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SADC responds to COVID-19 pandemic

by Kumbirai Nhongo

EXTRAORDINARY TIMES call for extraordinary measures and the SADC region is doing just that to combat the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

The priority for SADC Member States in their response to COVID-19 has focused on the health and wellbeing of the public and has involved efforts to strengthen the public health systems while implementing measures to curtail the spread of the virus, amid concerns that national medical facilities could be overwhelmed as the virus spreads.

As of 1 April, the SADC region had reported more than 1,780 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 56 recoveries, with 24 deaths attributed to the virus. These figures are rising steadily with increased testing of reported cases.

While most of the cases reported initially were returning residents or visitors, this may have been due to the strict testing that identified cases at airports and borders, but the virus is now spreading locally and the protective measures are essential.

The Africa regional office of the World Health Organization has said that sub-Saharan Africa still has a "narrowing" opportunity to curb the spread of the coronavirus, and urged African governments to invest their efforts into aggressively tracing all contacts of imported cases, while "preparing for a possible, broader expansion of the virus."

The regional response to this public health challenge has been resolute in southern Africa, with SADC Health Ministers holding an Extraordinary Meeting in March in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania to chart a coordinated response.

They decided to reconstitute the Technical Committee for Coordinating and Monitoring the Implementation of the SADC Protocol on Health, made up of senior public health officials from SADC Member States operating under expanded terms of reference that include strengthening the regional response to COVID-19 and other threats to public health.

The Health Ministers urged Member States to institute Peer Review Mechanisms to validate self-assessment reports on readiness, as concerns have been raised on the capacity of some SADC Member States to deliver healthcare services that adequately respond to such a threat.

The SADC Health Ministers proposed the suspension of traditional face-to-face meetings, recommending virtual options such as video conferencing and online meetings. This recommendation has since been adopted, with a number of bigger meetings and conferences being postponed.

The SADC Council of Ministers meeting on 18 March was held via video conference for the first time in the history of the regional community as Member States embraced innovative alternatives. (See pages 4-5)

COVID-19 a threat to SADC regional economy

by Kumbirai Nhongo

UNPRECEDENTED MEASURES such as nationwide lockdowns have been put in place by many SADC Member States during the month of April to restrict the movement of people and contain the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Most SADC Member States have declared a state of emergency or disaster, with some opting for a partial lockdown or a managed lockdown with restricted operations for mining and manufacturing in addition to food production and sale.

Most air travel has stopped in the region and most commercial flights are not operating except for occasional delivery of medical supplies and returning citizens. Some countries have closed their borders and placed restrictions on internal travel by road, except for essential cargo.

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirms that COVID-19 has had adverse effects on "the income of individuals and families, and the economies of communities and nations."

"We are in a shared struggle to protect both lives and livelihoods," the WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said in a global address.

The SADC Business Council, a regional association of private sector organisations, notes that such measures, though necessary, have had unintended consequences on the regional economy, particularly on intra-regional trade.

In a statement released after its online meeting on 1 April, the SADC Business Council noted the challenges businesses are facing in moving imports and exports, given the travel restrictions obtaining in some jurisdictions.

"Landlocked countries are failing to access ports, with truck drivers failing to pick and drop cargo because they do not have visas to travel to countries with port infrastructure," read the statement.

Following the Council of Ministers meeting held in March, SADC has since issued guidelines to manage the inter-state movement of goods, services and people during this period.

However, indications are that not all Member States have adopted these guidelines, resulting in bottlenecks in the regional supply chain.

The SADC Business Council notes that delays in the movement of cargo have led to increases in both storage and transport costs.

Apart from the challenges of intra-regional trade, SADC Member States face external risks associated with the slowdown of the economies of trading partners in the rest of Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas due to the negative effects of COVID-19 in those regions.

Information from the SADC Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade shows that the region is more exposed to exogenous shocks given its reliance on the production and export of unprocessed commodities.

Angola, the main petroleum producer in SADC, has had to revise its national budget figures downwards due to the sharp decline in oil prices, with COVID-19 contributing to reduced global demand.

Other commodities have not been spared, with diamonds, copper, nickel, cobalt, coal and platinum trading at reduced prices.

In countries where lockdowns have been effected, some agricultural markets have had to be closed, a situation that has af-

fectured farmers and impacted the livelihoods of those in downstream industries.

The SADC Secretariat notes that about 70 percent of the population within the region depends on agriculture for food, income and employment.

The tourism sector, which accounts for about eight percent of the Gross Domestic Product of the SADC region, has been among the worst affected following a slowdown in global travel.

Prime regional destinations in the Seychelles, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa are currently inaccessible due to lockdowns in the respective Member States.

The World Tourism Organisation estimates that at the global level of tourist arrivals will be down by between 20 and 30 percent in 2020 when compared with 2019, on account of COVID-19.

South Africa, the largest and most diverse economy in the region, is already in recession, with indications that it will contract further than the 0.2 percent decline projected by the central bank for this year.

The country has the highest number of coronavirus cases in the region, accounting for 71 percent of the total.

To manage the impact of COVID-19 on their respective economies, a number of SADC Member States have announced policy measures in mitigation.

These include tax concessions, temporary waivers on loan repayments, reduced interest rates, and social security measures for vulnerable communities.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo for example, the Central Bank of Congo announced a rate cut from 9 to 7.5 percent to reduce the cost of borrowing.

Similarly in Eswatini the government has reduced the price of fuel and suspended the increase of electricity tariffs for two months, among other measures aimed at cushioning businesses and consumers.

As of 10 April, Lesotho and the Comoros were the two remaining SADC Member States without any reported COVID-19 cases.

The virus has spread very fast through Europe and the United States, which has reported the most cases, while Asian countries that effectively contained the virus earlier this year are now starting to get back to work, notably in China, although travel remains restricted. sardc.net □

"Efforts to combat COVID-19 will only succeed if everyone plays their part"

THE SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax commended Member States for the "rigorous measures taken in response to this global pandemic."

Most SADC Member States have moved from readiness to response, and have implemented stringent measures to restrict the movement of people, encourage social distancing and promote sound hygiene standards in order to curb the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

In her video address to the SADC Council of Ministers, Dr Tax urged SADC citizens to abide by measures pronounced by regional leaders, adding that "efforts to combat COVID-19 will only succeed if everyone plays their part." □



SADC to review Protocol on Employment and Labour

THE SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour is to be reviewed in the context of changing global dynamics in the labour market.

SADC Ministers responsible for Employment and Labour approved the development of a new protocol at their annual meeting held in early March in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania.

According to a statement released soon after the meeting, the “new Protocol on Employment and Labour is expected to accelerate progress towards a harmonised and coordinated regional labour market that can deliver on the decent work agenda.”

The current Protocol on Employment and Labour adopted in August 2014 has been ratified by only one Member State, meaning that it is yet to enter into force.

The process of approval of a regional legal instrument requires, first, signing, and then ratification, a process that differs from country to country.

Labour migration action plan approved

MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE for Employment and Labour have approved the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan (2020-2025). The plan is premised on the notion that well-managed labour migration is mutually beneficial and can facilitate greater development and economic stability for all countries in the SADC region.

The ministers urged Member States to commit funds towards implementation of the plan, and commended the International Labour Organisation and the International Organisation for Migration for having mobilised financial resources for the plan. □

A protocol “enters into force” following ratification by two-thirds of the 16 SADC Member States, at least 11 countries. This advances the regional law from being a stated intention to actual application.

The Protocol on Employment and Labour will be reviewed to align its objectives to global targets and emerging issues such as decent work and social security.

