



COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA POLICY

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| DEFINITIONS | 3 |
| 1 INTERPRETATION | 4 |
| 2 BACKGROUND | 4 |
| 3.0 PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA..... | 5 |
| 4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT | 5 |
| 5.0 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES..... | 6 |
| 6.0 PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING IN AND AROUND SADC BUILDINGS | 6 |
| 7.0 PRESS STATEMENTS AND RELEASES | 6 |
| 8.0 RESPONSES TO RUMOURS AND SPECULATIONS IN THE MEDIA..... | 7 |
| 9.0 EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA..... | 7 |
| 10.0 CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT | 8 |

DEFINITIONS

Council means the SADC committee of Ministers established by Article 9 C of the SADC Treaty.

Deputy Executive Secretary means a person appointed under article 10 (7) of the Treaty to assist the Executive Secretary.

Director and Head of Unit means a person who occupies a post, which oversees a functional area of a unit or directorate and has overall authority and responsibility for its administration.

Employee means a person engaged by SADC Secretariat or a SADC Institution on a contract of employment and include fixed term, casual and short term employees

Employer means the SADC Secretariat or a SADC Institution.

Executive Secretary means the Chief Executive Officer of SADC, and Head of the Secretariat, appointed under article 10(7) of the Treaty.

Line Supervisor means a person responsible for achieving Key Result Area objectives by executing management functions.

Secretariat: means the principal executive institution of SADC established under Article 14 of the Treaty.

The Organisation means the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat and other SADC institutions.

Social Media means interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs, podcasts, social networking sites, online forums and other online discussion forums.

Related Documents

SADC Treaty
Revised SADC Communications and Promotional Strategy (2016-2020)
SADC Corporate and Identity Manual (2017)
SADC Vision 2050
SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030

| SUBJECT | COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA POLICY |
|-------------------|--|
| PURPOSE | The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for managing communication and media about SADC by establishing a set of principles to ensure that communication is accurate, effective, appropriate and consistent |
| SCOPE | This Policy applies to SADC Secretariat and other SADC Institutions' employees, employees seconded to the Secretariat, and employees under SADC projects, who are employed under SADC Conditions of Service. |
| POLICY NO. | Version 1 |
| DATE | May 2019 |

1 INTERPRETATION

- 1.1 This Policy shall be interpreted and aligned to the SADC Treaty, Protocols, other Policies, Decisions, Regulations approved by Council of Ministers and, where applicable, the Principles and Rules of International Law.
- 1.2 Any dispute as to the interpretation of this Policy shall be referred to the Executive Secretary.
- 1.3 Any dispute regarding the interpretation given by Executive Secretary may be referred to the SADC Administrative Tribunal for decision.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Organisation believes in clear, accurate and reliable top-down and bottom-up communication at all levels. Efficient two-way channels of communication ensure that employees understand, are aligned with and help the organisation achieve its business objectives.
- 2.2. It is essential for the Organisation to develop and maintain good relationships with the media. The media can assist the Organisation to promote a positive image of our activities as well as inform the public of the Organisation's programmes. The media can help the Organisation to be considered as a relevant and authoritative voice on regional integration issues in the SADC Region.
- 2.3. This Policy is intended to help preserve and enhance the Organisation's reputation, both internally and externally, and to help ensure that relevant information reaches the targeted audience in the right format and at the right time and in line with the SADC Corporate and Identity Manual.

3.0. PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA

- 3.1. The Executive Secretary, or designated officials shall be the authorised spokespersons for all matters relating to the Organisation's policy and corporate issues. In this regard, the Executive Secretary will be supported by the Head of Communication and Public Relations.
- 3.2. Communication with stakeholders and the media shall be aligned with the Organisation's official position and strategy and must only be done by duly authorised spokespersons as stated in 3.1. above.
- 3.3. Directors or other approved Senior Officers of the Organisation can speak to the media on particular topics or respond to specific media enquiries with respect to their areas of expertise or issues under the jurisdiction of their Directorates or Units.
- 3.4. If approached by the media or other stakeholders, any person not authorised to speak or write on behalf of the Organisation, must decline to comment and refer them to the Head of Communications and Public Relations Unit.
- 3.5. Any employee who, without authorisation, speak or write on behalf of the Organisation shall be subjected to disciplinary action.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT

- 4.1. In line with this Policy, and subject to section 3.0 above, the Communication and Public Relations Unit is responsible for, among others, the following functions:
 - 4.1.1. Customer Care and Public Relations (internal and external)
 - 4.1.2. Protocol, Public Affairs and Media Relations
 - 4.1.3. Corporate image brand projection and protection as guided by the SADC Corporate and Identity Manual
 - 4.1.4. Marketing of SADC programmes and activities (internally and externally) as guided by the SADC Corporate and Identity Manual; the SADC Vision 2050; the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020-2030; and the SADC Writing and Editing Style Guide.
 - 4.1.5. Information and communications policies, strategies and frameworks development
 - 4.1.6. Publicity and publications (print and electronic, internally and externally)
 - 4.1.7. Information dissemination to support the work of the various offices, Directorates and Units of the SADC Secretariat, as well as Member States.

