



**MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, POSTAL AND ICTs
MANGOCHI, MALAWI
21st NOVEMBER 2014**

The Meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Communications, Postal and ICT was convened on the 21st November in Mangochi, Malawi. The Ministers' meeting was preceded by the Meeting of the SADC Senior Officials convened from the 19th to 20th November. The Meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture of Malawi. The Ministers' Meeting was officially opened by RT. Honourable Saulos Klaus Chilima, the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi and was attended by Honourable Ministers from SADC Member States.

In his remarks during the Opening Ceremony, the RT. Honourable Saulos Klaus Chilima, the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi stated that it is a vision for SADC that an affordable Information and Communication infrastructure is the foundation upon which Southern African Renaissance can be built on and sustained. He said ICT if harnessed can contribute significantly to the economic development of countries and facilitate the provision of better life for the citizens. He indicated that ICT can compensate for inadequate infrastructure such as bad roads and slow postal services allowing information to move freely and making markets more efficient and unleashing entrepreneurship within the citizenry. He said, "All this has a direct impact on economic growth: an extra 10 phones per 100 people in a typical developing country boosts GDP growth by 0.8 percentage points, according to the World Bank". He also indicated that there are a number of technologies, like the mobile money service, that have been penetrating Sub-Saharan Africa at an exponential rate. He expressed his wish that the Ministers' Meeting should reveal some of the trends happening in SADC region and also trigger actions from various stakeholders towards improvements of ICT penetration and usage in the respective Member States. He concluded by urging all SADC Ministers and Delegates to engage in honest, upfront and forward thinking discussion in order to spearhead innovations in ICT that others can learn from using available resources.

Mr. Remigious Makumbe the Director of Infrastructure and Services of the SADC, who was representing the Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr. Stergomona Lawrence Tax, extended best wishes to the Ministerial Meeting saying she was looking forward to the outcomes of the deliberations which will guide the SADC Secretariat's facilitation role of the ICT agenda in the region. He applauded the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) for supporting and guiding SADC ICT and Postal programmes and also appreciated efforts of the SADC Secretariat and its Implementing Agencies namely; Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA), Southern Africa Telecommunication Association (SATA), Southern Africa Postal Operators' Association (SAPOA) for their invaluable role in facilitating the implementation of the SADC ICT and Postal Programmes. He urged the meeting to adhere to the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP) of August, 2012 which includes an ICT Chapter also called the Digital SADC 2027, focusing on implementation of the SADC Integrated Broadband Infrastructure, complimentary satellite network and roll out of the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Programme to meet the ITU Analogue Switch Over (ASO) deadline of 17th June, 2015. Mr. Makumbe noted that ICT infrastructure development, the strengthening of regulatory environment and postal network development remain key priorities and urged SADC Member States to continue to strengthen and support CRASA, SATA and SAPOA.

Honourable Dr. Busayi Juyana Mlambo, MP, Deputy Minister of ICT, Postal and Courier Services of Zimbabwe and Chair of SADC highlighted critical issues which ranged from provision of affordable postal and telecommunication services, implementation of guidelines on consumer protection, harmonization and implementation of cyber security law in the SADC Region. He said digital broadcasting migration has far reaching ramifications which must be expedited and treated with urgency. He also said citizens of the region will start reaping tangible benefits of affordable roaming rates within SADC in 2015 and urged the Honourable Ministers to approve the SADC Home and Away Roaming (SHAR) recommendations of the Senior Officials.

Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa, MP, Minister of Information, Tourism and Culture of Malawi who chaired the Ministers Meeting reminded the Delegates of Malawi's commitment to the SADC ideals of regional integration for socio-economic benefit in the ICT sector. He also noted that ICT in the SADC Region is an accepted development driver that we all have to embrace it if we are to move forward.

The vote of thanks was move by Mr. Thari Pheko, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) representing Botswana and Vice-Chair of SADC. He thanked the Government and People of Malawi for the warm welcome, the excellent facilities accorded to the Honourable Ministers and Delegates as well as for the hosting of the SADC Ministers Meeting and other ICT events held back-to-back in Mangochi, Malawi. He said that the hospitality extended to the Delegates since their arrival truly depicts Malawi as the Warm Heart of Africa.