A protocol that is acceptable to all Member States will make it easier for the employment and labour sector in the region to promote common interests through deeper cooperation among the various stakeholders.

The SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax said the revised Protocol will be “an essential tool to provide strategic direction on the employment and labour agenda in the SADC region.”

She said that, in addition to revising the protocol, a comprehensive policy framework is being developed to address decent work deficits the region.

“In order to put in place strategies and mechanisms for addressing decent work challenges for the region, in particular, employment creation, the Secretariat is coordinating the development of a comprehensive employment and labour policy framework.”

She said this is in addition to the key policy instruments that have been developed such as the Labour Migration Action Plan and the Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits.

“The instruments are crucial in facilitating greater labour migration which, in turn, promotes skills-sharing among Member States in support of industrialisation and regional integration.”

Dr Tax said that the policy development exercise is coinciding with the formulation of the Vision 2050 and the Revised Regional Indicative

Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

These two strategic documents are expected to be presented for approval at the 40th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled for August in Maputo, Mozambique.

On dispute prevention and resolution, the Ministers responsible for Employment and Labour tasked the Secretariat to develop draft Guidelines on Labour Dispute Prevention and Resolution in SADC and to report on progress at their next meeting.

Addressing dispute prevention and resolution is critical since industrial strikes and labour disputes are not conducive to sustainable investment and growth of enterprises in the region.

It is therefore important for all SADC Member States to strive towards strengthening multi-sectoral engagement and coordination involving all key sectors and actors to promote

full and productive employment.

The meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Employment and Labour and their social partners was convened to review progress in the implementation of various commitments to advance decent work in the region.

It also underscored the need for the SADC region to address the challenges and opportunities posed by the future of work, noting in particular the need to maximise the job creation potential of the ongoing technological transformation.

The Ministers called on Member States to promote job creation as one of the means to fully address poverty and inequality, and for concerted action needed in addressing the youth unemployment challenge. The meeting was held under the theme “Promoting Labour Market Stability and Harmonious Industrial Relations for Sustainable Development.” □

Women can improve Africa's economic growth but need to silence the guns

AS AFRICA dedicates the year 2020 to accelerating action towards ending wars, civil conflicts and gender-based violence there is emphasis on the role of women and girls as an integral part of the plan to silence the guns on the continent.

The African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Minata Cessouma, said there is need to strengthen the involvement of women and girls in prevention mechanisms, intervention for peace-building and the post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

She said contributions by women in peace initiatives cannot be limited to symbolic roles and deliberate efforts are needed to increase the involvement of women and girls in the peace and security agenda at the community, national, regional and continental levels.

The Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Vera Songwe, said the guns continue to silence women's voices in various ways, depriving women of human dignity on unprecedented levels.

“Women can help to improve Africa's economic growth exponentially and that growth can in turn help Africa's women as we seek to close the gender economic gap. We need to silence the guns now,” Songwe said. □

Embracing technology SADC holds first virtual meeting of Council

AS NEW technologies continue to impact on every aspect of human development, SADC held its first-ever virtual Council of Ministers meeting on 18 March, necessitated by the rapid spread of the coronavirus, commonly known as COVID-19.

The video conference followed the recommendations of the SADC Ministers of Health at their meeting on 9 March, at which they proposed the use of technology to facilitate meeting without the risk of spreading the virus.

This also followed the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020.

Coordinated from Dar es Salaam in the United Republic of Tanzania, the SADC Council of Ministers meeting was held using Video Conferencing Technology (VCT).

This enabled government ministers from all but three of the 16 Member States to link up via VCT from their capitals to deliberate on a range of issues, including progress towards implementation of priority regional initiatives as well as approval of the budget to fund identified action plans.

The equipment was tested prior to the day of the meeting and this involved technology experts from the SADC Secretariat, the host country and other Member

States, ensuring that all had the right equipment in good working order, including translation devices.

Most participants had power backup on standby as part of their contingency plans in the event of electricity load-shedding, an indication of their determination to ensure that the virtual meeting could proceed without interruption, and the Council meeting went ahead as scheduled.

The official opening ceremony took place in Dar es Salaam and was attended by Tanzanian officials and representatives of the SADC Secretariat, including translators.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Tanzanian Prime Minister, Prof. Kassim Majaliwa, said the historic convening of the virtual meeting was an indication that the region is embracing technology to promote sustainable development.

"The fact that this meeting is being conducted online is sufficient proof that there is no barrier or disaster that will discourage us from overseeing the development of our region and our people. We believe that the current challenges will pass and will leave us united," Prof. Majaliwa said.

The Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi, who chaired



the Council of Ministers meeting, thanked the ICT experts from the SADC Secretariat and Member States for their technical support.

"Let me take this opportunity to thank the SADC Secretariat and the expert teams from all SADC countries for the willingness and quickness they have shown to facilitate the smooth running of the meeting," Prof. Kabudi said.

"The cooperation we have shown in preparation for this conference has enabled us not only to take precautionary measures and protect ourselves from infection, but to strengthen our readiness to deal with the outbreak of the disease while continuing with the activities of the Community as usual."

The Council chairperson called upon "fellow ministers to continue collaborating, exchanging information and expertise to keep the Community strong during this period and to ensure that the economic, trade, investment, and financial markets in our Community do not get affected by fear of an outbreak."

Prior to the video-conference, sceptics had drawn attention to the different levels of technological advancement in the 16 Member States of the

regional organisation, predicting that the meeting may not proceed smoothly.

SADC had introduced a Paperless Meeting Policy effective from 2016. However, progress in implementation of that directive was slow, a development sceptics saw as the likely fate for the Council of Ministers video-conference meeting in March.

However, the response from Member States was overwhelming and the meeting was hailed as a success.

"Swift response by SADC Member States to the video-conference meeting is commendable, and is a demonstration of SADC's readiness to manage emergencies and disasters," the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, said after the meeting.

VCT ensures that audio and visuals are transmitted to different locations at the same time, enabling people in different places to interact and deliberate on matters without having to be physically in the same location.

Security of the VCT is obviously an issue of concern for an organisation such as SADC, as security sensitive matters should ideally be discussed in face-to-face meetings. □



Prof. Kassim Majaliwa



Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi



Spotlight on Vision 2050, industrialization in 2020

FINALISATION OF the process of developing a 30-year regional development plan and fast-tracking a programme to attain rapid industrial development will be among the top priorities for southern Africa during 2020.

This emerged from the first video-conference meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers chaired by the United Republic of Tanzania on 18 March.

Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, the Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Prof. Palamagamba Kabudi, said that since 2020 marks the final year for implementation of the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020, it is important for the region to devote greater attention to formulation of the proposed SADC Vision 2050 and the new RISDP 2020-2030.

"As we prepare the Vision 2050 and the Strategic Plan for the implementation of the Vision goals, we need a new strategic perspective that will provide guidance for our continued benefit and integration," Prof. Kabudi said.

"Additionally, we need a good strategic understanding of the implementation and analysis of the successes of past initiatives and the shortcomings that have arisen."

The SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, said that work is proceeding well to complete the SADC Vision 2050 and the RISDP 2020-2030.

"I am confident that Member States will attach the needed importance to this critical exercise and provide the needed inputs, as we pro-

ceed with the formulation," Dr Tax said.

She noted that, notwithstanding the challenges posed to the consultative process by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat is committed to ensuring that the process remains on course.

Most governments in the SADC region have instituted a statement of emergency or disaster, and lockdowns as part of efforts to contain the spread of the virus which was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation in March.

