# SADC: Fresh developments and achievements

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**Summary & Comment:** Globalization issues, argues Chris Kanyane, poses a serious threat to small countries, whose voices are rarely heard on the international stage. Integration, in the form of groupings such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), enables smaller countries to align with others and form a collective powerful force and can speed up development and economic growth in member countries.

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### Introduction

Regional groupings such as (*Southern African Development Community*) SADC aim to bring neighbouring countries together. The goal is regional integration. Regional integration is the process by which two or more nation-states agree to co-operate and work closely together to achieve peace, stability and economic development. Usually integration involves one or more written agreements that describe the areas of cooperation in detail, as well as some coordinating bodies representing the countries involved.

This co-operation usually begins with economic integration and as it continues, comes to include political integration. Marcomick (2005) describes regional integration by considering a scale, with 0 representing no integration at all between two or more countries. 10 would represent complete integration between two or more countries. This means that the integrating states would actually become a new country - in other words, total integration. The intention of regional integration is to form a centre that will promote the interests of all the member countries - as the old adage says 'there is strength in numbers'.

In Africa, regional integration is necessary considering that the majority of African countries are small, weak and poor. Integrating the countries of Africa will help them in dealing with the issues of globalisation that poses serious threat to poor nations. In international stages such as the *United Nations, World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund* and the *World Bank* the voices of smaller countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Seychelles, Benin, etc are not heard.

With regional integration we are assuming that smaller countries such as Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana can come together and form one community like the *Southern Africa Development Community* (SADC). Doing this they can form a collective powerful force that will enable them to deal with such burning issues like eradication of poverty, globalisation and social epidemics like HIV/AIDS.

Looking at the cases of Tanzania, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Angola can highlight the benefits of regional integration. Tanzanian economy has stagnated since the eighties and failed to develop. It is only now that it is active member of the SADC that its economy is beginning to grow. DRC and Angola that have been ravaged by political shenanigans where warlords and rebels were the order of the day are learning from the other member countries like South Africa, Botswana that are politically stable. Communities such as the SADC have organs of politics and economic developments – organs that deal with the promotion and creation of democratic cultures while on the other hand facilitating economic developments to member countries.

### SADC's Decentralised Approach

Before 2001 the countries forming the SADC have identified many common challenges. These *challenges are divided into sectors* as follows:
* Environment and land management
* Inland fisheries, forestry and wildlife
* Tourism
* Culture, information and sport
* Marine fisheries and resources
* Finance and investment

* Human resources development
* Industry and trade
* Employment and labour
* Food, agriculture and natural resources
* Water conservation and distribution
* Transport and communication
* Legal affairs
* Transport, communications and meteorology
* Legal affairs
* Health
* Mining
* Crop production

The SADC has, as of August 2001, restructured and adopted a centralised approach in running the integration and development of its 14 member countries. Before the restructuring the SADC have divided and centralised the sectors indicated in the diagram to all the 14 member countries. The aim of decentralising or internationalising the sectors was for SADC to guide and coordinate regional policies and programmes on a country-by-country basis.

With the restructuring of SADC sectors since 2001, SADC has now approached a more centralised approach through which the *sectors are grouped into four Directorates*, namely;
* Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment
* Infrastructure and Services
* Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
* Social and Human Development and Special Programmes

All these Directorates are based in the *SADC Head Quarters in Gaborone, Botswana*. With the previous decentralised strategy, each member country was allocated a sector to coordinate. Each country was tasked with a particular sector or sectors. The responsibility for the country charged with particular sectors involved proposing sector policies, development strategies, setting priorities, and processing projects for inclusion in the sectoral programme, monitoring progress and reporting to the SADC Head Quarters. Sectors were allocated to each member country based on the country's perceived strengths and opportunities.

