Medium and Long-term Economic Planning in Zimbabwe and SADC: Linkages with China's Planning System

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Contents

ABSTRACT

Relations between China and Africa date back to 1414 when Admiral Zheng He, Grand Eunuch of the Three Treasures, visited the East African Coast. In southern Africa these relations were later to be strengthened when China assisted the SADC region in the liberation struggle for example in countries such as Tanzania and Zimbabwe to name just a few. In Zimbabwe in particular these relations can be traced to the ancient Silk Road more than a thousand years ago when Great Zimbabwe and other empires surrounding it traded with their Chinese counterparts.

The research paper seeks to inform policy from an African perspective by generating a deeper understanding of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa's economic planning and development policy and how this can relate to China's vision on "One Belt, One Road" as well as the idea of building six major China-Africa cooperation areas to upgrade cooperation and projects relating to areas of– Industrial cooperation; Financial cooperation; Poverty reduction; Ecological and environmental protection; Cultural and people-to-people exchanges; and Peace and security.

The paper examines Zimbabwe's economic policy framework and planning system by giving the overview of Zimbabwe's economic planning system. It also analyses the planning system used by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The paper also draws lessons from Chinese economic planning system by analysing key lessons which Zimbabwe and SADC as well as where and how they can learn from the Chinese experience.

In addition, the paper explores the opportunities for linkages between Zimbabwe/SADC and China's planning systems for example how SADC and Zimbabwe in particular can tap into the Silk Road initiative.

The paper also identifies both existing and potential challenges that are/or may affect the linkages between Zimbabwe and/or SADC and China in the area of economic planning. It concludes by giving recommendations on strengthening cooperation strategies between Zimbabwe/SADC and China in the area of economic planning.

1. BACKGROUND ON CHINA-AFRICA RELATIONS

1.1 Introduction

The objective of this research paper is to inform policy from an African perspective by generating a deeper understanding of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa's economic planning and development policy and how this can relate to China's vision on "One Belt, One Road". This is in response to the trend in which internationally multiple policies are often crafted by the developed countries or international organizations and have dismally failed on the African continent.

The field of study on China-Africa relations is awash with literature concerning the various aspects of the relations, which range from the economic, social and political perspectives. However, very little if any of the literature focuses on what could be done to promote the linkages between China, SADC and Zimbabwe's economic planning systems and in particular responding to China's new Silk Road Initiative also known as the One Belt, One Road Initiative which was announced by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in September 2013 during his visit to Kazakhstan.

The Silk Road Initiative will play an important role in promoting world trade as it aims to establish trade routes linking various continents namely Africa, the rest of Asia and Europe. The initiative is comprised of two parts — a new land-based "Silk Road economic belt" linking China to Europe that cuts through the mountainous regions in Central Asia; and the "maritime Silk Road" that links China's port facilities with the African coast and then pushes up through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea (P. Johnson, 2015).

The first and second China-Africa policy papers provide guidelines of how China will cooperate with Africa at large. However, most of the cooperation between China and Africa to date is largely at a bilateral country-to-country level or African Union (AU) level, and less at the sub-regional level. The only significant cooperation at the continental level is conducted through the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) but even at this level countries pursue the outcomes and/or suggestions of the FOCAC as individual member states and not as continental or sub-regional blocs.

It is however interesting to note that while Beijing has policies of engaging with Africa at the continental level as is contained in the first and second China-Africa Policy Papers, Africa through the AU or its sub-regions is yet to craft a similar policy on engaging China. The first China-Africa Policy Paper was established in 2006 by the Chinese government while the second China-Africa Policy Paper was released in December 2015 at the FOCAC Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. The purpose of these policy papers is to clarify Beijing's position and guide engagement with the African continent. Some of the areas of engagement mentioned in the papers include the following among others: Upholding the FOCAC and its follow-up Actions; Values of Friendship; Promoting the All-Round Development of China-Africa Cooperation; China's Relations with African Regional Organizations.

According to Chow (2011), economic planning has been practiced in China since 1953 when the first Five-Year Plan began, but its nature changed after economic reform started in 1978. When market reform was introduced in the 1970s it contributed to a reduction in the importance of central planning, but recently due to the global economic recession and China's active macro-economic policy, interventions have increased the importance of central economic planning again. In 1978 the Reform and Opening up Initiative helped China to transform from a largely peasant economy to an industrial economy -- closed society to open society, agricultural society to urban society and in a way from a strictly planned economy model to a market economy.

The shift in the nature of China's economic planning system can also be attributed to the incorporation of new dynamics and trends in line with the changing global economic environment. For example when China re-joined the World Trade Organizations (WTO) in 2001, this meant that it had to align some of its policies so as to adhere to the stipulated rules and regulations of the WTO.

The critical success factor of the Chinese development experience remains the ability and capability of the Chinese government to formulate development policies and strategies across all sectors in the form of Five-Year Development Plans (FYDPs) through a balance of centralized planning and decentralized governance processes, notwithstanding the vastness of the country in terms of geographical extent, decentralized institutions of governance and a population of about 1.3 billion (Vhumbunu, 2013). The ability of China to craft and implement its own home grown policies has been one of the key factors propelling the country to its status as a world economic giant. As such African countries still have a lot to learn from China as far as economic planning and implementation of these policies is concerned.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Zimbabwe, in particular also have a lot to learn from China's industrialization experience as the western development trajectory which many African countries have tried to emulate post-independence have failed to a large extent. As rightly noted by Madakufamba (2014), having followed the European models of development for many decades, the post-colonial state in Africa is yet to enjoy the promised benefits of development and to effectively pull its citizens out of poverty.

In drawing economic planning lessons for SADC and Zimbabwe, it is important to note that the issue of trade liberalisation is important. This has been reiterated by various scholars including Lardy (2003) who is of the view that trade liberalization played an integral role in Chinese Economic Growth through opening up the Chinese economy. Other economic initiatives were also critical in the rapid economic growth of China such as the reform of pricing and allocation of foreign exchange. Lardy further states that key elements of this control system were the requirement that exporters surrender 100 percent of their foreign exchange earnings to the government; rigid limitations on the rights of individuals to hold foreign currency; and strict controls on the outflow of capital.

The southern African regional body, SADC is currently pursuing a regional integration strategy in its quest to improve the general standards of living of its citizens. As such the regional group has come up with various mechanisms to guide it in achieving deeper regional integration for example through industrialization. Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) is an example of such mechanisms which is meant to provide strategic direction for achieving SADC's long term social and economic goals. The revised RISDP (2015-2020) focus on the similar objectives for the five year period with four priority areas which are: Industrial Development and Market Integration, Infrastructure in support of regional integration, Peace and security cooperation and Special programmes of regional dimension.

SADC has also developed the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP) which will be implemented in five year phases: short term (2012-2017); medium term (2017-2022); and long term (2022-2027). The SADC RIDMP is part of the broader regional infrastructure development agenda for SADC that aims to strengthen infrastructure development in the region. At its 36th SADC Summit held in Swaziland, the Draft Agreement on the Operationalisation of the SADC Regional Development Fund (RDF) was approved. This fund will go a long away in accelerating the regional integration agenda. SADC also has an Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) in place which is in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

On its part, Zimbabwe is in the process of developing its own regional integration strategy framework so as to compliment the region's integration strategy. At national level Zimbabwe is currently being guided by its economic blueprint knows as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) for the period 2013-2018.

The economic blue print has four main pillars which are: Food Security and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation. Zimbabwe is too identifying opportunities in which it can tap into China's Silk Road Initiative under one of its ZIMASSET clusters of value addition and beneficiation which fits well with the southern Africa region's agenda on industrialization and the continent's Agenda 2063. This is important in the sense that the country's primary objective of belonging to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) is to gain wider market access into regional markets as well as to leverage regional advantages to gain better access into global markets and China's global Silk Road Initiative provides that opportunity.

The paper concludes by giving policy recommendations from an African perspective on strengthening cooperation strategies between Zimbabwe/SADC and China and how this can relate to China's "One Belt, One Road" policy.

1.2 Background

China-Africa relations dates back more than 600 years. As mentioned earlier it is imperative to note that relations between China and Africa in the areas of cooperation and trade did not start recently as many people would think. In fact this relationship can be traced back to at least hundreds of years ago, as can be seen from archaeological evidence of Chinese products found in coastal Mozambique and Kenya.

One of the most documented China-Africa relations can be traced back to the 15th Century when Admiral Zheng He, a military leader of China visited many African states during his sixth voyage (1421-14). During this voyage, the Admiral sailed to East Africa and established official conducts with the Ming Court and officials at Mogadishu, Malindi, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam and Kilwa (Charles, 2012).

Later in contemporary politics official and formal relations between China and Africa were established in the 1950s at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955. It is at this conference when Chinese officials held talks with leaders of Egypt, Ghana, Libya, Sudan, Liberia and Ethiopia. Just a year after this consultation, Egypt became the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China on 30 May 1956.

Three years later, Guinea under the then leadership of the popular Ahmed Sekou Toure became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to establish official relations with the People's Republic of China in October 1959 signalling a new era in Sub-Saharan Africa as far as China-Africa relations are concerned.

After the successful Bandung Conference, relations between China and Africa grew resulting in greater diplomatic relations. Around 1979 a total number of 44 African countries had established diplomatic relations with China. It is also interesting to note that around 70 African heads of states and ministerial officials had made 300 visits to China highlighting the growing and importance of China-Africa relations. As a way of strengthening its cooperation with Africa, the Chinese government built the complex that houses the headquarters of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa. The golden key of the building was presented at the 18th AU Summit of Heads of State and Government. The main building is 99.9 meters high to symbolise the founding date of the AU which is September 9, 1999 (Charles, 2012).

Recently China-Africa relations were promoted and cemented through the multilateral FOCAC in the year 2000 and since then the relationship has grown in leaps and bounds. In 2014, the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's Africa tour and its efforts to further promote cooperation with Africa and take the strategic partnership to a higher level was well received by the international community and Africa in particular. During this visit Li Keqiang visited four African countries namely Nigeria, Angola, Kenya and Ethiopia where he visited the African Union (AU) headquarters.

In 2015 the FOCAC Summit was held on African soil in Johannesburg, South Africa and Beijing indicated that it will be funding its 10 cooperation plans with Africa up to the tune of US$60 Billion for the current three year period which is from 2016-2018 (Madakufamba, 2015). This alone is a testimony of the commitment of the Chinese to the development of Africa. Africa as a continent should now craft a clear policy on engaging the Chinese for the benefit of the continent. Africa and SADC in particular have to craft a policy or plan on how the continent and region will tap into the proposed Silk Road Initiative which is slowly turning into reality with the establishment on the Silk Road Fund (SRF), New Development Bank (NDB) and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

In southern Africa these relations were later to be strengthened when China helped this part of the region in the liberation struggle for example in countries such Tanzania and Zimbabwe to name just a few. In southern Africa a good example of this friendship can be seen through the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway line (TAZARA), which is referred by many as the monument of China-Africa friendship. TAZARA was completed in October 1975 and it runs for about 1,860km from Tanzania (Dar es Salaam) through central Zambia to the northern part of Zambia. The railway is also referred to by Africans in this particular region as the “Railway of Freedom” and the “Railway of Friendship”. The TAZARA is referred by many as the first form of China-Africa cooperation and is more than just a railway line since it played a pivotal role in the independence of many countries in southern Africa such as Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

To further cement the relationship and also help Africa achieve its industrialization dream a similar project to TAZARA is currently under construction in Kenya. The Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) is expected to be completed by the end of 2016 and start operating in 2017. This is Kenya’s biggest development project since gaining independence in 1963. The SGR when complete will replace the old meter gauge railway line which is about 100 years old. The project cost is around US 3 billion and is being funded by the Kenyan Government (10%) and the Export – Import Bank of China (90%). It is also anticipated that when the railway line is finished will change the face of East Africa since it will be extended to other countries in the region such as the Rwanda and Uganda. The SGR will play an important role in regional integration. In Kenya it is also expected to improve the general welfare of citizens and also more importantly to reduce the cost and time of transporting goods.