The region has been seized with the process of reviewing the results of the RISDP 2015-2020 and formulating a new one as well as the long-term Vision 2050 since the decision by the Council of Ministers meeting in August 2018 to task the SADC Secretariat to review progress in implementation.

The review is intended to inform the process of recal-

ibrating cooperation and the regional integration strategy for SADC when the current development plan ends in 2020.

As part of that process, SADC has convened a number of consultative meetings, including the Strategic Ministerial Retreat on the "SADC We Want" held in Eswatini, Eswatini in March 2017.

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

The ongoing consultative process 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 the African Union's

Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The process is informed by the fact that there is need to maximise synergies in the implementation of the two pillars of SADC activities – political and security cooperation as identified in the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO II), and developmental integration as covered by the RISDP.

SIPO is a strategic document that establishes SADC's institutional framework for policy coordination and implementation in politics, defence and security cooperation.

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. □

40 years of regional development

SADC PAYS tribute to its heritage and its founders this year as the regional organisation commemorates 40 years since its formation.

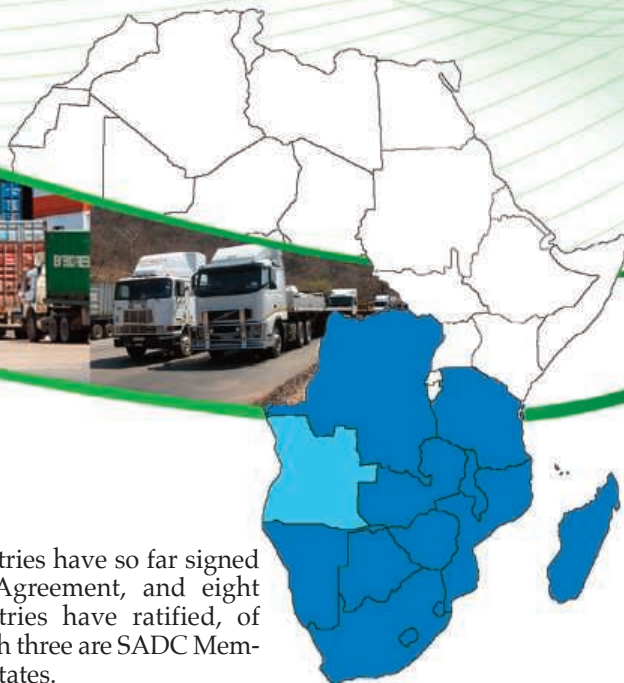
The SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, said the year 2020 is significant and provides an opportunity for the region to pay tribute to the Founding Leaders who established the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980 becoming a full regional community in 1992.

SADCC was launched on 1 April 1980 in Lusaka, Zambia by the leaders or representatives of nine independent countries – Angola,

Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland (now Eswatini), Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which was preparing for independence on 18 April.

"We owe a great deal to our founders who had the foresight of a better region. We might have lost the majority of them, may their souls rest in peace, but their legacy lives on," Dr Tax said.

"It is, therefore, befitting that while the major commemorations will be during the August 2020 Summit, Member States should explore ways of recognising and celebrating the 'ruby' anniversary of our SADCC on 1 April 2020." □



SADC aligns Free Trade Area with continental initiatives

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS has been made by SADC to align its enlarged free market with continental initiatives to ensure smooth and effective implementation, the Executive Secretary reported in March to the SADC Council of Ministers.

SADC launched its Free Trade Area (FTA) in August 2008, and most of the 16 SADC Member States are part of the FTA, with the exception of Angola, Union of Comoros and Mauritius.

In June 2015, SADC joined forces with two other regional economic communities – the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC) to establish an integrated market comprising 27 countries in eastern and southern Africa.

Commonly known as the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), the enlarged COMESA-EAC-SADC market has a combined population of some 700 million people and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about US\$1.4 trillion.

In May 2019, SADC joined the rest of Africa to launch the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which covers 54 countries on the continent who have signed the agreement, while 27 of those who signed have now ratified, and only Eritrea is yet to sign.

These initiatives are aimed at promoting the free movement of goods, services

and people across the region and the continent, as well as allowing member states to harmonize regional trade policies to promote competition and increased trade.

An integrated market will help to resolve some of the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration process.

Most countries in Africa belong to more than one regional economic community, a situation that is not ideal and could hinder the progress of integration in Africa.

Therefore, addressing the issues of overlapping membership has the capacity to accelerate the pace of integration in Africa and boost intra-regional trade across the continent.

According to the African Union (AU), the AfCFTA is expected to increase African intra-regional trade when fully operational, from the present 10 percent to about 40 percent of total trade on the continent.

Dr Tax said SADC is committed to making sure that these continental initiatives are a success as the region stands to benefit from an integrated market in Africa.

"The Secretariat continues to work with the three remaining Member States to be part of the SADC FTA, as we align the SADC FTA to the Tripartite and continental initiatives," she said.

"With regard to the Tripartite FTA, a total of 22

countries have so far signed the Agreement, and eight countries have ratified, of which three are SADC Member States.

"At the continental level, SADC now has five Member States that have ratified and/or acceded to the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement."

The process of approval of a continental legal instrument requires, first, signing, and then ratification, a process that differs from country to country.

The AfCFTA Agreement "enters into force" following ratification by at least 35 AU Member States. This advances the continental agreement from being a stated intention to actual application. Those member states that join after a protocol has entered into force are said to "accede" to the protocol.

Dr Tax urged SADC Member States to expeditiously ratify these important instruments that will facilitate the acceleration of regional and continental integration.

She said "time is running out" and countries make sure that the Tripartite FTA is a reality as it will lay the foundation for the smooth and effective operation of the continental FTA.

"While we proceed with the Continental FTA, we should not lose sight of the Tripartite FTA. The Tripartite FTA is crucial to the realisation of the Continental FTA," she said.

The African Union has agreed on a roadmap towards the successful operationalization of the AfCFTA.

These steps include the finalization of the Tripartite FTA, and then its consolidation with other regional FTAs.

The AfCFTA thus evolves from the existing FTAs in sub-regional economic blocs, creating a combined market of the entire continent, incorporating a population of more than one billion people and a combined GDP of more than US\$3.4 trillion.

The creation of an integrated market in Africa is one of the initiatives to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid that has seen African countries trade more with the outside world than with each other.

The AfCFTA is a flagship initiative under *Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want*, a continental vision adopted by the AU in 2013.

The strategic framework seeks to accelerate the implementation of continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development such as the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, signed in 1991 and entered into force in 1994, and the Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa. □

Transmission lines key to regional energy development ...as Malawi prepares to join regional grid

CONSTRUCTION OF a new power transmission line linking Malawi and Mozambique is expected to improve connectivity and electricity trading in southern Africa.

Ultimately, the power line commonly known as the Malawi-Mozambique Transmission Interconnector Project will link Malawi to the regional energy grid.

Currently, all power utilities in mainland SADC, with the exception of Angola, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania, are interconnected through the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), allowing them to sell electricity to one another through a competitive market.

The island states of the Union of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles are not yet members of SAPP – a regional body that coordinates the planning, generation, transmission and marketing of electricity in southern Africa on behalf of member state utilities.

According to the SADC Secretariat, the SAPP competitive electricity market has increased from less than 1 percent in 2012 to 32 percent in December 2018, proving to be a viable platform for power utilities to share electricity loads and help manage surpluses and deficits within the region.

Speaking at the SADC Council of Ministers meeting held in March, the SADC Executive Secretary Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax said a financial agreement had been reached to begin construction of the Malawi-Mozambique

Transmission Interconnector Project.

