SADC International Conference

on

Poverty and Development

Mauritius

18 - 20 April 2008
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I welcome the publication of a magazine following the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development held on 20 April 2008 in Mauritius.

The Conference on the theme “Regional Economic Integration: A Strategy for Poverty Eradication towards Sustainable Development”, was indeed a great success in terms of substance, proposals for action and also in all its organisational aspects. The major outcome of the Conference was the signature by the SADC Heads of State and Government of the “SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development”. The Declaration identifies seven priority areas namely food security, climate change, energy, trade, education, health and infrastructure development.

The Conference has clearly demonstrated that Mauritius is committed, along with other SADC Member States and strategic partners, to promote sustainable and equitable socio-economic growth. Fighting poverty at regional level requires economic growth that creates more resources for developing social integration projects targeting the poor.

As I said in my address at the opening ceremony of the Conference: along with policies for fostering growth, SADC needs to ensure that people can access productive resources and be gainfully employed. The experience of China and India demonstrates that if we, SADC Member States, open up and expand our economies, create gainful employment, increase productivity, educate, train and empower our people, we should be able to make important strides in poverty reduction.

I wish, through this special magazine, to thank all the SADC Member States, the invited dignitaries, the representatives of the International Cooperating Partners, governments of friendly countries, private sector and
civil society in and outside the African region as well as the panellists, the SADC Secretariat and all the members of National Organising Committee for contributing to the successful outcome of the Conference.

Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, G.C.S.K.
Prime Minister
In September 2005, the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam G.C.S.K., attended the first Clinton Global Initiative meeting where he announced a proposal to host an International Conference on Poverty and Development (ICPD). This proposal was reiterated in his statement at the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The 2006 SADC Summit in Lesotho endorsed the proposal of Mauritius to hold the ICPD. The ICPD, at Summit level, was to be held on 20 April 2008, preceded by the SADC Ministerial Consultative Conference with International Cooperating Partners on 18-19 April at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles.

**Main objectives of the SADC ICPD**

- To discuss the regional dimensions of poverty in the SADC region and their inter-linkages with national poverty reduction strategies and forge consensus on the key elements

- To develop an Action Plan/Road Map on Poverty and Development, outlining a series of timed specific tasks and actions and monitoring and evaluation mechanism

- To re-mobilise the international community in particular the developed countries to live up to their commitments in regard to increasing the levels of development aid

- To mobilise resources both at regional and international levels to meet economic and social adjustment costs and implement regional poverty-oriented programmes/projects

- To lay the foundations for a new global partnership for SADC that accelerates momentum for the region to achieve MDGs targets
Agenda

- Propose and adopt a Regional Poverty Reduction Framework (RPRF) with Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) targets and a clear Monitoring and Evaluation plan. This Framework to focus on specific programmes and actions that operationalise the RPRF and strengthen Member States’ poverty reduction programmes to meet the set Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Establish a SADC Poverty Observatory

- Receive concrete pledges of technical and financial support from the international community, development partners and private sector in line with MDG 8, the Gleneagles G8 Summit of 2005 and other such commitments (Global Partnership for Development)

- Adopt a Declaration

Expected outcome

To have a long-term impact on the approaches and policy practices of all stakeholders through:

- Increased commitment to support SADC in achieving the MDGs by focusing on the necessary reforms and increasing/refocusing of resources to align to identified targets

- Augmented interest in implementing the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) as important avenues for reducing and eliminating poverty both at national and regional levels

- Enhanced consensus on the causes of underdevelopment and poverty in the region as well as on the strategies for overcoming them by demonstrating the benefits of freer trade and investment in generating vertical and horizontal integration across national frontiers

- The emphasised role of SADC as one of the building blocks of the African Union in facilitating the attainment of the continental integration agenda as well as mandates/goals such as the MDGs
- Confidence-building on the multi stakeholder approach in regional policy development and mobilize consensus among the key stakeholders and lay the foundations for a new global partnership for SADC to achieve the MDGs

- Increased awareness by the international community of the efforts made in the SADC region for eradicating poverty, achieving inclusive and sustainable economic patterns of development and integrating the global economy

- Commitment from International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) for additional resources for poverty eradication based on adoption and implementation of bold action to achieve regional economic integration

- Agreement on specific role of each of the key stakeholders in the implementation of the Conference recommendations.
The Conference - An Overview

Participants resolve to boost up action in priority areas

Nine Heads of State were present at the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development held at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Paillè, Mauritius, on 20 April 2008. The theme of the Conference was “Regional Economic Integration: A Strategy for Poverty Eradication towards Sustainable Development”.

Out of the fourteen SADC Member States, Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia were represented at Heads of State and Government level. The remaining five countries, namely Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe were represented at ministerial level.

The Conference was also attended by the President of the Federal Islamic Republic of Comoros, the Prime Minister of Norway, the Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles as well as representatives from cooperating governments, international organisations, private sector and civil society in and outside the African region. About 700 participants, both foreign and local, participated in the one-day International Conference and the two-day Ministerial Consultative Meeting with International Cooperating Partners preceding it.

Plenary Opening Ceremony

In his welcome address at the official opening ceremony, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, G.C.S.K made an appeal for a re-thinking of our strategies to combat poverty in the SADC region, given the increasing dimension of the problem. His key message was that, along with policies for fostering growth, SADC needs to ensure that people can access productive resources and be gainfully employed. The experience of China and India tells us that if SADC Member States open and expand their economies, create gainful employment, increase productivity, education, train and empower the
people, they should be able to make important strides on poverty reduction. Dr Ramgoolam, G.C.S.K said.

Mr Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank, delivered the keynote address. In his remarks, he announced the availability of US$ 1.8 billion for investment in infrastructure in the SADC region for the next three years. He emphasised sustainability, that is, the need for steady and consistent progress instead of “stop and go” policies which result in production loss, undermining confidence and increasing poverty.

Mr Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway who spoke about global efforts towards climate change and diseases referred to the Norwegian pledges of US$ 1 billion for a 10-year period to the UN Global Campaign to reduce child and infant mortality and US$ 20 million to the World Food Programme. He added that Norway, whose international development assistance is close to one percent of its Gross National Income, was committed to help the African region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Mr Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, underscored the paradigm shift represented by the proposed Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) within the framework of ACP-EU Cooperation and the importance of regional integration for attracting Foreign Direct Investment. He stated that EU’s financial assistance was designed to support the SADC economic integration strategy.

The Conference was opened by Dr Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia and Chairperson of SADC. In his address, he referred to the common challenges facing the SADC region such as slow economic growth and job creation, declining social services and the increasing disease burden especially that related to HIV and AIDS. He ended with an optimistic note that there are solutions to the challenges.

**Main outcome**

The major outcome of the Conference was the signature by the SADC Heads of State and Government of the “SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development” built on the discussions at the levels of the three panels and also on the interactions at the plenary sessions.
The three panels were as follows:

Panel A: The SADC Regional Economic Integration Agenda- Paving a Road to Economic Growth and Poverty Eradication

Panel B: Tackling the Skills, Innovation and Technological Gaps required for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in the SADC Region

Panel C: The Social and Environmental Dimensions of Poverty in the SADC Region

In his intervention in Panel A, Prime Minister Dr NavinChandra Ramgoolam, G.C.S.K highlighted the importance of economic policy reforms geared to removing obstacles to trade and investment. Fighting poverty at regional level requires economic growth that creates more resources for developing social integration projects targeting the poor. He drew attention to adjustment costs which are of two types - the economic adjustment costs arising from removal of barriers and the social adjustment costs resulting from changing employment and income distribution patterns. Such costs, he emphasised, warrant assistance to the SADC region. The main focus of the panel was, thus, on integration into the regional and global economies.

Panel B recommended, among others the development of Science and Technology, promotion of training and re-skilling, upgrading the quality of reduction at all levels and close follow-up on decisions taken at SADC level in the form of a matrix.

The main thrust of Panel C was on the mechanisms to encourage cross-border co-operation to increase food supplies, adaptation and mitigation strategies in respect of climate change, including improving disaster preparedness. It was considered urgent and important to increase budgetary allocation and overall investment in agriculture with a view to improving the quality of life of the majority of the population in the SADC region. Social protection, gender balance and fight against HIV and AIDS were also part of the conclusions of this Panel.
The Declaration identifies seven priority areas requiring urgent attention namely food security, climate change, energy, trade, education, health and infrastructure development. The following action-oriented decisions are to be highlighted:

(i) The setting up of a Task Force of Ministers of Trade, Agriculture and Finance on Regional Collaboration, with immediate focus on the current food crisis;

(ii) The establishment of a Regional Poverty Observatory - an important component of the SADC Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy/Framework. It is basically a multi-stakeholder forum to monitor progress in the main areas of poverty eradication;

(iii) The continuation of negotiations for resources under Aid for Trade and the setting up of frameworks for the operationalisation of the SADC Development Fund and Public-Private Partnership programmes; and

(iv) The increased mobilisation of resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
THE SUMMIT
(SELECTED SPEECHES)
It is my distinct privilege to welcome you all to the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development on behalf of SADC and indeed on my own behalf. I am particularly honoured and pleased to warmly welcome the SADC Heads of State or Government to this Conference which they themselves decided to hold to deepen dialogue on the best ways to address the main challenge currently affecting our region - POVERTY. My special welcome goes also to our special guests the Heads of State or Government of sister and partner countries from Comoros, Seychelles and Norway who have come all the way to join the SADC Summit on the high dialogue on the fight against poverty. I wish to recognize with immense gratitude the presence of a number of eminent persons in particular Dr Donald Kaberuka, the President of the African Development Bank, who kindly accepted to be the keynote speaker for our meeting.

We feel greatly indebted to Dr the Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam G.C.S.K., Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, the people and the Government of Mauritius for the warm hospitality and excellent hosting of this very important Conference. This is a clear demonstration of the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius to the sustainable social development and prosperity of the people of the SADC region. Such commitment deserves commendation and support in order to re-energise our efforts towards promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication.

I am sure that this Summit Conference will come up with important deliberations on relevant policies and strategies pertaining to economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development of our region.

At this stage, it is my duty to report that in preparation to this high level dialogue on poverty, extensive consultations were undertaken at regional and national levels involving government departments, non-state actors, private sector and civil society. Through this process, we believe to have created a platform and raised the profile and momentum in the regional debate on poverty where
important proposals were made and translated into a draft Regional Poverty Reduction Framework, including the need for establishing a SADC Poverty Observatory as a regional forum for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of SADC poverty reduction strategies.

With these few words, I wish this Conference the most fruitful deliberations.
It is with great pleasure and honour that I stand before you today to officially open the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development in this beautiful tourist city of Pailles, in Mauritius.

At the outset, I wish on behalf of the SADC Heads of State and all the delegates, to convey my heartfelt gratitude to the government and the people of Mauritius for warmly welcoming us and availing us these comfortable Conference facilities. I am certain that this beautiful environment is an added incentive for all of us to apply ourselves with maximum creativity so that we can accomplish with excellence what we have come here for.

We are gathered here because we, the SADC countries, are gravely concerned at the large number of our people living in abject poverty. The region's poverty levels are quite high with over 40 percent of our population living on less than one dollar per day. This poverty exists in spite of the abundant resources such as land, water, minerals, talented human capital and many others that are found in the region. All of us agree that this is not acceptable.