The Ministers' Meeting was attended by Honourable Ministers responsible for Communications, Postal and ICT or their Deputies from Angola, Botswana, Kingdom of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Kingdom of Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Executive Officers of SADC Implementing Agencies, namely CRASA, SAPOA and SATA were in attendance as well as representatives from the UPU and African Telecommunications Union (ATU).

The Meeting focused on the review of the implementation of the Ministers' decisions of the Ministers' meeting convened in May 2013 in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho and March 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Meeting also facilitated fruitful policy dialogue which sought to ensure that the implementation of SADC Communications, Postal and ICT Programmes contributed meaningfully to regional integration, socio-economic development and to the attainment of the World Symposium on the Information Society (WSIS) targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the SADC Region. The Meeting deliberated over a number of issues and made a number of decisions including the following:

The Ministers approved the implementation of a Retail Tariff Glide Path as of 1st January 2015 leading to the implementation of the SADC Home and Away Roaming (SHAR) Project via Roam Like At Home (RLAH) and urged Member States to meet the target commencement date. They approved that the Glide Paths commence from the tariffs ruling as at 21st October 2014 and that the Retail Tariff Regulation be implemented before or concurrently with the Wholesale Tariff Regulation. The Ministers also approved that the three (3) route's solution relating to Wholesale Tariffs be implemented concurrently with the proposed Wholesale Tariffs Glide Path and to also commence on 1st January 2015 and all be monitored and reviewed every three (3) months. Ministers noted that the regulations must clearly state that the prices are ceilings and not flat tariffs.

The Ministers urged Member States to ensure that the relevant policies on international roaming are in place and to review their regulations to take into account Roaming issues. They also recommended Member States to consider the experiences of other regions such as those of the East Africa when dealing with Retail Tariff and Wholesale Tariff Regulations. The Ministers urged Member States to ensure that NRAs put in place Roaming Regulations and monitoring procedures by 31st March 2015 and directed the SADC Secretariat, assisted by CRASA and to urge Member States to ensure that CRASA and MNOs publish the Retail Roaming Prices on their respective websites, on a quarterly basis. The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the SHAR be undertaken by the Project Management Office (PMO) which will be based at CRASA.

The Ministers noted that SADC Member States are among the leading African Nations in terms of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Migration through the implementation of the SADC Roadmap for Digital

Broadcasting Migration. Some Member States are at the advanced stage while others have some constraints and are behind. Member States were encouraged to continue their efforts to migrate to DTT by the ITU deadline of the 17th June 2015.

The Ministers noted the progress made by Member States in implementing the SADC Roadmap for Digital Broadcasting Migration and also noted the identified risks including cross border challenges, critical success factors and mitigation proposals. Member States were urged to continue with their efforts on the DTT Migration so that the SADC Region meets the ITU ASO deadline. The Ministers directed the SADC Secretariat to immediately, after the June 2015 DTT deadline develop a post Digital Migration Roadmap which will form the framework to assist Member States to pursue Digital to Digital Migration and Digital Convergence as region with common goals, timelines and integrated platform management guidelines.

The Ministers noted the progress made in relation to the SADC TV bouquet and encouraged Member States to participate in implementing the SADC TV Bouquet by June 2015.

The Ministers noted the prompt progress made by made by Botswana, Kingdom of Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles, Kingdom of Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the national transposition of the SADC Model Laws on Cyber Security and urged Member States to ensure that they implement the SADC Model Laws on Cyber Security. The Ministers directed the SADC Secretariat to develop a Roadmap on Cyber Security capturing the national transposition of SADC Model Laws on Cyber Security (e-Transaction/e-Commerce, Data Protection and Cybercrime), establishment of National CIRTs, implementation of PKI and capacity building.

Ministers urged Member States to support the ICT and Postal Regulators to allocate the number '116' on a toll-free basis to give access to the Child Helpline Services run by organisations dedicated to the welfare of children and accredited by the Ministry responsible for children in their respective countries and use it in parallel with other numbers being used. They also urged Member States to reserve the number '116' for that purpose in the future for those with no Child Helpline Services and for those SADC Member States who have allocated '116' number for other purposes to, in due course, withdraw this allocation and assign or reserve '116' number for Child Helpline services. Lastly, Member States were urged to conduct education campaigns to promote awareness of these numbers.

The Ministers noted the progress made on the establishment of the SADC RIXPs and approved the establishment of the SADC Policy and Regulatory Framework Committee for Regional Interconnection composed of representatives from the SADC Secretariat (Chairman of Committee), SADC Implementing Agencies (CRASA and SATA) and two members from each Member State. They urged Member States to submit to the SADC Secretariat their nominations before the 16th January 2015.