“Notable achievements were recorded in the implementation of the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan. In particular, in the energy sector, these achievements include the Malawi-Mozambique Transmission Interconnector Project that reached financial closure in September 2019, with financing from the World Bank, KfW and the Government of Norway,” she said.

Dr Tax said the construction phase of the project is planned to commence in April 2020, with commissioning of the project expected by 2022.

“Upon commissioning, Malawi will be able to access the SAPP grid, and trade

electricity with other SADC Member States,” she said.

This will mean that any new generation capacity installed in Malawi will now be accessible to the nine other members of SAPP namely Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Previously, such surplus energy in Malawi was not accessible to the rest of the region.

The proposed Malawi-Mozambique Transmission Interconnector Project will thus allow Malawi to have access to the regional market through Mozambique’s interconnected grid with Zimbabwe (Songo-Bindura) and South Africa (Songo-Apollo).

In this regard, construction of new transmission lines is critical to promote sustainable development in the region.

Furthermore, interconnection creates new corridors that can support industrial development and improve energy security in other parts of the region without being stifled by overloads on the existing transmission lines.

The Malawi-Mozambique Transmission Interconnector Project entails the construction of a 220 kilovolt transmission line joining Matambo Substation in Mozambique to the proposed Phombeya substation in Malawi.

A 220km overhead transmission line and optical fibre ground wire from Matambo sub-station in Mozambique to Phombeya sub-station in Malawi will be built. □

Namibia, Angola to develop hydroelectric dam

ANGOLA AND Namibia have signed a bilateral agreement for the construction of a cross-border hydroelectric dam.

Angolan Minister of Energy and Water, João Borges said the agreement will enable the launch of a public tender for the selection of a construction firm for the project, in line with the proposed timeline.

“If we stick to the schedule of the agreement, we can comply with the deadlines, because there is a great interest in this bi-national project,” he said.

The proposed Baynes hydroelectric dam will be located on the Cunene River on the border between Angola and Namibia.

Construction of the US\$1.2 billion hydroelectric dam is set to begin in 2021, with completion expected by 2025.

According to the agreement, the hydroelectric plant is set to produce 600 Megawatts of electricity, and will be shared equally between the two countries.

Construction of the hydroelectric dam by Angola and Namibia will go a long way in promoting the use and uptake of renewable energy sources in the SADC region.

The aim for SADC is to achieve a renewable energy mix in the regional grid of at least 32 percent by 2020 and 35 percent by 2030.

Currently, the regional energy mix is dominated by coal, which contributes more than 70 percent.

This is despite the fact that SADC has the potential to become a “gold mine” for renewable energy due to the abundant hydro, solar and wind resources that are now hugely sought after by international investors in their quest for clean energy. □



What they said at launch of SADCC, 40 years ago

by Mukundi Mutasa

THE SOUTHERN African Development Coordination Conference was officially launched at the Mulungushi Conference Centre in Lusaka, Zambia on 1 April 1980.

On that day, the leaders of the five Frontline States (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia) were joined by the leaders of four other independent countries in Southern Africa (Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland [now Eswatini] and the newly liberated Zimbabwe) in appending their signatures to the Lusaka Declaration.

They were inspired by a common vision, said Seretse Khama, the founding President of Botswana, who chaired the meeting.

"With mutual trust and the common vision of a brighter future which brought us here today, we shall not fail," he said.

This was reinforced by President Samora Machel of Mozambique, who referred to the common denominator that bound the majority-ruled countries of southern Africa, leading to the formation of the group.

As one of the speakers on the day, President Machel talked of "our common identity and common determination in the fight for liberation of our region and our continent from colonialism, from racism, from oppression, dependency and exploitation."

When SADCC was formed, the precursor to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), its core objective was economic development and the reduction of economic dependence of the Member States on then apartheid South Africa, which was impeding development through economic and military destabilization of the region.

"We all know that our economies are to a very large extent, albeit to varying degrees, dependent on the economy of South Africa," President Khama told his compatriots.

"What we seek is the ability to exercise some degree of choice, which insures us against domination by one powerful partner," he added.

This was underscored in the Lusaka Declaration, aptly titled *Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation*, where the nine founding Member States committed that "future development must aim at the reduction of economic dependence not only on the Republic of South Africa, but

also on any single external State or group of States."

The dependence on South Africa was largely visible in the areas of transport and communication, with the country being a major exporter of goods and services, and importer of goods and cheap labour.

According to Khama, southern African countries, therefore, wanted to have a wider choice of transportation routes, markets, sources of energy, and investment partners.

It was inconceivable that Southern Africa's majority-ruled countries would oil the economic wheels of the apartheid regime by being dependent on its economy, yet they deeply despised South Africa's racial segregation policies.

President Machel was even more emphatic in his assertion that SADCC Member States would succeed in reducing dependence on South Africa only through cooperation.

"To increase our cooperation among States of the region signifies reducing dependency on South Africa and, consequently, on imperialism," he said.

President Kaunda advised his peers that there was a lot at stake and this was dependent on the success of the newly formed SADCC, particularly as the economic

emancipation of the countries attending the summit would have "an epoch-making impact within South Africa, and deal a mortal blow to the policy of apartheid."

"Our success is important to the people of South Africa and, therefore, to the liberation of the entire continent," he added.

While the objective of launching SADCC was premised on achieving economic emancipation, it did not mean that its Member States were abandoning their political liberation desires that had shaped the approach of the Frontline States.

Rather, economic emancipation was a continuation of the struggle, with political liberation providing a solid foundation for economic prosperity.

Presidents Khama and Machel both stressed that the political struggle would continue until Namibia and South Africa were fully liberated.

President Khama said the struggle would continue "until all of us in the region can freely enjoy all the rights to which we are entitled and are able to determine our future and wellbeing."

"Our task is not yet complete," President Machel emphasised, adding that "political struggle and support of the Frontline States must continue."

Lessons that the Frontline States had learnt in their quest for political freedom in Southern Africa would also inform progress in SADCC.

"I have no doubt that we are equally capable of working together for the economic and social advancement of our peoples in the same way as we have done in the struggle for political freedom," President Khama said.

Southern Africa: Toward Economic Liberation

A Declaration by the Governments of Independent States of Southern Africa made at Lusaka on the 1st April 1980



On 1st April 1980 the leaders and representatives of the independent states of Southern Africa came together in Lusaka. At this historic summit meeting they signed the Declaration *Southern Africa: Toward Economic Liberation*. This Declaration commits the countries of the region to work harmoniously to integrate their economies and gradually to reduce their dependence, particularly, but not only, on the Republic of South Africa. Accelerated economic development and regional self-reliance are the twin objectives of the Declaration. The only guarantee for the success of this initiative is the efforts of the people and the governments of the region. The Declaration also contains an appeal for external cooperation and international support. Southern African development coordination "will be achieved more rapidly and will be more effective if development takes place within the context of global cooperation".

Amon J. Nsekela
High Commissioner for Tanzania
Chairman, SADC Steering Committee
June 1980



ever, the task is ours and we must think of all possible ways of tackling it."

The Lusaka Summit was also attended by Robert Mugabe who had won the pre-independence elections and would soon be sworn in as the first Prime Minister of independent Zimbabwe, and by Sam Nujoma, the president of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), who received guarantees of support from the Summit

for the liberation of Namibia, which at that time was occupied by South Africa, although formally under UN mandate.

In his commitment of support to SWAPO, President Kaunda pledged that "time and our own determination to give SWAPO every support, favour victory for the oppressed."

President Khama's concluding statement during the Mulungushi Summit was the embodiment of the foundation upon which SADCC was built.

