



Closing Remarks

By

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Regional Integration

SADC Secretariat

**Regional Workshop on SADC ICT Statistics for
Observatory**

Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

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**Distinguished Mr. Christian KATENDE, President of
the Congolese Post and Telecommunications
Regulatory Authority (ARPTC)**

**Distinguished Chair of SADC ICT COMMITTEE, Mr
Brillant RAKOTORATSIMANJEFY**

Distinguished Delegates from SADC Member States;

Esteemed Partners;

SADC Secretariat Staff;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As we come to the close of this Regional Workshop on SADC ICT Statistics for the Observatory, convened with the support of the World Bank under the SADC Regional Statistics Project and hosted by the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is both an honour and a privilege for me to address you once again.

At this stage, my task is to commend all of you for your active participation, which has been the cornerstone of this workshop's success. I have been informed that all Member States contributed meaningfully through case study presentations, sharing of experiences, challenges, and recommendations, as well as valuable inputs into the enhancement of the SADC ICT Observatory indicator list and concept note. These outcomes will undoubtedly strengthen the SADC ICT Observatory and ensure that its data informs decision-making and monitoring at both national and regional levels.

The SADC Secretariat extends its sincere gratitude to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the exceptional hospitality extended to all delegates and for providing a conducive environment for the success of this workshop. Thank you for your unwavering support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me also to thank our partners who supported this workshop in particular the World Bank for enabling the participation of delegates, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Flowminder, Ookla, CRASA, and SAPOA for providing technical expertise and capacity-building. The success of this workshop would not have been possible without your commitment. As we still have a long way to go in

strengthening the SADC ICT Observatory, we look forward to your continued support, especially at Member State level, in implementing the recommendations agreed upon here.

I also wish to commend Member States for recognising the importance of ICT statistics in informing socio-economic policies and strategies. ICT statistics are a critical enabler, and we urge Member States to prioritise their collection and timely submission. While acknowledging that Member States are at different levels of capacity and automation, I encourage greater investment in ICT systems in line with global digital transformation trends, and in harnessing emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Mobile Phone Data, and GIS.

At the Secretariat, we will continue to prioritise capacity building, technical assistance, and collaboration with Member States to accelerate convergence during the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030. It will also be essential to mobilise resources for demand-side data collection aligned with international standards. The Secretariat will continue to play its part in mobilising additional resources, recognising that ICT is a cross-cutting enabler for key sectors such as Health, Education, and Agriculture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This workshop has been dedicated to strengthening the SADC ICT Observatory as a regional platform to coordinate stakeholders, identify data sources, and harness innovative technologies such as Big Data, Mobile Phone Data, and GIS mapping. The Concept Note developed here will guide our resource mobilisation efforts, and we count on your continued support in its implementation. In this regard, we encourage Member States to take forward practical steps at national level, such as appointing focal points and making use of training opportunities offered by our partners.

As I conclude, I encourage you to take the knowledge and skills gained here back to your countries and to share them with colleagues who could not attend, so that we build a wider pool of expertise. The future of ICT statistics in SADC is bright, and with your continued commitment, we can achieve the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves.

At this stage, I would also like to express special thanks to my colleagues from the SADC Secretariat who have steered this workshop to a successful conclusion. Thank you for your excellent facilitation, and please be assured of my full support as you coordinate follow-up actions.

Finally, I wish you all safe travels back to your respective countries and look forward to our continued cooperation in building a stronger, digitally integrated SADC community.

Thank You Very Much

Merci Beaucoup

Muito Obrigado

Asante Sana