In Zimbabwe these relations can further be traced back to the ancient Silk Road more than a thousand years ago when Great Zimbabwe and other empires surrounding it traded with their Chinese counterparts (Johnson, 2013). Just like many countries in this part of the region, Zimbabwe enjoys cordial relations with China. China supported Zimbabwe in its war of liberation in the 1970s by training soldiers and also supplying weapons. Since then the two countries have promoted the relationship from just political to socio-economic relations.

After Zimbabwe faced numerous challenges as far as the political, economic and social issues are concerned it responded by putting in place its Look East Policy in the early 2000s. The policy successfully strengthened its economic ties with several countries in Asia, the sub-continent and the Middle East (China, India, Indonesia, Iran and Malaysia) and this success is further evidenced by how China has become Zimbabwe’s largest trading partner outside the African continent.

In 2014, President Mugabe paid a state visit to China, at the invitation of the Chinese President Xi Jinping. It was President Mugabe’s 13th visit and third state visit to China. The two sides agreed to strengthen coordination and cooperation, jointly promote the all-round transformation and upgrading of the new type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership (The Herald, 2014).

In December 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a reciprocal visit to Zimbabwe just before the FOCAC Summit which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. During this visit President Xi and President Mugabe, witnessed the signing of different agreements worth $4 billion covering areas such as aviation, energy, telecommunications, infrastructure, and private sector ventures (SARDC, 2015).

2. ZIMBABWE ECONOMIC POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING SYSTEM

2.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe’s economic planning system is rooted in the country’s history. When the majority ruled government took over in April 1980, it inherited an economy that suffered from income inequalities as well as a wide gap in wealth distribution. The inequalities exhibited in Zimbabwe soon after independence – and for several years after that – were largely due to the racial dominance of the white settlers in the colonial period (1890-1980) as well as the manner in which resources were being distributed to and accessed by different groups in the post-colonial period. The race factor played a decisive role in the manner in which blacks and whites accessed land and the labour market as well as the provision of basic social services such as health, education, housing and sanitation.

The genesis of the inequalities was the 1890s *First Chimurenga War* between the indigenous people and the white settlers. The defeat of the indigenous people marked the beginning of extensive expropriation of land, massive displacement of people from land, confiscation of their cattle and exploitation of their labour. This was followed by the introduction of racist and oppressive policies and laws that were meant to ensure the subjugation of the indigenous people. In all facets of society, a person's race determined their level of access to economic resources and other privileges. As a result, the whites – who made up a mere four percent of the country's population at independence – controlled more than 90 percent of the economy in terms of owning the means of production (Mazingi and Kamidza, 2014). The black majority controlled less than 10 percent of the economy.

In addition, the black people suffered discrimination at workplaces, while overall development programmes were racially-skewed in favour of the whites. Basic infrastructural facilities such as tarred roads and piped water were found only in residential areas where only the whites lived or on white-owned commercial farms. In urban areas, blacks were confined to townships with limited infrastructure and other facilities.

Black women were particularly more disadvantaged as they were subjected to double discrimination on account of colour and sex, both in society and in the world of work. Black women were considered minors and needed the consent of their husbands or male relatives to enter into economic contracts. They also earned less than their male counterparts.

The above narrative was the situation when the ZANU PF-led government took over the country in 1980. At independence, the new majority-ruled government was faced with the challenge of reconstituting and realigning the inherited national policy making structures in line with the new socio-politico-economic dispensation. It was critical that the policy making systems and processes that it inherited should be transformed from minority-focused to majority-focused institutions that addressed the embedded inequalities in income and wealth distribution.

This historical reality has defined Zimbabwe's policy development system up to this day. Below, the paper tries to track the trajectory of Zimbabwe's policy development system since independence.

2.2 Institutional framework for Zimbabwe's planning system

Zimbabwe's national economic policy making process has been led by different government ministries since independence. The planning function was soon after independence housed in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, which championed the crafting of several economic blueprints between 1980 and 1991 (ZEPARU, 2012). These were the Growth with Equity Strategy (1981), the Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan (1982-1985), the Zimbabwe First Five-Year National Development Plan (1986-90) as well as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) that covered the period 1991-1995.

However, the planning function always played a subservient role to the finance aspect in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, a development that forced the government to form the National Economic Planning Commission (NEPC) in 1992. The commission was housed in the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) to give it the necessary clout to have influence and oversight over government ministries, departments and agencies. The commission was involved in the final years of the implementation of ESAP and the subsequent formulation of the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) that covered the period 1996-2000.

The NEPC was meant to be the hub of overall policy making, coordination, implementation and monitoring. It had the following functions:

- to provide overall policy direction and guidance to all ministries and departments;
- to coordinate the formulation and implementation of development plans and programmes including determination of the capital budget;
- to monitor the implementation of government programmes by various ministries;

- to analyse and evaluate the impact of policy decisions in the public and private sectors; and
- to coordinate the activities of the various Cabinet committees and their working parties and to establish and administer commissions of inquiry.

The planning function was again moved from the OPC to the newly formed Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. This saw the NEPC incorporated into the Division of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The ministry was involved in the crafting of the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) of 2000, the National Economic Recovery Programme (NERP) of 2003 and the Macroeconomic Policy Framework (2004). NERP was also preceded by the Ten-Point Plan enunciated by President Robert Mugabe to set the tone for a sectoral-driven economic revival growth strategy. The Ten-Point Plan outlined 10 broad objectives meant to give policy directions on the Post-Election Economic Development Strategy and Economic Recovery Programme.

However, six years after its disbandment, in March 2005, the government re-created the planning function in the new Ministry of Economic Development, which was mandated with spearheading the national planning process. The ministry spearheaded the formulation of the National Economic Development Priority Programme (2006) as a short-term government work programme meant to stabilize the economy.

At the formation of the Government of National Unity in 2009, the government launched the Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP I & II) in 2009 and 2010 to stabilise the economy. However, while the STERP programme managed to stabilise the economy, the need for an overarching framework to anchor the budget and other sectoral policy was noted. In this regard, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion resuscitated the consultations to develop a Medium Term Plan for the country in September 2009 and launched in July 2011.

The MTP has provided the overarching macroeconomic framework, priority projects and strategies for the five years, 2011-2015, to guide the development agenda. The MTP has also set sectoral growth targets that underpin the overall growth of the economy. In this regard, all sectoral policies and strategies will focus at achieving these targets.

Thus other line Ministries are expected to formulate sector specific policies which take into account the priority national projects; policy targets and strategies outlined in the MTP. The national budgets are also expected to actualise the objectives of the MTP through the provision of adequate resources to the identified anchor/priority projects.

2.3 Overview of national economic policies since 1980

The economic planning landscape in Zimbabwe is guided by a long-term vision, which is implemented through short-term plans and further broken down into annual targets that are implemented through annual budgets. Since independence, the country has had two major medium- to long-term strategies or visions in the form of the Growth with Equity Strategy of the early 1980s and the Vision 2020 Programme of the late 1980s. Table 2.1 shows some of the key economic policies implemented by Zimbabwe since independence.

Table 2.1: Zimbabwe economic policies 1980-2016

Development plan	**Period**
Growth with Equity Strategy	1981
Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan	1982-1985
Zimbabwe First Five-Year National Development Plan	1986-1990

Zimbabwe Second Five-Year National Development Plan	1991-1995
Economic Structural Adjustment Programme	1991-1995
Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation	1996 -2000
Zimbabwe Vision 2020	1997
Millennium Economic Recovery Programme	2000-2002
National Economic Recovery Plan	2003
Macroeconomic Policy Framework: Towards Sustained Economic Growth	2005-2006
National Economic Development Priority Programme	April-December 2006
Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP I)	February-December 2009
Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP II)	2010
Mid Term Plan	2011-2013
Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation	2013-2018
10-Point Plan	2015

Growth with Equity Strategy

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited a dual economy characterized by a relatively well-developed modern sector and a largely poor rural sector that provided livelihood to about 80 percent of the country's population (Government of Zimbabwe, 2004). Against this backdrop, the government resolved to direct its spending towards social sectors with emphasis on the expansion of rural infrastructure and redressing social and economic inequalities through the land resettlement programme. For urban populations, policies pursued covered areas of minimum wages, black affirmative and indigenization policies to ensure an increase or rise in living standards for the urban population.

Just a year after independence in 1981, the Zimbabwean government implemented what was to be its first economic policy – Growth with Equity. The main aim of this plan was to achieve a sustainable high rate of economic growth and speedy development in order to raise incomes and standards of living of the general citizens of Zimbabwe.

The Growth with Equity plan set up a Commission of Inquiry into the Incomes, Prices and Conditions of Service. One of the major recommendations of the commission was the proposal to develop the "Poor People's Charter" that recommended that minimum salaries should be at least close to the poverty datum line. The Growth with Equity policy brought about high growth of 11 and 10 percent in 1980 and 1981, respectively (Kanyenze, 2007). Other positive returns of Growth-With-Equity policies were most visible in the education and health sectors where access to public services, resource allocation and distribution was deracialized.

The Growth with Equity policy statement provided a framework for overall sectoral policies and in this way constituted the basis for national policy planning. In general, it asserted the government's desire to develop the country guided by socialist and democratic principles in the allocation and distribution of resources and social benefits.

Vision 2020

Zimbabwe's development vision was first spelt out in a relatively comprehensive manner around the late 1990s under the framework and document known as 'Vision 2020'. This framework broadly defined the development vision statement, aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe and strategies to be employed. However, one notable weakness of this noble attempt to steer the nation in to a different direction was that the vision was not backed up by clearly defined development milestones in the form of goals, indicators and targets to help track progress and hold authorities accountable for the nation's progress. It is also sad that Vision 2020 remained a document piled up in some government offices and it never saw the light of the day.

The Vision Statement was that "Zimbabwe should emerge a united, strong, democratic, prosperous and egalitarian nation with high quality of life for all by the year 2020." It was envisaged that this proud and happy nation would by 2020 "strive for a highly competitive, sustainable, and industrialized economy benefiting from its national endowments including its natural resources." The objective was to ensure that Zimbabweans "continue to be guided by democratic principles, respect for human rights, with vibrant and tolerant culture while ensuring aesthetic, physical and spiritual welfare for all its citizens."

According to the Vision 2020 document, the national vision for Zimbabwe should be based on the aspirations identified by the people during a nation-wide consultation process carried in the early 1990s. These aspirations are supposed to be the foundation for the desired future and were key to the realization of Zimbabwe's national vision. The following is a summary of the aspirations to be realized during the vision period and beyond:

- Good Governance;
- Maintenance of political stability;
- Diversified economy with high growth rate;
- Access to social services by all;
- Acceleration of rural development;
- Equal opportunities for all;
- Development and utilization of modern science and technology;
- Vibrant and dynamic culture; and
- Sustainable utilization and management of natural resources.

According to Zimbabwe government officials, implementation of Vision 2020 was, however, affected by the hostile political situation in Zimbabwe starting from the beginning of the millennium. The political situation negatively impacted on the noble aspirations set out in the Vision document.