"We move forward in unity, or we perish," he said.

The host, President Kaunda, echoed the same sentiment when he said unity should not be limited to political liberation alone.

"African unity must be given economic substance, out of which the socio-cultural fabric will grow so strong that our continent will no longer be vulnerable."

This informed the vision of SADC, the successor to SADCC, that of "a common future within a regional community that will ensure economic wellbeing, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the peoples of Southern Africa."

The Mulungushi Summit, held on 1-2 April 1980, was a culmination of events, in-



cluding the inaugural Southern African Development Coordination Conference convened by the five Frontline States on 3-4 July 1979 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, which decided that "economic liberation could not be achieved without the involvement of the other majority-ruled states of Southern Africa."

When SADCC was formed, it had a membership of the nine countries that signed the Lusaka Declaration in 1980. Today, the membership of SADC has expanded to 16 countries.

The SADC Member States are -- Angola, Botswana, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**Mukundi Mutasa writes in his personal capacity* □



The message was equally emphatic from the charismatic Machel.

"It is very important that the experience of unity and cohesion of the Frontline States in the political liberation struggle of the people should also be extended to other majority-ruled States and governments in Southern Africa, in economic liberation," he said.

While obviously beaming with pride for the successes on the political front, which included the imminent achievement of majority rule in Zimbabwe, President Khama acknowledged that economic liberation would not be easy.

"It must be accepted that this will no doubt be a more difficult task than the political one," Khama warned. However, he stated bluntly that it was incumbent upon the peoples of southern Africa to achieve economic freedom.

It would be "over-optimistic to hope for easy and quick successes," he said. "How-



From left, Frederick Chiluba, President of Zambia, Presidents Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, Sam Nujoma of Namibia, Ketumile Masire of Botswana, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania; as well as top Ministers from Angola, Swaziland, Malawi and Lesotho, including Angola's Prime Minister Franca Van-Dunem *The Namibian, Tuesday Aug 18, 1992*

"Among the good, but generally unreported things of Africa, is the Southern African Development Community, SADC"

Julius Nyerere, 1996



"... after their liberation, Namibia and South Africa joined the nine countries which founded the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980, and out of which the community grew. Mauritius has very recently been the latest country to join the community. From the beginning, the objectives and the commitment has been that of active and deliberate movement towards cooperation and unity among its members.

"During its twelve years of existence (1980-1992), the coordination conference gave greatest priority to the building up of a sub-regional infrastructure, so that all its members become linked together by road, railways, telecommunications, civil aviation, and a shared electricity grid. Much remains to be done, but it is now possible to drive from Tanzania to Angola or Namibia, as well as to South Africa. I am not saying it will always be comfortable, or quick, but it can be done, whereas previously, it was virtually impossible.

"Also, despite the destructions of war in the two countries, it is now, or soon will be, possible to telephone from Maputo in Mozambique to Luanda in Angola without passing through Portugal. There were no such links before SADC. The railway

network leaves many great areas unconnected by rail but when a secure peace had been established in Angola, so that the Benguela railway can be repaired along its length, each of eleven mainland countries will be connected by rail to all others, however, devious the route at present.

"The improved communications links facilitate the planned expansion of intra-SADC trade. There has already been considerable growth in this, although up to now, this growth has taken place more especially among the several bilateral or trilateral free trade sub-groupings which exist, and which is intended gradually to link into a Southern Africa community-wide group, and then develop into a common market. Also, cooperation on agricultural research is fast being organized.

"I am told that some new seeds, suitable for ecological conditions of the community have been developed and spread in member states, under the auspices of the coordination conference and, lately, of the community. This scientific cooperation is just a part of the total ongoing movement towards the organization of food security, on a Southern African basis." □

Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, Founding Chairman of the South Centre, at a conference in New Delhi, India on *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, February 1996



SADC, SARDC partner to document SADC@40

THE SOUTHERN African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) will partner SADC to document the road that SADC has travelled as it commemorates its 40th anniversary this year.

SARDC is an independent regional knowledge resource centre

established in 1985 to strengthen regional policy perspectives and track implementation on a range of issues in southern Africa, and is the publisher of this publication, *Southern Africa Today/SADC Today*.

Based on SADC documents and SARDC's extensive library of the period, an illustrated history of SADC will be presented with key achievements and milestones since the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was formed in 1980 as a loose alliance of nine majority-ruled States in southern Africa, with their declaration,

Southern Africa: Toward Economic Liberation.

The SADCC was transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992, through the Treaty and Declaration signed by the Heads of State and Government of 10 Member States meeting at Summit in Windhoek, capital city of Namibia, whose independence they had supported until it was achieved in 1990.

In her remarks at a meeting with the SARDC management in Harare, Zimbabwe earlier this year, the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, commended SARDC for its long-standing collaboration with SADC in enhancing

knowledge about the region, and for partnering with the SADC Secretariat to document its progress toward regional integration.

"SARDC continues to produce analytical and well-researched articles and publications, enabling SADC citizens and other stakeholders to have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the implementation of SADC's regional developments, we commend you," she said.

Dr. Tax expressed her commitment to ensuring the successful completion of the publication to enable future generations to learn and appreciate the collective efforts and achievements that SADC has made in the last four decades.

The SARDC Executive Director, Munetsi Madakufamba said his organisation appreciates the strong partnership with SADC and is well prepared to undertake the research and document the road that SADC has travelled from inception through its 40th anniversary.

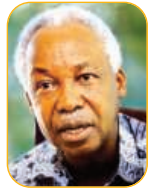
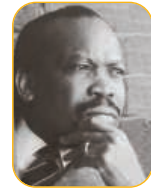
Madakufamba said SADC has made significant achievements in the last 40 years, including the collaborative regional efforts that supported the eventual independence of Namibia and the end of the apartheid system in South Africa.

In addition to the publication which will be accessible in print and online, SADC will organize a number of activities with the aim of raising awareness about its 40 years of development and regional integration agenda.

These activities will include, but not limited to, public lectures, private sector engagement, video production and coordinated awareness-raising through social media activities.

adapted from sadc.int □





... "grateful to the men and women who sacrificed their lives for liberation"

Southern Africa Liberation Day

23 March

THE SADC region will forever remain grateful to "the men and women who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of our region, as well as the spirit of togetherness that existed among Member States," the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax said in her message to mark the day.

"Without the commitment and selflessness of the men and women who sacrificed their lives, we would never have achieved the political liberation of our region," she said.

"We owe a great deal to our Founders, we might have lost the majority of them, unfortunately, but their legacy lives on, may their souls rest in eternal peace.

"We express our gratitude to the international community for their support to our struggle for freedom."

She urged future generations to continue to hold and safeguard the ideals of the Founders of SADC who included the visionary leaders of the first three Frontline States – Seretse Khama, Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, who were the founding Presidents of Botswana, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, respectively.

They delayed the economic development of their countries to ensure that the rest of the region achieved political independence.

"We must endeavour to ensure that our unique liberation history is not forgotten. To achieve this, it is important for our Member States to, among others, incorporate the Southern African liberation history into the school curriculum, so that our youth and the future generations appreciate the sacrifices of that generation of

young men and women who liberated us," Dr Tax said.

"While we celebrate our liberation, we must collectively work to transform our economies and liberate our people from the bondage of poverty.

Cassinga to Cuito Cuanavale and Cape Town

THE SMALL town of Cuito Cuanavale in the province of Cuando Cubango in southern Angola was the epicentre of one the fiercest conventional battles in Africa, but it signalled the coming end of the apartheid system in Namibia and South Africa -- and is commemorated as the last battle for the liberation of southern Africa.

