



## **Overview**

**by Ms. Emilie A. Mushobekwa**

**Deputy Executive Secretary: Finance and Administration**

**on the occasion of the**

**Launch of the New SADC Website**

**Monday 03 December 2012**

**SADC Headquarters**

**Gaborone, Republic of Botswana**

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Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Excellency Madam the Ambassador of the Republic of Germany,

Excellency the High Commissioner of the Republic of Mozambique;

The Executive Secretary;

Colleagues' Members of the SADC Secretariat;

SADC National Contact Points;

SADC National Media Coordinators;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. As mentioned earlier in the Master of Ceremonies' introduction, we are gathered here today to launch a new version of the SADC

website, which is “our face to the world” .

2. The presence of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the internet can be traced as far back as 1996 when our institution registered the sadc.int domain name. Under this domain name, the SADC Secretariat has maintained an official website and official email addresses. This has made it possible for us to reach our stakeholders and conduct business to meet our mandate.
3. The Secretariat is engaged in a drive to improve its outreach to stakeholders, following a call from the Executive Secretary, Head of our institution. A number of outreach-projects have been identified, one of which has been to conduct a major review and upgrade of the SADC Website.
4. In December 2011, the German Development Cooperation, through GIZ (the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), our main cooperating partner in this project, approved a request for financial and technical support to carry out this major review and upgrade, and a consultancy contract had been awarded to Hatfield Consultants Africa (HCA). This contract commenced in March 2012.
5. Realising the importance of becoming a world-class organisation, the SADC Secretariat included a benchmarking exercise as part of the review process. This exercise ranked the old SADC website and those of similar organisations such as COMESA, EAC, NEPAD and AU against good website practices. The results highlighted areas that needed most attention and the amount of effort needed to move ahead of the pack.
6. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, with the new website that we are launching today, we have certainly made great strides. Our new

website, “our face to the world” contains valuable information about institutional set-up, priorities of regional integration and common projects as well as progress and impact made by all 15 Member States and relevant stakeholders.

7. The website has been totally reorganised to make it easy for visitors to get information, even if they do not know about our institutional set-up. The information used to reorganise the website was collected through questionnaires circulated to all staff members. An interactive card-sorting exercise allowed participants from Directorates and Units to engage in construction of a new structure and a navigation system for the website. This work informed the design of a professional website template on which the website was built.
8. Once the structure was decided, Directorates and Units as well as Member States were engaged in re-writing content for the website. The website now has more than 250 new web pages and a comprehensive collection of documents. This content has been initially made available in the English language and work will commence right away to translate the website into other official languages of SADC.
9. On behalf of the SADC Secretariat, I would like to express my deep felt gratitude for the on-going support from GIZ and the high quality work delivered by Hatfield Consultants Africa. I also want to express my appreciation to those who worked relentlessly on this project. A project of this magnitude would not have been successful without commitment and passion of the colleagues from SADC ICT & PR Units, all Directorates and Units and contact-persons in Member States.
10. Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the internet is a rapidly

evolving technology. As we launch this website today, we mark not the end, but the beginning of a journey that will enable us to engage with our stakeholders and interested parties all over the world. We will embark upon this journey bearing in mind differences in internet access technologies and internet infrastructure challenges that some of our stakeholders may be facing. We will endeavour to make SADC accessible through a number of technology platforms and social media that seems to be increasingly popular, especially with the younger generations.

11. I invite all of you to make maximum use of this valuable resource that is accessed by more than 10,000 users every month. I also invite you to give your comments and suggestions to the SADC ICT & PR Units. I especially encourage Directorates and Units to continue to review and update the website and provide text, photographs, videos, sound recordings, reports, event announcements, advertisements and any other updated information that will keep our website informative and interesting to our stakeholders.
12. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we present to you “[www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int) - our face to the world” .

Thank you for your attention.