Transitional National Development Plan 1982/83-1984/85

The Zimbabwean government launched the Transitional National Development Plan in 1982, which covered the period 1982-1985. The plan focused on economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication. Among other measures, the plan aimed to address the inequalities which the then racially-segregated society faced as a result of colonialism (GoZ, 1991). It marked the first time that the government stated its intention, "subject to practical financial and economic constraints", to resettle 162,000 peasant families over the three-year period of the plan. The land issue was to later emerge at the turn of the century, leading to the promulgation of the Land Acquisition Act in 2002.

First Five Year Development Plan

Like its predecessor, the First Five Year National Development Plan (FFYNDP) from the year 1986 - 1990 focused on economic growth, job creation and poverty eradication. It played an important role in poverty eradication by creating more employment opportunities in non-agricultural sector which was the backbone of the economy. It is also under this policy that communal and resettled farmers accounted for most of the food supplied to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). It also interesting to note that it is under the First Five Year National Development Plan that Zimbabwe become the bread basket of southern Africa.

However, despite the success side of the plan, the government admitted that it had faced some challenges. These included in the area of rural development and land reform, economic expansion and employment creation, which were the priorities in the development planning of the first decade of independence.

Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

Soon after independence Zimbabwe started initiating its people driven policies of post war reconstruction and addressing the colonial imbalances for example in the education sector when it introduced education for all. These popular policies were well received by the locals until in 1990 when Zimbabwe succumbed to pressure from western countries and implemented the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). From October 1990, Zimbabwe started implementing the five-year ESAP that was crafted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as a way of addressing the some of the economic challenges the country was facing such as the high public sector wage bill.

One of the aims of ESAP was to de-emphasize its expenditure on social services and emphasize investment in the material production sectors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing. ESAP also aimed at pursuing a free market-led economic development strategy. However, as noted by Mlambo (2012), the reform programmes of 1990-2000 impacted negatively on social welfare in the country.

As a measure to curb some of these challenges the government through ESAP introduced measures such as: reduction of government expenditure, 40 percent devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, liberalising the foreign currency allocation system, removal of protection of non-productive import substituting industries and increased profit remittance abroad and restructuring of the various government parastatals.

Between 1991 and 1995, the government also introduced the ***Framework for Economic Reform***, which was to guide the government in reducing its support or involvement in the parastatals. The idea behind this policy was in a way to turn these parastatals into private companies so that they compete with others without the government protection which they had enjoyed for the previous years. The government also argued that it was a way of improving management and efficiency in these companies. While there were some visible progress in the area of commercialization, progress on the privatization front was very low. In fact, by close of the ESAP programme, not a single parastatal in Zimbabwe had been fully privatized (Zhou, 2000).

Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation

In 1998, the government launched the second stage of its economic structural adjustment programme known as the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). ZIMPREST initially was supposed to be introduced in the year 1996 but was delayed up to 1998. Taking major lessons from the failures of ESAP, its main aim was to restore economic stability, poverty eradication and also to facilitate public and private savings and investment as well as creating employment. The Africa Development Bank (AfDB) report on ZIMPREST of 1999 noted that the main aim on this policy was at deepening the reforms implemented under ESAP and removing the remaining structural weaknesses in the economy.

The idea looked good on paper but unfortunately it lacked the support from important stakeholders within the economy. Stakeholder participation was very low at its inception in 1998. When the ZIMPREST policy was introduced it emphasised the need to improving the quality of democratic institutions, pursuing a good governance system, and eliminating corruption in public offices.

The programme sought to achieve a target average annual growth rate of 6% and create 42 000 new jobs in the formal sector per annum. During this period, per capita income grew by 3.4% and consumption by 4.4%. In order to achieve minimum growth, government was expected to reduce its budget deficit from 10% in 1996 to less than 5% of GDP by 2000. The programme targeted to reduce inflation from over 20% to a single digit level over the same period. It also aimed to achieve higher levels of savings and investment, averaging at least 23% of GDP and export growth of at least 9% per annum.

ZIMPREST OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Urgent restoration of macro-economic stability (low inflation and interest rates and stable exchange rate);
- ✓ Facilitating the public and private savings and investment needed to attain growth;
- ✓ Pursuing economic empowerment and poverty alleviation by generating opportunities for employment and encouraging entrepreneurial initiative
- ✓ Investing in human resources development; and
- ✓ Providing a safety net for the disadvantaged

Millennium Economic Recovery Programme

The Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) was introduced in 2000 as measure to stabilise the economy which was facing pressure at the time. The aim of the MERP was to stabilise the economy through accelerating the land resettlement, reducing duties on all imported inputs, lowering production and capital costs, accelerating privatization to attract both local and foreign investment, rebuilding confidence in the economy, and providing effective and efficient infrastructure services. Some of the measures brought about by MERP included maintaining the public sector salaries at 12 percent of GDP and it also introduced the cash budgeting system. In terms of agriculture, the government set aside Z$1.6 billion which was allocated to support small–scale farmers in the communal and resettlement areas of Zimbabwe. Some of the notable measures brought about by this economic blueprint include was the formation of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA). During the same period the Privatization Agency of Zimbabwe (PAZ) was also created to with sole aim of facilitating the privatisation of public companies.

However, the programme did not achieve the intended results due to multiple factors. One of the major reasons which led to the failure of this blueprint is poor implementation which can be attributed to policy inconsistencies between the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, which was in charge of monetary and inflation control, and the government, which was responsible for enhancing policy credibility and bringing spending under control. Another reason worth mentioning which led to the failure of this policy to achieve its intended results was the rate of growing corruption at this particular time. For example looting scandals at the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM).

National Economic Revival Programme

In 2003, Zimbabwe faced with a declining economy the government introduced the National Economic Revival Programme (NERP). The programme also focused on restoring the macro-economic stability. This was to be achieved by reducing the high rate of inflation which had characterized the economy during this particular period. This was to be done in all major areas of the economy but with specific focus in the agricultural sector which is the main driver of the economy. In short, the programme sought to kick start the economy basing on agriculture revival.

In the agricultural sector the programme focused on the following measures also with the goal of promoting rural development:

- Security of land tenure;
- Promotion of effective land utilization;
- Review of minimum farm sizes;
- Provision of farm input support;
- Proper producer pricing policies;
- Encouragement of contract farming;
- Promotion of dairy farming;

- Promotion of livestock development;
- Establishment of farmer associations;
- Promotion of irrigation development;
- Establishment of a land bank;
- Improvement of marketing of agricultural commodities internally and externally;
- Assurance of food security through productivity growth and least cost import programmes**.**

National Economic Development Priority Programme

The National Economic Development Priority Programme of 2007 was a short term blueprint which was meant to stabilise the economy. This was to be achieved through the implementation of quick win strategies. One of the specific goals of NEDPP were to mobilise foreign currency and resuscitating the industry with the country faced with de industrialization.

Unlike other previous blueprints the NEDPP brought important stakeholders on board such as business organizations to assist in the mobilization foreign currency and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). Besides involving the business community it is unfortunate to note the strategy failed to achieve the intended results mainly due to the fact that at the same time the government was committed on another four-year blue print – Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) which ran from 2007 up to 2011.

Key focal points of the NEDPP included:

- reducing inflation;
- stabilising the currency;
- ensuring food security;
- increasing output and productivity;
- generation of foreign exchange;
- enhancement of expenditure and revenue management;
- removal of price distortions; and
- effective policy coordination and implementation.

Short Term Economic Recovery Programme

The Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP) was first launched in March 2009 as part of the implementation of the Global Political Agreement. It was an emergency short-term stabilisation programme which ran from February to December 2009. The key goals of STERP were to stabilise the economy (macro and micro), improve levels of savings, investment and growth, and lay the basis for a more transformative mid-term to long-term economic programme that was to turn Zimbabwe into a progressive developmental state.

The STERP programme included three main priorities:

- Political and Governance Issues;
- Social Protection; and
- Stabilisation
  - Implementation of a growth-oriented recovery programme
  - Restoring the value of the local currency and guaranteeing its stability
  - Increasing capacity utilisation in all sectors of the economy and jobs creation
  - Ensuring adequate availability of essential commodities such as food, fuel and electricity
  - Rehabilitation of collapsed social, health and education sectors
  - Ensuring Adequate Water Supply

A second STERP programme ran from 2010 to 2011 and included the same targets.

Mid Term Plan

The Mid-Term Plan (MTP) covered the period 2011-2015 and set the platform for consolidating the macroeconomic stability achieved under STERP and was meant to propel the economy to a high and sustainable growth path. The plan was in response to a mandate espoused in Article III of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) to support the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe.

Targets of the MTP were:

- Achieve GDP of $9 billion by 2015;
- Maintain single digit annual inflation;
- Low interest rates and sustainable BOP with a current account balance of not less than 5 percent of GDP;
- Increase in employment to above 1997 levels by 2015;
- Sustained poverty reduction and progress in line with MDG targets;
- Foreign exchange reserves of at least three months import cover by 2015;
- Double digit savings and investment ratios by 2015; and
- Improved social indicators, including education and health as they are fundamental for the sustainable development of the economy.

The MTP was a five year plan that was supported by a results and implementation matrix which was to be revised annually.

Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset) 2013-2018 is a cluster based Plan, reflecting the strong need to fully exploit the internal relationships and linkages that exist between the various facets of the economy. These clusters are as follows:

- Food Security and Nutrition;
- Social Services and Poverty Eradication;
- Infrastructure and Utilities; and
- Value Addition and Beneficiation

To buttress the aforementioned clusters, two sub-clusters were also developed, namely Fiscal Reform Measures; and Public Administration, Governance and Performance Management. To ensure the successful implementation of ZimAsset, key strategies, success factors and drivers have been identified as implementation pillars. Under this arrangement, initiatives identified under each Cluster will be implemented immediately to yield rapid results (Quick Wins) in the shortest possible time frame (October 2013-December 2015), with the other deliverables targeted up to December 2018. In the process, Government will undertake blitz interventions in the delivery of services.

In order to ensure that the plan is fully funded, the following have been identified as financing mechanisms:

- Tax and non-tax revenue,
- Sovereign Wealth Fund,
- Issuance of bonds,
- Accelerated implementation of Public Private Partnerships,
- Securitization of remittances,
- Re-engagement with international and multilateral finance institutions, and
- Other financing options, focusing on Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS).

The Office of the President and Cabinet is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ZimAsset.

Ten-Point Plan
Introduced in 2015, the plan aimed to maintain economic growth, in particular the creation of jobs. The plan was anchored on the agriculture sector and value addition and beneficiation. Another key government priority that aimed to retain the economy to sustained growth was the reform of parastatals and state enterprises. To this end, the government instituted a Parastatal Reform Programme targeting 10 key enterprises such as the Grain Marketing Board and Cold Storage Company.

Main targets of the plan were:

- Revitalizing agricultural and the agro-processing value chain;
- Advancing beneficiation and or value addition of agricultural and mineral resource endowment;
- Supporting infrastructure development in key sectors like energy, water, transport and Information Communication Technologies;
- Unlocking potential of Small to Medium Enterprises;
- Encouraging private sector investment;
- Restoration and building confidence and stability in the financial services sector;
- Promoting joint ventures and public private partnerships to boost the role and performance of state owned companies;
- Modernizing labour laws;
- Pursuing anti- corruption thrust; and
- Implementation of special economic zones to provide impetus for foreign direct investment.