The poverty suffered by our people is clearly reflected in the poor social indicators that every one of us is so much aware of. The indicators include high levels of malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, underemployment, declining life expectancy, unsatisfactory access to basic social services and infrastructure needed to sustain basic human capacities. Further, lack of capacity to cope with external shocks, such as natural disasters of droughts, floods and cyclones, diminishing energy and communicable diseases such as HIV & AIDS has had its fair share in worsening the poverty situation in the region.

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Considering the immense challenges of poverty in the region, the Summit held in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho, in 2006, mandated the SADC Secretariat in consultation with Member States to prepare and convene an International Conference on Poverty and Development in the SADC region. I am therefore very pleased that the Maseru decision is being implemented through the Summit Conference that we are holding this weekend.

Being a large body of different nation States, the key factors that have caused poverty in our region vary from country to country. However, there are some key common factors behind the poverty. Among these are slow or negligible economic growth and job creation over most of the 1980s and 1990s, declining social services and rising disease burden especially that related to HIV/AIDS. Country specific causes of poverty have included internal conflict and strife, poor governance and natural calamities.

As we ponder over the issues of poverty in our region, it is important that we also recognize the tremendous progress in the fight against poverty that has occurred in some of our member countries. In a sense, this demystifies the fight against poverty and it encourages all of us that indeed this fight can be won and it must be won because our neighbours have demonstrated that this is possible.

As we all know, our host country Mauritius is a shining example of the successful countries and, for this, I wish to congratulate the government and people of this impressive country. We all look forward to emulating the transformation that has taken place here.

It is also gratifying that even for many of our countries where poverty is much higher than here in Mauritius, real progress in the fight against poverty or, at least, stopping it from rising further is clearly visible. Even where progress is modest, we must still recognise it because it signals that, at least for now, the worst may be over if we continue to make the progress that we have been making. The challenge is to make this progress to happen even faster.

I express this hope because for the first time in many years after independence, our economies have shown strong consistent economic growth. As we have been told by experts, economic growth or wealth creation is a prerequisite for fighting poverty even though it may not be enough by itself. In other words, poverty can be ended by sharing rising wealth, which is what is happening now. Poverty cannot be ended by sharing increasing poverty, which is what happened before.
Coming to the discussions that are about to start, I have been informed that we are privileged to have experts on the topics that we are going to discuss. Equally important, we have participants from countries outside our region who have managed to significantly reduce poverty in spite of whatever odds they faced. Let us take advantage of these resource persons to learn what we can do, in practical terms, for our region.

I am also told that the main discussions will be through panel discussions in break out groups. As we discuss, no doubt lots of proposals will be laid on the table.

While accepting that many of the suggestions are useful, I urge all of us to focus on a few key suggestions for which we have the capacity to implement. I believe in the principle that for most problems, a few key steps are usually sufficient to resolve most of the problems at hand. As is known, most of us already have a lot of programs that we are implementing so we have to be careful that we clearly prioritise the actions that we shall agree to implement from this meeting. It is therefore not useful to come up with too many resolutions which we know will not be implemented.

Related to this, I am extremely delighted at the large turnout of the Member States to this Conference taking into account that Heads of State and other senior government officials are very busy. This good gathering should therefore enable us to exchange experiences on what each one of us is doing in our countries to fight poverty. No doubt, we shall all learn about what works and what does not work.

But I wish to caution us, once more, that we need to go beyond exchanging experiences about what is happening in our individual countries. We should also avoid preparing a regional plan by merely amalgamating our individual country poverty reduction plans.

In my opinion, the output of this Summit will be more useful if we focus on those steps and actions that are necessary at a regional level to help us fight poverty. In other words, we must at regional level, prioritise the implementation of those actions which require us to act in unison with other members in order to put a dent in poverty. In my view, this is the only way in which we can render a regional approach to poverty reduction to be a meaningful exercise.

As I conclude my opening remarks, let me emphasize that we, the SADC Heads of State and/or Government, are very pleased to be here to chart the way forward on the poverty issues in the SADC region. I thank all my colleagues who
have made it here as well as our staff, the Cooperating Partners and the technical experts from all over the world who will interact with us. I also thank the Secretariat for the excellent follow up on the Maseru decision so that we are able to meet this weekend.

With these remarks, I look forward to fruitful discussions and attaining the goals and objectives we have set ourselves to attain through this Conference.

I wish this meeting God’s guidance in its deliberations.
I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished Heads of State and Government, Ministers and Delegates to this SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development.

I thank the SADC Member States for accepting my proposal that this Conference be convened and for giving us the privilege of hosting it - for this Conference brings into focus the most crucial issue that development policies have to address in our region.

I hope that, during our deliberations, we will be able to define the extent and depth of the poverty problem in our region, share a common vision and forge a common approach to resolving it individually as nations and collectively set the appropriate mechanisms to accomplish the daunting task ahead of us.

Poverty is no doubt the greatest concern of our time. Its extent and pervasiveness are worrying. It is mind boggling that close to one in every six persons in the world lives on less than one dollar a day; that the poorest 40 percent of the world’s population receive 5 percent of global income; that poverty kills close to 30 000 children each day; that a third of children in developing countries are undernourished and underweight, most of them in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; and that more than 70 million children of primary school age in the developing countries do not go to school, most of them girls. We can go on and on and give statistics on access to clean and safe water, to electricity, and other basic necessities and talk about the various infectious diseases such as malaria and TB and the heavy incidence of HIV/AIDS.

'Speech of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius
Dr NavinChandra Ramgoolam, G.C.S.K.
20 April 2008

'A rising economic tide does not lift all the boats - we must therefore ensure that growth reaches the poor and the vulnerable, and that our people are properly empowered to harness the benefits of the positive dynamics befalling sub-Saharan Africa.'
On almost all poverty counts, SADC as a region fares worse than the global average. There are countries in SADC where more than 80 percent of the population live in poverty. On average 40 percent of SADC population live on less than one dollar a day, and 60 percent on less than 2 dollars a day.

Chilling figures, yet they do not even start to capture the grim reality. They do not show the suffering of children going to sleep without food, of parents who see their children denied a future, and the despair of seeing them die of preventable and treatable diseases because of lack of funds.

The sheer scale of the problem makes it incumbent upon us to rethink our strategies and to address the problem with earnest resolve.

To make matters worse, other issues have come to the forefront which add complexity to the fight against poverty: soaring energy prices, climate change and food security. They will undoubtedly redraw and redefine the policy space within which we can act responsibly.

During this Conference, we are meant to consider poverty eradication and sustainable development. But we all know that the usual path from poverty to prosperity is via a development process that sees a remarkable increase in the per capita use of fossil fuels.

We may be inclined to argue that poverty eradication ranks higher, in terms of priority, than climate change. But the effects of climate change will threaten to undermine any progress we make in poverty eradication.

This leads us to an even thornier question: Can we find the appropriate policy space within which we can combat poverty while adopting a precautionary environmental policy? As policy makers who have to ensure decent livelihoods for our people today as well as for future generations, we can hardly afford to brush aside the intersection between the poverty crisis and the climate crisis.

The other issue which adds to the challenge of poverty eradication is food security. The realities of demography, energy prices and biofuels together with climate change have resulted in soaring food prices. Commissioner Louis Michel has warned that the global food crisis “has the potential to cause a real economic and humanitarian tsunami in Africa”. Josette Sheeran of the World Food Programme calls it the silent tsunami. We need a new deal for global food policy which contributes to inclusive growth and sustainable development while addressing the
problems that are holding poor farmers back. The solution is not imposing export quotas and trade restrictions - which will only exaggerate the problem. Part of the solution must be to produce higher yielding seeds. It is, therefore, imperative that we move out of the business-as-usual mental frame in order to find effective and sustainable policies to combat poverty.

History tells us that the struggle against poverty has never been an easy task. In fact, a study published by the University of Cape Town reports that the number of people in extreme poverty has doubled in Africa between 1981 and 2001, rising to over 300 million.

Globally, the progress on poverty reduction in recent years has been more encouraging. Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty, most of them in economies that have been growing rapidly. India and China are inspiring examples of how economic growth can have a significant impact on reducing poverty. Their experience tells us that if we open and grow our economies, create jobs, increase productivity, educate, train and empower our people we should be able to make important strides on poverty reduction.

I am convinced that all of these can also happen in SADC. Africa's high positive and persistent growth in recent years is bringing about significant improvement in per capita income. We must however, ensure that this growth is inclusive. A rising economic tide does not lift all the boats - we must therefore ensure that growth reaches the poor and the vulnerable, and that our people are properly empowered to harness the benefits of the positive dynamics befalling sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, SADC has a unique opportunity in its history to bring its poor in the loop of mainstream development. Along with globalisation and the revolution in information technology, there is the new dynamics of South-South cooperation which is bringing enormous opportunities for trade, investment and technology transfer on a scale that the continent has rarely experienced.

Let us therefore harness these new dynamics to concentrate our efforts on inclusive growth - growth that will have more direct impact on poverty reduction. But how do we do it? Let me share with you some of my views.

First and foremost, along with our policies to foster growth we must take parallel actions to ensure that poor people can access productive resources and be gainfully employed. We must invest in human resources to build a flexible and efficient workforce.
Let us think on how to improve productivity in agriculture where up to 70 percent of people in our countries draw their livelihoods. I welcome SADC’s decision to include sustainable food security as one of the priority intervention areas in its 15-year comprehensive long-term socio-economic development framework, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). Rising food prices can cut both ways, it can improve the earnings of farmers but at the same time it can further blight the lives of those already in poverty and with low income.

Let us also endeavour to shift our workforce to higher value-added activities within and outside agriculture to improve its earning capacity.

In some of our countries, the majority of the population do not have access to a bank account. Let us think of how to develop more inclusive financial systems at a time when we are witnessing such tumult in the financial markets.

We must also root out the obstinate inequalities that are deeply seated in our systems. I am referring in particular to gender bias.

Let us also think on how to further deepen democratic institutions and improve governance, for good governance is essential for inclusive growth and poverty alleviation.

Poverty is indeed multifaceted and I have but scratched the surface. Our actions must be comprehensive and go to the roots of the problem. And we must constantly watch the outcomes of our actions. To this end, the proposal to set up a SADC Poverty Observatory is most welcome for it is concrete action in the right direction. We must get early warnings of any factor or force that send SADC off track on the Millennium Development Goals so that we can take swift remedial actions.

I also welcome the efforts of development partners to emphasise pro-poor growth in developing countries. But I should at the same time emphasise that it is no time for our development partners to use aid fatigue as an argument to slow down their efforts. On the contrary, for Africa to maximize the dynamics of change in favour of the poor, it is essential that our development partners further strengthen their focus on pro-poor/inclusive growth. They should channel more resources for direct support to the poor, while at the same time promote trade, regional integration, higher flows of foreign direct investment and more technology transfers. It is clear that regional programmes are required alongside national ones for a greater overall impact on trade. The development partners can assist in operating the Regional Aid for Trade (RAFT) initiative which is on the agenda for
quite some time. This should enable regional assessments of needs, and greater cooperation in designing, costing and implementing major infrastructure projects with significant impact on poverty.

May be SADC should establish a RAFT Committee, comprising also sub-regional and regional organizations and financial institutions, to oversee the implementation of regional dimensions of Aid for Trade, report on needs, responses and impacts, and to oversee monitoring and evaluation aspects of the initiative. There is a clear rationale for RAFT and, given the MDGs commitments for 2015, we should not let time run out. We must start articulating and adopting possible approaches to finance regional aid for trade programmes and projects within SADC.

