MEDIA STATEMENT
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SADC ICT MINISTERS MEETING
8TH NOVEMBER 2012
BALACLAVA, MAURITIUS

Held under the theme, *Moving SADC Towards the Broadband Ecosystem*, the Meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for Communications and ICT was convened at La Plantation Resort & Spa, Balaclava, Mauritius on 8 November 2012, kindly hosted by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT), of Mauritius. The Meeting which was officially opened by Honourable Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum, Minister of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) of the Republic of Mauritius, was attended by Honourable Ministers from SADC Member States. The Meeting viewed an address via video playback by Mr. Brahima Sanou, the Director BDT of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), in which he commended the SADC Region for the developments in the SADC ICT Sector and confirmed his commitment to support the ICT for development for the Region.

In his remarks delivered on behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary, the Director of Infrastructure and Services, Mr Remigious Makumbe, emphasised that the development of the ICT sector was central to Regional Integration and that efficient and cost effective ICT services can respond to modern business demands based on the commitment to universal service provision and the need to bridge the digital divide. He commended the partnership and the work

being undertaken by the SADC Implementing Agencies, namely; CRASA, SATA and SAPOA on behalf of the Region. He also commended the support accorded by International Cooperating Partners

In his address Honourable Louis Pelembe, the Minister of Science and Technology, Mozambique and Chair of the SADC ICT Ministers, commended the Republic of Angola for their achievements and able leadership during their tenure as Chair of the SADC Committee of Senior Officials and SADC Committee of Ministers, which led to the development of the SADC Regional Infrastructure Master Plan (RIDMP). The RIDMP was adopted by Summit at their Meeting held in Maputo in Mozambique in August 2012.

The Chair of the SADC Committee of Ministers noted the pivotal role that ICTs played in the development and enhancement of the living conditions of the SADC citizens. He emphasised that the high access costs deserved the attention of the Ministers and in particular the issue of Roaming tariff, which was the topic of discussion under SADC Home and Away Roaming Project. He also noted the role that Postal services could play in the Region and highlighted the issue of cyber security, as being one of the important issues in the attainment of Regional Integration. He commended the role that SADC Secretariat continues to play in guiding and coordinating the harmonization and participation of SADC Member States, at International Fora. He hailed the development of the Master Plan as a significant move that would enable the Region to realize the ideals of Regional Integration and poverty alleviation.

In his opening speech, Honourable Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum, the host and Minister of ICT, Mauritius alluded to the relevance of the theme of the meeting, m*oving SADC towards the Broadband ecosystem''*, and mentioned that if Broadband was to be fully developed and deployed it would work towards developing economies such as those in the SADC Region and ín turn, reduce the cost of communications. He emphasized that it was time for Africa to join the rest of the world as an equal partner in the framework of actions and choices for socio-economic development, and to achieve this SADC would be required to re strategise. He commended the work that the SADC Region was undertaking towards the development of the Postal Sector with a view to

ensuring that the sector assumes its role as a powerful driver of public policy designed to reduce poverty and the effects of social and economic inequality. He emphasized that the development of infrastructure is key to promoting e-Commerce and Intra and inter Regional Trade. He mentioned that Mauritius was prepared to share these experiences with SADC Member States. He called upon the SADC Secretariat to continue to facilitate a conducive environment that would allow exchanges among and between Member States. He cautioned that the proposed SADC Cooperation should not be confined to just being a dream but SADC should provide incentives to operators in order to deploy adequate infrastructure.

The vote of thanks was provided by the Honourable Moses Kalongashawa, Minister of Information, Malawi and Vice-Chair of SADC, who thanked the Government of Mauritius for Hosting the Meeting and for the warm hospitality that has been accorded to the Honourable Ministers and delegates to the Meeting.

