatives to advance gender equality and women empowerment through innovation and technology as well as gender-responsive approaches to science, innovation and technology.

Gender equality and empowerment is firmly rooted in the Declaration and Treaty through which Member States established the shared community of SADC, realizing that equality and empowerment of both women and men is crucial for the attainment of sustainable development.

The main guiding document on gender is the Revised SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which provides for the empowerment of women, elimination of discrimination and attainment of gender equality and equity through enactment of gender-responsive legislation and implementation of policies, programmes and projects.

Article 14 of the Protocol calls upon "State Parties to take special measures to increase the number of girls taking up Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects and Information Communication Technology at the primary, secondary, tertiary and higher levels."

The Protocol was revised in 2016 to align with the provisions of other instruments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the

SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063.

Dr Tax said the approval of the SADC Charter on Women in Science, Engineering and Technology in 2017 is another "significant step in ensuring women and girls' participation in science and technology."

She said advancing gender equality and equity is a collective effort that should be championed by both women and men to ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

Often, there is a perception that only women ought to be the main supporters and advocates of gender empowerment.

"Achieving transformative change through innovation and technology, requires active participation of all members of society and the establishment of strategic partnerships between key sectors in our communities, without leaving behind women and girls," she said. sardc.net □

Significant achievements in gender equality ... but more needs to be done

by Thenjiwe Sisimayi

THE DEPUTY Prime Minister and Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia, Hon Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, who chairs the regional Council of Ministers, has said that significant progress has been made towards gender equality in the region, but more needs to be done.

"I wish to stress that SADC has made great and recognisable strides towards women empowerment in the region," Nandi-Ndaitwah told the Council meeting held in Windhoek, Namibia in March.

She noted that the representation of women in various positions of influence and decision-making has improved in most of the 16 SADC Member States.

However, she said that more still needs to be done to achieve gender equality and equity in SADC to sustain and build on the progress made in empowering women.

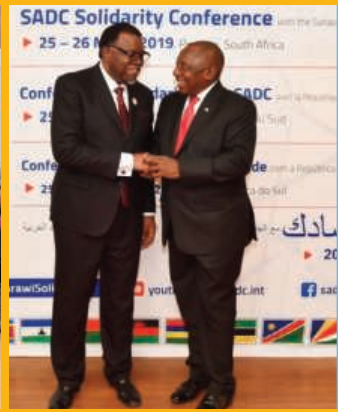
Namibia leads the region with the highest number of women in the National Assembly at 45 percent.

SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, supported this assessment, saying "while we are making significant efforts in achieving gender equality and equity, more still needs to be done for us to realise our gender parity aspirations."

Dr Tax urged countries to strive to address the barriers that hinder the acceleration of gender equality in the region.

The SADC Council of Ministers, which traditionally meets twice a year in February/March and August/September to review implementation of regional programmes, projects and activities and approve the budget for the SADC Secretariat, was preceded by meetings of senior officials representing the 16 member states.

The Council consists of ministers from each member state, usually from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning or Finance, and oversees the functioning and development of SADC. sardc.net □



SADC solidarity with Western Sahara

THE MESSAGE from the recent solidarity conference on Western Sahara was bold and clear: Southern Africa stands in solidarity with the Sahrawi people to attain their right to freedom and self-determination.

"Freedom is not a gift to the people of Western Sahara," SADC Chairperson, President Hage Geingob of Namibia said in his address to the SADC Solidarity Conference with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic held on 25-26 March in Pretoria, South Africa.

"No one can bestow freedom on the Sahrawi people, for freedom is their birth right, which no one can keep from them and which they must claim as their own."

Geingob said it is still a mystery that Western Sahara remains the only territory in Africa under colonial occupation and oppression.

Western Sahara is under Moroccan occupation despite several declarations by regional, continental and international bodies such as the United Nations for Western Sahara to take charge of its internal processes.

Geingob also said it is difficult to understand why some African countries are content and supportive of the colonial occupation and oppression of Western Sahara.

"I am aware of growing divisions on our continent on this issue regarding Western Sahara," Geingob said, adding that the division is being employed by the same countries which oppressed Africa in the past, hence the continent should be wary of such deceptive forces.

For example, in opposition to the SADC Solidarity Conference with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic held in South Africa, there was a parallel meeting being held in Morocco.

Some countries from SADC are understood to have attended the parallel meeting in Morocco.

"We should therefore ask ourselves. Are we, as SADC, united in support of the Saharawi people in their fight for freedom and self-determination or do we need a new approach?" Geingob asked.