We should also consider setting up a Regional Development Fund (RDF), along the lines of an Infrastructure Fund, to operationalise RAFT and to support SADC-wide development projects.

Finally, while I believe that SADC must necessarily take a collective approach and ensure that we are on track on the MDGs, I am equally convinced that success also lies in “national ownership” of policies and in the wider participation of civil society. In fact, we must get our civil society to go regional and not only work on a national basis. There can be a very constructive sharing of experience, knowledge and a more efficient pooling of resources in the struggle against poverty if we develop fully a regional civil society that also sees the problem in its wider regional context.

To conclude, let me reiterate my conviction that we can and should harness the new dynamics that are at play in our region to make a decisive stride on poverty reduction. Nationally and collectively, we need to weave in all our policies and reforms, actions that will make a positive impact on poverty reduction. The task is certainly immense but so is our responsibility to the millions who live in absolute poverty in our countries. If we do not attain the 2015 target of reducing extreme poverty by half, starting with 1990 as the reference year, then we would fail and we would also fail the millions of our citizens who are desperately seeking a way out to reintegrate the mainstream of society.

There can be no illusions about the daunting challenges we face. But if we remember that the ultimate objective of power over the destiny of the people we lead is precisely to put those very people first and take decisions that will make a difference to their lives and those of future generations, then I have no doubt that we shall overcome these challenges and break this invidious cycle of poverty.
It is a great honour to be here today to address you - political leaders of Southern Africa.

A special thanks to our hosts, Prime Minister Ramgoolam G.C.S.K., and the Chairman of SADC, President Mwanawasa. I very much appreciate the invitation to the SADC Summit and I have been looking forward to join you in the discussions.

During my visit to Africa over the last days, I have once again been struck by the beauty and greatness of this continent. By the warmth of its people.

And this is indeed true for Mauritius. But Mauritius is much more than unforgettable sunsets and perfect beaches.

Turning to the topic of this Summit, we should look to the experience of this island nation. You have reduced poverty by one fourth in one generation. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is on track. And investments in education and health have helped transform the economy.

Eight years ago, 189 world leaders signed the Declaration on the UN Millennium Development Goals in New York. We are on track to meet the first Millennium Development Goal - reducing extreme poverty by half. This will happen thanks to the remarkable economic growth over the past decade. And other Millennium Goals are within reach in many parts of the world.
But we are lagging seriously behind in many areas. Continued and increased action is needed if we are to honour the pledges made. This is particularly true for reducing child and maternal mortality.

That is why Norway has decided to give these goals special attention.

Every year, close to 10 million children die of diseases for which there are inexpensive and effective remedies, such as vaccines. To fully vaccinate a child costs 30 dollars. If every child is vaccinated, we could save 2.5 million young lives a year - many of them in Africa.

Every year, half a million women die in connection with child birth. That is, one mother every minute. Many of them could have been saved by simple means.

We are supposed to reduce child mortality by two thirds. At the present pace, we may only reach one third. And maternal mortality has hardly been reduced at all. We have the knowledge and the resources to prevent most of these tragic deaths. And there is no excuse for not doing more.

That is why a new Global Campaign to save the lives of women and children was launched in New York last September.

I am grateful that President Kikwete and President Guebuza have joined this campaign. Both of them have taken bold initiatives to make change happen in their countries.

Change that will save the lives of thousands of children and mothers.

Norway will do its part. We have pledged 1 billion US dollars over a ten-year period specifically to reduce child and maternal mortality.

I welcome the initiative by the UN Secretary General to convene a High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals on 25th September in New York. Let us make this a turning point in our efforts to reach all the Millennium Goals.

Norway will support you in this process. Our contribution to international development assistance is close to one percent of our Gross National Income. Norway is the world’s largest per capita contributor to the UN. And the seventh largest in actual figures. And we are committed for the long term.
For children to grow and prosper, their parents must have the means to feed them. Lately, global food prices have almost doubled. According to the World Bank, this could mean “seven lost years” in the fight against worldwide poverty.

The poorest people of the world spend more than half their income on food. For them a doubling of food prices is devastating.

For refugees in camps, for those internally displaced, this is simply a matter of survival.

In response to the recent appeal by the World Food Program, I am pleased to announce today that Norway will contribute 20 million US dollars to alleviate the most urgent needs. This will be allocated to the World Food Program, African institutions and those countries which need it most.

And we will do it on the basis of Africa’s own priorities, Africa’s own plans and initiatives both nationally and regionally.

There are many reasons for the surge in food prices. It is a consequence of population growth and higher living standards. It is a consequence of climate change.

But the increase in food prices may also be an unwanted effect of producing bio fuels.

Bio fuels may be part of the solution to climate change. But not all bio fuels have a clear positive effect on the climate. And today a significant share is produced in a way that reduces food production. The corn it takes to fill up the tank of a car with ethanol fuel could feed a person for almost a year. Land, water and energy resources are diverted from food to bio fuel production.

It is time that we take a critical view at the unwanted consequences of bio fuel and carefully assess our policies in this area.

All countries will be affected by climate change.

But the most vulnerable, the poorest countries and peoples, those who have contributed least to the causes of climate change, will suffer most.
Many African countries lack the resources to deal with these problems, to adapt to the consequences and to continue economic development in a climate-friendly way.

Indeed, as Prime Minister Ramgoolam said at the UN General Assembly last year “We all have a stake in addressing climate change and global warming”.

It is the rich world that has created the problems of climate change. And it is the rich world that must shoulder the main responsibility for solving them.

Climate change is man-made, and it can be solved by man. But this takes leadership.

Being here in Africa, I am inspired by great African leaders like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela. They transformed this continent.

Now, it is our turn. We must lead the way towards a global agreement on climate change with the same courage and conviction.

Last December the world agreed on a “road map” in Bali. This road map is an important step forward. We need a new and more ambitious agreement, with more countries participating. It should be based on common but differentiated responsibilities.

The industrial countries must lead the way by cutting emissions in our own countries and by financing mitigation and adaptation in the developing world.

We have to put a global price on carbon. Carbon trading creates incentives to reduce emissions. It stimulates investments. And it stimulates the transfer of funds and technology from rich countries to poor countries.

By means of a single measure, we can address those twin challenges: climate change and poverty. This is not a new notion. President Mwanawasa made the same point at last year’s UN General Assembly.

Deforestation represents almost half of Africa’s total emissions.

And it should be included in the post-Kyoto agreement. Through emission trading, this would create great new economic opportunities for African countries.
In Bali, I announced that Norway is prepared to increase support to prevent deforestation in developing countries to around 500 million US dollars a year. By saving forest, we can achieve large cuts in greenhouse gas emissions quickly and at low cost.

Some of these funds will be used in Africa. We will seek to establish carbon and forest partnerships. And we will be starting with Tanzania tomorrow.

Global challenges - like climate change, poverty, endemic diseases, and threats to peace and security - must be met by global measures.

We need a strong and efficient UN. We need a UN that delivers results. We need a UN that delivers on the Millennium Development Goals.

I was privileged to chair the UN Panel on System Wide Coherence with my colleagues from Pakistan and Mozambique.

A year and a half ago we presented our report and recommendations for UN reform to the Secretary-General.

At the heart of our report was the proposal to establish “One UN” in each country. One leader, one programme, one budget and, where possible, one office.

This does not mean less resources for development, but more development for each dollar spent.

Mozambique and Tanzania are leading the way as two of the eight pilot countries. The experiences so far are positive. Host governments report that their interaction with the UN system is easier.

UN programmes have become more aligned with national priorities. And the countries find themselves in the driver’s seat of the process. We who believe in a strong UN should be the first to work for reforming the organisation.

Let me finally turn to an important issue that affects us all.

The eyes of the world are on Zimbabwe. Norway has been a supporter of Zimbabwe since the days of the liberation struggle. The bonds between our two countries are strong. Now, I am deeply worried about the situation.
The lack of results from the elections casts serious doubt about the willingness of the Government to respect the voice of the people. This situation should not be allowed to continue.

As a friend of Zimbabwe and the region, I strongly appeal to you to strengthen your efforts to find a solution. The Government of Zimbabwe must respect basic democratic rules and human rights and prevent violence.

The economic and humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe seriously affects the country, its people and the whole region. The Nordic countries are prepared to launch a major stabilization and reconstruction package when democracy is fully restored and a credible national economic policy is in place.

Political freedom, democracy and respect for human rights are inextricably linked to economic and social progress. Sustainable development is the foundation for all.

Nelson Mandela once put it this way:

“We knew that political freedom alone is not enough if you lack clean water.

Freedom alone is not enough without light to read at night, without time or access to water to irrigate your farm, without the ability to catch fish to feed your family.

For this reason the struggle for sustainable development nearly equals the struggle for political freedom.

They can grow together or they can unravel together”.

Let us make sure that they grow together.
Let me, at the outset, express my gratitude for this invitation, an honour and privilege, for me and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Thank you Mr Chairman, President Mwanawasa, for the initiative and the Government of Mauritius for the hospitality.

The subject of poverty and regional integration has attracted numerous conferences and initiatives in the past. Many pertinent recommendations have been formulated. I do not intend to return to that familiar ground. Let me simply observe that we have made steady progress in most regional blocks as we have suffered setbacks. I see this Conference as an opportunity to re-energize, consolidate and decide on the way forward. Commendable progress has been achieved in SADC and it is right that you now seek to arrive at a regional poverty reduction framework and an observatory to measure and monitor progress. SADC was the first regional block to adopt a coherent regional development framework and a macroeconomic convergence program, and together with the AfDB we have concluded a joint strategy - a first ever such initiative. My humble purpose today, therefore, is to reflect with you on the next steps in the context of an emerging complex global economic landscape and how the AfDB can contribute to the collective endeavour.

In this respect, let me recall the essentials. We will eliminate poverty if our economies can grow sustainably over several years. To maintain that path, it is imperative to steadily reduce the costs and the risks of doing business, both political and economic, while expanding the size and diversity of our markets. I am not by any means suggesting that economic growth on its own is sufficient to eliminate poverty. Far from it. But it remains the essential condition, provided that it is
broad-based and non exclusive. And it will be ever more inclusive if, among other things, we give greater attention to education, attend to the needs of our small farmers and small businesses, especially those owned by women, and it will be more broad-based if we widen access to financial services. For emphasis, let me recall that while the continent of Africa and its sub-regions have generic problems, there is a very high level of diversity.

You will recall that the 1980s have been called “the lost decade”. In the 1990s, underpinned by steady reforms, progress was substantial. And in the last six years, the continent has got back on the growth path. It is true that it is to a large extent commodity driven and there is not, as yet, evidence of change in the economic structure but it is an opportunity that we must exploit to make the changes in the internal dynamics of our economies. Some countries have been able to maintain a consistent path of growth, while others can barely keep up with population growth. Those well endowed with natural resources are riding on the strong demand for commodities, while the less endowed ones, but with strong policies, are registering credible performance. Six countries in sub-Sahara Africa have tripled their per capita income over the last thirty years, nine have stagnated to 1960 levels while the majority have witnessed a net improvement but not yet enough to make a dent on poverty. In addition, those engulfed in crisis or emerging from conflicts present a special challenge which requires innovative solutions.

