



COMMUNIQUÉ

Accelerating SADC's Development through the Socially Accountable Generation and Use of Public Resources

3rd REGIONAL DIALOGUE FOR NON-STATE ACTORS ON THE SADC RISDP 2020-2030

13-14 September 2023

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Whereas a regional dialogue for non-state actors (NSAs) on the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) for 2020-2030 was held on 13 to 14 September 2023, under the theme **Accelerating SADC's Development through the Socially Accountable Generation and Use of Public Resources**, co-convened by Southern Africa Trust, Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN), Southern Africa Coordination Council (SATUCC), SADC Council of NGOs, Care International, Global Campaign for Education, Trust Africa, SADC Youth Forum (SAYoF), Agenda 2063 Media Network, and the Partnership for Social Accountability (PSA) Alliance (a consortium of ActionAid International (AAI), Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) of Rhodes University, Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) and SAfAIDS).

1.2 Over 200 people, from eight¹ of SADC's 16 Member States, joined the dialogue virtually and from meetings in five locations (Dodoma, Tanzania; Lilongwe, Malawi; Lusaka, Zambia; Harare, Zimbabwe; and Johannesburg, South Africa), representing various non-state actors (NSAs), including civil society organisations (CSOs), smallholder farmers' associations, trade unions, youth organisations, people's movements, faith-based organisations and media outlets, as well as SADC Secretariat, SADC Parliamentary Forum (PF), SADC National Committees, SADC National Contact Points, the Strengthening National Regional Linkages programme of GIZ, and other government departments.

1.3 Noting that the SADC RISDP 2020-2030 (hereinafter RISDP) and Vision 2050 were approved at the SADC Heads of State and Government Summit in August 2020, and its regional and national implementation plans were adopted by the SADC Council

¹ Dialogue participants were from the following six SADC Member States: Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

of Ministers in August 2021 and 2022, respectively. The SADC Council of Ministers then approved the revised, reprioritised, regional implementation plan in March 2023 and the regional investment plan in August 2023. The 10-year regional strategy envisions “a peaceful, inclusive, middle to high income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom”.

1.5 Emphasising the importance of social accountability for effective delivery of quality, affordable, accessible, and gender-responsive public services to all people in the region, and ultimately to the achievement of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the AU’s Agenda 2063 and the SADC Vision 2050, and regional commitments, as noted below. To ensure social accountability in the roll-out of the RISDP 2020-2030, SADC and its Member States must ensure the people of the region are fully aware and involved in its associated regional, national, and local level initiatives.

1.6 Cognisant that deepening national debt among SADC Member States, triggered by repeated climate-change induced disasters, and inflation in fuel, fertiliser, and food prices following the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing war in Ukraine have exposed the region’s vulnerability to shocks and overdependence on external credit, raising the cost of living and compounding already high levels of poverty and inequality among the people of the region.

1.7 Appreciating that SADC PF adopted the SADC Model on Public Financial Management (PFM) at their Plenary in July 2022, which seeks to revitalise and modernise the PFM frameworks of SADC Member States. The model law is aligned with the objectives of the RISDP which envisages that the developmental goals within SADC will be reached within a climate that is conducive to good governance, transparency, and accountability.

1.8 Applauding that the SADC Council of Ministers approved the establishment of a Regional NSA Engagement Mechanism in August 2022, and that it will also consider the proposed NSA Accreditation Guidelines in early 2024. Such actions acknowledge that, as enshrined in the SADC Treaty (Article 23), NSAs and citizens are key stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of SADC policies and programmes.

1.9 Appreciating that eight² Member States have signed the ‘Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty on Transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into the SADC Parliament’. It is hoped that the remaining Member States will swiftly sign

² Only 8 Member States have signed the agreement to amend the SADC Treaty to recognise a SADC Parliament; these are: Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Seychelles, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. A total of 2/3 of SADC Member States must sign (i.e., 10).

the agreement, which would then be followed by a protocol to establish a SADC Parliament.

