

Southern African Development Community, African Regional Bodies

Declaration of the Southern African Development Community

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Declaration of the Southern African Development Community
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Southern African Development Community

Declaration of the Southern African Development Community

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We, the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African States hereby commit ourselves and our governments to the establishment of a SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) to achieve these ideals, and to serve as a vehicle for the development and integration of the region.

We also offer and commend this Declaration to the peoples of Southern Africa, and call upon them to make the same commitment, and to participate fully in the process towards regional integration. Furthermore, we call upon the international community to continue to support the efforts of the countries of Southern Africa to realise this ideal.

Southern Africa in context

Since the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration, Southern Africa has changed, and is still changing. The quest for democracy and popular participation in the management of public affairs is entrenched, and spreading fast and wide. The management of economic affairs is being reformed to allow for efficiency, economy and competitiveness, and to enable individuals to innovate and to take the responsibility for improving their own lives and their communities.

The attainment of independence and sovereign nationhood by Namibia, formally ended the struggle against colonialism in the region. In the other countries, concerted efforts to end internal conflicts and civil strife are bearing positive results.

In South Africa, the process is underway to end the inhuman system of apartheid, and to bring about a constitutional dispensation acceptable to the people of South Africa as a whole. It is, therefore, only a matter of time before a new South Africa is welcome to join the family of free and majority-ruled States of the region.

The developments outlined above will take the region out of an era of conflict and confrontation, to one of cooperation; in a climate of peace, security and stability. These are prerequisites for development, and for the improvement of the standard and quality of life of the peoples of the region.

These changes taking place in the region are also bringing about a greater convergence of economic, political and social values across the region, and will help create the appropriate environment for deeper regional cooperation.

On the African continent, efforts continue, principally under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to promote closer economic relations.

Both the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, and the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, signed by OAU Heads of State or Government, in June 1991, make Regional Economic Communities (RECs) the building blocks for the continental community.

We, therefore, view our efforts at regional integration in Southern Africa as part of this continental effort.

On the global scene, fundamental and far-reaching political and economic changes are taking place. The cold war has ended, and world affairs are increasingly being managed on the basis of consultation and consensus, rather than confrontation and competition.

In addition, economic and social progress in the world is increasingly based on the mastery of science and technology, advanced human skills and high levels of productivity.

Integration is fast becoming a global trend. Countries in different regions of the globe are organising themselves into closer economic and political entities. These movements towards stronger regional blocs will transform the world, both economically and politically. Firms within these economic blocs will benefit from economies of scale provided by large markets, to become competitive both internally and internationally.

Colonialism, racism, especially apartheid, and destabilisation have left Southern Africa a legacy of wide disparities, deep economic dependence and social dislocation. This situation is neither desirable nor sustainable in the long term, because it is both unjust and wasteful. It is also a potential source of tension that could lead to future instability in the region. There is, therefore, an urgent imperative to restructure regional economies and relations towards balanced, equitable and mutually beneficial growth and development.

The SADCC experience

SADCC was established as a vehicle for the reduction of economic dependence and for equitable regional integration; an appropriate sequel to the political emancipation of the region. SADCC has made commendable achievements since its founding in 1980, particularly seen against the national economic problems, the hostile international economic environment and the massive destabilization and military aggression of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Of all the contributions SADCC has made to regional development, the greatest has been in forging a regional identity and a sense of a common destiny among the countries and peoples of Southern Africa.

However, progress towards reduction of the region's economic dependence, and towards economic integration, has been modest. The organisation has, so far, not been able to mobilise to the fullest extent possible, the region's own resources, for development. Yet this is one of the central objectives, as well as strategies, for effective and self-sustaining regional development. This requires political commitment and effective institutions and mechanisms to mobilise the region's own resources.

A shared future

In the light of its peculiar circumstances, and international changes in the organisation of production and trade, Southern Africa needs to arrange and manage its affairs in a manner that will provide opportunities to all its people, on the basis of equity and mutual benefit; to invest and to become effective actors in the regional and international market places.

The economies of Southern Africa states are small and underdeveloped. The countries of the region must, therefore, join together to strengthen themselves economically and politically, if the region is to become a serious player in international relations. No single country of Southern Africa can achieve this status on its own.

Southern Africa has also been an arena of conflict and militarisation, associated with the struggle for political liberation, and the fight against apartheid and racism, aggression and destabilisation. A new Southern Africa, concerned with peace and development, must find a more abiding basis for continuing political solidarity and cooperation, in order to guarantee mutual peace and security in the region; and to free resources from military to productive development activities.

The countries of Southern Africa will, therefore, work out and adopt a framework of cooperation which provides for:

- a) deeper economic cooperation and integration, on the basis of balance, equity and mutual benefit, providing for cross-border investment and trade, and freer movement of factors of production, goods and services across national borders;
- b) common economic, political, social values and systems, enhancing enterprise and competitiveness, democracy and good governance, respect for the rule of law and the guarantee of human rights, popular participation and alleviation of poverty;

- c) strengthened regional solidarity, peace and security, in order for the people of the region to live and work together in peace and harmony.

There is, therefore, a critical need to develop; among all the countries and people of Southern Africa, a vision of a shared future, a future within a regional community.

Strategies

a) **Human resources, science and technology**

The most binding constraint to development of the region is inadequate professionally and technically qualified and experienced personnel, to plan and manage the development process efficiently and effectively.