Over the last few weeks, much has been said about a new threat, that of skyrocketing food prices. The consequences - human, social, economic and even political require firm resolve and action, nationally and internationally. The people most endangered are the urban poor, populations living in fragile states, children, the old and the sick. I am persuaded that while the underlying inter-play of supply and demand may take time to work themselves out, the world has the resources to provide emergency support needed, the macroeconomic support required and robust plans to implement a green revolution. If there was problem for which the world has the means to respond quickly and effectively, this is one but it is also opportune for us in Africa to think long term.

In addition, the vulnerabilities in the global financial system, now into the 11th month, have spread well beyond delinquent mortgages, into an extensive squeeze on credit and liquidity. Although different regions of the world are differently affected, no part of the globe can be immune. Uncertainty is growing as economies in the industrial world slow down.
Despite the substantial monetary and fiscal support, the US economy will go into a mild recession, with growth at below 0.5% expected to begin recovering gradually in 2009.

a. Global growth expected to drop from 4.9% in 2007 to 3.8% in 2008, with the strongest slowdown in industrial countries.

b. Even though economic growth in emerging Asia is expected to decelerate by around 1% point of GDP, it will remain very strong at around 7.8%. It is clear that these emerging economies cannot fully escape the impact of a recession in industrial countries. It appears that these are economies which, while not decoupling have evidently developed stable dynamics of their own around domestic factors and hence their resilience to weaker export demand, tightening global financial conditions and lower capital inflows. This is most welcome news for African commodity exporters as demand remains robust.

The level of economic activity in Sub-Sahara Africa, which accelerated to 6.8% in 2007, will maintain momentum only modestly slower, both among resource rich and resource poor countries, but the pace of the last decade, which has seen African growth above population is maintained. I expect on average that overall African growth will hover around 6.4%. It is not yet the 7% we need to attain MDGs by 2015, but it is above population increase. Hence, provided we can sustain the pace over time, real per capita incomes will be positively impacted and steadily poverty will decline if we succeed to broaden the pattern of growth and make it inclusive.

I would like in this context to emphasize two points: First, to return to this, the sustainability question. Here, I can do no better than repeat the well known story that “the tortoise always beats the hare”. In other words, steady, continuous progress, consistent performance, avoiding “stop and go”, is much far preferable to spurs of fast growth followed by reversal and decline either because of change in policies, or change in the external environment. Africa has experienced far too many cases of excellent, promising performers who abruptly changed direction, resulting in significant damage and loss of production, undermining confidence and horizon and dramatically increasing poverty. I commend the leaders of SADC who have maintained such a pace, such sustainability, and the results are beginning to show.

My second point is related to commodity dependence. I have pointed out earlier the central role of commodities, be their oil, minerals or agricultural in the current phase of growth. Our economies are riding on commodity price effects, not
increased exports as such, although unlikely this implies vulnerability that also provides an opportunity for diversification. Brazil, historically the world largest coffee producer, still is, yet does no longer really depend on its coffee which is no longer central to its economy as it was for many years till the 1990s. Now Brazil is a major agricultural power. It can supply the world market not only with manufactured products such as aircraft but also any type of tropical or sub-tropical agricultural products one can think of.

Equally, I am encouraged by genuine efforts all around to avoid problems associated with the commodity booms of the past such as debt distress and macroeconomic imbalances. We now know much better how to deal with the impact of large inflows, commodity revenues as well as related governance issues. But we now need to go further beyond enclave economies and expand the range of beneficiaries. I am referring to the attention needed for greater side stream development, horizontal integration into the local economy and opportunities for small businesses to enter the supply chain: all this is good economics but also good practice. But above all, this is the opportunity to develop our productive base, our human resources and our infrastructures.

My third point (another point) relates to the critical importance of the so-called neighbourhood effects. I am informed that in this region a 1% increase in the GDP of the largest economy, South Africa, implies an increase in the neighbourhood of three-quarters of 1% of GDP. The progressive ability to anchor regional integration is to strengthen these inter linkages. This is so because of their own good policies non-mineral endowed economies have been able to do so well in the last decade, growing at around 5%. They have done so because of their own good policies and stability, but also as a result of initiatives in regional integration. As barriers, both man-made and physical, are lowered, regional integration has expanded trade opportunities, diversity of skills, factors of production and investment, and thus opportunities for all.

Much has been said about African economies lack of competitiveness in the global economy. In fact, this is not as straightforward as it seems. Various studies, including ours, conclusively demonstrate that African firms and farms can be competitive, but only at the firm’s or farm’s gate. After that point, external costs beyond the control of our business peoples and our farmers kick in. Such external costs relate to poor infrastructure. Institutions like the AfDB have a major role here. I want to commend our cooperation with the SADC and its members for the programs we have in place. Together, we have drawn up a well articulated plan for infrastructure, transport corridors, energy and power pools.
We are increasing private sector financing from our non sovereign window. From the rehabilitation of Inga I and II, which we are co-financing with the World Bank, to the Kazungula Bridge and the Mmamabula Power project, we are keen to catalyze investment in infrastructure in the region at country and regional levels. This is why two years ago we provided USD 104 million to DBSA for a regional facility and why we are investing in the Panafriican Infrastructure fund.

I am confident, that this region can eradicate poverty. The example which comes to my mind is the dramatic improvement in agricultural productivity in Malawi, following the introduction of fairly standard and small agricultural packages, demonstrating the huge potential of increasing total factor productivity. The changed dynamics of world market for food and cereals is indeed a threat, but can also be a window for our farmers to be given means to respond. They cannot respond given the high cost of inputs, implements and fertilizers whose prices have also skyrocketed. We want to work with you to reduce our economies dependence on commodities, be their oil, minerals or agricultural. Brazil historically the world’s largest coffee producer still is -yet Brazil does no longer really depend on its coffee - which was so central to its economy to as late as the 1980s. Now Brazil, a major world agricultural power can supply the world market with manufactured products such as aircraft but also any type of tropical or subtropical agricultural product we can think of.

Given today’s economic landscape, a pro-active state is very much needed. I am not referring to old style state interventions, which suffocated the economy; I am referring here to a state which enables businesses and farmers to prosper by responding to opportunities in the world market. Going forward, it is imperative to strengthen this aspect of state function, while of course continuing to roll back its predatory role. I understand the skepticism about the role of the state given the past. This is fully comprehensible. But what is called for now is qualitatively different, with our overloaded, frontloaded agenda, a capable developmental state which enables rather than disables is what we are looking for.

We, at the African Development Bank, Africa’s Bank, we consider our role as central in this process. I have indicated our role in infrastructure. But of course, the finality of infrastructure or regional integration is trade. With 35 currencies, with numerous small economies, with 30% of Africans living in landlocked states, the agenda of regional integration is as urgent as ever. This is indeed the only way we can build a solid trading platform and overcome the “late comer problem”.

SADC as a region has unparalleled potential and possibilities. We are proud of what we are doing together; in public sector programmes, in private lending, in regional infrastructure and regional public goods, such as the recently approved USD
15 million program for shared water courses, the USD 21 million program for animal health, the USD 25 million for communicable diseases and the USD 22 million for capacity building and distance education and our interest in Enterprise SADC to support SMEs.

Like the rest of Africa, SADC in its fight against poverty must maintain pace in: (i) food security; (ii) macroeconomic stability, for there is nothing punishing to the poor than inflation; (iii) investment climate; (iv) spread the benefit of growth ever wider; (v) progressively diversify our economies away from commodity dependence. And we need to be prepared to respond to the three mega trends that will influence long term prospects, namely the impact and interplay of:

(a) The demographics of a younger continent and the counter veiling impact of HIV/AIDS;

(b) Internal migration (urbanization), as African cities burgeon with young unskilled peoples with fewer opportunities;

(c) climate change and its impact.

The way the above three factors interplay, inter influence each other will very much determine Africa’s trajectory into the next two/three decades. SADC has been a haven of growing democracy and stability. It must remain so, for its people and for Africa - a zone of peace, stability, exemplary governance, a region of opportunity and growing prosperity for all. The African Development Bank is ready to accompany you in that process and we are already doing so. That is why we have opened offices in Dar Es Salaam, Kinshasa, Antananarivo, Lilongwe, Lusaka, Maputo, and shortly Luanda and Johannesburg. Equally, that is why I feel very proud to announce today that over and above our ongoing program under our newly replenished concessional window, eligible countries in SADC will be allocated a total of around USD 1.8 billion for investment in different sectors over the next three years. About half a billion will be earmarked for regional infrastructure and other regional public goods.

We are adopting new policies in respect to the middle income countries several of which are members of SADC, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Mauritius and Seychelles; regarding infrastructure financing and other non sovereign activities. The ongoing preparation for the Mmamabula energy project in Botswana and our participation in the ESKOM investment expansion in South Africa are such examples. We are keen to examine with MICs, such as Mauritius, ways and means to adjust to changed market external conditions.
Let me conclude:

Last year, Ghana, Africa’s Bank Star, celebrated its 50th Anniversary - its Golden Jubilee. Incidentally so did Malaysia. You will have heard so often how these two countries comparable at departure have taken different paths, like Asia and Africa globally. I am aware that in fighting poverty we face daunting historical, geographical and now environmental challenges. But these are not destiny. These same obstacles have been overcome elsewhere. These are factors which can delay us but cannot trap us into stagnation. I commend the SADC and its members for the achievements to date. I want to assure you of the continued steady support of the AfDB.
I hail the Prime Minister’s genuine personal commitment towards SADC. My own presence here bears testimony to the staunch support and the commitment of the European Union in favour of the SADC political ambition to achieve meaningful regional integration.

I am well aware of the challenges facing countries of the region and I know how determined you are to rope in the political resources needed to achieve your goals. It is now more than ever that regional integration can serve to seize the wonderful opportunities resulting from globalization and to overcome its harsher effects.

This Conference is crucial for dialogue and strategic reflection. Political decisions are needed to accelerate economic and social development to fight poverty on one hand, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals on the other hand. All this calls for courage and vision.

The workshops to be held along with this Conference will chart out the means to boost up SADC action. Four themes will be discussed in the different panels and I would like to share with you my thoughts on the subject closest to my heart, that is, regional integration.

Why regional integration? In my view, there are three main advantages:

Firstly, economic advantages: It is in the regional context that a market wide enough can be created so that enterprises can evolve on the basis of economies of sale, making them competitive, and the States can attract direct investments
required to build up such economies and ensure their growth. I must congratulate you upon the proposed launch, later this year, of the SADC Preferential Trade Area. We also fully support the institution of the SADC Customs Union in 2010.

Secondly, regional integration makes it easier to face common challenges. Sectoral policies become more coherent and effective through common regional action. This applies for example to policies regarding transport, management of certain common natural resources, customs, or the fight against infectious diseases, including AIDS, which is striking this region in such a deadly manner.

As concerns food security, another burning issue, I would say that a regional policy covering the food sector would be the solution to the alarming imbalances that are prevailing on world markets. However, it cannot be denied that concerted regional action, focusing on an upgraded operation of the regional agro-industrial markets, can bring about a significant contribution in stabilizing the situation. Of course, this would be implemented with other regulatory instruments like the institution of regional warning systems, a better transport system and upgraded food storage facilities, the setting up of regional food stocks and the development of the relevant infrastructure.

Thirdly, peace and political stability: Regional integration is such that it bears some sort of political stability that seems nearly inherent to it, owing to the interdependence and solidarity it brings about. Regional stability is, in turn, an essential element for economic development. We all know that bad governance or conflicts can completely annihilate decades of development. Regional integration can therefore generate a 'virtuous circle' for the benefit of all.

We do appreciate certain important regional initiatives such as the institution of the SADC Brigade, the Civil Police and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

Regional integration is a complex and politically sensitive process.