From November 1987 to March 1988, thousands of combatants from the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) supported by the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the Cuban Revolutionary Forces fought to defend Angola against military incursions by the apartheid regime of South Africa.

The South African military had stretched too far in defence of their apartheid system of racial segregation, when they conducted raids and attacks further into Angola against the well-trained and armed Angolan army and SWAPO liberation fighters, strengthened by Cuban military forces, some of whom lost their lives and are considered heroes in Africa due to their support for liberation.

After this battle, South Africa began to retreat from its military adventures in the region, and from apartheid. Two years later, Namibia celebrated Independence, and Nelson

"We must all commit to our shared vision of a common future that will ensure economic wellbeing, improvement of the standard of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security of our people." □

Mandela was released from prison in South Africa.

The defeat of the South African apartheid forces at Cuito Cuanavale led to negotiations involving the United Nations, Angola, Namibia, Cuba and South Africa, among others, eventually resulting in South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia, which returned to UN mandate for a transitional period leading to elections for a Constituent Assembly in 1989 and Independence on 21 March 1990. This was followed by democratic elections in South Africa four years later, on 27 April 1994.

In addition to establishing 23 March as the Southern Africa Liberation Day, the 38th



SADC Summit hosted by Namibia in 2018 approved the establishment of a regional working group of curriculum experts to determine the requirements for teaching Southern African Liberation History and its inclusion in the school syllabus of SADC Member States.

SADC leaders also put in place a mechanism to honour the Founders of SADC. □

"criminal in legal terms and savage in moral terms"

Attack on Cassinga, 4 May 1978

AMONG THE atrocities was the raid by South African apartheid forces on a camp for Namibian refugees at Cassinga in Huila Province of Angola on 4 May 1978 -- one of the largest airborne operations by the South African Defence Force which dropped almost 400 paratroopers near the town, bombing camps and bases nearby, followed by a ground attack.

More than 600 Namibians were killed including men, women and children, and hundreds more were injured. A UN mission that visited Cassinga described the attack as "criminal in legal terms and savage in moral terms".

4 May is Cassinga Day in Namibia, a public holiday to reflect on those who gave their lives for freedom and independence. □



“We have come of age”, says Geingob

PRESIDENT HAGE Geingob has reminded Namibians of the progress made by the country since independence in 1990 and the need to cherish the national, regional and international support that made it all possible.

“We have matured in our Constitutional Democracy; we are stronger, more resilient and determined to prevail in this second phase of our struggle for economic emancipation. Indeed, we have come of age,” he said as he took the oath of office for his second term.

“Namibia today and Namibia at independence are miles apart.”

Geingob, the third president of the republic, was speaking on the occasion of the 30th independence celebrations for Namibia on 21 March, which was also his inauguration day for a second five-year term.

Geingob highlighted some of the improvements realised in Namibia since independence including a 30 percent increase in the number of school-going children; a transformed and inclusive national health system catering for all Namibians; and a 45 percent increase in the tarred road network in the country.

His statement built on his first inauguration speech in 2015, when he famously remarked, “No Namibian must feel left out.”

The country’s independence was born out of a protracted struggle for liberation by Namibians including a war

that drew the support of independent countries in Africa and elsewhere.

“Namibia is a Child of International Solidarity, friend to all and enemy to none,” said Geingob in 2015, in a speech reminiscent of a history lesson where he detailed the support that Namibia received from the international community towards the fight for emancipation.

He echoed the sentiments of the founding President Sam Nujoma, who said in his inauguration speech at independence in 1990, that Namibia’s independence was “a welcome and laudable culmination of many years of consistent support for our cause.”

The fight for self-determination in Namibia has been continuous since the colonial invasions more than a century ago and the recent decisive phase was a result of the determination of young Namibian men and women who took up arms, led by the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) which from 1966 fought physically against South African occupation after global mobilization through the United Nations from 1946.

The realization of independence in 1990 was a tribute to the heroism and tenacity of Namibians, with support from their friends and supporters in southern Africa and beyond.

The fight for independence ended after the Battle at Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola from August 1987 to March 1988, when the joint forces of



President Hage Geingob sworn in for second term

Angola, Cuba and SWAPO fought against the invading army of apartheid South Africa.

This resulted in an internationally negotiated settlement under which Cuban troops withdrew from Angola in exchange for the withdrawal of the South African military from Angola and Namibia. United Nations-supervised elections followed on 7-11 November 1989, which were won by SWAPO with 57.33 percent of the total ballots cast.

This marked the end of apartheid rule in Namibia (1990) and soon also in South Africa (1994), and thus a return to freedom for the whole of southern Africa.

That started a journey that has seen Namibia develop as an independent country under the leadership of SWAPO guided by three leaders in 30 years – HE Sam Nujoma who, as SWAPO leader, served as the founding President from 1990 including the period of establishing the Constitution, followed by two terms of direct election as President from 1995 to 2004; HE Hifikepunye Pohamba from 2005 to 2014; and the incumbent HE Hage Geingob who took office in 2015 and has just commenced his second term.

The advance towards gender equality is acknowledged to be among the country’s

major achievements since independence, and Namibia now counts among countries globally that have witnessed a significant increase in the number of women parliamentarians.

According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) rankings, Namibia is number 15 out of 179 parliaments in the world in the representation of women in parliament, coming third on the African continent only to Rwanda and South Africa.

Following the elections held in November 2019, women account for 43 percent of parliamentarians in the National Assembly and 19 percent in the National Council.

This is mainly due to a quota system adopted by the majority SWAPO Party. The party is leading a quiet gender revolution under which it has committed to filling half of its seats in parliament with women and half with men.

In keeping with the policy of striving for gender equality, Geingob appointed nine women to a 24-member cabinet announced on 22 March, including some top positions, and more than half of the deputy ministers are women.

The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister are both women, as are the ministers responsible for justice; industrialisation and trade; and education. sardc.net □

Malawi to hold presidential re-run in July

THE MALAWI Electoral Commission has set 2 July as the date for the re-run of the presidential election.

This follows a ruling by the High Court of Malawi, which declared the 21 May 2019 elections null and void.

In a judgement handed down on 3 February 2020, the High Court of Malawi cited widespread irregularities in the conduct of the elections as the reason for declaring the outcome of the polls as null and void.

Some of the irregularities included failure by the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) to adhere to statutory requirements on handling tally sheets and log books, delegation of statutory powers belonging to MEC commissioners to the chief elections officer and accepting tally sheets that had been altered.

The incumbent President, Peter Mutharika challenged the decision of the court without success.

Mutharika had emerged victorious in the 2019 poll with 38.57 percent, defeating a strong field of six other presidential candidates.

He narrowly defeated Lazarus Chakwera of Malawi Congress Party (MCP) who garnered 35.42 percent, and former Vice President Saulos Chilima who broke away from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 2018 to form his own party, the

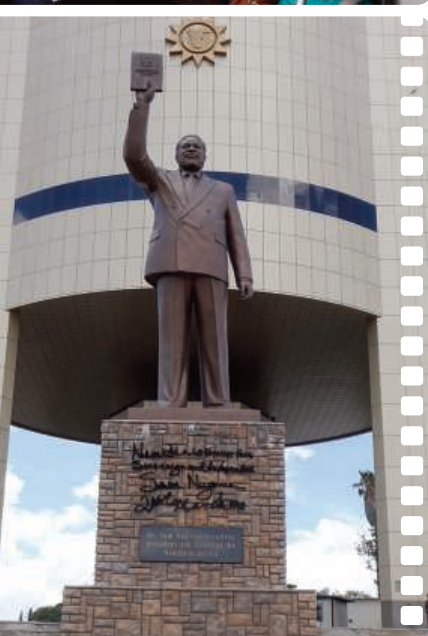
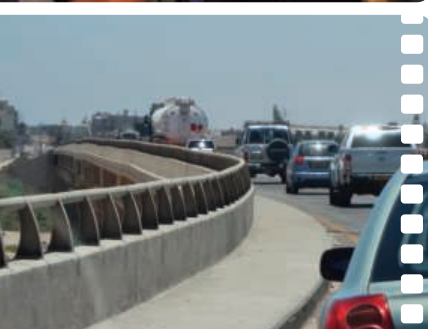
United Transformation Movement (UTM), and managed to get 20.24 percent.

