



**OPEN SOCIETY
INITIATIVE
FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA**



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
SOUTHERN AFRICA OFFICE**



**SOUTHERN AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY**

**Distr.
LIMITED**

**ECA/SA/E-SADC/2009/Info.1
October 2009**

**e-SADC Launch Meeting
05 – 06 October 2009**

**Gaborone International Convention Centre (GICC)
Gaborone, Botswana**

AIDE MEMOIRE

I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has taken the broad international commitment to use ICT for development as an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in line with Africa's reaffirmation of this pledge through the NEPAD Action Plan and the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). SADC constituted the SADC Treaty Article 21, 1992 with a wider Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) aiming to transform the region into an information-based economy providing specific objectives and deadlines.

In August 2001, the SADC Heads of States signed a SADC Information and Communication Technology Declaration asserting commitment to the following priority areas of action:

- 1) The regulatory environment for Information and Communications Technology;
- 2) Infrastructure for ICT development;
- 3) Community participation and governance in ICT development;
- 4) ICT in Business Development;
- 5) Human resource capacity for ICT development.

The Declaration also urged member States to accord priority to ICT for national and regional social and economic development and proposed a policy to build an information economy in the SADC sub region. The Declaration further emphasized the need to adopt and adapt technologies that enabled e-commerce capability to avoid increasing exclusion from the global economy. In the same vein, the SADC e-Readiness Task Force recommendations alluded to three powerful means of directly improving e-readiness and harnessing ICT for social and economic advancement within the SADC region: (1) establishing the policy framework for action, (2) building the necessary infrastructure, and (3) undertaking ground-level projects.

In order to address the new digital revolution and its challenges, SADC published a paper in November 2000: *Policy Guidelines on Making ICT a priority in turning SADC into an Information-Based Economy* and also created specialized associations to undertake specific tasks. Some of the associations are:

- a) Communication Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) (formerly the Telecommunication Regulators Association of Southern Africa (TRASA 1997) was established to coordinate and harmonize regulatory issues in the sub-region in the wake of accelerated transformation in this sector;
- b) Southern Africa Telecommunications Association (SATA) - an association of all SADC Telecommunications operators was formed, with the main objective of harmonizing interconnectivity in terms of setting up of radio, fiber and microwave backbone links in the SADC region.

While SADC member States have at policy level adopted ICT as a key-driving factor for socio-economic development as per the 2001 ICT Declaration, in practice, implementation at the strategic level has posed a big challenge. It is for this reason that concerted efforts have been marshaled for assisting member States to develop their national ICT policies and strategic plans based on the SADC guidelines. These plans are expected to chart the roadmap for effective ICT applications in all economic sectors.

In an effort to develop ICT in Southern Africa, SADC and ECA, in partnership with member States organized a meeting in April 2008 to develop a project on ICT Development Strategy (e-SADC Initiative). The objective was to prepare a SADC ICT strategy framework to serve as a guideline for implementation of the Information Society in the region based on already identified SADC ICT priorities in terms of harmonization of ICT policies and strategies and their integration into broad development concerns. The meeting was attended by cooperating partners such as: Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), African Union (AU), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA), Southern African Telecommunications Association (SATA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Cisco Systems Inc.

The meeting developed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the e-SADC Initiative and evaluated the strategies to deliver ICT policies in terms of institutional and operational concerns. The e-SADC Initiative was also presented to the Ministers responsible for communications, ICT and Postals in June 2008 in Mauritius.

As a follow up, the SADC, OSISA and ECA Secretariats are jointly organizing a meeting from 5 – 6 October 2009 at Gaborone International Convention Centre (GICC), The Grand Palm in Gaborone, Botswana to discuss the launch of the e-SADC Initiative.

II. SCOPE OF MEETING

The meeting will discuss the following presentations from the ECA, SADC Secretariat and Consultant.

- (1) An overview of the status and challenges of ICT development strategy in Southern Africa (SADC).
- (2) The Terms of Reference on the e-SADC Initiative: the framework for the implementation of the Information Society in the sub-region (UNECA and SADC Secretariat).
- (3) The Inception Report and findings of Phase I of the Study (The Consultant).
- (4) "Measuring the impact of ICT usage" (The Botswana Central Statistics).
- (5) Fostering partnerships for strategy implementation: Challenges of implementing the action plan.
- (6) Review of main findings, recommendations and charting the way forward.

III. PARTICIPANTS

SADC Secretariat, OSISA and ECA-SA will jointly host the meeting. Participants will include National Focal Points for NICI in the SADC countries, experts from ICT institutions including ITU and the private sector such as Microsoft. SADC institutions, CRASA and TRASA; development partnerships including OSISA, AU, COMESA, and UNECA will be present for a broad-based dialogue. ECA-SA will

internally coordinate with ISTD in organizing the meeting.

ECA and OSISA will fund the return airfare and DSA at applicable UN rates to participants from member States and some of the experts from regional organizations.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The discussions from the rich blend of participants will enable the meeting to define and validate the SADC ICT Consultant Reports in terms:

- (1) Inception report and modalities for programme implementation adopted
- (2) Project launched
- (3) Phase I of Study completed.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

SADC will organize the logistics including hotel reservations, airport reception and transportation to and from the hotel. Participants are advised to provide details of travel itinerary to SADC in good time. It will be the responsibility of participants to organize their entry visas prior to their travel.

VI. CONTACTS

All communication concerning the meeting should be addressed to:

Goitseone Cecilia Mamelodi-Onyadile
Senior Programme Manager
Communications and Meteorology
SADC Secretariat
Private Bag 0095
Gaborone
Tel: +267 3611948 fax: +267 3924099
Email: cmamelodi@sadc.int

Thandikile Mbvundula
ICT Programme Manager
President Place
1 Hood Avenue
Rosebank
P O Box 678, Wits, 2050, South Africa
Cell: +27 (0) 83 229 6894
Tel: +27 (0) 11 587 5000
Fax: +27 (0) 10 587 5099
Email: ThandiPCM@osisa.org
Web: www.osisa.org

Copied to:

Atamelang Princess Ngwako
Associate Economic Affairs Officer
UNECA -SA
P O Box 30647,
Lusaka, ZAMBIA
Tel: (260-211) 228 502-5, Ext. 21341
Fax: (260-211) 236 949
E-mail: angwako@uneca.org