In southern and eastern Africa, more than elsewhere in Africa, the existence of parallel regional organizations is a striking feature and illustrates how complex the process can be. To mention but one example: eight SADC member countries also form part of the COMESA.

The existence of such parallel organizations can be easily explained at the political level. I understand the actual difficulty in choosing to adhere to a
particular economic zone rather than joining another one. The fact remains that such a position may not be sustainable in the long run.

You will be able to achieve your vision and your political ambition for the region only through solid regional institutions. This is why you must ensure that these institutions have a clear mandate and adequate human and financial resources to live up to the higher missions entrusted to them.

Let me now come to the commitment of the European Union to support your region to achieve its regional integration goals.

What is the European Union doing to support your regional integration projects?

Support for regional integration is one of the fundamental pillars of our cooperation for development, in the Cotonou Agreement as well as in the European Consensus for Development. This support is based on three instruments:

The first of these instruments is political dialogue, an essential pillar of our relationship. It actually constitutes the basis of all our partnership strategies.

The second one is trade policy, with the paradigm shift caused by EPAs - shifting from a unilateral trade region to a trade and development partnership on a regional basis.

An EPA is not an end in itself. EPAs complement and consolidate development cooperation as provided for by the Cotonou Agreement. They actually constitute the trade pillar of an enlarged, global partnership.

Last year, provisional agreements were reached with quite a number of countries of the SADC region. They were interim agreements. The second phase of negotiations, which was reactivated when Commissioner Mandelson visited the region last month, is indeed very important. I am aware that we now have to seize the opportunity and clear all misunderstandings in those few additional months.

Let me recall that EPAs provide for a very asymmetrical opening up of markets, spread over several years, fifteen or more, with the setting up of regional support packages and the possibility of maintaining important exemptions for sectors that partner countries want to protect.
This second stage would bring about complete EPAs that can boost up the creation of better integrated regional markets based on common regulations. I hope that at the end of the negotiations, all the countries of the region will join EPAs, even those who are not among the LDCs.

The last instrument is financial support. This assistance can only come in the form of support to your own regional integration strategy. The regional programme of the EDF will be based on the road map that you yourselves will define for the future.

On our side, we shall continue to consolidate the coordination of European aid. We have solicited from our Member States important efforts that would give tangible results before the end of this year with regional packages for aid to trade. I sincerely wish that the regional programme put in place jointly with the region provides at the same time a framework for aid to members of the European Union.

I view regional integration as a priority. I shall elaborate on an indicative document for the action of the Commission on economic development and regional integration. This document would establish the guidelines for the finalization of cooperation programmes for every ACP region, including SADC. I would like the vision expressed in the document to draw the widest adherence possible and I invite all stakeholders to make their suggestions known to us.

I shall conclude by speaking on an essential aspect of the role and the incomparable value addition of a regional organization such as yours.

I am referring to the superior political nature of your responsibility. Yours is a legitimate one, enabling you to define ethical models that are at the basis of a common way of governance inspired the democratic values that you share, you want to respect, and expect to be respected. When a country of the region is faced with serious risks of destabilization and has to grapple with internal problems which may have consequences that go beyond its boundaries, it is your responsibility, more than that of others, to address the situation through appropriate initiatives. You are best suited to decide on action to be taken and you are duty-bound to come forward with proposals so that a wonderful country like Zimbabwe gets what it deserves.
Thank you for the invitation to join you at this Conference. I am honoured to be here on my first overseas visit as Secretary-General.

I am delighted that it is to this beautiful country of Mauritius. The theme of the last CHOGM was 'Transforming Societies'. This society has transformed itself in recent years.

I am also delighted that my first overseas trip brings me to the environment of SADC, with its record of collective striving and enlightened regionalism, to an organisation of which the overwhelming majority are Commonwealth members. SADC is our largest sub-regional constituency.

SADC is, moreover, the only sub-regional organisation, to the best of my knowledge, that has 'development' in its name and was established to give a boost to development among its members, as the clear objective.

It is a dynamic part of the world, with some fast-growing economies. It has also shown its ability to deal with conflict situations. This region played an important role in the establishment of NEPAD and the APRM.

The Commonwealth has worked with SADC ever since its inception. We are here not as a donor organisation, but as a strategic partner.

With its 53 Member States across the globe, the Commonwealth accounts for nearly a third of the world's population, a quarter of its nations, and more than one fifth of global trade and investment.

'Development is not development if it leaves poverty behind…. (It) includes giving people a genuine voice and choice, making the poor and marginalised feel part of the mainstream, levelling imbalances and addressing injustices'.
Poverty and Development

We offer access to a network of shared institutions, systems and a common language, in senses more than one, and we also have shared values and concerns.

We can act at the international scale (as in trade, environment and encouraging global concord).

We can act at the regional scale, e.g. with SADC, ECOWAS, PIF, CARICOM, and in support to ACP in Economic Partnership Agreements with the EU, or the Hubs & Spokes trade facilitation project.

We can act at the national scale - and have been engaged in Member States for decades.

This Conference has two keywords: 'Poverty' and 'Development'.

Poverty is the persistent scandal of our times - nearly 750 million Commonwealth citizens live below the poverty line.

Development, therefore, is the primary imperative of our times. The world's leaders declared it as such in 2000, when they set themselves the MDGs.

We share many development concerns - the ravages of HIV/AIDS, the loss of critical human resources like teachers and healthcare workers, international market access for commodities, environmental degradation, and now the emerging crisis in food security.

The Commonwealth, too, has two keywords, the two pillars of its strategic plan:- 'Democracy' and 'Development'.

'Development' is a common objective for our two organizations, but all these themes are inherently linked.

Development is not development if it leaves poverty behind.

But Democracy and Development are also inter-twined, on which the Commonwealth sponsored an important report. Development and socio-economic transformation will advance if they are at heart democratic, and are underpinned by institutions of good governance.

Development includes giving people a genuine voice and choice, making the
poor and marginalised feel part of the mainstream, leveling imbalances and addressing injustices. Our political, economic and social goal has to be coherent, comprehensive and inclusive development.

It has to go beyond reducing income poverty and just the low income and low consumption phenomenon. It has to encompass poor education, health, sanitation, nutrition and other basic indicators and areas of human development. It also includes powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability and fear, as well as gender inequality and environmental degradation. These different aspects of poverty are mutually reinforcing. Progress in human development has lagged behind that in reducing income poverty.

For development to be achieved, and poverty alleviated, it is well recognized that there must be a global partnership that brings together the developed and developing countries.

The Monterrey Consensus was a compact - it was reinforced again in 2005 (the year of G8/Gleneagles and the Commission for Africa).

In the compact, the developing world would develop its own strategies to beat poverty - coherent strategies, united coordination and evaluation mechanisms and accountability in their own systems in the use of resources, good governance, efficiency, and targeting in the use of funds.

The developed world: committed itself to assist that process through resources. It agreed to use as its tools: aid (bigger volumes, better coordination, less conditionality); debt; and trade.

We are struggling in these areas. The indicators are that in 2008, half-way to the 2015 MDGs deadline, those goals still seem very remote and difficult to achieve within the stipulated time frame.

Many developing countries have done very well, including here in the SADC region, and have made genuine efforts to move forward. But others remain mired in difficulty and have begun to lose hope.

The developed world, by and large, is yet to fully live up to its part of the compact.

This Conference aims to move both further forward.
For SADC, it seeks two results: an agreement of a SADC Regional Poverty Reduction Framework (RPRF); and the creation of a SADC Poverty Observatory (to monitor and evaluate).

From the developed world it seeks one outcome; renewed pledges to provide enough resources to tip the balance.

What value can the Commonwealth add?

The Commonwealth is at work on all your challenges at the national level, with projects in a range of areas, including governance of public institutions; SME support to expand gainful employment; Public-Private Partnerships to create synergies; and review of national HIV/AIDS strategies.

The CW is at work on all your regional challenges: Climate Change through the Lake Victoria Action Plan; urbanization through the Com-Habitat programme; raising food quality and safety standards; mainstreaming of gender policies - in politics, in business, in society at large; and empowering and harnessing the energies of youth - the regional centre of the Commonwealth Youth Programme is located in the SADC region.

The CW is at work beyond the SADC region, advocating on its behalf: global multilateral trade deals; global approaches to the environment; and richer countries committing ODA at the promised rate of 0.7% of GNP.

The CW has convening power in helping you bring together the three partners in domestic development government, the private sector (the Business Forum at our summits) and civil society (the People’s Forum at our summits). All have to be collaborative partners.

It nourishes each, and is strongest as a force for democracy and enlightened governance, embracing but going beyond elections, democratic institutions, lively civil society, free media, into the real, deep-set culture of democracy, participative governance and polity, and especially in the advancement of women and young people.

We in the Commonwealth look forward to working with our partners in SADC to take forward our shared objectives to eradicate poverty and promote development, to reach the fulfillment to which our societies aspire. We also hope to learn a lot from our partners, as we already have.
I am delighted and honoured to address this august gathering on behalf of the Southern African Civil Society including the SADC NGO COUNCIL, FOCCISA representing the Council of Churches in Southern Africa, the Southern Africa Trade Union Council SATUCC and The Southern Africa Trust.

We wish to express our gratitude to the SADC Heads of State and Government for having invited us to be part of this Conference. We would like to place on record our thanks to the Government of Mauritius and to the Organising Committee for the welcome we have received here and the excellent work done. We also want to acknowledge the support of the SADC Secretariat.

We can assure you that the Civil Society of Southern Africa is committed to the ideals and aspirations of SADC. As we face the multi-faceted challenges related to economic growth and poverty in our respective countries, we acknowledge the fact that all stakeholders need to come together so that we can have a more constructive role.

A multi-stakeholder participation has been initiated at this conference. It is understood that Governments alone cannot bring about transformation for the eradication of Poverty. Civil Society needs to be consulted and included in all policies. This partnership is of strategic importance in making any process inclusive and legitimate with all stakeholders actively pursuing the goals SADC has set out.

We sincerely hope to see in the final Declaration Statement, a strong statement reaffirming SADC’s commitment to engage with Civil Society.

We have noted the focal themes of the summit and concur that these are important issues in tackling Poverty and Development. Promoting cross border trade is crucial to poverty alleviation and development but we are seriously concerned with the rising food prices and food security and the lack of support to

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small scale agricultural producers in the region. The policy of our governments to promote gender equity needs to be implemented and we call for the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. We also call for a SADC Common Action Plan on Violence against Women and Children.

While we welcome the setting up of the Poverty Observatory, we would wish to see its establishment as a matter of urgency to consolidate and focus on the Regional Poverty Reduction Framework and articulate the poverty dimensions of the RISDP and SIPO.

The Southern African Civil Society acknowledges the fact that standard and generic arrangements are taken care of, but views with concern the fact that a Pro-Poor Approach is not seen to be mainstreamed in all processes.

We not only need to prioritise our strategies but we need to refocus and redirect the scarce available resources of our region towards a people centred sustainable development to eradicate poverty. So let us display a commitment by setting benchmarks and timeframes.

As Civil Society, we note the efforts of governments to combat the economic and social impact of HIV and AIDS and call for greater coordination to address the crisis.

Peace, stability, security, good governance and respect for human are prerequisites for the effective role of the state in promoting development. All citizens but in particular the poor and vulnerable need accountable, transparent and corruption free governments and institutions that are responsive to their needs.