Chakwera and Chilima then approached the court for an order to overturn the outcome of the presidential poll which was eventually granted in their favour.

MEC Commissioner, Moffat Banda said preparation for the re-run are going smoothly. However, he said the commission is also monitoring the trends of the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected daily activities worldwide.

"We are prepared to hold the election on July 2 and this is why we continue to prepare but the coronavirus is the only threat," he said.

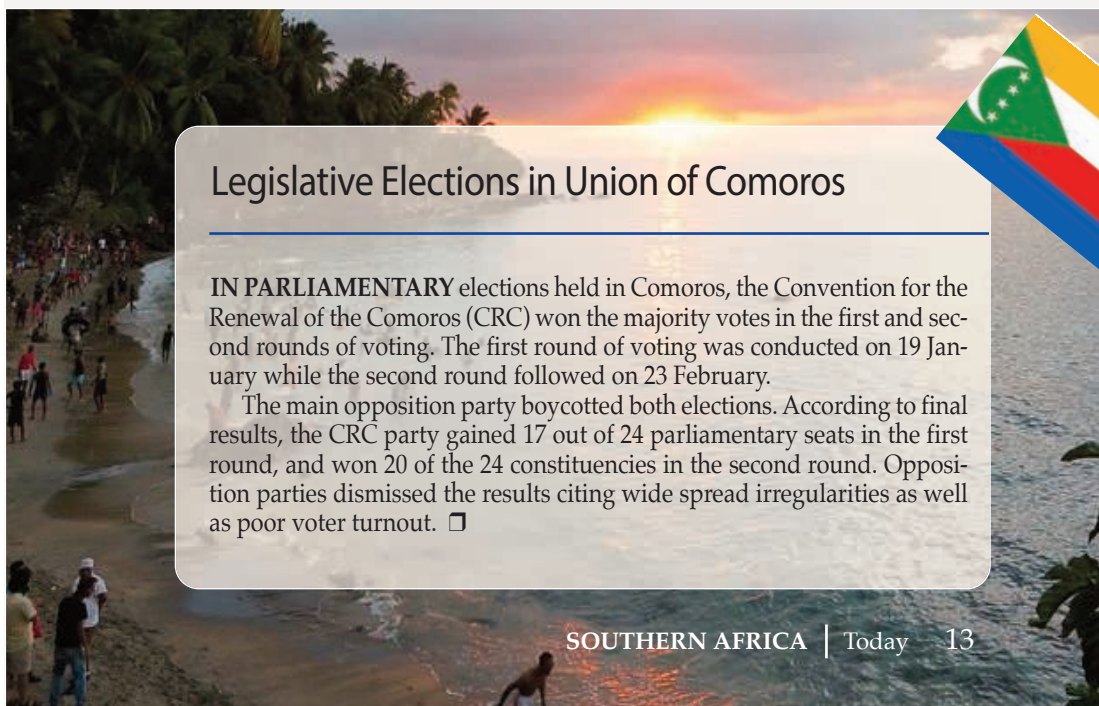
Under the Malawian Constitution, the president is directly elected using the majority electoral system under which the candidate with the highest number of votes is declared the winner, even if they scored less than 50 percent of the valid votes cast. □



Legislative Elections in Union of Comoros

IN PARLIAMENTARY elections held in Comoros, the Convention for the Renewal of the Comoros (CRC) won the majority votes in the first and second rounds of voting. The first round of voting was conducted on 19 January while the second round followed on 23 February.

The main opposition party boycotted both elections. According to final results, the CRC party gained 17 out of 24 parliamentary seats in the first round, and won 20 of the 24 constituencies in the second round. Opposition parties dismissed the results citing wide spread irregularities as well as poor voter turnout. □



Relief as Zambezi River shows increased flow

by Egline Tauya

THE SECOND half of the rainy season 2019/20 has brought relief to most parts of southern Africa, with increased water flows recorded in the major gauging stations along the Zambezi River.

A gauging station is a facility used to take measurements of data on terrestrial bodies of water for planning purposes.

According to the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA), the Victoria Falls – one of the key stations on the Zambezi River – recorded flows of 4,289 cubic metres per second on 31 March. Last year on the same date the recorded flow was 816 cubic metres per second.

The flows this year are 54 percent above the recorded long-term average flow of 2,522 cubic metres per second for this station.

The increased water flow at Victoria Falls is the highest since 1958 when the flow reached 10,000 cubic metres per second during the construction of the Kariba Dam.

This increase is therefore contrary to some media reports which had indicated that the Victoria Falls, located between Zambia and Zimbabwe, was in danger of drying up as the river levels dropped.

Downstream of Victoria Falls, the level of Kariba Lake has continued rising steadily, recording 478.2 metres on 6 April, although slightly lower than last year's level on the same date.

This is about three metres above the minimum operating level for power generation at Kariba power station.

The Victoria Falls is one of the world's natural wonders, and an improvement in water

flow is a big boost for the tourism sector, including domestic tourism, as it brings an extra attraction for visitors to the falls to watch the thundering wall of falling water at full length.

The constant spray from the waterfall supports a dense woodland vegetation known as the Victoria Falls Rainforest. This flora, in turn, supports a varied diversity of insects, amphibians, birds and mammals. According to a forecast by ZRA, the water flows at Victoria Falls are likely to increase in a second peak period expected in April.

The increased flows are a result of intense run-off from the high rainfall received at the source of the Zambezi River in the Chavuma area of northwestern Zambia close to the border with Angola.

The Chavuma Gauging Station recorded an increase of more than 500 percent from the 2019 flows.

The flow on 6 April for example, was recorded at 5,825 cubic metres per second while the flow observed on the same date last year was only 695 cubic metres per second.

The ZRA predicts that Chavuma is still to reach its peak, similar to the forecast for the Victoria Falls.

The Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum had predicted normal to above-normal rains between January and March 2020 in most of Angola, and northern and western parts of Zambia, with areas further south receiving normal to below-normal rainfall.

Before reaching the Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River flows through the expansive Barotse floodplain in western Zambia, which soak up

water during the rainy season and only when they get saturated do they release the bulk of the water, about 80 percent, which then finds its way into tributaries and rivers that eventually empty into Zambezi River.

The floodplain, which is estimated to store 8.6 billion cubic metres of water, draws much of the flows that were recorded at Chavuma.

Once the Barotse floodplain is full, the water flow starts increasing towards the Victoria Falls.

The peak at the falls is expected around mid-April, with roughly 625 million litres of water flowing over the edge per minute. This huge volume of water produces a spray that rises more than 500 metres into the air.

While climate change is taking its toll there is need to take note of the seasonal variations in flows.

There is a time each year when the Victoria Falls is seasonally low, around December of every year, particularly so after a drought as was the case last year.