2.4 Challenges

Like in many other African countries, economic policy planning and formulation in Zimbabwe has faced numerous challenges in the past years since independence in 1980. One of the challenges is policy inconsistency, which has negatively affected policy implementation in Zimbabwe. In some instances – as in the case of the indigenisation policy – different line ministries would have different interpretations of the policy and the relevant laws.

Another challenge is that some policies such as the ESAP did not involve sectoral stakeholders during the crafting stages. As a result, there is usually little buy-in from the relevant constituencies that are supposed to help in implementing the policies.

Funding challenges have played a crucial role in disrupting implementation of Zimbabwe’s economic policies. Western economic sanctions imposed in the early 2000s have had a telling effect in this regard. The sanctions have led to the withdrawal of budgetary support by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other financial institutions and international cooperating partners. For instance, Zimbabwe is estimated to have lost more than US$42 billion in potential revenue from the European Union since the imposition of the sanctions (The Herald, October 2013).

To circumvent the impact of the sanctions, the Zimbabwean government has since 2000 promoted the “Look East” policy and strengthened relations with China and other Asian countries. This has seen China becoming the largest investor in Zimbabwe in sectors such as agriculture, energy and mining.

Political squabbles have also in a way affected the smooth implementation of some policies. This was particularly visible during the Inclusive Government when the parties involved in the government squabbled about economic strategy resulting in the abandonment of the Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy, a few years after it came into force.

3. SADC ECONOMIC POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING SYSTEM

3.1 Introduction

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was founded through the Lusaka Declaration of April 1980 as the Southern Africa Coordination Conference (SADCC) by nine independent southern African countries – Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Membership has since grown to 15 with Namibia (1990), South Africa (1994), Mauritius (1995), Seychelles (1997), Democratic Republic of Congo (1997) and Madagascar (2005) joining over the years (SADC, 2015).

It is important to acknowledge from the onset that SADC states, in spite of their many commonalities, are not necessarily homogenous, particularly with respect to administrative and political regimes, nor in terms of stability and levels of economic development as evidenced, for example, by primary indicators such as demography, GDP growth, inflation, etc. However, there are also several commonalities beyond the geographic linkage, including cultural affinities and a shared common future, providing great scope for collective strategic visioning for deeper regional integration and therefore the common good of the peoples of the region.

Further, the economic performance of all SADC economies is intricately interlinked to the performance of the global economy, in particular, at least for the last century or so, the European former colonial powers as well as the United States, with whom political and economic ties remain strong, and the same being also the major sources of development aid, investment and trade for the region. These political and economic ties have had an important bearing on the planning system in SADC, both at the regional and national levels.

Economic cooperation between China and SADC in particular, and Africa in general, predate the continent's colonial history. In the case of SADC, trade ties gave way to military and political cooperation during the region's quest for political independence, remaining predominantly so during the early years of independence for most of the Member States. It was only around the turn of the millennium that economic ties have regained traction, coinciding with China's resurgence as a global economic giant. The inception of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 was in essence a recognition of this emerging reality, providing a more structured platform and practical direction for advancing cooperation. Even with the enunciation of FOCAC, practical economic and political engagement between the two parties has largely remained a bilateral affair until 2012 when the African regional integration dimension was added to the scope of multilateral cooperation. It therefore comes as no surprise that China's engagement with African sub-regional groupings, SADC included, is yet to be more clearly defined (Madakufamba, 2015).

SADC's policy framework largely feeds from and into the continental and global policy frameworks. For example, while SADC is yet to come up with a long term vision, its current short to medium term strategies such as the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-20 and the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap draw generously from the African Union Agenda 2063.

SADC's vision is that of a common future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the people of southern Africa. This shared vision is anchored on the common values and principles and the historical and cultural affinities that exist between the people of southern Africa (see SADC Treaty, 1992). However, beyond this terse expression of intent, SADC is yet to come up with an elaborate cross-sector document that would spell out its long term strategy and vision. The

RISDP, which was first approved in 2003, is a medium term blueprint initially intended to cover a 15-year period, extended to 2020 following a five year review that started in 2010. There are nonetheless, sector specific plans that run over a medium to long term horizon, notably the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (2012-2027) and the Industrialisation Strategy (2015-2063).

SADC economies have to overcome some key binding development constraints, notably what has predominantly hitherto been a primary commodity-driven development agenda to embrace investment in infrastructure development and value addition, while aiming to transit through the growth trajectory that is driven by greater efficiency and ultimately driven by knowledge, innovation and business sophistication. Only this way can SADC be transformed into an important player in the continental and global landscape, and any cooperation with China should critically consider support in this area and thus depart from the donor approach of the Western world.

3.2 The Ideological and Foundational Context of SADC's Planning System

SADC's founding objectives were:

- to reduce Member States' dependence, particularly, but not only, on apartheid South Africa;
- to implement programmes and projects with national and regional impact;
- to mobilise Member States' resources in the quest for collective self-reliance; and,
- to secure international understanding and support.

Thus during the period 1980-1992, the planning system and the resultant regional agenda were predicated on the political economy of the region, strongly influenced by political solidarity among the liberation movements of the frontline states and their response to economic and military threats emanating from apartheid South Africa and from the Cold War powers and their regional proxies. The policy agenda was much leaner with a decentralised organisational and institutional structure. The responsibility of implementing and coordinating agreed regional policies and programmes was delegated to Member States who played host to what were known as Sector Coordinating Units while the Secretariat remained small, with a largely convening role.

With the changing political and economic landscape, the development and geo-strategic interests of the sub-region evolved; that is, with the end of the Cold War era, the process leading up to the independence of Namibia in 1990 and the democratisation of South Africa that culminated in multi-racial elections in 1994. So in response to the early signs of shifting regional and global geo-politics, southern African leaders agreed to transform the regional integration and cooperation approach from a "Coordination Conference" to a "Development Community", through the Windhoek Treaty of 1992, pursuant to deeper regional integration aspirations. Thus the main objectives then focused on the need "to achieve development, peace and security, and economic growth, to alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration, built on democratic principles and equitable and sustainable development" (see SADC Treaty, 1992).

One fundamental implication of the Windhoek Treaty was to bring about legal obligation to Member States as soon as they signed and ratified the Treaty, and by extension the sector protocols through which the regional integration agenda was broadly captured. To date, 33 such protocols have been signed and 26 of those have been ratified by the requisite two-thirds of the signatories, giving them legal force. (SADC, 2016) The responsibility to implement these protocols lies with Member States, with most of the legal instruments calling for harmonisation of regional policies with the national legislative and policy framework. However, implementation of regional commitments has been a major Achilles' heel for SADC, a position that has been acknowledged at successive Summits of Heads of State and Government.

Historically, the SADC integration agenda has been supported mainly by donors; in the recent past as high as three-quarters of the budget has been funded by donors while only one-quarter has come from Member States. Ideally, SADC Member States must at least fund the operational budget, which would normally be 50 percent of the overall budget. But they have almost always fallen short of that. For example, in the 2015/2016 budget donors contributed 79 percent of the US$79.4 million budget while the rest was from Member States. Despite many public pronouncements at the highest level to move away from this unsustainable state of affairs, little has changed in practice. The swelling of donor funds in the SADC budget has inadvertently increased the appetite for more and more development 'priorities' and with that the proliferation of projects. Thus the regional integration programme kept expanding until it became untenable. If the proverbial saying that "who pays the piper calls the tune" is anything to go by, it would leave little to imagination what bearing this scenario has on the agenda-setting and ultimately planning system for SADC.

The challenge of too many regional priorities was first acknowledged in the late 1990s when it became apparent that the decentralised approach would no longer be effective and as such a new approach was needed if the development ambitions of the region were to be met and for purposes of coordinating donor contributions, which were significant at the time and would remain so (Vanheukelom et al, 2016). First, it was agreed that an overarching strategy was needed to collate and focus the ever-expanding integration agenda. That's the process leading up to the drafting of the Regional Indicative Development Plan (RISDP) gained momentum from 2000, eventually leading to the adoption of the 15-year blueprint in 2003. Implementation would not start until about 2005, and the plan would undergo a mid-term review in 2010 through to 2015 when a revised RISDP was adopted by an extra-ordinary Summit under the chair of Zimbabwe to run for the period 2015-2020.

Secondly, a process got underway from 2000 to restructure the organisational and institutional structure of SADC. This became a protracted exercise, only being partially completed in 2008 when an enlarged centralised Secretariat emerged at the headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana, effectively clustering what were previously Sector Coordinating Units into eight directorates. Further, in 2006 donor support was clustered into thematic groups, informed by the RISDP. These thematic groups of International Cooperating Partners have since been meeting regularly, often twice a year, to coordinate their support for SADC programmes. Although the development of the RISDP and the institutional restructuring were intended to streamline operations and better focus the regional integration agenda concerns have remained that the agenda is still too broad. This was a key observation of the review of the RISDP.

3.3 Selected Key SADC Plans and Strategies

Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020

The Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (Revised RISDP) 2015-2020 was endorsed by the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit in April 2015 in Harare, Zimbabwe, as the new blueprint that will guide the implementation of SADC programmes in the next five years. The Revised RISDP has four main priority areas:

- Industrial Development and Market Integration;
- Infrastructure in support of regional integration;
- Peace and Security Cooperation as a prerequisite for regional integration; and
- Special Programmes of regional dimension.

Before this latest revision, the RISDP was developed and approved by Summit in 2003 for a 15-year period, but was effectively implemented from 2005, thus giving an implementation timeframe of 2005-2020. The Revised RISDP provides a guiding framework for the last phase of the RISDP –

2015-2020. The scope and purpose of the Revised RISDP remain unchanged from those of the original document, except that emphasis has been placed on re-aligning existing priorities with resources allocation in terms of their relative importance and greater impact on regional integration.

Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063

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. It was approved by an Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of SADC that was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 29 April 2015.

The context preceding formulation and adoption of the strategy has been characterised by disappointing trends in SADC's intra-regional and global export content and economic growth that has done little to positively change human development in the region. Most SADC economies rely heavily on the performance of their primary commodities such as minerals and agricultural produce, leaving them vulnerable to the fluctuations of international commodity prices. The region has generally performed well in terms of growth in GDP, averaging three to five percent over the last two decades. Yet human development indices have been less satisfactory, with a combined average of 60 percent of the SADC populace still living in poverty.

Thus the primary orientation of the SADC Industrialization and Roadmap is the need for the structural transformation of the SADC region by way of industrialization, modernization, upgrading and closer regional integration. *The strategic thrust is a shift from reliance on resources and low-cost labour to increased investment and enhanced productivity of both labour and capital.* (SADC, 2015)

Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP)

The Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP) 2012-2027 is the region's framework for infrastructure development and coordination, approved by Summit in 2012 in Maputo, Mozambique. The Master Plan provides the strategic framework that guides the development of seamless and cost-effective transboundary infrastructure and outlines priority hard and soft infrastructure needs for the region. The strategic framework, known as Infrastructure Vision 2027, is anchored on six pillars – Energy; Transport; Information Communication Technologies; Meteorology; Trans-Boundary Water Resources; and Tourism (Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas), which constitute to the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Programme.