Labour and employment are closely linked to poverty eradication. Urgent action is necessary in that area to ensure sustainable employment and we call for the region to adopt the decent work campaign for decent work, decent salary and a decent work environment.

Last we welcome the commitment of the ICPs to several projects and in particular the reinforcement and strengthening of the SADC Secretariat. It comes at a very opportune moment. The SADC Secretariat is an indispensable instrument that binds us and can mobilize all of us to work actively for the implementation of the SADC Protocols, growth, redistribution and social inclusion.
We all want to work in partnership between equals and for our mutual benefit.

I would like to conclude by expressing once again our thanks to you for having given the Southern African Civil Society the opportunity to address this gathering and participate in this Conference.
SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development
PREAMBLE

We, the Heads of State and/or Government or our duly authorized Representatives of:
The Republic of Angola
The Republic of Botswana
The Democratic Republic of Congo
The Kingdom of Lesotho
The Republic of Madagascar
The Republic of Malawi
The Republic of Mauritius
The Republic of Moçambique
The Republic of Namibia
The Republic of South Africa
The Kingdom of Swaziland
The United Republic of Tanzania
The Republic of Zambia
The Republic of Zimbabwe

In attendance: the President of the Federal Islamic Republic of Comoros, the Prime Minister of Norway, the Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles, the Representative of the President of the Federal Republic of Brazil, the President of the African Development Bank, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid.

RECALLING that the objectives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are, among others, to:

(i) Promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication;
(ii) Enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of SADC and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration; and

(iii) Mainstream gender in the process of community and nation building.

NOTING that despite enormous efforts that SADC Member States have undertaken to achieve sustainable economic and social development, on average over 40 percent of the SADC population continue to live in abject poverty;

RECOGNISING that in addition to diseases, underdevelopment, deficient economic structures, gender inequalities, inadequate capital and skills and marginalization from the world economy, there are new developments that are further frustrating efforts to combat poverty in particular surging food and energy prices, diverting food into energy production as well as climatic upheavals;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to the achievement of key international development goals aimed at sustainable social and economic development including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

FURTHER reaffirming our commitment to the roadmap for the creation of a common market;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development of 1997, the SADC Maseru Declaration of 2003 on HIV and AIDS, the 2004 Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in the SADC Region;

HEREBY

REITERATE our commitment to combating and eradicating poverty in all its manifestations and dimensions as a matter of utmost urgency, through regional cooperation and integration, sound political and economic governance, the pursuit of appropriate trade and growth policies and gainful participation in the world economy and in that regard recommit to mobilize the necessary resources;

ENCOURAGE all SADC Member States to fully implement their strategies aimed at poverty eradication in pursuance of our commitment to the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO) as the SADC long-term strategy for deepening regional integration to contribute to the acceleration of economic
growth, poverty eradication and the achievement of a sustainable pattern of economic growth as well as meaningful participation in the world economy;

THEREFORE

1. DECLARE the following as priority areas requiring our urgent attention at the regional level in view of the new challenges:

(i) achieving food security in a situation of growing global food shortages;

(ii) addressing the adverse impact of climate change in the fight against poverty;

(iii) increasing capacity in power generation and transmission as well as secure greater use of renewable and alternative sources of energy;

(iv) achieving higher economic growth through accelerated regional integration, pro-poor trade liberalization and economic development;

(v) developing and sustaining human capabilities through increased access of the population to quality and appropriate education, training, welfare and social development, nutrition, health, and sporting services as well as information in all Member States; and

(vi) accelerating development rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure for Regional Integration.

2. To address these priorities, we RESOLVE TO:

(i) achieve food security by setting up a Task Force of Ministers of Trade, Agriculture and Finance to encourage regional collaboration and by sustainably improving the production capacity and productivity, facilitating cross border and internal food flows based on improved infrastructure and distribution networks;

(ii) mandate the Task Force to immediately focus on the current food crisis;

(iii) promote financial sector development including micro finance and develop small and medium enterprises with particular emphasis on gender;
(iv) promote relevant education and skills development at all levels in order to ensure higher general efficiency, productivity and boosting the required innovative processes by, amongst others, bridging the digital divide;

(v) ensure wide access to health services including primary health care and step up efforts to combat HIV and AIDS and other diseases;

(vi) achieve resilience against the impact of climate change by preparing and implementing national and regional adaptation and mitigation plans;

(vii) accelerate implementation of regional integration including intra-regional trade liberalization, cross border investment and value addition by improving the business and investment climate;

(viii) enhance, expand and upgrade infrastructure with emphasis on labour intensive methods and Public Private Partnerships; and

(ix) strengthen our partnerships with the private sector and civil society at large to mobilize financial and technical resources to combat poverty at its roots.

3. **We further RESOLVE TO:**

   (i) work towards the establishment of a Regional Poverty Observatory to monitor progress made in the implementation of actions in the main priority areas of poverty eradication; and

   (ii) acquire and develop adequate capacity both at the SADC Secretariat and at Member States level to ensure effective implementation of poverty eradication programmes.

4. **We also RESOLVE TO:**

   (i) continue negotiations for resources under “Aid for Trade”;

   (ii) set up the required framework for the rapid operationalisation of the SADC Development Fund to implement regional projects linked mainly to promote trade and infrastructure development;
(iii) encourage partnerships with civil society organizations and community leaders in poverty reduction programmes; and
(iv) urge the international cooperating partners to assist and provide predictable, additional and dedicated resources and encourage Foreign Direct Investments in the SADC Region in order to achieve key international development goals including the MDGs by substantially increasing their financial and technical assistance, reducing unnecessary procedural impediments and supporting reform programmes at country and regional level as well as through effective implementation of the existing initiatives and commitments.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, WE, the Heads of State and/or Government, and the duly authorized Representatives have signed this Declaration.

Done at Pailles, Republic of Mauritius, this 20th day of April 2008, in three (3) original texts in the English, French and Portuguese languages, all texts being equally authentic.
CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS
(SELECTED SPEECHES)
It is my honour and pleasure to welcome you all to the 2008 SADC Conference. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of Mauritius for hosting this important Conference and for the excellent facilities put at our disposal.

As you might be aware, SADC holds Consultative Conferences with its International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) and other stakeholders every two years to discuss the implementation process of its integration agenda and the ways in which the partnership can be enhanced to attain maximum impact. At the last Consultative meeting held in Windhoek, Namibia, in 2006, we adopted a new framework for cooperation, between SADC and ICPs which is known as the Windhoek Declaration. Through the Windhoek Declaration, we agreed to concentrate our actions in the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and SIPO as the long term strategy for deepening regional integration, economic growth, poverty eradication and achieve a sustainable pattern for development.

This year’s SADC/ICPs Conference is of particular importance. This is, among other things, because it precedes a SADC Heads of State Summit-Conference on Poverty and Development, it coincides with the midterm review of the MDGs and also it precedes the launching of the SADC Free Trade Area (FTA). Clearly, this is not just a coincidence. The SADC Heads of State and Government decided to hold the Summit on Poverty and Development, firstly, because poverty remains the main challenge facing our region in its efforts for development and prosperity; secondly, to intensify high level dialogue on the regional dimensions of poverty and the collective efforts to address it through regional cooperation and integration; thirdly, to continue dialogue on the partnership necessary to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs.

In preparing this Conference, besides consulting the public sector and the ICPs, we undertook extensive consultations with the civil society, NGOs, private sector and other sectors involved in programmes against poverty and developed a
Regional Poverty Reduction Framework consisting of high impact and yet short-term actions aligned with the key regional cooperation and integration areas identified in the RISDP.

From what we are learning about the nature of poverty in our region, we believe that there are important regional dimensions which require regional concerted actions. This demands that we turn our focus on new targets and new approaches. We need to be pro-poor in our strategies, and start our interventions where the poor are located. We know they are in the informal sector, they run small medium scale businesses or work for them, they are either small scale farmers or supplement their livelihood as farm workers, the majority are young people, they are women. They live in rural areas or in peri-urban communities which are the least developed parts of our countries with the least infrastructure and or services.

Much can be said about the state of poverty in this region; for instance the fact that 35% of the people living with HIV and AIDS live in this region. Amongst those countries with the highest prevalence rate of HIV and AIDS in the world, eight (8) are in the SADC region. We still have much to do to gain the gender equality and women’s empowerment we have committed ourselves to. Infrastructure that services and meets the needs of the poor such as feeder roads that enable farmers to link with cross border main roads, one stop border posts that facilitate informal cross border traders, indigenous technologies that are affordable and easily accessible to our people is very needed.

It is these and many such issues that make this Conference an extremely important gathering. We have all the key stakeholders from our Governments, ICPs, business community, civil society and academic institutions present today. I thus believe that today we not only speak as a Conference but are echoing the many voices from across the region who entrusted us with their hopes and aspirations to see a poverty free SADC.

The Secretariat has placed before you, comprehensive proposals to consider on the different areas of cooperation and integration to tackle poverty; a pro-poor implementation framework that seeks to operationalise the overarching priority of Poverty Eradication as espoused by the RISDP. The Regional Poverty Reduction Framework (RPRF) is intended to further sharpen the achievement of the RISDP Goal of halving poverty between 1990 and 2015. It articulates those activities that will have direct impact on poverty which are currently not or inadequately addressed in the implementation of the RISDP and SIPO. The RPRF proposes that SADC
establish a Regional Poverty Observatory to augment its capacity to monitor poverty and track progress on the attainment of MDGs to guide policy development and implementation of programmes and projects. The Secretariat is also presenting the SADC Secretariat Capacity Development Framework which will enable the Secretariat deal with its capacity constraints so as to effectively operationalise the RISDP and SIPO in the fight against poverty.

In conclusion, let me say that I believe our dialogue in this Conference will contribute to unlocking the potential we know this region holds and we can catalyse actions that lead to the realization not only of the MDGs but of the hopes, dreams, aspirations of the women, men, girls and boys we seek to serve today.
As chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, allow me to take this opportunity to firstly thank the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for hosting this important meeting and for providing us with these comfortable conference facilities, which will address how the SADC region with its partners could best tackle the challenges of poverty and enhance economic development that will uplift the standards of living of the poor in our region.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of Mauritius for the warm hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this tourist capital.

I would also like to thank you for accepting this invitation and finding time in your busy schedules to attend this meeting, which will contribute to the implementation of Summit decisions that will better our region. More importantly, to thank our all weather international cooperating partners who have continued to stand with us in our developmental efforts by providing us with the much needed resources for our programmes.

The decisions of this International Conference will go a long way in laying the foundations for a new global partnership for SADC that will accelerate the momentum for the region to significantly reduce poverty, achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and enshrine sustainable wealth creation by the poor.

The SADC region despite being a relatively well endowed region with natural resources is one of the poorest regions in the world. Poverty in the SADC region takes a variety of forms, the region is characterized as having high inequality, with pockets of prosperity across the region surrounded by a high proportion of people living in abject poverty.

Poverty can be defined as a lack of capability to take up opportunities and the absence of opportunities for one to explore one’s human potential. As such, the poor are characterized as having lack of income, lack of access to means of survival
such as health, water and food, lack of means of production, lack of human capital or skills that are necessary for one to engage in production and general deprivation. The poor may not have acquired essential assets or capabilities because they live in remote, conflict-prone, disaster-prone, or resource-poor areas. They may be vulnerable due to age, being female, widowed, orphans, disabled, poor health, poor living environment, or occupation. Economic stagnation also contributes to limiting opportunities for gainful or productive employment.