He said the decolonization of Africa will not be complete until the day the people of Western Sahara decide the fate of their future status, through a free and fair referendum.

In fact, Africa's longstanding vision of a united and prosperous continent will remain elusive if Africa does not enjoy total freedom.

"The prolonged impasse on the Western Sahara issue will have grave consequences on the functioning of our African Union," he said, adding that

"we can only move forward when freedom is guaranteed to all our citizens."

Geingob urged the international community to continue to support efforts aimed at resolving "the question of Western Sahara," so that its citizens are able to determine their own destiny.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa concurred, saying that SADC stands ready to support the Sahrawi people in their quest for independence.

"As countries of the SADC region who have waged struggles in pursuit of our own liberation, we know too well the pain of being deprived of the right to be treated as full citizens in the land of one's birth," Ramaphosa said.

"The pain of the Sahrawi people, their trauma brought about by displacement and exile, is ours too."

He said SADC supports ongoing efforts by the United Nations to resolve any political challenges between Morocco and the Western Sahara.

In a declaration released soon after the solidarity conference, SADC expressed its unwavering commitment to stand in solidarity with the people of Western Sahara to attain their right to freedom and self-determination.

SADC said while negotiations between Morocco and

Western Sahara continue, there is need for external forces to refrain from exploiting natural resources from Western Sahara as this violated international laws and in the long term will have a negative bearing towards the development and potential of Western Sahara.

The conflict between Morocco and Western Sahara came after the revolt by the Polisario Front against Spanish forces who were occupying their land from the period 1973 to 1975.

The Polisario Front is a national movement fighting for the total independence of Western Sahara.

After the withdrawal of Spanish forces in accordance with the Madrid Accords in 1975, Morocco and Mauritania moved in to occupy the territory of Western Sahara. This led to a 16-year war of independence by the Polisario Front against Morocco.

In August 1979, Mauritania withdrew from Western Sahara after a peace agreement with the Polisario Front.

The war came to an end in 1991 after the intervention of the UN with a promise of a referendum to determine the independence of Western Sahara. However, since then, the referendum is yet to be conducted and Morocco continues to occupy Western Sahara. sardc.net □

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April

14 - 18, Egypt

AU Specialized Technical Committee on Infrastructure

The Specialized Technical Committee is the ministerial decision-making organ of the African Union for the Transport, Energy, Tourism Sectors as well as overall Infrastructure Development matters. The main objective of the meeting is to evaluate implementation of the updated STC Plans of Action adopted in Lomé, Togo in March 2017.

16, Botswana

SADC Energy Thematic Group Meeting

The Energy Thematic Group is a coordination meeting of SADC and its subsidiary organizations with cooperating partners to review the energy situation in the region.

26-27, China

Second Belt and Road Forum

Global leaders will meet in April at the second Belt and Road Forum to discuss how to develop a seamless infrastructure network connecting Asia, Europe and Africa.

May

8, South Africa

National Elections South Africa

More than 25 million South Africans will cast their ballots in elections to choose members of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies. These will be the sixth general elections in South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994.

21, Malawi

National Elections Malawi

As Malawi prepares to mark 55 years of independence this year, around seven million people will vote in elections to elect the President, Members of Parliament and local government leaders.

24, Namibia

SADC Energy and Water Ministers

The joint meeting of energy and water ministers is aimed at facilitating the exchange of ideas and forging practical and sustainable solutions towards addressing the energy and water challenges in the region with a view to planning a strategic direction.

25, Africa

Africa Day

Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU). This year marks 56 years since the formation of the OAU. On this day in 2013, the AU approved a 50-year vision for Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want.

27, Madagascar

Madagascar Parliamentary Elections

Madagascar will hold Parliamentary elections on 27 May. The National Assembly consists of 127 members elected for a five-year term in 119 single-member and 2 two-member constituencies. For single-member, the seat is filled by the individual candidate with the highest number of votes, whereas in two-member constituencies, the two candidates of the Party with the highest number of votes become members of the National Assembly.

June

4 – 5, South Africa

Africa Pharma Conference 2019

The Africa Pharma Conference seeks to contribute to efforts to boost local production of essential medicines. The Africa Pharma Conference 2019 will focus on access to medicines and health commodities.

5, Global

World Environment Day

The day is observed each year to raise awareness on the need for the global community to work together on preserving the environment. China will host the global World Environment Day celebrations for 2019 with a theme of air pollution.