3.4 Some Salient Challenges and Opportunities for Possible Linkage with China

Some salient features of the SADC planning and implementation approach can be summarised as below and opportunities highlighted for possible linkage with China:

a) The policy planning in SADC is a collective process where decisions are made through consensus[1]. Legally binding policy instruments become effective upon ratification by two-thirds majority of the Member States;
b) Member States remain the key agents for implementation of the regional integration agenda through domestication of protocols, which are legal instruments of implementation of the SADC Treaty and provide a framework for action. SADC now has as many as 33 protocols,

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[1] SADC structure comprises the following institutions: the Summit of Heads of State & Government; Council of Ministers; Organ on Politics, Defence & Security Cooperation; Sectoral/Cluster Ministerial Committees; SADC Secretariat, Standing Committee of Officials, and SADC National Committees. With its chairpersonship held on a rotational basis, SADC applies the Troika system from Summit, the Organ, Council and the Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) as well as the Officials level. The SADC Troika System vests authority in the incumbent Chairperson, Incoming Chairperson who is the Deputy Chairperson at the time and the immediate Previous Chairperson to take quick decisions on behalf of SADC that would ordinarily be taken at policy meetings scheduled at intervals stipulated by the Articles 10, 11 and 13 of the Treaty. This also applies to the Troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and when combined, the two are referred to as the Double Troika. (see www.sadc.int)

with 26 of them ratified. However, there are deep-rooted discrepancies when it comes down to commitment to implementation by the Member States;

c) It requires a 75% consensus among Member States present at a Summit to change or amend a protocol. Protocols enter into force upon ratification by two-thirds of the signatory states. The procedure for ratification of protocols varies from country to country. For example, in some countries, legislation empowers the head of state or government such that once s/he signs, the protocol is effectively ratified while in other countries ratification is through an act of Parliament;

d) Trade liberalism in practice – most SADC economies which adopted structural adjustment programmes in the 1990s are yet to completely break-free of this planning system, nor have they completely shaken off the legacy. The planning systems are still much predicated on this approach, two decades after, with a strong influence of the European mostly former colonial powers, and their Western allies notably the US. The lessons from China are that even with its increased reliance on market forces, it has not abandoned its planned economy, maintaining a carefully controlled economic regime while employing strategic trade protectionism to hedge local industries from the potential destructive nature of liberalism; and

e) Industrialization is the latest rallying cry in SADC but resource commitment is yet to match the ambitions -- The SADC industrialization Strategy and Roadmap, initiated by Zimbabwe and adopted during her leadership of the organization in 2014/2015, is seen as the core mechanism for generating economic transformation in the region. However, only a few countries have followed this agenda with national industrialization policies of their own, informed by the regional policy, nor have any committed the necessary resources in pursuit of this dream. This is an area that China can potentially assist SADC Member States in, even starting from the level of experience sharing as well as helping to build industrial Special Economic Zones and the necessary infrastructure. This is a process that requires long term planning and commitment, which characteristics have been key factors in China's success story and the SADC region could do well to learn from her development experience and approach.

4. LESSONS FROM CHINESE ECONOMIC PLANNING SYSTEM

4.1 China's economic planning system

In his effort to modernise China into a world class, Chinese leader Mao Tse Tung followed the Soviet's style of economic planning. After an impressive record of the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), in 1953 Mao introduced the Five Year Plan (FYP), which was similar to Stalin's Five Year Plans. Stalin was at the time the leader of the USSR.

China is a socialist democracy (with Chinese principles) and as such economic planning plays a key role in socialist economies around the world. Economic policies in China are decided by the Communist Party of China (CPC) through relevant institutions such as the *Central Committee*, *Political Bureau* and the *National Congresses*. The government of the PRC derives from the CPC that is to say the party has a great influence on key decisions taken by the government be it in economic, political and social spheres. This means that the economic planning in China is centralised but the actual implementations of these policies and plans is decentralised in a way and is carried out through relevant institutions.

Decisions concerning the economy are made by the CPC which then mandates the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) to carry out the duties and consultations. The party also directs all its organs such as party secretaries to work towards implementing economic policies such as the FYP. At the government level the instructions come from the highest level that is the Central government to the provincial level, city, country up to the village level which all work together to towards economic planning and work towards achieving the economic goals. However, it should be noted that all government activities are under the CPC which also coordinates them in a way. This strategy has proved to be effective in the sense that there is inclusivity in policy planning as well as implementing.

Although the Chinese economy in the past years has changed solely from a planned economy to a market economy which is determined by the market forces, economic planning still takes place in China through various forms such as FYPs. Proper and efficient planning which also allows the economy to be determined by market forces has contributed immensely to China's impressive growth in a short period of time since it was founded in 1949. Now China is the world's second biggest economy and there are projections that in the foreseeable future it will surpass the United States of America and become the world's biggest economy.

China's economic blueprints are mainly midterm with a period of five years. The first FYP in China was for the period 1953-1957 after the country was founded in 1949. As noted by Vhumbunu (2012), the critical success factor of the Chinese development experience remains the ability and capability of the Chinese government to formulate development policies and strategies across all sectors in the form of FYPs through a balance of centralized planning and decentralized governance processes, notwithstanding the vastness of the country in terms of geographical extent, decentralized institutions of governance and a population of about 1.3 billion.

The key highlights in the first five year plan were in the areas of industrialisation, develop agricultural producers and to facilitate the socialist transformation of private industry and commerce. To date China has managed to achieve these goals with proper and effective monitoring of implementation of these goals by the CPC and the government through its relevant agencies and structures such as the NDRC.

In the year 1978, China then under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, initiated an economic overhaul which was to be the turning point of the Chinese economy by boosting trade and luring investment in China by becoming more economic friendly to the outside world when it introduced the Opening Up and Reform Policy in 1978. This policy mainly focused on opening China to the outside world and also encouraged the Chinese companies to compete globally and not just rely on the Chinese market. Successful initiatives of this policy can be seen to date from Chinese brands which have become household names internationally such as Huawei telecommunications and also major global companies such as Apple which have set up factories in China and in the end creating employment and accelerating industrialization.

For the past years since 1980 the economic planning in China has been characterised with the setting up of special economic zones (SEZs). SEZs have played a key role in the Chinese economy and have been a perfect example for other developing countries. SEZs are basically defined areas with favourable policies aimed at attracting investment. These areas can be closer to the ports, have tax incentives and other advantages with specific aim of luring investment. For example the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone which was established in 1980 as trial has been a good example to other developing countries which seek to follow this economic growth path.

4.2 Planning process

As highlighted earlier, major economic planning in China is done through the FYP and the latest is the 13th Five Year Plan which is for the period 2016 – 2020. Preparation of the FYP is usually done two years before it is announced.

The FYP after being crafted is then approved by the CPC through its Central Committee arm. The NDRC operating under State Council elaborates or explains broader details of the policy to the legislators.

What is a Five Year Plan?
China's five-year plans are blueprints containing the country's social, economic, and political goals. They encompass and intertwine with existing policies, regional plans, and strategic initiatives. A five-year plan signals the Chinese government's vision for future reforms and communicates this to other parts of the bureaucracy, industry players and Chinese citizens. It is a living document that goes through constant review and revision over the next five years. There will be revision and discussion before the full plan comes out.

Source:
http://www.apcoworldwide.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/Thought-Leadership/13-five-year-plan-think-piece.pdf?sfvrsn=2

4.3 Role of Planning

The economic set up of China is a unique one as it includes both characteristics of a planned economy and a market economy. FYPs are carried out in China but the economy is also greatly influenced by the market forces. From this it is safe to say that the FYP recently are now playing a guiding role to the economy.

To date the Chinese government through its relevant institutions has shown that it is indeed committed to the market economy whereby decisions are determined by market forces but the role of planning is still necessary as it plays an important role in as far as guiding the economy is concerned. The nature and process of the Opening Up Policy have in a certain way allowed the Chinese economy to embrace both the market economy and the planned economy characteristics. This has been effective in the sense that the market economy in China functions effectively being guided by government planning which plays a crucial role in economic development.

4.4 National Development and Reform Commission

Basically the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) is a macroeconomic management agency which operates under the State Council. The commission studies and formulates policies for economic and social development. The commission is also tasked with maintaining a balance of economic aggregates and guiding the overall economic system restructuring of China.

The NDRC has constantly been changed to allow it to respond to the changing environment. As rightly noted by Chow (2012), the organization of NDRC is a result of its historical development and not of rational design for the purpose of achieving its current important tasks. The NDRC has various strategic departments which allows it to operate in a more efficient and effective way and deal with various economic issues in a big country like China. The various departments includes: Department of Policy Studies, Department of Development Planning, Department of National Economy, Bureau of Economic Operations Adjustment, Department of Economic System Reform, Department of Fixed Asset Investment, Department of Foreign Capital and Overseas Investment, Department of Regional Economy, Department of Western Region Development, Department of North-eastern Region Revitalization, Department of Rural Economy, Department of Basic Industries, Department of Industry, Department of High-Tech Industry and Department of Resource Conservation and Environmental Protection. In addition the organization has what it calls the General Office which is basically tasked with the day-to-day operation of the organization.

The NDRC replaced the State Planning Commission (SPC) which was founded in the year 1952. The SPC was later renamed to State Development Planning Commission (SDPC) in 1998. The State Development Planning Commission (SDPC) was later changed to the NDRC in 2003 after it was merged with the State Council Office for Restructuring the Economic System (SCORES) and part of the State Economic and Trade Commission (SETC).

Main Functions of the NDRC

- To formulate and implement strategies of national economic and social development
- To monitor macroeconomic and social development trend and provide forecast
- To summarize and analyse fiscal and financial situation, participate in the formulation of fiscal, monetary and land policies, and formulate and implement price policies
- To direct, promote and coordinate the restructuring of economic system; to study major issues concerning the restructuring of economic systems and opening up to the outside world
- To plan the layout of key construction projects and productivity
- To push forward strategic economic restructuring
- To organize the compilation of plans for major functioning zones
- To maintain the aggregate balance and overall control of important commodities
- To coordinate social development policies with national economic development policies
- To promote the strategy of sustainable development
- To organize the formulation of key strategies
- To draft relevant laws and regulations concerning national economic and social development
- To organize and formulate plans for national economic mobilization
- To undertake day-to-day affairs of the State Defence Mobilization Commission
- To undertake other tasks assigned by the State Council

Source: National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/mfndrc/

4.5 Key lessons for SADC and Zimbabwe

For any country or region to enjoy economic development there should be robust mechanisms in place which will help in achieving the set targets. Against this background effective policy planning and coordination are the key drivers in economic development. China has effective policy planning and the African continent in particular SADC and Zimbabwe still has a lot to learn from the Chinese system of economic planning which has played a key role in positioning the country to be global economic giant it is today.

Leadership and Policy Planning in China

It is with no doubt that leadership and policy planning in the form of Five Year Plans have played an important role in determining the positive prevailing economic environment in China since they were introduced in 1953, but more importantly since 1978 when the reform era started. These success can largely be attributed to the visionary leadership of the CPC and all those involved. As noted by Ratliff (2004:19), the visionary trait of Chinese leadership is assisted by an orderly transition and succession system in governance that facilitates continuity in development while assuring a stable political system. From this it can be deduced that leadership which embraces continuity is one of the major reasons why economic policy planning system has been successful in China. Vhumbunu (2012), rightly notes that China has never had its reform process scuppered or interrupted by transitional politics from the leadership of Deng Xiaoping up to the current Xi Jinping leadership.

Consistency

China's effective implementation of its Five Year Plans (FYP) presents another important lesson for SADC and Zimbabwe. This of course can be done taking into consideration that China and Africa are different and both sides have their own advantages as well as disadvantages.

China has been constantly following its five year economic blue prints since it was first formulated in the year 1953 by Mao. This has been effective in the sense that it has helped the country to continue incorporating important issues from the previous blue prints and making adjustments if need be. Sadly this has not been the case for Zimbabwe in the sense that when a policy has expired or reached its life span it is put aside and entirely new policy is crafted not taking into consideration the success or failures of the previous blue print. Perhaps this has been a reason why Zimbabwe has crafted not less than 15 economic blue prints since independence in 1980 with a majority of them failing to achieve the intended targets since they lack consistency. In other words nothing is borrowed from the previous policies. Does the Chinese economic policy consistency not provide an important lesson on economic planning for Africa and Zimbabwe in particular?