Poverty Statistics indicate that:

- Approximately over 40 percent of the total population live on less than US$1 a day;

- While the population that is undernourished, that is, it does not have access to nutritious foods and therefore is underweight, accounts for 36.1%. This average figure obscures some of the highest figures of undernourishment where 6 countries have figures in the range of 44% to 72%;

- Life expectancy has declined substantially in many countries in SADC with the lowest being 33 years and the highest 72 years. Only 7 countries have life expectancy of above 40 years. This decline in life expectancy emanates from poverty and has been exacerbated by the HIV and AIDS pandemic; and

- Infant mortality rates which have remained above 50 per 1000 in 13 countries.

The main factors exacerbating poverty include the following:

(a) Low shares of GDP from the agriculture, manufacturing and mining sectors;

(b) Lack of access to land;

(c) High debt burden;

(d) Lack of access to credit;

(e) Poor infrastructure;
(f) Poor access to social services;

(g) Unemployment;

(h) Lack of education;

(i) Food insecurity due to climate change;

(j) HIV/AIDS and other health issues;

(k) Rural underdevelopment;

(l) Urban invisibility; and

(m) Poor targeting processes, for interventions meant for the poor of the poorest.

The diversity of the conditions and causes of poverty implies that interventions to reduce it must be comprehensive and tailored to particular circumstances. In this regard, an effective strategy for poverty reduction must therefore help to achieve pro-poor and sustainable economic growth, pro-poor governance, and inclusive social development.

In order to address the challenge of poverty, Member States have been implementing national poverty reduction strategies. The major benefits of national poverty reduction strategy papers identified include the fact that plans are becoming more comprehensive than before in addressing poverty, improved prospects for linking poverty planning, budgeting and improvements in the engagements with all stakeholders in poverty eradication. However, the main weaknesses of these strategies have been that of the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction being unclear and it has been recommended that future plans for poverty reduction should address the question of policies for growth promotion which are meant to reach the poor in the region.

In addition to poverty reduction strategies, most countries in the SADC region are also party to the Millennium Development Declaration, which includes among others halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015. The implementation towards halving poverty indicates that most countries in the SADC sub-region are unlikely to meet this goal.
In view of the above, the role of SADC in poverty eradication includes coordination, cooperation, and harmonization of policies to ensure an effective regional approach to poverty that takes into consideration the local differences and regional commonalities. SADC has done this through the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO).

As I conclude my remarks, I wish to state that the challenges of poverty are immense, and costly, therefore requiring concerted efforts from all stakeholders.

With commitment, hard work, comprehensive programmes, effective implementation, periodic monitoring and evaluation, joint financing, achieving meaningful poverty reduction in our region is attainable.

I wish us all successful deliberations and God’s guidance throughout this Conference.
It is indeed a great pleasure to address you at the opening of the SADC Consultative Conference on Poverty and Development. Before going on to make my statement on this crucial challenge of eradicating poverty in our region, let me wish all the Honourable Ministers and their delegations, participants from non-member States, development partners and representatives of various international organizations a very warm welcome to Mauritius. I also wish all of you a most pleasant stay in our country.

The backdrop to this Conference on Poverty and Development is unfortunately not very bright. Most of the data on poverty portray a sad and precarious situation that calls for a doubling of our efforts on the MDGs. With an average economic growth rate of 3% over the past decade, our chances of breaking the cycle of poverty are simply very low. Moreover, the anatomy of poverty in the SADC tells a completely different story from the averages. The 45% average of people living in abject poverty in SADC is high but still hides the fact that across countries this ratio ranges from less than one percent to above 60%. The figures also do not tell us that besides income poverty, millions of our poor people have to put up with diseases, with noxious climatic conditions and other calamities. Millions of children are out of education and may never get a fair start in life.

In recent years, new developments and challenges have been adding to these predicaments and to the dilemma of policies to eradicate poverty. First, the soaring prices of food globally. The Bank President Robert Zoellick has warned that a doubling of food prices over the last three years could potentially push 100 million people in low income countries deeper in poverty. It is estimated that for every 2 to 2.5 % increase in food prices, the number of people going hungry in developing countries will increase by 1%. There is even talk of the rise in food prices costing seven years in terms of halving poverty by the 2015 MDGs.

A second major drag on our efforts to reduce poverty is the surging energy prices. Rising energy costs have an impact on all people, but the poor are hardest hit. There is a disproportionate impact, when considering that higher energy costs will reduce the resources available for food, clothing, medicine and other basic necessities.
Climatic upheavals are the third threat to the MDGs. Our planet is caught between two extremes. In some countries drought is crippling production, while in others flood is damaging crops. In Sub-Saharan Africa as well as in other parts of the world, farmers are no longer certain when the rains will begin and when to plant. The adverse effects of the patterns and trend in climate change are already with us. And we know, from climate change to food shortages to poverty, the linkages are short and direct. Whether it be flood or drought, the impact ranges from acute food shortages that can last for long periods of time and even lead to famine, to a worsening of malnutrition to proliferation of diseases and to loss of lives.

The fourth new development that has a direct bearing on food availability, on global food inflation and on poverty is the increasing diversion of food into energy production.

While these new challenges will henceforth have to weigh heavily in our fight against poverty, there remains the stylized fact that the only sustainable way to combat poverty is to secure higher economic growth. Indeed, the new challenges and uncertainties only reinforce the conviction that growth followed by improvement in the distribution of wealth and income should be seated at the very center of our fight against poverty.

But the greatest impediments to growth remain low trading capacity, both intra and extra regional trade and low levels of investment, both domestic and foreign. In fact, SADC is among the regional blocs with the lowest intra regional trade flows. Opening our countries to more trade flows among ourselves and with the rest of the world must necessarily go through:

(i) a lowering of both tariff and non-tariff barriers;

(ii) an increase in production and trading capacity, i.e, more trade facilitation measures and infrastructure, in particular transport infrastructure;

(iii) more investments, which can be achieved by bringing about significant improvement in the ease of doing business, in openness of our countries and region to foreign investment capital, expertise, talents and ideas; and

(iv) greater empowerment of our people through education, training and skilling.

Let me here share with you that my own country has been implementing fundamental reforms to further open the economy to the rest of the world,
embracing regionalization and globalization, eschewing protectionism and parochialism. Such reforms are giving inspiring positive results taking the economy from a 2% to a 6% growth path, and attracting FDI at an unprecedented rapid pace. Encouraged by the outcomes of our reforms, we have set for ourselves the goal of eradicating extreme poverty which affects less than one percent of our population and relative poverty, as measures by half median income which amounts to around 8 percent of the population within the next ten years. We expect most of the reduction in poverty to result from higher and more equitable GDP growth.

But our own experience also tells us that the costs of reforms including infrastructure, economic and social adjustment costs are very high, with most of them frontloaded to have maximum impact. I believe that like Mauritius very few countries, if any, would be able to withstand the tough grind of reforms and transition they entail without substantial support from abroad.

In fact, it is estimated that to bring infrastructure in SADC to the level necessary to increase trade, investment and growth on a sustainable basis would require an investment of USD 8 billion yearly until 2015. Yet total aid to SADC for the period 2001-2005 amounted to USD 5 billion, including for infrastructure and all other needs. Let me stress that such aid inflows are woefully inadequate.

Clearly, if this gap between financial needs and availability is not narrowed and even filled, SADC even risks losing the recent impetus to higher growth path of 6% and above. Extreme poverty could remain with us for years and years with more families pushed outside of the mainstream. It will become extremely difficult for many countries to spend on education, training, primary health care, empowerment, and decent dwellings for all, let alone invest in infrastructure and liberalise trade and open up to the rest of the world. Nor will our countries be able to halt and reverse the rising trend of HIV and AIDS and other diseases that drive a new cohort of families into poverty every year. And gender inequalities will continue to contribute to exacerbate poverty.

That is why I believe it is crucial to make an appeal to development partners for predictable, additional and dedicated financing and for resources under “Aid for Trade” within the WTO and EPA arrangements to support SADC build capacity to trade and support its trade-related development priorities. International cooperation and support are essential to our efforts, individually as nations and regionally to combat poverty.

We must set up the required framework for the rapid operationalisation of the SADC Development Fund to implement regional projects linked mainly to further trade and infrastructure development.
We should also recognize that Public Private Partnerships will have to become a prominent feature of our policies and actions on infrastructure projects.

In a similar vein we must establish greater partnership at the social level, bringing together the corporate sector, civil society, government, and non-governmental organizations to combat the multifaceted aspects of poverty at their roots.

The task ahead is by no means easy. It will require commitment at all levels. It will also require a good implementation capacity. The Lusaka UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission For Africa) Meetings a year ago, highlighted gaps regarding availability of credible information for monitoring progress and lack of suitable macroeconomic frameworks for the implementation of MDGs. There are challenges in terms of having effective monitoring mechanisms and the required capacity both in government and civil society to do so. It has also been noted that there is lack of clarity in terms of roles in the implementation and monitoring of MDGs at national and regional levels. I must also stress that statistics on poverty in SADC are notoriously murky and make it difficult to track our progress. Let us during the next three days take decisive actions at all levels to address any remaining weaknesses that are undermining our efforts.

After these three days of Consultative Conference, I am confident that we will all have gained a new and more informed perspective on the combat against poverty. We should also come up with an effective arsenal of policies and concrete actions to counter the adverse forces that are frustrating our fight against poverty.

Looking at the enormity of the problem, regional cooperation and integration also have a hefty role. But the bulk of the efforts on poverty reduction remains at the national level. It is difficult and it would be unrealistic to conclude on a note of buoyant optimism. But at the same time, it is crucial for all of us to realize that the combat against poverty is one that we cannot lose. We can never let up on the MDGs. Let me reiterate that substantial international cooperation and support are crucial to our efforts. We are therefore looking forward to concrete commitments on effective actions and financing at national, regional as well as international levels so that we can turn around the situation and put our efforts on poverty reduction back on the right path.
It is a great pleasure and honour for me to address you this morning on behalf of the International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) of SADC. Let me start by expressing our gratitude for the invitation to attend the SADC Consultative Conference here in Port Louis. This important Conference should allow a strategic dialogue between Heads of State and Government and key stakeholders from the region and internationally and give the opportunity to reflect on and adopt innovative approaches to the region’s poverty eradication strategies. It should provide a platform to review the progress made towards eradicating extreme poverty to meet the targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We need to elaborate a programme to re-double our joint efforts to achieve them.

The year 2008 is a crucial year for development. Several high-level meetings will reinforce the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a political priority. The Doha Conference will take stock of undertakings made at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002. The high-level UN event on MDGs in September 2008 will boost the international community’s resolve to achieve the 2015 targets. The Accra Forum in September 2008 will look at the implementation of the 2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

Since the last Consultative Conference in Windhoek in 2006, SADC and its International Cooperating Partners have worked jointly to implement the main principles of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. This region’s version of the Paris Declaration, the Windhoek Declaration, sets out the principles of harmonization, alignment and ownership of aid. In our work since the Windhoek meeting two years ago, we have made progress towards them.

This Conference thus constitutes a strategic gathering to see how SADC and its cooperating partners can continue to move along these lines, to make cooperation more successful and sustainable.