The seasonal variations of high and low flows have long been observed by the Lozi kingdom in the Barotse floodplain of western Zambia. To cope with the floods, the Lozi have developed a lifestyle based on the seasonal changes of the floodplain.

Around the end of March or early April each year, the paramount chief, the Litunga, leads the Lozi people and their



cattle to higher ground at the flood-time capital of Limulunga, in a traditional flood-water ceremony known as Kuomboka.

According to the ZRA, the water coming into the Barotse floodplain hit just over 5,000 cubic metres a second at the end of March. This has been the highest flow recorded in 20 years.

Consistent heavy rains in the second half of the 2019/20 rainy season have caused flooding and affected people over parts of Angola, DRC, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.

In Mozambique, almost 60,000 people were affected by heavy rains and flooding in January, primarily in Zambezia, Cabo Delgado and Sofala provinces.

In February, heavy rainfall increased the levels of the Buzi and Pungwe rivers, causing further flooding and damage in the central provinces of Sofala and Manica.

For other parts of the region, a late start to the rainfall season and uneven rainfall distribution contributed to persistent moisture deficits and dryness. sardc.net □

April - June 2020



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April
1, SADC**SADC @40 Years**

The regional grouping that became SADC was launched in Lusaka, Zambia on this date in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), by nine independent states who made a formal declaration of intent titled *Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation*.

7, Global

World Health Day

April 7 marks the annual World Health Day. From its inception at the First Health Assembly in 1948 and since taking effect in 1950, the commemoration has aimed to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization.

18, Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe@40

Zimbabwe is also commemorating 40 years since April 1980 when the colonial flag was eventually lowered and the new Zimbabwe flag was raised at midnight, and the independence flame was lit for the first time... after a protracted liberation war.

May
5, Botswana**SADC Energy Thematic Group**

The Energy Thematic Group meeting is a coordination forum for SADC, its energy subsidiary organizations and cooperating partners. The meeting reviews the energy situation in the region, and is likely to be held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

18-22, Tanzania

SADC Energy and Water Ministers Joint Meeting

The SADC Energy and Water Ministers meet to review the regional water and energy programmes. The meeting presents an opportunity for Member States to share progress on the implementation of regional commitments. The meeting could take place via video conferencing, or may be postponed.

25, Africa

Africa Day

Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union. This year marks 57 years since the formation of the OAU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary in 2013, the African Union approved a 50-year vision for *Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want*.

June
16 June**Youth Day in South Africa**

Youth Day in South Africa is noted throughout the SADC region as the date in 1976 when the youth of Soweto resisted and marched against apartheid. The peaceful march was met with force and there were many casualties, others left the country to join the liberation war, but this gave new impetus to the resistance to apartheid and inspired another generation.

18-24, Senegal

20th APUA Congress

Members of the Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA) meet annually to deliberate on energy cooperation and discuss how they can improve operations and contribute towards socio-economic development of the continent.

5, Global

World Environment Day

This day, marked annually, is intended to raise awareness of the need to conserve and protect the environment. The theme for this year is "Biodiversity Provides the Essential Infrastructure Supporting Life on Earth and Human Development".

TBA, Tanzania

SADC Gender Ministers Meeting

The SADC Gender and Women Affairs Ministers meet annually to review the regional gender programme and progress towards implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The meeting presents an opportunity for Member States to share progress on the implementation of gender commitments. The meeting could take place via video conferencing, or may be postponed.

30 June-3 July

Africa Energy Forum

The Africa Energy Forum brings together representatives of governments, power utilities and major players in the energy sector of Africa and the rest of the world to focus on delivery of power infrastructure projects in Africa.

40 years

A regional community, a shared future



40 years of unity and regional integration through SADC since 1980

"Our Community, dear Readers, is more than a political grouping, it has a past and a future whose roots can be found in the liberation movements and in the Frontline States. But, more fundamentally they are revealed in the hearts and souls of our proud sons and daughters of the soil who have stood together in their insistence that the region be transformed into something new and different..."

President Festus Mogae of Botswana, Chairperson of SADC in 2005@25

THE YEAR 2020 has many milestones in southern Africa –

- 40 years** since the launch of SADCC, and the independence of Zimbabwe;
- 30 years** since the independence of Namibia; and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison; and
- 60 years** of independence for the Democratic Republic of Congo, and for Madagascar.

April is the month to celebrate the birth of SADC(C) and Zimbabwe, and the birth of two of the founding leaders of the Frontline States who guided the region through tumultuous, difficult times: late *Mwalimu* Julius K Nyerere on 13 April 1922 and Dr Kenneth David Kaunda, now 96 years, born on 28 April 1924.

SADCC was planned in Gaborone, Botswana in May 1979; conceived in Arusha, Tanzania in July 1979; and born in Lusaka, Zambia on 1 April 1980 with nine independent Member States and the reality of apartheid's military power on its southern borders, which soon crossed the borders to destabilize the region economically and militarily for the next decade.

Before SADCC, Southern Africa was fragmented, locked in colonial boundaries, and it transformed again in 1992 when independent Namibia hosted the signing of the SADC Treaty to become a regional community, and in 1994 when South Africa emerged from the dungeons of apartheid into freedom to join the Community. Five more countries have seen the benefits of joining this regional economic community since that time, bringing their unique diversity to make a total of 16 Member States in 2020.

The journey towards a southern African development community began more than 40 years ago in the long-range vision of African leaders who held Pan-African consultations and established the Organization of African Unity in 1963 – and their passionate commitment to freedom, unity and prosperity.

President Seretse Khama of Botswana opened the formative conference of SADCC in Arusha on 2 July 1979, saying,

"We need to gain mastery of our own destiny in this turbulent region of our continent and we can only succeed ... within the framework of a united Southern African community. I am not calling for the dismantlement of our independent states... I am calling for cooperation and unity of purpose so that we can together plan for our future and the future of our children..."

"The full exploitation of our natural resources and the development of our productive sectors are constrained by the small markets in our economies, but taken as a whole, southern Africa forms a sizeable market. Economic regional cooperation would of necessity lead to coordinated production expansion which would in turn encourage the expansion of markets for intra-Southern African trade."

Botswana later offered to host the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone where it now has headquarters. □



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN SADC

February – April 2020

4 April	Peace and Reconciliation	Angola
7 April	Women's Day	Mozambique
	Sheik Abeid Karume Day	Tanzania
10 April	Good Friday	All SADC except ...
		Angola, Comoros, DRC, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique
11 April	Holy Saturday	
		Seychelles, Zambia
12 April	Easter Sunday	Namibia, Zimbabwe
13 April	Easter Monday	All SADC except ...
		Angola, Comoros, DRC, Mauritius, Mozambique
18 April	Family Day	South Africa
19 April	Independence Day	Zimbabwe
25 April	King's Birthday	Eswatini
26 April	National Flag Day	Eswatini
27 April	Union Day	Tanzania
	Freedom Day	South Africa
1 May	Worker's Day	DRC, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe
	Labour Day	Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Eswatini
4 May	Cassinga Day	Namibia
14 May	Kamuzu Day	Malawi
17 May	Liberation Day	DRC
21 May	Ascension Day	Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Eswatini
23 May	Eid al Fitr (End of Ramadan)*	Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritius
25 May	Africa Day	Angola, Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe
	Africa Freedom Day	Zambia
11 June	Corpus Christi	Seychelles
16 June	Youth Day	South Africa
18 June	Constitution Day	Seychelles
25 June	Independence Day	Mozambique
26 June	Independence Day	Madagascar
29 June	Independence Day	Seychelles
30 June	Independence Day	DRC

*Exact date depends on sighting of the new moon

A shared future within a regional community