



MEDIA STATEMENT

SADC Ministers for ICT, Information, Transport and Meteorology meet in Namibia

27th September 2018 - The Ministers responsible for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Public Information, Transport and Meteorology from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) met on the 27th September 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia, and deliberated on several issues of importance to the region in the four sectors in relation to Infrastructure in support of regional integration.

This multi-sectoral event was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Namibia, and was attended by Ministers or their representatives from Angola, Botswana, Comoros, DRC, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The meeting was also attended by a representative from COMESA Secretariat and representatives from SADC partners and implementing agencies from the four sectors, and was preceded by a three-day meeting of Senior Officials from the ICT, Public Information, Transport and Meteorology sectors.

In his Keynote address, the Vice President of the Republic of Namibia, H.E Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, said in a speech read on his behalf by the Minister of Mines and Energy in Namibia, Hon. Tom Alweendo, that the ICT, Information, Meteorology and Transport sectors were critical in the interconnection for sustainable development in the region.

He said the SADC region was making efforts to reduce connectivity problems in the region, citing the implementation of the Swakopmund Submarine Landing Station as an example of a regional project that will enhance access to affordable Internet through the submarine cable landing station thereby making, communication efficient and cost-effective.

He added that while some considerable progress was made in the four sectors, much more needs to be done to provide the seamless, efficient and cost-effective services to the citizens of the SADC region.

The Vice President emphasized that it was important for the SADC sectors to constantly communicate what they were doing and their successes to the citizens of region so that they appreciate the role and relevance of SADC. He added that without effective communication, SADC will be misunderstood, and its achievements will remain invisible.

The SADC Secretariat Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, Dr. Mhlongo presented an overview of the Secretariat's implementation of programmes outlined in the revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020 to bridge the identified gaps, thereby unlocking the regional potentials in the areas of ICT, Information, Transport and Meteorology.

Dr Mhlongo noted that while SADC Member States either have transposed the SADC Harmonised Cyber Security Model Laws or have a cyber-security legal framework in place, the region needs to establish the supporting institutional structures and collaborative networks, such as the Computer Incident Response Team (CIRT) that will use the law to ensure the Citizens of SADC are protected whilst online and also ensure there was recourse should they fall victim to cybercrime.

The Ministers received reports on the implementation of decisions taken during the last sectoral ministerial meetings, provided guidance and approved several decisions to facilitate Infrastructure in support of regional integration and enhanced awareness and promotion of SADC Programmes.

In the ICT and Information Sectors, the Ministers approved the:

- i. SADC Broadband Targets for the region which include broadband goals to ensure that the region reach 50% household penetration of broadband, 60% of youth and adults with a minimum level of proficiency in sustainable digital skills, and that entry level broadband costing less than 2% of the monthly GNI per capita; and urged Member States to ensure that their National Broadband Plan or Strategy are aligned to the targets.
- ii. SADC Rural Broadband Guidelines and Recommendations to ensure that all SADC Citizens in the rural areas have affordable access and benefit from broadband services.
- iii. Recommendations on Cyber Security and SADC Regional Cyber Drill and the SADC Cyber Security Action Plan, which compliments the SADC harmonised Cyber Security Model laws, and includes capacity building, cyber drill, International cooperation and cyber security institutional mechanism such as the Computer Incident Response Teams (CIRTs)
- iv. Harmonisation of Emergency Services Numbering in SADC for Police, Fire and Ambulance in line with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and international best practices to ensure that there is a rank in terms of priority and that a single Emergency Number '112' is used for the Police, Fire and Ambulance services in SADC.

- v. Recommendation on a Harmonised Approach to Domestic Licensing and Mutual Licence Recognition of Earth Stations in Motion (ESIMs).
- vi. Framework, Roadmap and Institutional Mechanism to support the development, implementation and monitoring of the SADC Framework for Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR) for implementation.
- vii. SADC Resolution to operationalise the Implementation of the SADC Declaration on Fourth Industrial Revolution using ICTs for submission to the Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for ICT for implementation.

The Ministers received progress on the implementation of the SADC Postal Strategy and an assessment report on the SADC e-commerce readiness, and urged all Member States to participate in the Operational Readiness for the e-Commerce project.