Review

The Five Year Plans (FYP) of China during the first stages of crafting go through various organizations and people for review. There is wide consultation before the plan is eventually adopted. This initiative is important in the sense that encourages various organizations to participate and as such they can easily identify with the policy which is not the case in many SADC countries and in Zimbabwe in particular whereby it is not surprising to note that many individuals are not familiar even with economic blue prints of their respective countries. As noted by Vhumbunu (2012), vigorous participatory review and revision of the FYPs at policy level, technical level and stakeholder level throughout the course of implementation certainly assist in the continuous focusing of various targeted policy initiatives and identification of appropriate interventions for the achievement or attainment of policy targets.

Policy planning in China is very effective and constantly reviewed so as to respond to the changing environment. This has not be the case for many African countries Zimbabwe included. Policy planning in many African states has not been that flexible as compared to that of China and the continent still has a lot to learn from the world economic giant. Reshuffling of Ministries in order to complement their economic plans is another major lesson which Zimbabwe can learn from the Chinese system. This Chinese tradition of reshuffling ministries is necessary so as to promote efficiency. For example in 2013, the China restructured its government for the 7th time since reforms after 1978 (Morning Star, 2013). Another good example of the efficient restructuring is the NDRC itself which underwent a series of changes in the previous years to enable it to function properly and respond to the economic needs in line with the economic plan of the country.

Inclusive

Involving various strategic players in economic planning presents another vital lesson for SADC and Zimbabwe in particular. Without the private sectors and other major players in the economic sector it is very difficult for an economic policy to achieve its intended targets. In China the CPC includes various strategic stake holders in economic planning such as the National Development Reform Commission (NDRC) which has wide knowledge and experience in economic planning. This has not been the case in Zimbabwe whereby in most cases an economic blueprint is crafted by a political party without assistance from technical people and such when an economic blueprint is eventually introduced it is viewed by many as political document which is entirely not true.

Moreover, in Africa the private sector play an important role in as far as policy implementation is concerned. The private sector also in a way helps the government of the day in achieving the desired targets of a policy by actually implementing and explaining it to the general citizens but it is unfortunate to note that in many countries these important players such as the banking and constructing sectors are excluded in economic planning but are expected to support the very policies which the government would have crafted. This provides yet another important lesson for Zimbabwe and SADC from the Chinese economic planning which engage technical and experienced people in crafting economic policies. This is important since economic policies directly affect citizens so including them is not only proper but plays an important role in making sure that the desired goals of an economic policy are met since everyone will be working in the same direction as seen from the Chinese experience with FYPs.

Coordination

Regular monitoring and evaluation is another key characteristic of economic policies and coordination in China. For example the FYPs in China are constantly reviewed and evaluated by major players such as the central, provincial and local government. The Five Year Plans (FYP) are reviewed usually between their third and fifth years that is to say in their final years so as to asses if they have made any impact and adjust if the need arises. This exercises also plays an important role in determining the next FYP.

As mentioned earlier economic planning at the SADC level is coordinated by the SADC secretariat with its offices located in Botswana. Currently the region is pursuing a regional integration strategy and stands guided by various blue prints meant to guide and ultimately achieve this strategy. These blue prints include the revised RISDP and RIDMP and are supported by the Directorate on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment and many other relevant institutions. The RISDP is long term blueprint from the year 2005-2020 and the revised RISDP from 2015-2020.

An important lesson which perhaps SADC as a regional block can learn from the Chinese experience is to do with coordination. In China regional policies are decided by the central and local governments are always in line with the national strategy. For example regional economic zones such as the Shanghai Pudong New Area and Guangzhou Nansha New Area in developed areas and others which are in least developed central and western areas. This coordination has helped by reducing the gap of development between regions in China. Preferential policies are also given to the under-developed regions as can be seen from the Pingtan pilot zone in Fujian. This poses an important lesson for SADC as it has faced some difficulties in coming up with coordinated policies which are accepted by all countries so as to address the gap between the rich and poor countries. For example South Africa still remains an economic power house in the region. It has virtually reduced other countries within SADC as supermarkets for its finished products.

For Zimbabwe the issue of well-coordinated policies provides another major lesson in as much as economic planning is concerned. In China leadership and smooth coordination of national economic policy planning up to its implementation level has been one of the major reasons as to why economic planning in China has been a huge success over the past years and it has also played critical role in positioning China as a global economic giant. As such this provides an important lesson for Africa and Zimbabwe in particular.

Realism

SADC as an organization has medium term blueprints which it then breaks down into shortterm periods for example of five years for easy implementation and management. An important lesson which the regional body can learn from the economic planning and implementation from China is setting of realistic targets with realistic time frames. The regional body has been criticised by many for setting unrealistic targets. For example SADC is still to achieve the Customs Union which it had envisaged to achieve by the year 2010, according to the RISDP. The delay in achieving the Customs Union also means that the targets of establishing the Market Union and eventually the Monetary Union have been affected. In order to come up with reasonable and attainable targets SADC must learn to include various important stakeholders for example banks which will have a greater influence in helping the region to achieve its targets such as that of the monetary union.

Administration and Decentralization

Proper administration and decentralization policy management is another important lesson presented to regional bodies in as much as policy governance and control is concerned. China also has decentralization fiscal system to allow local governments to be innovative in revenue generation, investment promotion and smooth implementation of policy programmes and projects locally (Xu, 2011). This can present yet another important lesson for Zimbabwe as far as policy planning and implementation is concerned. Currently Zimbabwe's economic policy planning system is centralized which in away will also have a negative bearing on the implementation part.

Smooth planning accompanied by proper administration by the Chinese provides another key lesson for SADC. China has managed to overcome challenges associated with big regions as far as policy planning and implementation is concerned. These challenges can be in the areas of diversity which leads to different interests and priorities. China has tackled this by putting robust administration characterised with effective institutions which coordinate policies in the various regions of China. This provides an important lesson for Africa and the SADC region in particular which also in a way has different economies which obviously has got different needs with different priorities.

This key lesson obviously can be done taking into account the differences between China and SADC as coping entirely what China has done and try to implement it directly might not yield the intended results. Against this background it is important that SADC draw the key lessons of economic planning from China and try to put them in the African context for them to work.

Continuity

Policy continuity is another factor which has immensely contributed to the economic growth of China. This presents an important lesson for Zimbabwe which has implemented not less than fifteen economic blueprints in a space of 36 years with some of them being abandoned without achieving their intended results. For example the Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) was abandoned in 2008 but initially was supposed to run up to 2012. China has been consistently implementing its FYP since 1953 up to date. This is to say that an efficient and democratic succession system in China allows for continuity in policy planning and implementation at the same time maintaining stability.

In Africa, political instability in some countries has really affected economic planning and at the end of the day affecting economic development. This is also to say that economic planning is affected by political issues. As such Africa should learn from China on how to separate economic issues with politics. Economic planning should done and implemented without paying particular attention to politics. Governments voted into power must follow what would have been planned before by the previous government and of course if there is need to adjust they can always go back to the drawing board and not entirely reversing the economic plans which would have been made before. This is an important in the sense that it promotes consistency which lacks in many African countries and Zimbabwe included in as far as economic planning is concerned.

Currently China is implementing its 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) with more emphasis on maintaining economic growth and social stability while continuing with reform efforts. This alone poses as a great example for SADC and Zimbabwe as far as policy continuity is concerned as the 13th FYP can be viewed as a complimentary of the 12th FYP which was under the theme of “rebalancing the economy, ameliorating social inequality and protecting the environment”. Can this not pose an important lesson for Zimbabwe’s economic policy planning system?

Policy clarity and harmonisation

Proper explanation of economic policies and how they will be implemented is a major lesson which Zimbabwe can learn from China. For example, China’s economic policies are well planned and clarified. However, sadly this has not been the case for economic planning in Zimbabwe where some policies are not properly explained. A good example of this is the indigenization policy, which was not properly clarified during its inception phase and in the end discouraged investors and those who were already participating in various economic sectors of the country. It is therefore prudent to borrow from the Chinese how their economic policies are clarified and implemented as this leaves no room for unnecessary panic and speculation especially from the outsiders.

In terms of policy harmonisation, China presents yet another important lesson to SADC, and Zimbabwe in particular, in terms of policy planning. In the past few years China has managed to undertake effective policy planning and coordination through extensive consultation, and vigorous and rigorous review. This has been remarkable considering the fact that China has a very huge population of about 1.3 billion in 22 different provinces. Perhaps an important lesson which SADC and Zimbabwe must learn is the need to quickly harmonize diverse legal systems, and governance structures from the national and regional level. This can be done through cross-sector harmonization and standardization of laws on regional practices such as trade laws and investment laws. This with no doubt will improve economic policy planning in Zimbabwe and the SADC secretariat at large which is in charge of crafting and implementing economic blueprints for the region.

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR LINKAGES BETWEEN ZIMBABWE/SADC AND CHINESE PLANNING SYSTEMS

5.1 Introduction

According to Vhumbunu (2012), the bedrock of sustainable development is policy prudence, together with the existence of capable systems and structures for effective policy planning and coordination. It is important to note that Africa's familiarity with development planning dates back to colonial times. Several African countries had national development plans in the 1960s and before. These include several members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) such as Angola, Democratic Republic Congo (then known as Zaire), Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia (UNECA, 2011).

However, Africa's experience in development planning has been fraught with challenges, including lack of ownership of development programmes, over-ambitious unrealistic targets, and lack of capacity to put development plans into effect. Most of the challenges are attributed to deficiencies in the plans, institutional and bureaucratic weaknesses (including inadequate planning resources), exogenous shocks, and political factors.

It is important to draw lessons from how China has been able to maintain and sustain an orderly planning system that ensures smooth development processes that are necessary for stability and growth. The critical success factor of the Chinese development experience remains the ability and capability of the Chinese government to formulate development policies and strategies across all sectors in the form of Five-Year Development Plans (FYPs) through a balance of centralized planning and decentralized governance processes. This ensures that the details and thrust of the national development mission, vision, goals, objectives and intentions are not only shared across all levels of government but also well-coordinated for effective delivery. This is not an easy task in such a populous and expansive polity.

This paper postulates that there are several opportunities for building on the blossoming relations between China and Zimbabwe, and China and SADC. In other words, through working together Africa and the SADC region can transform some of the planning challenges faced by the latter into game-changing opportunities that could result in a win-win situation for both sides. For instance, there is scope for a win-win scenario in the energy sector given that China is concerned about depending on too few energy sources while SADC – and the rest of Africa – has rich natural gas and oil reserves. Other areas of possible cooperation include in industrial development and the attendant infrastructure requirements. In this section, the paper seeks to identify the opportunities presented by the Chinese planning system that Zimbabwe and other SADC countries can take advantage of.

5.2 Opportunities for Zimbabwe

The Chinese political system and public administration is a progressive blend of centralized planning and decentralized governance. This has been complemented by the establishment of capable and able institutions to coordinate the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and national development plans at all levels of government within and between the central government, the 23 provinces, the five autonomous regions, the four provincial-level municipalities, the 333 municipality-level units, the 2,862 county-level units and the 41,636 town-level units across the width and breath of China (Xu, 2011).

