



SADC DECLARATION ON THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION IN BUILDING THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

The SADC Council of Ministers met in Johannesburg, South Africa on 25 and 26 August, 1995 and adopted the SADC Declaration on Information and Communication in Building the Southern African Development Community, as follows:

CONSIDERING

- The tenets of the treaty establishing the Southern African Development Community.
- The principles, policies and development strategies adopted by the Summit of the SADC.
- The need to clearly express the importance of information and communication in the realisation of the SADC ideals and programmes.
- The wealth of complimentary information and communication resources and the expected common political outlook of Member States of the SADC at international level.

RECALLING

- United Nations General Assembly resolution 59 (1) of 14 December 1946 stating that freedom of information is a fundamental human right.
- Resolution 25 C/104 of the General Conference of UNESCO of 1989 in which the main focus with regard to information and communication is the promotion of “the free flow of ideas by word and image among nations and within each nation”.
- United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in service of humanity.
- The UNESCO / Windhoek Declaration of 1991 which calls for the support to an independent and pluralistic media in Africa.

REGONISING

- That sustainable development can only be attained when the expected beneficiaries of this development have the benefit of balance and reliable information to explain it's necessity and implications and their specific role.

AND REALISING

- The importance of information and communication in complementing development cooperation and its processes.
- That information and communication have the capacity to motivate people to work towards the fulfillment of, in this case, regional economic cooperation and integration.
- That in order to involve people of the community in the activities to be realised through collective awareness of a shared and those that can be shared destiny, values already shared and those that can be shared, all the people of the Community must be informed.

DECLARE THAT

1. All Member States shall promote balanced dissemination of information, within the context of Community building, and shall not impede freedom of speech nor impede the freedom of expression of the peoples of the Community.
2. All Member States shall promote pluralism of information that does not suppress the existence of multiple and autonomous initiatives regarding the ownership, control and operation of the mass media.
3. All Member States shall contribute to the development of an efficient information and communication infrastructure by promoting the optimum use of available human and material resources within the community.
4. Information and Communication Policies of all Member States shall be harmonised in order to:

Remove systems and procedures that restrict the free movement of journalists, the exchange of news and information and the circulation of media products within the countries and across national boundaries of the countries of the Community.

Recognise accreditation documents issued by any SADC Member State to media personnel to cover events in other Member States, of the Community.

Implement UNESCO and OAU resolutions concerning the reduction of posts and telecommunication tariffs, which represent a huge burden on media operations and are also real impediment to

wider cooperation and exchanges among media institutions of the Community.

Ensure that media and labour relations laws in the Community recognise the necessity for the existence of representatives associations or trade unions of journalists, editors and publishers established to defend press freedom.

Abolish media monopolies in order to bring about the existence of radio and television organizations, newspapers, magazines and periodicals reflecting the widest possible range of opinions, within the Member States of the Community.

Provide constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press, of freedom of association and the existence of independent and pluralistic media.

Rationally utilize the media training institutions and specialist personnel available in the Community.

5. All Member States shall provide resources to the information and communication infrastructure of the Community in order to enhance its role in the promotion of international understanding, as well as peace, peaceful co-existence, reconciliation, human rights and democratic ideals.
6. All Member States, in their effort towards Community building, shall encourage the production and distribution of radio and television programmes and press features about the Community and disseminate productions of the other Member States in their respective countries.
7. All Member States shall through their respective media contribute to the organisation and promotion of cultural and sports events to allow greater interaction, exchange and understanding between the peoples of the Community.
8. In order to promote exchange of knowledge between experts and professionals within the Community, to speed up the flow of knowledge, optimise resources and standardise procedures, Member States shall ensure that:
 - 8.1 The information and communication infrastructure will support the development and dissemination of reports by experts from within the Community, on all aspects of knowledge, considered beneficial to the Community.

- 8.2 Information and communication organisations highlight, promote and publicise existing professional associations and foster the creation of new ones within the Community, and
- 8.3 Information and communication organisations highlight, promote and publicise meetings, seminars, workshops and professional conferences, within the Community, for regular exchange of ideas, views, innovation, planning and review, etc.
9. Member States shall endeavour to address the problems which have led to the insufficient dissemination of information about SADC, its activities and peculiarities especially the following:
- Where the information and communication infrastructure bears some semblance of development, it serves the exclusive interests of the urban elite.
- Poor road networks, illiteracy and a low level of reading culture.
- Excessively high costs of television and radio receivers, compounded by the lack of electric power to many rural areas.
10. Member States shall support and finance efforts by the social media in the development process, in particular the development of programmes that use the peoples traditional forms of communication to teach, sensitise, circulate and channel development information.

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