The following is an illustration of how sectors were allocated to each member country based on strengths and opportunities found in that particular country.
1. Angola
Sector responsibility: Energy
Strengths: Angola is rich in mineral resources e.g. oil

2. Botswana
Sector responsibility: Agricultural research
Strengths: Botswana is mainly a farming country.

3. Lesotho
Sector responsibility: Environment and land management
Strengths: Lesotho is mountainous with  many rivers

4. Malawi
Sector responsibility: Inland fisheries, forestry and wildlife
Strengths: Lakes Nyasa and Victoria

5. Mauritius
Sector responsibility: Tourism
Strengths: Mauritius is essentially well known tourism country

6. Mozambique
Sector responsibility: Culture, information and sport

Strengths: Mozal Transport, communications and meteorology

7. Namibia
Sector responsibility: Marine fisheries and resources

8. South Africa
Sector responsibility: Finance and investiment
Strengths: Advanced medical facilities

9. Swaziland
Sector responsibility: Human resources development

10. Tanzania
Sector responsibility: Industry and trade

11. Zambia
Sector responsibility: Employment and labour Strenghts: Mining

12. Zimbabwe
Sector responsibility: Food agriculture and natural resources
Strengths: Crop production

The centralised or global strategy has seen all these sectors grouped into four Directorates and based in SADC Head Quarters in Gaborone, Botswana, as already indicated. *The four Directorates are the core activities of the SADC headquarters.* The previous decentralised policy appeared to promote regional integration and to ensure that each country's strengths and opportunities are explored. The previous system also appeared to have been working considering that a country that is lacking in a particular area can rely on the other country that has strengths on that area. Say for example, if Swaziland is experiencing water shortages, it can source water supply from Lesotho with its large rivers.

**When SADC followed the decentralised approach it reasoned along the following lines:**
1. To offload work done at the SADC Head Quarters to the 14 member countries, allowing the SADC Secretariat time to focus on critical issues.

2. To give each member country a sense of control and a feel of belonging to the community by giving responsibilities in each member country.

3. The SADC also realised that there is flexibility in the decentralisation of SADC functions, more rapid local responsiveness and attuning the Community to local conditions of each member country.

Decentralisation ensured that the decisions taken are influenced by conditions and cultures of each member country. Decisions taken are often informed decisions. Nevertheless on the operational level the decentralised country by country sectors was too complex to manage and coordinate. Projects were initiated but in most of the cases were not started or after started they were not completed.

The decentralised approach also involved large sums of money that was not always available. With the decentralised approach, member countries were, instead of integrating became more polarised since each country was focusing in developing sectors in their own countries and saw little benefits in working with other member countries. With the decentralised approach, in reality and practice, there was no integration. These are reasons that forced SADC to re-look the decentralised approach and eventually restructured itself by 2001.

**Restructured SADC: Developments and achievements**

With the restructuring of the SADC, the entire 21 sectors were grouped and centralised. Out of this restructuring process emerged four directorates all based in Gaborone, Botswana.

**The main reasons why the SADC centralised its functions** are the following:

* SADC wanted to facilitate coordination. SADC saw the decentralised 14 sectors dispersed in the 14 member countries difficult to coordinate.
* To ensure that decisions are consistent within the entire SADC system. When decisions are dispersed around 14 countries, country managers can make decisions at variance with those at the SADC Head Quarters in Botswana. Centralisation of functions reduces this risk.
* By centralising all the functions in SADC Head Quarters in Botswana, the Secretariat may find it easier to speed up the integration process without circulating document decisions to various dispersed sectors.

With the present centralised strategy, and through the *Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan* has mapped out a strategy that would allow member countries' economies to grow steadily over the years to reach the targeted 7 per cent growth rate. This strategy centres on the *twin pillars of good economic governance and good political governance.*

Already some Member countries are emerging as continental leaders in terms of macroeconomic policies and poverty reduction strategies as well as institution building and these are: Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa. In terms of the economic performance within the Region, Angola is leading the way with a 13.8% growth rate, followed by Mozambique with 8% and Tanzania with 6.2%. Improvements in growth rates have also been witnessed in Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. On the *Public Index Rankings*, as contained in the *Global Competitiveness Report*, *four of our Member States* ranked *among the top ten*, with Botswana ranking first. The three others are South Africa, Mauritius and Tanzania (Ramsamy, 2003).

Looking at these developments and achievements one can see that the restructured SADC is on a firm foundation in achieving its objectives of speeding development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa. This can be achieved through the success of other SADC activities which covers promoting and defending peace and security and, strengthening and consolidating the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the region.

The ultimate objective of SADC, the Community is, therefore, to build a Region in which there will be a high degree of harmonisation and rationalisation to enable the pooling of resources to achieve collective self-reliance in order to improve the living standards of the people of the region.

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