1.10 Recalling the importance of the African Union (AU) and SADC regional instruments such as the **(i)** African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (1996), and its Protocol on the Rights of Women (2003); **(ii)** African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007); **(iii)** African Youth Charter (2006); **(iv)** AU Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods (2014); **(v)** AU Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases (2001); **(vi)** SADC Protocol on Gender and Development; **(vii)** Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (2004); **(viii)** SADC Strategy for SRHR in the SADC Region (2019 – 2030); **(ix)** SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) (2013) and Investment Plan (RAIP) (2017 – 2022); **(x)** SADC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (FNSS) (2015-2025); **(xi)** SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063; **(xii)** SADC Model Law on Elections; **(xiii)** SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence; **(xiv)** SADC Model Law on PFM; and **(xv)** SADC Model Law on HIV in Southern Africa; and **(xvi)** SADC Model Law on Eradicating Children Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage.

1.11 Acknowledging the theme of the 43rd Summit (2023) “Human and Financial Capital: The Key Drivers for Sustainable Industrialisation in SADC”.

1.12 Recognised the achievements realised by SADC and its Member States in implementing the RISDP 2020-2030, as reflected upon in SADC Annual Plans and Reports. The following areas of progress were noted, in particular:

In health: Emerging signs of health system recovery in Member States, evidenced by strengthening human resources, rebuilding of health infrastructure, and improving health financing; development of guidelines for capacity building of Member States; resource mobilisation, including issuing of SADC HIV Fund grants; and completion of the second SADC SRHR Scorecard biennial review.

In agriculture: Upward trajectory of agricultural growth, with an increase in cereal production and livestock; monitoring of National Food and Nutrition Security Strategies; scaling up of demonstration adaptation projects in five Member States; and the production of the SADC State of Vulnerability Report for the 2023/24 season.

In education: Development of the SADC Open and Distance Learning Strategic Plan and Implementation Framework 2021-2030; growing alignment of national policies to the SADC Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning; and the monitoring of the SADC Qualifications Framework.

In employment and labour: Monitoring of the SADC Strategy on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities and Treatment in the Workplace; approval of the SADC Action Plan on Social Security for Workers, including women in particular; establishment of national productivity centres; and implementation of the SADC Guidelines on Labour Dispute Resolution and Prevention.

In climate change: Mobilisation of public and private climate finance by 16 Member States and four regional institutions; capacitation of universities to address challenges of climate change; implementation of pilot projects in Member States, including on agriculture; and completion of climate-oriented research in 10 Member States.

In gender: Development of the 2022 Handbook to Promote Effective Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiatives in November 2022; provision of capacity-building for law enforcement representatives from seven Member States on preventing and responding to GBV; production of the 2022 SADC Gender and Development Monitor; and drafting of a scorecard for monitoring implementation of the SADC GBV Strategy.

In youth: Submission of the SADC Protocol on Youth to Ministers of Youth; and development of the framework for a SADC Youth Forum.

1.13 Raised concern with the persistent lack of reporting by Member States on their SADC commitments, despite the existence of a regional online monitoring and evaluation system and provision of training by the SADC Secretariat, while **acknowledging** the potential of the newly introduced balance scorecard to improve monitoring.

1.14 Raised further concern with continued low public and NSA awareness and understanding of SADC planning and reporting processes at both the regional and national levels, while **recognising** the ongoing efforts of SADC Secretariat to improve communications and access to information, as demonstrated by revision of their communications strategy and provision of public documents via their website.

1.15 Warned that while varying SADC coordinating structures exist in most Member States, most do not have fully functional and accessible SADC National Committees (SNCs), which are key accountability mechanisms required by the SADC Treaty. It was **acknowledged**, however, that progress has been made in establishing and supporting SNCs and integrating SNCs into key planning processes in some Member States.