The Communist Party of China (CPC) is central in the national planning process and it provides guidance and direction to the whole policy planning cycle and issues contained in the plans, through its key organs, that is, the Central Committee and the Political Bureau (APCO, 2010). Therein lies one of the opportunities for Zimbabwe. The southern African country could utilise its strong links with the CPC to learn how China undertakes its development planning. There is need to strengthen cooperation between, not only the ruling parties of ZANU PF and the CPC, but also between national institutions such as Zimbabwe's Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion and National

Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China. Such cooperation may take the form of exchange programmes where Zimbabwean officials are seconded to the NDRC to learn from the Chinese economic planning system. Alternatively, NDRC officials can be seconded to Zimbabwe to assist in the latter's planning system.

There are also vast opportunities for NDRC to offer structured training to officials from the Zimbabwean government and state-owned enterprises. This should be a crucial first step towards the creation of Zimbabwe's own planning body along the lines of the NDRC. Currently the planning function in Zimbabwe is spearheaded by the Office of the President and Cabinet, working with the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion. There is need to revive Zimbabwe's National Planning Commission borrowing from Zimbabwe's past experience and the Chinese experience. This will ultimately go a long way in ensuring that China-Zimbabwe economic cooperation is strengthened and well-coordinated. This is expected to remove existing bottlenecks in the consummation of cooperation agreements.

As a result of such increased cooperation between China and Zimbabwe in the planning domain, Zimbabwe could benefit from China's globalisation initiatives such as "Go Out Policy" and the "One Belt, One Road Strategy". The Go Out Policy is China's current strategy to encourage its enterprises to invest overseas. This strategy dovetails with Zimbabwe's – and SADC's current push towards industrialisation. Zimbabwe should take advantage of this Chinese policy as a low-hanging fruit to advance its own economic blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). One of the four ZIMASSET pillars is Value Addition and Beneficiation, an area where Zimbabwe could benefit a lot from Chinese experience in both planning and implementation.

Closely linked to the above, another opportunity presented by linkages between planning systems in China and Zimbabwe is in the area of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) where the former has vast experience. Zimbabwe has just enacted an SEZ Act, which seeks to give the green light and legal basis for the creation of SEZs. The new law will form the basis for clustering, including value-chain creation so that firms can exploit the benefits of external spinoffs such as being located close to input suppliers, repair shops and financial institutions. There is need for Zimbabwe to promote strategic joint-venture partnerships with China that facilitate knowledge and technology transfer. Investment partnerships should facilitate value-addition of Zimbabwe's – and SADC's – natural resources, especially in the mining and agricultural sector.

China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative is the flagship foreign policy of President Xi Jinping. It has the potential to open a raft of new development opportunities for African infrastructure, mining and power projects. The extent to which the initiative covers Africa is still a little unclear but it appears to cover North Africa and parts of East Africa, with Kenya acting as the gateway to other parts of Africa through its modern "Maritime Silk Road".

Opportunities for Zimbabwe and other countries in SADC include access to the Silk Road Fund and other facilities made available under the initiative. The Silk Road Fund was established in Beijing in December 2014, with investment from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, China Investment Corporation, Export-Import Bank of China and China Development Bank. The fund mainly provides investment and financing support for trade and economic cooperation and connectivity under the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.

In collaboration with domestic and international enterprises and financial institutions, the fund is designed to promote common development and prosperity of China and other countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. It is a medium to long-term development and investment fund, and is dedicated to supporting infrastructure, resources and energy development, industrial capacity cooperation and financial cooperation in countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative to ensure medium and long-term financial sustainability and reasonable returns on investment.

Another financing avenue for strengthening planning capacity for Zimbabwe as well as increasing the country's ability to benefit from the One Belt, One Road initiative is the China Africa Development Fund (CADFUND). Although the practical application of the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative is still developing, Chinese state owned enterprises have already started the process of seeking approval from Chinese banks for outbound investments. They have been preparing business plans for investment in the Belt and Road projects and countries. It is therefore opportune for the Zimbabwean government and Zimbabwean firms to position themselves for this initiative and one way of doing that is to engage their Chinese counterparts for planning purposes.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, planning linkages between Zimbabwe and China could provide an opportunity for Zimbabwe to learn from China's pragmatism. China was pragmatic enough to borrow positive aspects of the capitalist open economy and blend these with the positive traits of socialism, and apply these to their own situation. Thus the ideological underpinning of Chinese development is neither capitalist nor socialist (Bolesta, 2007), but rather it is conceptually positioned between a liberal open economy and a centrally planned model. Zimbabwe should adopt the same pragmatism towards its planning – in fact, the southern African country should embrace the attitude that "it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches mice". Learning from the Chinese planning experience, Zimbabwe could benefit from global capital but lay down clears "rules of engagement" with all investors, whether Western or from the East.

5.3 Opportunities for SADC

The Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) as the only multi-sector blueprint for SADC provides the best option for a holistic regionally focused cooperation with China, cascading from the African Union's Agenda 2063 through the FOCAC multilateral framework. Since its inception in 2000, FOCAC as a multilateral platform has provided two main functions. Firstly, it has provided a platform to "strengthen consultation and expand cooperation within a pragmatic framework", and secondly, to "promote political dialogue and economic cooperation with a view to seeking mutual reinforcement and cooperation". It is a partnership that has been mutually reviewed and strengthened over time, bringing about many notable advantages.

While cooperation at the Regional Economic Community (RECs) level provides an attractive option to augment bilateral cooperation, there are some potential challenges that would have to be grappled with in upgrading China Africa cooperation to the sub-regional level. Such constraints would mirror some of the same challenges that Africa is facing vis-à-vis regional integration. For example, none of the RECs in Africa, while at different stages of integration, have advanced enough to have supra-national status with legal mandate to act on behalf of their Member States. What that means is while the RECs such as SADC can facilitate the marketing of infrastructure projects, contractual matters would still have to be dealt with at an individual Member State level. Further, many African countries, while active members of RECs, are still struggling to shake off the influence of their former colonisers (Madakufamba, 2015).

China's pledge to focus on helping Africa to build cross-border infrastructure projects resonates well with SADC and Africa's current aspirations and priorities. This is particularly important given that weak and disconnected infrastructure is one of the biggest challenges hindering regional integration and development in Africa. In the case of SADC, its revised integration roadmap for 2015-2020 identifies infrastructure development as one of the four strategic pillars for regional development – the other three being industrial development and market integration; social and human development programmes; and peace and security. The SADC integration roadmap endorses the RIDMP sector blueprint.

The infrastructure sector master plan offers many opportunities for Chinese businesses, for example through the flagship special development project, the North South Corridor project. The North South Corridor project is a comprehensive multimodal initiative that covers road, rail, sea-ports, border posts, energy infrastructure improvement, trade and transport facilitation and carries over 60 percent of regional trade, serving eight countries (Botswana, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and interconnecting eight east–west regional transport corridors.

Zimbabwe's geographic position is particularly important for this multimodal project as the country is right at the core providing north-south and east-west linkages. The development of railways and roads in Zimbabwe therefore becomes critical in providing seamless infrastructure to the rest of the corridor Member States. SADC can draw from China's experience with large infrastructure.

6. CHALLENGES FOR LINKAGES BETWEEN ZIMBABWE/SADC AND THE CHINESE PLANNING SYSTEM

6.1 Introduction

Relations between China and Africa have grown stronger and have managed to navigate through difficult times and conditions such as during the wars in southern Africa in the 1970s and more recently during the global economic recession in 2008. Examples of the growing relations between the two can be seen from the subsequent launch of the FOCAC in 2000 and more strengthened by the Silk Road Initiative as already seen in Kenya from the construction of the Mombasa – Nairobi railway line. While SADC and Zimbabwe have a lot to learn and gain from its linkages with China it should be noted these linkages may encounter challenges or are already affected by challenges in areas such as economic planning because of the differences in nature of China and Africa. However, the positives far outweigh the negatives when one critically analyses the relationship between the two in the area of economic cooperation.

6.2 Challenges for Zimbabwe, SADC & China

Absence of a clear policy of engagement

The main challenge in the relations between China and Zimbabwe, and China and SADC in terms of economic planning is the fact that there is no clear policy of engagement from the Zimbabwe and SADC side. The only official and recognised forum is conducted through the FOCAC and China-Africa Policy. Therefore, there is need to jointly develop a policy paper between the two parties. This will go a long way in strengthening relations, in particular in the areas of economic cooperation. However, lately it is interesting to note that the SADC Secretariat is engaging the Government of the People's Republic of China so as to come up with a Framework Agreement on Economy, Trade, Investment and Technical Cooperation. If this is done urgently it will go a long way in harmonising SADC and China policies as far as economic planning between the two is concerned.

Different priorities

Another challenge which may be encountered in the area of cooperation in economic planning between SADC and China is the issue to do with priorities. The SADC secretariat might have its own priorities which may differ to those of China because of the difference in economic development. Resultantly a lack of urgency in action may stem from the mismatch in priorities. This can also be due to the reason that SADC is made up of 15 countries which might have different perspectives in engaging China in economic planning. For example Swaziland which is the current chair of SADC does not have diplomatic relations with China instead it has relations with Taiwan. From this fact alone challenges between SADC and China in the areas of economic planning can be noticed in the region due to various diverse opinions but again it is something which can be solved by developing a clear policy paper of engagement .

Diverse economic planning systems

In addition another challenge which may be encountered in the area of economic planning between China and Zimbabwe and indeed in many African countries is the fact that currently economic planning in Zimbabwe still has characteristics of British style of planning which is the country's former coloniser until Zimbabwe got its independence in the year 1980. This type of planning does not blend well with how the Chinese conduct their economic planning. It is with no doubt that colonization left a whole lot of influences in the African continent and Zimbabwe is no exception to that as can be seen from how the government conducts its business and depends greatly on institutions such as the Bretton Woods twins. British style of planning and relying more on international institutions for bail out have really affected the economic planning in Zimbabwe as seen from programmes which were initiated by the IMF and World Bank such as the ESAP in 1991 which to a certain extent led to disastrous effects and more recently the Staff Monitored Programme. This is in sharp contrast to how the Chinese conduct their planning and how they have developed. China has developed by using the resources at its disposal and without much reliance on institutions such as the IMF and World Bank.

Moreover, economic planning in Zimbabwe has been on a short to medium term basis not that consistent and clear as compared to that of China (see section 2. Zimbabwe Economic Policy Framework and Planning System). This poses another challenge in the area of economic planning. Zimbabwe since independence has crafted not less than 15 economic blue prints and has abandoned some of them along the way such as the Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS).This has not been the case with China which has been over the past years constantly implementing its Five Year Plans since 1953. Therefore, policy inconsistency from the Zimbabwean side is another factor which may affect the linkages between Zimbabwe and China in economic planning.

Differences in political structures

Another factor which may affect the linkages between China and SADC and China and Zimbabwe in the areas of economic planning is the issue of the political structure in many SADC countries. Political systems between China and Africa are very different. China is a socialist democracy with the CPC at the helm whereas Zimbabwe is a constitutional democracy which holds its elections in every five years. This means that economic policies are crafted by the party which is currently in power that is to say the government of the day. This also means that economic policies and planning may change depending on the view of the government of the day which is an unlikely in the situation China. A good example of this situation can be drawn from 2008 in Zimbabwe. During this period, there was an inclusive government in Zimbabwe which consisted of three political parties with entirely different opinions in economic and political policies.

