



MEDIA RELEASE

SADC ICT Sub-Committee (SCOM) Meeting

SADC Headquarters, Gaborone, Botswana

4th to 6th July 2018

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat convened the SADC ICT SCOM Meeting from the 4th to 6th July 2018 in Gaborone, Botswana. The Meeting was attended by fifty-two (52) delegates from eight (8) SADC Member States namely; Botswana, Kingdom of Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The meeting was also attended by Executive Secretaries of all SADC ICT Implementing Agencies, the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) and Southern African Telecommunications Association (SATA), and Southern Africa Postal Operators' Association (SAPOA) and Secretary General of the Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA). Also in attendance was the Global System for Mobile Association (GSMA), International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and African Union (AU) Youth Council.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Itumeleng Batsalelwang, Director of Communications from the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Botswana. Mr. Batsalelwang said that it is important for Implementing Agencies and Member States to report fully and provide accurate update on progress of the action items as quite often a lot of items are under-reported. He said that he noted that each Member State possesses its own unique challenges, but these should not discourage us but rather a clear sign that together we can overcome them. Mr. Batsalelwang continued to say that we are sometimes afraid to advise our principals to make hard decisions that impact highly on our sector. He urged Member States to be brave and have facts to the challenges and take them head-on. Our sector comprises of very intelligent bodies and we are equally intelligent. Consultation is the key to defeating the unknown. Lastly, he intimated that the SADC Region can shine in the Africa if we provided a conducive environment for the Sector to move forward and in turn the players do their part diligently.

Speaking on behalf of the SADC Director of Infrastructure, Dr. George Ah-Thew, Acting Senior Programme Officer ICT said the SADC Roaming Project was initiated through a Ministerial directive in June 2007 in Maputo, Mozambique was to ensure that rates for mobile roaming services within the SADC become affordable but most importantly to make SADC competitive for business. Today, the project is on Phase III, its last stretch to deliver the highest impact towards reducing the SADC Roaming Tariffs for voice, SMS and data. This will be achieved with the development of the SADC Roaming Cost Model through the engagement of a consultant. Dr. Ah-Thew also indicated that the ITU is presently exploring ways of using big data from the ICT industry to improve and complement existing statistics and methodologies to measure the information society and for decision-making of ICT Policy Makers and investors. He stated that Big Data will be the key driver of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and in developing knowledge economies. It is generated by ICT stakeholders and is today the most important source for creating wealth. Time has come for SADC to prepare a strategic plan on Big Data and propose recommendations, on who is going to champion Big Data, who is to be Guardian, how do we address confidentiality, privacy, collaborate and share data, services, statistical tools, technologies, lessons learnt and know how. Lastly, Dr. Ah-Thew encouraged Member States to start thinking of ICT projects that can contribute towards the implementation of this year's Summit Theme: "Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development".

Mrs. Nonkqubela Jordan spoke on behalf of Mr. Robert Nkuna, the Director General (DG) of the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS) and Chairperson of SADC. Mrs. Jordan

indicated that as we are fast approaching the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we need to be cognisant of the opportunities and threats towards this digital economy. It is our role as Policy Makers and NRAs to encourage domestic ICT innovation, explore measures aimed at introducing a creative commons licensing framework; establish technology and digital hubs for SMME development, and encourage new entrants to transform our sector through incentive schemes. In addition, we must work to bridge the digital divide and look to upskilling our communities to get them ready for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

She continued by saying that it was pleasing to note that the ICT Sector is ready to lead our Member States into the Fourth Industrial Revolution and that in finding best solutions for innovative regulations, consumer issues are taken into consideration. Another area which SADC can explore benefits from is on e-commerce through employing the postal services network, where we can expand the SMME sector in areas of trade and entrepreneurship. The e-commerce sector is becoming increasingly competitive, and it will be crucial for the future of SADC Post Offices to position themselves early as a competitive player in Africa in order to benefit from the high levels of growth that are anticipated in the sector and in the region.

The SADC ICT SCOM Meeting included a one day SADC ICT Thematic Day convened on the 5th July 2018 covering the following four (4) thematic areas; Broadband SADC, 5G SADC, Co-operative Initiative on Regulatory Reform and Advancement, and SADC ICT Community. Presentations delivered by Zimbabwe, CRASA, SATA, SAPOA, SABA, ITU, GSMA and the African Union (AU) Youth Council brought about stimulating discussions and recommendations. A Botswana Youth from the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) had the opportunity to chair the last session.