On Communication and promotion of SADC, the Ministers noted the progress made in implementing the Action Plan for the Revised SADC Communication and Promotion Strategy 2016-2020 (SCPS), and urged Member States to facilitate the entry of Journalists assigned to cover SADC programmes, events and meetings, including the SADC Council and Summits into their countries.

The Ministers also had the opportunity to see a demo of the SADC TV Channel using a content hub sharing platform hosted by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation and the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA). Basically, it is a TV Channel prepared from key news items from participating SADC Member States; Botswana, Kingdom of Eswatini, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and Zambia. This is an initiative anchored in the SCPS.

To enhance popularization of the SADC identity, brand, and community building symbols, the Ministers recommended to Council to approve the singing of the SADC Anthem and hoisting the SADC flag alongside national flags and anthems in SADC Member States, during all SADC Meetings and national events and ceremonies.

Furthermore, Ministers urged Member States to promote singing of the SADC anthems in schools, and support implementation of the August 2018 Council Decision on the commemoration of the Southern Africa Liberation day, and the inclusion of the teaching of the Southern African Liberation History in the school syllabi of SADC Member States.

In the Transport Sector, the Ministers:

- i) Noted the performance of the Interim SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (SASO) and reiterated their decision urging the remaining Member States to sign the Charter establishing the SASO. SASO's objective is promote the safe and efficient use and development of civil aviation with the SADC region.

- ii) Congratulated the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Zambia for receiving the award for attaining higher effective implementation levels in safety oversight; and encouraged Member States to continue improving the implementation of International Civil Aviation Organisation Standards and Recommended Practices.
- iii) Reviewed the Status of Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) in SADC and within the Tripartite Framework of COMESA-EAC-SADC; urged Member States who have not yet signed the *Solemn Commitment* on Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) to do so; and all SAATM countries to implement the seven concrete measures for all States joining the SAATM, to meet the Abuja safety targets and the Windhoek security and facilitation targets.
- iv) Noted progress on the implementation of the Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) which is assisting Member States to harmonise road transport laws, policies, regulations, systems and standards, and approved their programmes. The TTTFP is assisting with preparations to enable legislation to give effect to the provisions of the Vehicle Load Management Agreement and the Multilateral Cross Border Road Transport Agreement.
- v) Encouraged the SADC Secretariat to collaborate with subsidiarity organisations which include the Association of Southern Africa National Roads Agencies (ASANRA), Federation of East and Southern African Road Transporters Association, the Southern African Railways Association, Corridors Management Institutions and the newly established Cross Border Road Transport Regulators Forum (CBRT-RF), in order to accelerate the implementation of the transport sector programme

In the Meteorology Sector, the Ministers adopted the resolution of the African Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) of the African Union Commission (AUC) to celebrate annually, the Africa Meteorology Day on 29 June, to promote awareness on the importance of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to sustainable development.

To improve the production of climate sensitive socio-economic sectors and preserve life and properties, SADC Ministers directed the Secretariat, in consultation with International Cooperating Partners to continue raising funds for projects in the Meteorology sector, such as the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa, and the Satellite and Weather Information for Disaster Resilience and Global Climate Change Alliance plus.

The Ministers noted the important role played by the SADC Climate Services Centre (CSC) in generating climate and weather products through the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF); urged Member States to allocate resources to support the sustainability of the SARCOF process; and directed the Secretariat to sensitize policy makers on the critical role that National Meteorological and Hydrological Services played in reducing the weather and climate-related impacts.

The Ministers noted the urgent need to facilitate dialogue between the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and National Civil Aviation Agencies (NCAA), in order to develop national mechanisms to provide financial resources and assistance to NMHSs for the ISO 9001.2015 Certification,

The Ministers urged Member States who have not yet been certified as ISO 9001 2015 to take appropriate action to be certified even though the 14 September 2018 deadline has passed, to avoid their National Meteorological and Hydrological Services being flagged as high safety risk zones.

The Ministers observed a minute of silence and expressed sympathy to the Governments of the United Republic of Tanzania for the loss of over 230 lives due to capsizing of MV Nyerere in Lake Victoria on 21st September 2018, and the Republic of South Africa for the passing of Hon Edna Molewa, Minister of Environmental Affairs.

The Ministers resolved that the next such meeting will be held in the United Republic of Tanzania, in September 2019.

Windhoek, Namibia, 27th September 2018