Competition

Competition from former African colonisers and in particular Western countries is another challenge which may threaten cooperation between China, SADC and Zimbabwe in the areas of economic planning. China’s massive penetration in African countries in particular Zimbabwe has really irked western countries to the extent that western countries have stepped up their criticism of China’s policies in Africa while at the same time reviewing their own strategies in order to compete effectively with China’s influence. These continued efforts to derail China Africa cooperation is another challenge which might affect policy planning between China, SADC and Zimbabwe in the economic sphere.

Legal instruments

Another problem which may affect economic planning between China and SADC and Zimbabwe is in the area of signing pacts or cooperation plans at regional and national level. While SADC can facilitate agreements with China it cannot sign any meaningful pact with China on behalf of a particular country and the entire region without consulting first since it does not have supra national powers to do so. Another challenge which can emerge from this scenario is the fact that China will have to sign multiple agreements with different countries in the region even if it includes the same issue. For example if Zimbabwe and Zambia intends to construct a railway line to link the two countries it means that the SADC Secretariat cannot sign the agreement on behalf of Zambia and Zimbabwe and it also entails that China has to sign the same agreement with Zambia and Zimbabwe separately for the same project which may take time. From this challenge the issue of sovereignty also comes into play since countries in southern Africa fear losing their sovereignty to institutions such as SADC.

Different targets

Issues to do with time frames is another challenge which may affect economic cooperation between China, SADC and Zimbabwe. These parties when they cooperate they may have different time frames due to the difference in nature of the economies involved, in which they want certain projects to be commenced and completed. For example China's economic planning is done in five year phases through the Five Year Plans, whereas SADC and Zimbabwe's broad economic planning is done or guided by continental goals such as industrialization, continental free trade area in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Conflicts and political instability

It is generally agreed the world over that peace is a pre requisite for development. As such it should be noted that conflicts and political instability in some SADC countries such as DRC, Lesotho and Mozambique poses greater risks and challenges in the area of economic planning. No meaningful economic cooperation can take place in a country or region that is not politically stable. These conflicts are usually caused by divergent views between different groups in a country.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

Southern Africa has a shared historical experience with the People's Republic of China in taking up arms to achieve liberation, and a shared understanding of the interaction and differences between political independence and economic development. The relationship between the two sides is nurtured in this shared experience through the values and vision of their founding fathers, Zhou Enlai and Julius Nyerere, respectively (Johnson, 2011). The two leaders were instrumental in establishing the close relations and linkages that blossomed and expanded to neighbouring countries following Tanganyika's independence from colonial rule in December 1961; and they shared common values and vision of people-centred socio-economic development, of self-determination, and partnership among independent nations. They planted the seeds that took root in the liberation struggle and achieved the eventual political independence of all of southern Africa, including, finally, the end of apartheid in South Africa 30 years later, in 1994.

The 30-year period of close collaboration and shared commitment laid a firm foundation for the development of modern relations between China and southern Africa. This relationship has deepened and strengthened over the past decade through China's commitment to the goals and targets of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and Africa's dedication to overcoming the colonial divisions that created 54 different countries on the continent and very uneven development. This unity is being achieved through the ever-closer integration of multiple African states into Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as SADC. The RECs are the building blocks towards the ultimate goal of an African Economic Community as agreed by African leaders more than 20 years ago and now under construction.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese leaders have attached great importance to the relations between China and Africa, and have worked out a series of principles and policies for the development of China-Africa relations. In 1996, the Chinese government put forward a five-point strategy for a long-term relationship with Africa that is the foundation of China's Africa policy. China announced plans in 2003 to shape this partnership based on long-term stability, equality and mutual benefit, stressing that there is no intention to impose ideology, social system or mode of development.

The Chinese and African leaders who met in Beijing in 2006 at the first Summit of FOCAC proclaimed a new type of strategic partnership. The Beijing Action Plan that emerged from that summit provided the roadmap for 21st century relations, including political and economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in international affairs, social development, human resources, education and health, environmental protection, tourism, culture, media, and people-to-people exchanges.

China's engagement with Africa is premised on a clear strategic framework, which, in turn, is guided by a strong planning infrastructure. The overall lesson from the accelerated development in China since 1978 stands out to be that policy governance over a complex and diverse polity would essentially achieve meaningful success only when driven by effective policy planning and policy coordination. From the above, it can be seen clearly that the pace of economic development in Zimbabwe and regional integration in southern Africa can be accelerated through effective policy planning and policy coordination rooted within competent administrative structures.

A major highlight of the Chinese planning system is the consultative nature of policy-making and policy implementation as well as extensive review and revision of FYPs, together with active engagement between policy-makers and think tanks. If adopted, such a system and process can contribute to policy enrichment in individual SADC countries and the region as a whole. It is the coordination of the various regions and provinces, and the aggregation of conflicting demands and interests across the breath and width of an expansive and populous country like China that SADC should emulate. This is being achieved through an optimum balance between centralization and decentralization, all made possible by how a system progressively distributes power and authority over public policy formulation and policy implementation.

One of the major weaknesses of Zimbabwe's and SADC's planning system since independence has been piecemeal approach to economic policies coupled with a low implementation rate. As noted in Section 2, the country has had no less than 15 economic blueprints in a period of 33 years. The major challenge has been that one economic policy is discarded a few months into implementation and is replaced by another without assessing the achievements or bottlenecks of the previous policy. The government has tended to "throw away the baby with the bath water" when all it needed would have been a simple recalibration of the policies/targets.

The diversity of SADC Member States, be it in terms of levels of development or colonial regimes and practices (insofar as it relates to such factors as cultural and linguistical legacies, mindset, legal systems, etc.) present as much opportunities as challenges for cooperation with countries such as China. For example, while the diversity that makes up SADC may be celebrated as a strength, it has often presented major headaches when it comes down to the realities of negotiations and the practicalities of implementation of regional commitments, as such differences often add to financial and time costs or even more complexities where Member States follow different legal procedures for domestication of legal instruments such as protocols.

In some cases, if not in the majority, political and economic ties with European former colonial powers and the US remain strong. As much as SADC continues to strive for a political and economic identity, interference from former colonial metropoles remain evident, whether overt or covert. Furthermore, the dominance of donor influence on the SADC budget and therefore the planning system of the regional body continues to shape the nature and direction of the regional integration agenda and with it what becomes the regional development priorities.

All these are key factors that would have to be taken into consideration and therefore grappled with when shaping the cooperation framework between SADC and China. They are factors for example, that will continue to determine the level of cohesion within SADC, and thus ultimately the development landscape of the region with ramifications across the economic, political and security settings in the medium to long term.

As mentioned in a previous section, another highlight of China's development strategy is the initiative to establish new routes linking Asia, Africa and Europe – a new "Silk Road economic belt" linking China to Europe through Central Asia; and the "Maritime Silk Road" that links Chinese ports with the African coast and through the Suez Canal to Europe. China's vision for the overland Silk Road Economic Belt, and the Maritime Silk Road by sea is expected to change the world political and economic landscape through rapid development of infrastructure and transport corridors of countries along the routes. The initiative presents several opportunities to the SADC region, including access to markets through the proposed new infrastructure. However, the key to tap into such opportunities demand that SADC and its member states come up with proper plans that in sync with China's vision of a 21st century Silk Road.

7.2 Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations for strengthening between the Chinese planning system and those for Zimbabwe and SADC.

7.2.1 Zimbabwe

National Planning Commission

There is need to resuscitate the National Planning Commission which will act as the central planning agency covering all socio-economic sectors. The Commission should benefit from a strong working relationship with the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China. The cooperation should, among others, involve capacity building by NDRC in the areas of policy design, policy implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Continuity of policies

To address the issue of lack of continuity of economic policies, the Zimbabwean government should embrace a system of conducting regular reviews of policy implementation along the lines of China Five Year Plans (FYPs). Now implementing its 13th FYP, China has constantly reviewed progress in implementation of its development agenda, reviewing targets were necessary and retaining those aspects that have worked. This has ensured that the country's development trajectory has been an incremental process, with one FYP building on the successes of the previous one.

Pragmatism

As mentioned in Section 5 (Opportunities for Linkages between Zimbabwe/SADC and Chinese Planning systems), Zimbabwe could learn from China's pragmatism by borrowing the positive aspects of the capitalist open economy and blending these with the positive traits of socialism. The southern African country should embrace the attitude that "it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches mice". This pragmatism would be supported by clear "rules of engagement" with all investors, whether Western or from the East. In other words, any investors should know the dos and don'ts of doing business in Zimbabwe and the rules/policies/regulations should be consistently applied.

Inclusivity

There is need to ensure that all key stakeholders such as business are included during the formulation of policies. Zimbabwe's planning would benefit by borrowing from the example of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which is a political advisory body in China. The CPPCC consists of delegates from a range of political parties and organisations, as well as independent members. The proportion of representation of the various parties is determined by an agreement negotiated among the parties. The largest and dominant party in the CPPCC is the Communist Party of China which has about one third of the seats.

Role of think tanks.

Governments and organizations both in China and Africa should fund research that contributes to understanding China's engagement in Africa and addresses issues that exist in China-Africa relations. Zimbabwe should form partnerships with research institutions whose research can be used to inform policies. This is one area that the Chinese have used to maximum advantage. The Chinese government has shown interest in Africa, a development that has seen the creation of African studies centres across the country as well as funding of research projects, collaborative works, conferences, and so on.

7.2.2 SADC

Pursuant to a cooperative framework with China, SADC along with other African RECs should push an agenda for the development of cross border infrastructure to attract new industries as the centre-piece of their relations with China at the sub-regional levels as this would likely bring about many advantages including attracting large-scale Chinese investment while at the same time pushing closer to reality the longstanding aspirations of integrating the African continent. This would also be a departure from the current overly donor dependent ties with the European former colonial powers and the US, a relationship that is yet to bring about the desired progressive developmental change in the region and the majority of its Member States. The multilateral cooperation at the RECs level would not be meant to replace but rather augment bilateral cooperation.

While the development of industrial parks to beneficiate SADC and Africa's natural resources is the development path of choice at the moment, there are some critical challenges that would still need to be overcome to fully exploit available opportunities. There is widespread criticism on China's economic cooperation with minerals-rich African countries as they label the Chinese capital "minerals-guaranteed loans" or that the type of cooperation is based on an "infrastructure-minerals-swap" model. This is a matter that needs addressing.

However, there is no denying the fact that the arrival of China and other BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa on the development scene has no doubt further democratized access to capital as well as widened options for Africa in general and SADC in particular. In theory, there is nothing wrong with Africa using its natural resources to leverage capital from countries such as China and the rest of the BRICS. The problem only arises when those resources are given away at well below their true value. First and foremost, it is therefore, imperative that African countries take the initiative to audit the value of their natural resources so that any concessions are done at the market value of such resources. Only that way can Africa guarantee today's development without compromising on development opportunities for future generations.

Secondly, the initiative to know what is the value of Africa's natural resources should be taken by Africa itself, and not by China or any other country for that matter. This calls for visionary leadership on the continent.

Thirdly, Africa is receiving increasing attention from the major economic powers, China included. Whereas in the past, the only source of capital was through the West, the arrival of China and other BRICS has broadened choices for African countries. So, armed with the knowledge of the value of what Africa has in its resources, the continent can negotiate the best deals with any potential investor from this now widened choice.

Fourthly, one has to appreciate that some mistakes have already been made in the past by giving away undervalued concessions, through omission or commission, not only to Chinese businesses but even more so, and for a longer time, to Western businesses. It will require some painful decisions to correct such mistakes, and magnanimity on the part of the benefiting businesses to accept that such imbalances have to be corrected for the good of the continent. It's not too late to do that for the sake of inclusive development! All it takes is valiant leadership.

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