TBA

SADC Gender Ministers Meeting

The SADC Gender and Women's Affairs Ministers meet annually to review the regional gender programme. The meeting presents an opportunity for Member States to share progress on the implementation of gender commitments.



SADC commemorates inaugural Liberation Day

EXACTLY 31 years ago, the small town of Cuito Cuanavale in the province of Cuando Cubango in the southern part of Angola, was the epicentre of one the fiercest conventional battles of the African history after the Second World War.

From November 1987 to March 1988, thousands of combatants from the People's Liberation Armed Forces (FAPLA) supported by the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the Cuban Revolutionary Forces fought back to defend the country from invasion and defeated the mighty armed forces of the Apartheid regime of South Africa.

For the first time, following the endorsement of the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Windhoek, Namibia in August 2018, leaders from SADC gathered on 23 March in Cuando Cubango Province to commemorate the Southern Africa Liberation Day, which is dedicated to the Cuito Cuanavale battle.

The historic event was attended by Presidents João Lourenço of Angola, his Namibian counterpart Hage Geingob, who is also the SADC Chairperson, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa as well as President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Other SADC countries sent representatives. Cuba and Russia, who played a critical role in the liberation struggle of most countries in the region, also attended the event.

In his address, President Lourenço spoke of the importance of remembering the Cuito-Cuanavale battle.

"This location where we are gathered today signifies the defeat of the racist army of South Africa which opened the doors for the independence of Namibia and the liberation of Nelson Mandela and consequently, marked the end of Apartheid in South Africa."

He paid tribute to SADC for the decision to adopt the 23 March as the Southern Africa Liberation Day.

"Angola is proud for this historic decision which enables the present and future generations of the southern African region to remember the countries and people who played part in liberation struggle so that their sacrifices are not forgotten," he said.

President Geingob said SADC is enjoying the fruits of the struggle waged by the heroes and heroines who made sacrifices to liberate their countries.

"We now owe it to our heroes and heroines to make sustainable development and prosperity for our people a reality," he said.

Geingob recognised the role played by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (now the Russian Federation), Cuba, the Frontline States, as well as Nigeria and the Scandinavian countries for the political, military and material support rendered during the struggle for independence.

He said the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale "was the battle to end all the battles", forcing the apartheid regime in South Africa and its allies to accept a negotiated solution based on the UN Security Council Resolution 435/78 and subsequently leading to the independence of Namibia.

At the event, SADC leaders consecrated 51 combatants and veterans from Angola, Cuba, Russia and Namibia who fought in the Cuito Cuanavale battle.

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CHRONOLOGY

23 March 1988	End of the Cuito Cuanavale Battle
22 December 1988	Signing of the New York Agreement, a tripartite agreement by Angola, Cuba and South Africa on the implementation of the UNSCR 435/78 and the departure of the Cuban revolutionary forces
1 April 1989	Start of implementation of UNSCR 435/78 leading to the independence of Namibia
11 February 1990	Release of Nelson Mandela from prison in South Africa
21 March 1990	Independence of Namibia
27 April 1994	Democratic elections in South Africa to end apartheid system

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN SADC

April – June 2019

4 April	Peace and Reconciliation Day	Angola
6 April	Ougadi	Mauritius
7 April	Sheikh Abeid Karume Day	Tanzania
13 April	Leirat al- Meiraj	Comoros
18 April	Independence Day	Zimbabwe
19 April	King's Birthday	Eswatini
	Good Friday	All SADC countries except Angola, DRC, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique
20 April	Easter/Holy Saturday	Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe
21 April	Easter Sunday	Namibia Zimbabwe
22 April	Easter Monday	All SADC Countries except Angola, Comoros, DRC, Mauritius, Mozambique
25 April	National Flag Day	Eswatini
26 April	Union Day	Tanzania
27 April	Freedom Day	South Africa
1 May	Workers Day	DRC, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe
	Labour Day	Angola, Botswana, Comoros Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Eswatini
4 May	Cassinga Day	Namibia
14 May	Kamuzu Day	Malawi
17 May	Liberation Day	DRC
25 May	Africa Day	All SADC
	Africa Freedom Day	Zambia
30 May	Ascension Day	Botswana, Madagascar, Lesotho Namibia, Eswatini
5 June	Liberation Day	Seychelles
16 June	Youth Day	South Africa
17 June	Public holiday	South Africa
18 June	National Day	Seychelles
20 June	Corpus Christi	Seychelles
25 June	Independence Day	Mozambique
26 June	Independence Day	Madagascar
29 June	Independence Day	Seychelles
30 June	Independence Day	DRC