The Ministers approved the establishment of the SADC Conformity and Interoperability (C&I) Committee to develop a Plan for the Establishment of SADC In-Country and Regional C&I Testing Laboratories and a Plan for the Establishment of a SADC Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) Framework for Conformity Assessment of Telecommunications Equipment. This SADC C&I Committee shall be composed of representatives from the SADC Secretariat (Chairman of the Committee), SADC Implementing Agencies CRASA and SATA and one member from each SADC Member State. They urged Member States to submit to the SADC Secretariat their nominations before the 16th January 2015. They also encouraged Member States to participate more actively in surveys that are undertaken by entities/partners from which assistance has been requested by the SADC Secretariat in response to decision of the Ministers.

The Ministers noted the progress made in relation to the development of a framework for Open Access to ICT Broadband Infrastructure and the SADC Model Broadband Plan, the progress made in relation to SADC Postal Reforms and the progress made in the implementation of the SADC Regional Postal Projects towards modernising and enhancing the quality of postal services in order to improve their quality of services and also reduce pricing, namely; Regional Electronic Money Transfer Project, Global Monitoring System (GMS), Regional Road Transport Network (RTN) and Quality of Service (QOS) Audit.

The Ministers were also briefed on the Electrification and Internet Connectivity Project in the SADC Region and the project milestones. Member States were urged to include the Power and Internet Connectivity Project in their Development Plans and where possible utilise the Universal Service Fund (USF) to jump start the Electrification and Internet Connectivity Project.

The Ministers were also briefed on the preparations underway for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (WRC-15) and the development of the SADC Common Positions on the WRC-15 Agenda, noting that the 3rd SADC Preparatory Meeting for WRC-15 will be convened on 23rd to 27th February 2015 in South Africa.

The Ministers noted the preparations leading to the outcomes of the 3rd Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum (SAIGF) and ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 (PP-14). In respect to the PP-14, they received a report from the Zimbabwe the Chair of SADC on the outcomes of the PP-14 conference. United Republic of Tanzania was congratulated for being elected to the ITU Council. Member States were urged to become more active in the participation and in developing and submitting proposals to ITU study groups and conferences. For those participating in ITU structures such as Council or study groups, they are encouraged to brief other SADC Member States and to coordinate inputs via email with the assistance of the SADC Secretariat. Member States were urged to attend the ITU Council as Observers and prepare to contest for the elected seats in 2018. They were also urged to pursue with the ATU on a proposal for proportional representation by sub-region or Regional Economic Community (REC) for distribution of elected ITU Council seats for the Africa region.

On the convening of the 3rd SAIGF-14, Ministers noted establish common positions and proposals on Internet Governance issues. They urged Member States to establish their National IGFs by June 2015. Ministers approved the draft TOR for the SAIGF Multi-Stakeholder Coordinating Team.

The Ministers noted that the SADC Secretariat will commence discussions with regional and international partners to develop non-binding MoUs for collaboration and initial development work on the implementation of the Resolution on Promoting a Vision for Digital SADC.

The Ministers considered and approved a new list of SADC Regional Priority Projects to be undertaken during the year 2015/2016 pertaining to ICTs Infrastructure Development, Policy, Standards and Regulations, SADC Regional Postal Services Development and Regional and International Coordination.

The Ministers directed the SADC Secretariat to convene the inaugural meeting of the SADC-International Co-operating Partner (ICP) ICTs Thematic Group as a matter of urgency and further directed that the ICT Thematic Group sources partners for the implementation of the SADC ICT priority areas.

The Ministers expressed their condolences to the family and Government of Zambia following the passing on of his Excellency Late President Michael Chilufya Sata and to the family and Government of the United Republic of Tanzania following the passing on of Mr. John Saidi Kimbe a long time employee of the SATA.

The next ordinary Ministers' Meetings are planned to be convened in the Seychelles in 2016 and South Africa in 2017.

The Ministers endorsed the offer by Namibia to host the 9th DTT Forum scheduled to take place just after the ITU ASO deadline of 17th June 2015 and this forum will be held back-to-back with the SADC ICT SCOM, during the week beginning 22nd June 2015 in Walvis Bay, Namibia.

21st November 2014
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