1.16 Expressed alarm that despite the need to mobilise finance for development across SADC for the implementation of the RISDP, and other SADC regional instruments, that there is slow progress on operationalisation of the Regional Development Fund and the Agricultural Development Fund.

1.17 Noted with concern that the number of food insecure people in the region increased from 50.8 million in 2021/22 to 55.7 million in 2022/23, the region is behind on meeting its Malabo Declaration commitments, and SADC failed to raise the anticipated funds required to implement the now expired Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP) of 2017-2022. Also, considering the impact of climate change in the region, **recommended** that SADC and Member States embrace and finance policies to support the adoption of agroecology, following the lead of Zimbabwe and Tanzania.

1.18 Noted that, based on the second biennial report of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Strategy Scorecard, progress on various indicators remains piecemeal, with missing data on abortion, maternal mortality, and integrated SRHR implementation; investment in health services remains below 15% of the national budgets, apart from Botswana (18%); and involvement of young people in health services planning remains limited. Considering this, **recommended** that Member States involve youth in planning and monitoring health services; ensure full reporting on all indicators in the SRHR Scorecard, and increase domestic investment in health services, with a focus on SRHR for young people.

1.19 Noted that, except for Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, and Tanzania, investment in education across SADC Member States is below the 15-20% of national budget that should be spend on education (or 4-6% of GDP), and many Member States spend more on debt servicing than on education (for example, Zambia spends 51% on debt vs. 17.1% on education). Considering this, **recommended** that SADC coordinate regional action on the debt crisis, and harmonise and share widely the reporting on education data (such as, for example, UNESCO reporting on SDG4).

1.20 Noted that young people compose 60% of the SADC population and their involvement in sustainable development is critical. Considering this, **recommended** that Member States fully adopt the SADC Youth Protocol and involve young people in the monitoring of national youth development strategies; and urged SADC Secretariat to ensure the SADC Youth Forum enables full participation of young people.

1.21 Noted progress on the monitoring of regional gender frameworks, but **urged** SADC Secretariat to urgently develop clear accountability and compliance mechanisms to ensure Member States address underlying structural causes of gender-based violence.

1.22 Noted the continued impact of climate-induced disasters in the region. Considering this, **recommended** that Member States adopt and enforce regulatory frameworks on fossil fuels, provide incentives and set targets for renewable energy, and encourage sustainable finance practices. Developed countries and the private sector are urged to provide fair climate finance for adaptation, with an emphasis on

grants rather than loans, to support the adoption of renewable energy and ensure a just transition, particularly to mitigate the impact on women and indigenous peoples.

1.23 Acknowledged that while the Dialogue focused on the social sectors of health, agriculture, and education; cross-cutting issues of gender, youth, climate change; and role of industrialisation and trade in financing development, the RISDP also covers many other vital areas of regional integration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The dialogue, therefore, makes the following overall recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the RISDP, at regional level. We:

2.1.1 Call upon the SADC Secretariat to promote the adoption by Member States of the SADC National Committee (SNC) guidelines as working tools, and to support resource mobilisation training for Member States to inform the full establishment and/or strengthening of SNCs. The SADC Secretariat is also urged to increase training for SNCs on communications, and monitoring and evaluation. We also urge SADC Secretariat to promote the adoption of a model law to facilitate the establishment and full operationalisation of SNCs in all Member States.

2.1.2 Encourage SADC Secretariat to expedite the operationalisation of the Regional NSA Engagement Mechanism, in particular the approval of the NSA accreditation guidelines, formation of the Regional Civil Society Forum, and establishment of a SADC NSA Liaison Office. SADC Member States are urged to consult NSAs about the draft NSA accreditation guidelines ahead of their review at the SADC Council of Ministers in March 2024. SADC Secretariat should also ensure consultation and involvement of NSAs in the development of other planned instruments, such as the SADC Protocol Compliance Monitoring Mechanism and SADC Extension Services Strategy. A funding facility should also be established to facilitate participation of NSAs at both regional and national levels.