The SADC ICT SCOM Meeting received detailed status reports from CRASA, SATA, SAPOA and SABA. The SADC ICT SCOM deliberated on all the issues presented and made several conclusions and recommendations, including:

- CRASA has engaged a Consultant to development the SADC Roaming Cost Model and is now pursuing data collection from MNOs;
- The SADC Expert Group on PKI and CIRT has circulated a survey to establish the baseline status of PKI and CIRTs in Member States and the deadline for submission is the 13th July 2018;
- Mauritius is planning to host a SADC Capacity Building Workshop on PKI and CIRTs, which will also include a Regional Cyber Drill to provide real time hands on experience for CIRTs, from the 20th to 24th August 2018. Mauritius will showcase the Certification Authority (CA) of Mauritius which is used to issued digital signatures;
- The SADC Shared Satellite Benchmarking Questionnaire was circulated to Member States for the laste time and the final deadline was the 6th July 2018;
- Endorsed the draft Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of the Visitors Radio Amateurs between the CRASA and CEPT;
- Urged Member States to implement the SADC Interconnection Policy Framework and Reference Interconnection Offer (RIO) by convening National Workshops to articulate the said Policy Framework and RIO to relevant stakeholders;
- Urged the remaining Member States to consider signing and ratifying the AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection;
- Considered and recommended the following for submission to the Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for ICT for adoption:
 - Revised list of SADC Broadband Targets for 2025.
 - Draft SADC Rural Broadband Guidelines and Recommendations.
 - Draft Digital Financial Inclusion: Key Regulatory Principles and Guidelines for Mobile Financial Services.
 - Draft SADC Cyber Security Action Plan.
 - Draft Recommendation on Harmonisation of Emergency Services Numbering in SADC.
 - Draft SADC Universal Postal Service and Access Regulatory Guidelines.
 - Draft Recommendation on a Harmonised Approach to Domestic Licensing and Mutual Licence Recognition of Earth Stations in Motion (ESIMs).
- Directed the SADC Secretariat to facilitate the convening of more forums that would allow for discussions by various stakeholders in the SADC Region on issues that would adequately address the digital gender divide in access to ICTs;

- South Africa, the SADC Chair has agreed to host the Fourth African Preparatory Meeting (APM) for WRC-19 and will make announcement at the Third APM for WRC-19 to be convened from the 17th to 21st September 2018 in Cairo, Egypt;
- Urged Member States and the SADC Secretariat to attend the ITU PP-18 to be convened from the 29th October to 17th November 2018 in Dubai, UAE and the SADC Secretariat to facilitate the essential side meetings for SADC Member States to consult and discuss PP-18 Agenda Items that requires attention. Member States not attending to advise early and organise transfer of voting rights;
- Urged Member States to participate in ITU Telecom World 2018 and to liaise at the earliest with DTSPS if they wish to participate in the exhibition;
- Urged Member States to attend the UPU Extraordinary Congress to be convened from 3rd to 7th September 2018, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to support the Pan African positions as recommended by the PAFU Africa Support Committee;
- Urged Member States to attend the PAFU Extra-Ordinary Plenipotentiary Conference to be convened from the 26th to 27th July 2018 in Antananarivo, Madagascar to support the proposed amendments to the PAFU Statutes;
- Encouraged Member States to express their interest in taking up the existing and additional Council Seats;
- Revival of SAPOA is on track and a detailed roadmap leading to SAPOA becoming fully operational with the recruitment of the Executive Director;
- Urged SADC Member States and SADCC Secretariat to attend the 16th SAPOA AGM to be convened from the 9th to 12th July 2018 in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania and SADC Secretariat to prepare a report to the SADC ICT Ministers' Meeting in September 2018 in Namibia;
- Urged Angola, Comoros, DRC and Madagascar to participate in the Operational Readiness for e-Commerce project;
- Directed SAPOA to ensure that all Designated Postal Operators are providing e-commerce solutions.
- South Africa, the Chair of SADC is to undertake project preparation for the seven (7) projects identified to support the operationalisation of the SADC Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Business Plans are to be submitted at the September 2018 SADC ICT Ministerial Meeting in Namibia; and
- SADC Fourth Industrial Revolution Task Team will continue to meet and was requested to develop a SADC Strategic Position paper on Dig Data.

Lastly, the SADC ICT SCOM developed, considered and endorsed a draft Resolution on the Fourth Industrial Revolution to be submitted to the Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for ICT for adoption. The Resolution notes the anticipated positive impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will bring to the region will depend on the active participation of all stakeholders. At the SADC level, there is a need for all Sectors to collaborate towards the development of a single, harmonized and coordinated SADC Regional Strategy and Plan. SADC Secretariat is to coordinate this effort. The draft Declaration adopted by the Ministers of ICT and Communications in September 2017 as well as other similar initiatives should be integrated into the overall SADC Regional Strategy and Plan. The draft Resolution proposes that the SADC Council should establish a Regional Advisory Council on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with representatives of all sectors of SADC and other stakeholders such as academia and civil society and be mandated to develop SADC Regional Strategy and Plan and advice on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The vote of thanks on behalf of all participants of the meeting was delivered by Mr. Mbeuta Ua-Ndjarakana, Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of ICT of Namibia and Vice-Chairperson of SADC. The SADC ICT SCOM Meeting was officially closed by Mr. Robert Nkuna, DG of DPS, representing South Africa and Chairperson of SADC.