Human development is a life-long process of developing an individual's potential to the fullest, through education and training, improved health, ability to earn a decent living, the exercise of economic and political choices, and guaranteed basic human rights; to afford him/her full involvement in the development process.

The region also lacks an adequate scientific and technological base, and is substantially dependent on imported expertise and technology.

A high priority for the region must, therefore, be to develop effective national and regional policies on science and technology, setting realistic goals and identifying practical, cost-effective instruments for achieving these goals. In formulating policies and programmes, close links will need to be developed with the business sector which utilises the technology and skilled people.

Appropriate measures will be taken to improve the region's scientific and technological base, through curricula improvement; establishment of centres of specialisation and concerted efforts in the promotion of research and development.

Policies will also be implemented to realise the innovative potential and entrepreneurship of the people of the region, and to encourage self-application and a strong work ethic.

b) **Food security, natural resources and environment**

Land, agriculture and food security are synonymous with life and livelihood. Most of the people of Southern Africa remain dependant on agriculture as a source of food and income. Agriculture is also critical to the industrialisation of the region, by ensuring availability of raw materials for local industries, and a source of purchasing power for the people. Agricultural development will, therefore, need to provide for increased production and productivity, and intra-regional trade in food and other crops, to guarantee food security and enhance the quality of life of the people of the region.

The exploitation and utilisation of natural resources, especially land, water and minerals will contribute to human welfare and development. However, such exploitation requires good management and conservation, to ensure that development does not reduce or impair the diversity and richness of the region's natural resource base and environment.

In this context, policy measures will be taken, and mechanisms instituted to protect the environment, and manage natural resource utilisation with a view to achieving optimum sustainable benefits for the present and future generations of Southern Africans.

c) **Infrastructure and services**

In order to enhance services to the people of the region, to support industrial development and growth, and promote intra-regional trade; the rehabilitation and upgrading of existing, and development of new transport and communications and energy systems will remain a priority.

Emphasis will also be placed on increased and effective operational coordination, towards efficiency, cost-effectiveness and competitiveness, in order to ensure economic viability of the systems.

d) Finance, investment and trade

The creation of an environment conducive to increased investment, particularly in the material productive sectors of the regional economy, is central to the strategy for regional integration.

The experience gained in regional cooperation so far, shows that collective self-reliance with respect to the mobilisation of regional resources, is one of the areas where the gap between the declared aims and practice has been widest. Appropriate measures will be instituted urgently to address this issue, in order for the region to achieve its aims and objectives.

Although the creation of a regional market under existing circumstances could lead to only a modest increase in intra-regional trade, its most important impact will be to spur new types of investment in more productive and competitive industries, to supply the regional and international markets.

Continuing policy and management reforms, the restructuring of production at higher levels of enterprise, productivity and competitiveness; are accordingly identified as the main pillars of a strategy capable of engendering increased investment in production and trade.

It is evident that for this to take place, the countries of Southern Africa will need to harmonise their economic policies and plans, and ensure that regional integration becomes an intrinsic and integral part of the management of national affairs. In this regard, particular attention will be given to factors which impinge on intra-regional Investment and trade flows, such as payments and clearance, monetary and financial relations, and mechanisms for the mobilisation of the region's own resources.

e) Popular participation

Regional integration will continue to be a pipe dream unless the peoples of the region determine its content, form and direction, and are themselves its active agent.

Measures will, therefore, be taken, and appropriate mechanisms and institutional framework put in place; to involve the people of the region in the process of regional integration.

f) Solidarity, peace and security

War and insecurity are the enemy of economic progress and social welfare.

Good and strengthened political relations among the countries of the region, and peace and mutual security are critical components of the total environment for regional cooperation and integration. The region needs, therefore, to establish a framework and mechanisms to strengthen regional solidarity, and provide for mutual peace and security.

Institutions

Successful regional Integration will depend on the extent to which there exist national and regional institutions with adequate competence and capacity to stimulate and manage efficiently and effectively, the complex process of Integration.

Integration will require mechanisms capable of achieving the high level of political commitment necessary to shape the scope and scale of the process of Integration. This implies strengthening the powers and capacity of regional decision-making, coordinating and executing bodies.

Integration does imply that some decisions which were previously taken by individual states are taken regionally, and those decisions taken nationally give due consideration to regional positions and circumstances. Regional decision-making also implies elements of change in the locus and context of exercising sovereignty, rather than a loss of sovereignty.

International cooperation

This Declaration is a statement of commitment and strategy, aimed at economic development and integration of Southern Africa, on the basis of balance, equity and mutual benefit. However, Southern Africa is still a

developing region which will continue to need the support of the International community to realise its plans and aspirations. Every effort will, therefore, be made to consolidate the goodwill which the Southern African states have established with their international cooperating partners, and to justify and stimulate enhanced practical international cooperation, for mutual benefit.

Commitment

Underdevelopment, exploitation, deprivation and backwardness in Southern Africa will be overcome only through economic cooperation and integration. The welfare of the people of Southern Africa, and the development of its economies, require concerted and higher levels of coordinated regional action.

The primary responsibility for upliftment of the welfare of the people of this region rests primarily with them and their Governments. Member States recognise that the attainment of the objective of regional economic integration in Southern Africa will require us to exercise our sovereign right in empowering the organisation to act on our behalf and for our common good. This is the challenging mission of SADC.

This declaration is produced in two (2) original texts in English and Portuguese languages, both texts being equally authentic.

Done in Windhoek, on 17th August, 1992.