2.1.3 Remind SADC Secretariat and Member States of their responsibility to facilitate timely access to publicly available information; in particular, SADC's regional planning and reporting process and timeline, to better enable social accountability monitoring. The SADC Secretariat website should be regularly updated with official plans, reviews, reports, and strategies, among other publicly available documents, in all four SADC official languages (English, French, Portuguese and Kiswahili), and information should also be shared through social media to facilitate young people's access.

2.1.4 Urge the SADC Secretariat to facilitate the remaining eight Member States (Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius,

Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia) to urgently sign the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty on Transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into the SADC Parliament, and ensure this is swiftly followed by the development and ratification of the required protocol, in accordance with the agreed roadmap.

2.1.5 Encourage SADC PF to support alignment of national laws to the Model Law on Public Financial Management (PFM) and Model Law on Gender Based Violence (GBV) through facilitating the use of model law scorecards and convening regular model law oversight committee meetings and public hearings.

2.1.6 Urge SADC Secretariat to facilitate the financing of sustainable development through operationalisation of regional mechanisms, such as the SADC Regional Development Fund and Agricultural Development Fund, ensure regional access to climate finance, continue issuing of SADC HIV Fund Grants, and support Member States' efforts to introduce universal healthcare. Related to this, private sector and international cooperating partners are urged to invest in these initiatives.

2.1.7 Noting the 43rd Summit theme towards industrialisation, **urge** SADC Secretariat and Member States to prioritise investment in information management systems in education, health, and agriculture, such that policy decisions are strengthened, responsive, and informed by credible evidence.

2.2 NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the regional recommendations, above, the Dialogue makes the following recommendations for national-level action. We:

2.2.1 Urge SADC Member States to expedite the operationalisation of the Regional Development Fund and the Agricultural Development Fund to ensure adequate support for RISDP implementation, particularly those programmes focused on smallholder farmers; sustainable, nutritious, and diversified food systems; sexual and reproductive health interventions for adolescents and young people; and education for all.

2.2.2 Call upon all SADC Member States to urgently establish and finance SADC National Committees (SNCs), including by introducing legal instruments, as mandated by the SADC Treaty. Existing SNCs should further facilitate and support the full participation of NSAs, especially young people, women, and people with disabilities.

2.2.3 Implore all SADC Member States to facilitate and broaden participation of NSAs, including by repealing all laws that threaten the existence of a diverse and pluralistic civil society.

2.2.4 Encourage SADC Member States to ensure NSAs can provide input into and easily access national-level planning and reporting information related to RISDP, including by providing information to the public through national SADC media coordinators and to NSAs through SNCs.

2.2.5 Remind SADC Member States to timeously submit annual reports on the SADC Online Monitoring and Evaluation System on their progress in implementing RISDP commitments and domesticating regional agreements, in accordance with the SADC reporting requirements, to ensure full data is available to inform regional decision making.

2.2.6 Recommend that all SADC Member States review their GBV and PFM laws and, if necessary, amend them to be in line with the SADC Model Laws on GBV and PFM, to ensure comprehensive prevention and response to GBV, and improve transparency and accountability in the use of public funds and to prevent illicit financial flows. This should also include providing full and timely response to SADC PF-led scorecards assessing national laws.

2.2.7 We express our profound appreciation to all our donors for their commitment to strengthening social accountability in the SADC region, in particular the regional office of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for their support of this dialogue.

Finally, this communiqué is hereby submitted to the SADC Secretariat, SADC Parliamentary Forum, as well as each SADC Member State through their National Contact Points.

NSAs at regional level and in each Member State are also encouraged to make use of this communiqué and its recommendations in their own engagements.

Issued on 18th September 2023 in Johannesburg, Dodoma, Lilongwe, Harare, Lusaka. For more information, please contact psaalliance@actionaid.org.