5.0 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. Employees of the Organisation must behave as if they were representatives and ambassadors of the Organisation at all times. Every employee must be committed to preserving and enhancing the Organisation's reputation.
- 5.2. Any illegal or offensive behaviour or statement, including through social media accounts and other online platforms, which could cause damage to the organisation must be avoided. Employee guidance on the use of social media is provided in 9.0
- 5.3. In undertaking internal and external communications, employees must, at all times, reflect the core Organisation values of *Professionalism, Integrity, Commitment and Passion, Team Spirit, Mutual Respect and Trust, Courtesy, Equality of Opportunity, Transparency and Frankness*.
- 5.4. All the Organisation's documentation, correspondence and organisation-related information, unless and until publicly available, must be treated as confidential.
- 5.5. Non-public information concerning suppliers, customers, employees, agents, consultants and other parties must also be protected in accordance with SADC Respective Policies, as well as, legal and contractual requirements.

6.0 PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING IN AND AROUND SADC BUILDINGS

- 6.1. Filming and photography in or around the SADC Secretariat building or SADC satellite offices must be authorised in writing by the Head of Communications and Public Relations Unit.
- 6.2. A member of the Communications and Public Relations team or an authorised employee must be present to oversee and coordinate the filming or photography of the SADC Secretariat building or SADC satellite offices.

7.0 PRESS STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

- 7.1. All Press Statements and Releases are to remain consistent in style in line with SADC Corporate and Identity Manual and the SADC Writing and Editing Style Guide.
- 7.2. The relevant Directorate or Unit shall generate all copies for Press Statements and Releases. The Communications and Public Relations Unit must receive a copy of the Press Statement and Release at least three (3) days before it is shared with the media.
- 7.1. While the author of the draft Press Statement or Release is responsible for the accuracy of the content, the Communications and Public Relations Unit shall be responsible of ensuring the drafts are consistent in style in line with SADC Writing and Editing Style Guide, improving its news value, ensuring appropriate readability or reader comprehension.

All edited press releases as edited by the Communications and Public Relations Unit will be returned to the respective Directorates or Units for final endorsement before distribution.

- 7.2. The Communications and Public Relations Unit will engage with the Organisation's subject experts to proactively issue news releases and story leads, respond to incoming requests from journalists and to provide advice to employees in dealing with the media. This will be guided by the requirement of section 3 above.

8.0. RESPONSES TO RUMOURS AND SPECULATIONS IN THE MEDIA

- 8.1. The Communications and Public Relations shall proactively and timely advise the Executive Secretary on how to, affirmatively or otherwise, respond to rumours or speculation (whether in the mainstream media or on social media, or otherwise).
- 8.2. In certain circumstances, the Executive Secretary, or the Head of Communications and Public Relations Unit may determine that it is appropriate to issue an official response to rumours or speculations in the mainstream media or social media.

9.0. EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 9.1. Employees shall direct all official communications upon approval by the line supervisors for posting on the official SADC Social Media Platforms to the Communications and Public Relations Unit for review, clearance, and posting on the official Social Media Platforms.
- 9.2. Employees shall use their best judgement in posting material on personal social media platforms to ensure that the material posted on their personal social media platforms is appropriate and does not, in any way, affect negatively SADC's Image, Brand and reputation; SADC employees; and SADC Member States and stakeholders.
- 9.3. Employees shall not publish, post or release confidential information about SADC, its employees, Member States and stakeholders on personal social media platforms.
- 9.4. Employees shall not publish or post any information that borders on policy, official position and practices of SADC, its employees, Member States and stakeholders on the Social Media Platforms, without express permission from the Executive Secretary or designated officials.
- 9.5. Employees shall disengage from controversial social media discussions or dialogue which may affect SADC, the SADC Secretariat and its employees, and SADC Member States.

10.0. CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

- 10.1. In the event of a crisis, or an event which may have a detrimental impact on the reputation of the Organisation, the Executive Secretary shall constitute a Crisis Communications Team, which will be a core group responsible for overseeing communications of issues throughout the crisis period.
- 10.2. The Crisis Communications Team shall assess the facts of the crisis to determine the appropriate plan of action for both internal and external communications, as well as determine what, how and to whom messages will be communicated, both internally and externally, and advise the Executive Secretary.
- 10.3. The Executive Secretary may co-opt other members into the Crisis Communications Team, depending on the nature of the crisis and the expertise required for effective crisis communication.
- 10.4. The spokesperson in the event of a crisis shall be the Executive Secretary or designated officials. Depending on the nature of the crisis, a person possessing the direct knowledge of the crisis may also be appointed as a designated spokesperson.
- 10.5. The release of information and comments to the news media and the public should be limited to the designated spokespersons. All other employees may assist to link the news media with the designated spokespersons and should refrain from speaking and providing any information directly to the media.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING HELD

ON THE 12th DAY OF MARCH 2021