The Ministers Meeting which was preceded by the Meeting of Senior Officials held on 6 and 7 November, was chaired by the Honourable Louis Pelembe, Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of Mozambique. The Meeting was attended by senior officials from all SADC Member States, and honourable Ministers from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Namibia and Deputy Ministers from Angola and Mozambique. The meeting was also attended by the heads of SADC implementing Agencies in the Communications and ICT Sector, namely; SATA, SAPOA, CRASA and the Secretary General of ATU was in attendance as well as representatives from Uniform SA/dot Africa, ITU, PAPU, NEPAD and UNECA.

The meeting deliberated over a number of issues and made a number of decisions including the following: Consideration of the Regional Alliance Task Team (RATT) Report to the Ministers. The meeting approved that the Region should move towards the adoption of the 'Roam like a Local and urged the SADC ICT Regulators to engage Operators and ensure that all measures are put in place to effectively implement the recommendation on Roam Like a Local' by April 2014. In extending the term and mandate of the RATT, the Ministers

called upon the task team to ensure the realization of the "Roam like a Local" in the SADC Region, along the phases that have been identified in the Report.

Ministers considered and approved the revised SADC Roadmap on DTT Broadcasting Migration and called upon the Secretariat to expedite the setting up of a DTT Project Management Office, that would oversee the implementation of the SADC Roadmap; they called for a progress Report to be presented at their next meeting.

The Ministers also considered and approved the draft SADC Model Laws on Cyber Security; Cybercrime, Data Protection and Electronic Transactions, which were developed in conformity with the Africa Union Commission (AUC) Draft Convention on Cyber Security, which will be submitted to the AUC Summit in January 2013.

Ministers also considered and approved the draft e-Commerce Strategy and Action Plan, and directed the Secretariat to ensure that they effectively implement the SADC e-Commerce Strategy and Action Plan. They noted the plans to set up an ICT Observatory, and urged SADC Member States to set up at a national level their own National Observatories.

The meeting noted that the SADC Summit adopted the SADC Infrastructure Master Plan. The meeting also noted that in terms of the institutional arrangements in place for the implementation of the Short Term Action Plan (STAP), will be overseen by the ICT Sub Sector Committee (SCOM), which will in turn report to the Committee of Senior Officials; and Committee of Ministers.

The Ministers also noted the work which is currently on going in the SADC with regard to the updating of a number of guidelines to take into consideration technological developments including the review of the SADC Frequency Band Plan; the review of the Framework for Harmonisation of Frequencies for PPDR; the review of the SADC Framework for Harmonisation of Frequencies for PPDR; the review of the Framework for Harmonisation of Frequencies for Public Protection for SADC and the development of a Guideline for Accessing the Unlicensed Spectrum Bands.

Ministers also noted and discussed case studies which provided examples of the provision of equitable access to submarine cables by the Member States who have submarine landing stations. They, however urged, Member States with landing Stations to continue working together with their land locked counterparts in order to allow access to the submarine cables at fair and affordable prices.

Ministers also approved the convening of a High Level Ministerial Postal Conference to consider and approve the SADC Postal Strategy and work programme detailing the implementation of the key UPU resolutions as agreed to in the Doha Postal Strategy.

Ministers are also briefed on the harmonised common positions for proposals to the WCIT-12, and also encouraged the participation of Member States in the WCIT-12, and WTSA-12. The Ministers also directed the Secretariat to pursue a similar process with ITU international conferences such as WRC-15, WTDC-14 and the 5th WTPF.

The Ministers meeting also approved priority projects to be undertaken during the year 2013/2014 pertaining to Infrastructure Development, Policy and Regulatory Framework, Postal Operations and Regulation, Regional Coordination and new priority areas.

The Ministers ended the meeting by expressing their appreciation to Honourable Tseliso Mokhosi, the Minister of Communications, Science and Technology from Lesotho, for having offered to host the next Ministers' meeting in May 2013.

Delivered on 8th November 2012
La Plantation Resort & Spa
Balaclava, Mauritius