



Opening Remarks

Launch of the SADC Communication, Awareness and Visibility Strategy
2025-2030

18 November 2025
in Gaborone, Botswana

by
the German Embassy Gaborone
(accredited to Botswana and SADC)

Simone Goertz
Head of Economic and Development Cooperation

- check against delivery -

Your Excellency, SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration,
Angèle Makombo N'tumba,

Distinguished Senior Officials of SADC Member States,

Distinguished Officials of SADC Secretariat,

Distinguished Representatives of various National Public Media Organizations
from SADC Member States,

Distinguished Representative of various Non-State Actor Organizations,

Distinguished Members of the Press,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Based on our own positive experience as a member of the European Union,
Germany is a great supporter of regional integration. In Europe, and abroad.

Yet, also in Germany, we hear citizens pose the question: What has the European
Union ever done for us?

I have to admit, in Germany and Europe, communicating the successes of
regional integration to citizens, and sometimes even member states, from time
to time, poses a challenge. Despite the tangible benefits of initiatives such as the
free movement of people, citizens lack understanding of the benefits of regional
integration to their private lives.

Of course, regional policies often are quite complex. Additionally, misinformation
sometimes overshadows positive narratives.

Addressing these challenges requires tailored communication strategies that highlight localised benefits, engage diverse communities, and leverage innovative platforms to make regional achievements more relatable and accessible to citizens.

Likewise, SADC citizens and sometimes even member states may ask: What has SADC ever done for us? As someone working on supporting SADC policies, I can assure you, it is a lot!

I think we can all agree, effective communication and visibility are essential for regional organisations to achieve their objectives and to foster integration. By clearly articulating their goals, policies, and achievements, regional organisations can build trust, enhance transparency, and engage citizens, stakeholders, and international partners.

Communication serves as a bridge between institutional frameworks and the lived realities of the people they aim to serve.

Moreover, in a globalised world, where narratives shape perceptions, strategic communication is vital to counter misinformation, promote inclusivity, and strengthen solidarity within and beyond the region.

When SADC launches its Communication, Awareness and Visibility Strategy 2025-2030 today, it aims at tackling the complexity of these challenges.

Your Strategy is not merely about information dissemination. It is about building connections — between institutions, Member States, citizens, and stakeholders — to strengthen regional solidarity and shared identity. It also is about strengthening coordination channels between regional and national communication systems – to enable more consistent, impactful, and citizen-centred messaging across the SADC region.

The German government is humbled to have supported the development of this Strategy via SADC-German cooperation on the request of SADC Secretariat.

Our joint project called “Strengthening National-Regional Linkages (SNRL)” has contributed to raising awareness on SADC-related topics through a range of interventions, including:

- Training over 500 journalists and media stakeholders across the region, thereby strengthening their understanding of SADC protocols, regional integration processes, and cross-border cooperation.
- Improving public knowledge and awareness of SADC-related topics, resulting in more accurate, consistent, and citizen-friendly reporting across Member States.
- Supporting the development and publication of SADC Success Stories
- Supporting SADC Public Lectures held alongside SADC Summits
- Contributing to the production of policy briefs and fact sheets
- Strengthening institutional communication capacity at the level of SADC Secretariat and Member States,
- Enhancing storytelling and impact reporting across the region, showcasing the tangible benefits of SADC regional integration

I wish to express my gratitude to Your Excellency, SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, Angèle Makombo N’tumba, for championing communication as a cornerstone of SADC’s regional integration agenda. Your leadership has been instrumental in steering this process forward.

In the same vein, I would like to thank all SADC Member States and stakeholders who contributed to the consultative process that produced this Communication Strategy. Your level of engagement demonstrates a strong sense of ownership and recognition that communication is essential to advancing SADC's mission and vision.

Let's not forget the strong participation of national and regional media institutions, as well as of representatives from the Southern Africa Youth Forum. Your role is indispensable. The media, as a trusted source of information for the public, is central in shaping the narrative of regional integration. Equally, youth voices are vital-not only as beneficiaries of regional initiatives, but as main drivers of SADC's future.

Congratulations to all of you for enabling the launch of your new Communication, Awareness and Visibility Strategy! Its Implementation will now require your continued dedication to collaboration, coordination, and regional integration. The German Government remains your committed and reliable partner during this process.

As a great supporter of regional integration, I am looking forward to witness this implementation. As someone aware of the challenges of communicating the successes of regional integration to our citizens, I am also looking forward to your sharing of lessons learned during the process! So that next time, when a SADC citizen asks "What has SADC ever done for us?", her neighbor will be able to provide some informed response.

Thank you! Merci beaucoup! Asante sana! Ke a leboga! Danke!