This Conference, with the goal to realize the target of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger for the SADC region by 2015, will focus on the regional dimensions of poverty, namely through the improvement and the strengthening of
the implementation of SADC’s Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation (SIPO). We encourage the Secretariat and Member States to establish result-oriented operational plans spelling out roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat and Member States. Such plans would also allow ICPs to direct support to SADC priorities in an efficient manner, including increasing utilization of joint financing mechanisms, where appropriate. In particular, we intend to re-iterate our commitment to poverty eradication and to working with SADC to ensure that its action is better focused on this goal. The RISDP is the region’s framework for poverty eradication and its plans for regional integration and trade remain valid. However, in a region containing some of the countries with the highest levels of income inequality, policy should have a more explicit concern for the welfare of the poorest and implementation should be more effective.

The expectations of the Consultative Conference are therefore high.

The Consultative Conference is an important occasion for dialogue on SADC strategies to promote regional integration. This time we consider in particular what can best and most appropriately be done at regional level to contribute to poverty eradication. Regional integration in SADC should also be seen in the context of the work of the AU.

Cooperation at regional level should also be coordinated with national and continental development policies. Maintaining consistency and coherence between the three is a necessary challenge, as on the one hand regional integration would not materialize without support at country level and on the other hand regional policies need to be reflected into and respect the wider African Union process. For this reason, regional integration needs to be integrated in the broader continental strategies of cooperating partners. This is not in our view a mere philosophical concept but a very operational one which opens concrete opportunities for the RECs and the AU alike.

This also brings us to the subject of coordination between SADC and other neighboring regional organizations. I understand that high-level contacts are envisaged on this matter and we stand ready, if invited to support inter-regional cooperation to facilitate progress also in this critical area.

We have reviewed a draft of the Regional Poverty Reduction Framework and welcome the concrete proposals to operationalise aspects of the RISDP to make it more effective in assisting the poor. The framework is right to re-state SADC’s basic aims, to achieve high and sustainable economic growth and deeper economic
integration. Trade integration does indeed have to be pursued within a context of complementary policies and implementation has to be strengthened. Growth is essential for poverty eradication, but it does not automatically translate into inclusive social development. Policy has to be directed towards spreading the benefits of growth and protecting the vulnerable who may be harmed by economic change and adjustment. We hope that the working groups will be conducted in the context of the Regional Poverty Reduction Framework and that we will have an in-depth review of the Framework in plenary this afternoon.

The version of the Framework we received prior to this Conference did not include the section on good governance and poverty eradication. We consider this fundamental. We would have liked to have had more opportunities at this Conference to discuss the link between governance and poverty. Peace, security and good governance are essential for development and for poverty eradication. The region illustrates this clearly, through the establishment of peace in Mozambique, Angola and Congo and a vibrant democracy in South Africa after decades of a racist regime. On the other hand, the impoverishment of Zimbabwe in recent years and its accelerating decline is a crisis for that country and the region. It is a matter of grave concern for the international community as a whole.

We have read with interest the proposal to establish a “Poverty Observatory”. We agree that it is appropriate that this should be primarily funded by the SADC Member States. This will be a forum for monitoring and evaluating performance, so it introduces an element of peer review to regional cooperation. We would be interested in examining support for this, but if the aim to allow cross-country comparative performance analysis and create a “competitive” dynamic situation in favour of best practice is to be achieved, the process has to come from within the region and be led by it.

The SADC poverty profile is a useful document setting out the scale of poverty in this region. It makes a strong case for support at national and regional levels. High levels of poverty and dramatic falls in life expectancy due to HIV/AIDS require strong national policies, effective regional cooperation and substantial external support. The profile highlights the vulnerability of economies dependent on the primary sectors and the importance of increased trade and investment. Economic progress and growing convergence on stable and sustainable policies can be noted with exception such as Zimbabwe. Barriers within the region like long and arduous customs processes are matters which a regional organization is best placed to tackle. Challenges such as climate change and the current rise in food prices can only be faced with international cooperation. In fact, the SADC region is most vulnerable to climate change. The region has experienced devastating floods and is
at the same time prone to droughts. Adaptation to climate change is therefore crucial for SADC countries. We would urge SADC Member States to intensify regional efforts to jointly address this serious challenge. The emphasis on human development is appropriate as we focus on poverty. Education, health, gender equality, prevention of HIV/AIDS and access to resources, particularly land are issues in the first place for national governments, but regional co-operation can usefully complement and inform those policies at national level. The SADC region is also facing a huge energy deficit that could severely hamper growth and social development if generating and transmission capacity is not substantially increase. We should enhance the dialogue on this issue with a view to identifying priorities for regional energy efforts.

With this Conference proposing new functions for the SADC Secretariat as well as better implementation of existing ones, the capacity of the Secretariat, the involvement and commitment of SADC Member States in promoting regional integration and the participation of Civil Society and Private Sector in the process are all factors the ICPs see as essential for effective action.

The ICPs also recognize that substantial efforts have to be made on their side. Promises made to increase aid levels collectively and individually are part of the partnership for development set out in the MDGs. The recently announced OECD figures for aid volumes showed that 2007 was the first year in which aid decreased since the year 2000. Renewed efforts are required by ICPs to meet the commitments we all share.

We recognize the improvements made in SADC’s management, especially in the financial area and look forward to a time when it will be possible for ICPs to align themselves on SADC procedures, contributing to regionally managed funds or the general SADC budget, simplifying management and increasing SADC ownership of the regional development process.

This Conference meets at a time where the challenges of Southern Africa are well recognized. We hope it will demonstrate a clear and shared resolution to address them. The targets are set out and the links between the poverty agenda and the economic regional integration mandate of SADC are being elucidated. It is time to put effective strategies in place to turn our joint commitments into reality. Regional cooperation has a vital contribution to make to poverty eradication.

We look forward to a fruitful Consultative Conference, a constructive dialogue and mutual re-engagement on jointly set targets.
The Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCCI) currently representing 18 National Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Sector Organisations and various corporates and multinationals is pleased to participate in this forum to represent the interest of the private sector in the region.

The theme for this conference is **Regional Economic Integration: A Strategy for Poverty Eradication Towards Sustainable Development.**

The theme correctly reflects what all the stakeholders should focus on towards building economies for all the countries in the region and thus ensuring jobs are created and poverty is eradicated.

Our presentation will try and focus on how we can foster Regional Economic Integration and how this can contribute to sustainable development.

It is our view that for effective Regional Economic Integration, all the stakeholders, i.e. Government, Business, Labour and Civil Society need to play their role efficiently. To tackle the challenges that face us, we need partnership that is designed to achieve measurable outcomes. Government must contribute towards creating a very conducive environment for doing business in the region.

Business has to be able to fire on all cylinders if the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is to achieve its goals of increasing intra-regional trade to at least 35% (from the current 2.5%) and form a free trade area by 2008, followed by a common market in 2015. It must be made easy as soon as possible for countries to trade in one another.

This is where the Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry comes in. ASCCI was launched in its present form in 1992 to act as the voice of business in the region. It represents 18 National Chambers of Commerce in all 13 SADC States, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe,
South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. Its primary objective is to encourage the governments to implement policies conducive to doing business in the region, to develop mechanisms to increase capital flow and foreign direct investment and to promote enterprise, SMME and industrial development.

The private sector is relatively small in most of the SADC countries. The key exception is SA, the region’s economic hub. SADC was, in 1980, originally formed to reduce the region’s dependence on the secretariat’s private sector partner in facilitating trade and investment and promoting private sector growth in the region.

ASCCI’s role is to unleash trade and investment opportunities in the region. We represent the interest of the private sector to ensure that business creates wealth so that the region’s economies can grow at increasingly higher rates and thereby generate the required employment opportunities and reduce poverty.

The main challenges facing business and private sector growth in the region are:

- The lack of regional infrastructure for the transportation of goods and people
- A lack of policies in some member States to facilitate trade and compliance
- Overlapping membership in different regional groupings such as the Southern African Customs Union and COMESA
- Most of the region’s exports are commodities that are similar
- Onerous border and customs procedures in most member States and the key opportunity is access to a much bigger market

Notwithstanding the countries outlined above, companies in SADC member countries expect intraregional trade to grow and become a bit easier, according to the latest ASCCI Regional Business Climate Survey (RBCS).

The mild optimism came with a big dose of caution - largely due to concerns over crime and corruption, regulatory uncertainty and bureaucracy. But the experience and perception of business enterprise are largely positive.
The ASCCI business confidence index for 2007 was up by 11% compared with its 2006 level. The index is based on current performance, expected performance, employment outlook and investment outlook. The index has risen from 100 in 2004 to 126.4 in 2007.

The RBCS is based on business expectations rather than hard numbers, which companies are reluctant to divulge. Suffice to say that export revenue generated within the region has been growing for the past two years at least.

On the negative side, however, it seems that governments in the region are not doing enough to address some of the obstacles facing business in the region. That’s because business confidence over regulatory issues seems to have declined. It has moved from being a minor problem to a major one. The expected rise in intraregional imports is a result of growing order-books of SA companies trading in the region. Firms in other SADC countries also expect to export more into SA.

Whether this signals the start of an underlying trend remains to be seen. The upward business trend has not been matched by a rise in employment levels, except in Namibia and Angola, where labour laws have been relaxed.

The RBCS has been presented at the ASCCI Annual General Meeting since 2004. It is becoming an important tool for business deciding which countries to invest in, for public-private sector dialogue, and to governments that want to make policy decisions aligned with business thinking and economic growth strategies. The RBCS is also a valuable aid in the SADC quest for regional integration as it can identify barriers to trade and business - the key drivers of successful regional integration. Experts believe a free trade area or common market won’t be achieved if the process is only politically-driven, without the inclusion of private sector and other role players.

The survey’s great value is that it flags a range of issues that need to be addressed by governments and cross-border co-operation, and ranks them in order of importance.

Thus, the lack of supportive infrastructure, such as transport and communications, is consistently raised as an impediment to business - as are regulatory uncertainty, the need to harmonise tax regimes and customs, problems of corruption, and exchange rate volatility.

This highlights the need for political will among Member States to act jointly and individually to remove obstacles to what we all want to achieve.
Yet another advantage of the survey relates to the fact that businesses are often represented in more than one country, and generally look at export opportunities and supply linkages across borders.

The macroeconomic costs of doing business (in the region) can really impede the drive of companies that want to exploit a better SADC business climate.

The survey says that obstacles to business “suggest a lack of legislative and regulatory harmonization of standards and procedures”, which stifle the smoother flow of goods and services within the SADC region.

Regional integration can help address some of these problems, but little or no interference with… business may actually expedite it.

Some of the obstacles identified by ASCCI Regional Business Climate Survey in 2007 were as follows:

**Obstacles to doing business in the SADC by rank:**

1. Crime theft and corruption
2. Customs regulator, procedures and bureaucracy
3. Exchange rate fluctuation
4. Lack of market information
5. Affordable and reliable transportation (this relates to both road, air transport and ports)
6. Economic and regulatory policy uncertainty
7. Lack of transparency of rules and regulations
8. Trade tariffs and customs charges
9. Legal environment (enforcement of contractual and property rights)
10. Business licensing and operating permits
11. Access to land
12. Access to and cost of finance
13. Business culture
14. Skills and expertise
15. Communication restrictions
16. Insurance
17. Visa regulations
18. Import-export licensing
19. Phyto-sanitary and veterinary regulations
20. Domestic content

Trade is important because as ASCCI in a 2001 white paper on economic issues states: “No significant regional economic integration can be achieved if major measures are not taken to favour the development of intraregional trade.”

But in reality the SADC’s economic integration goals are unlikely to be met based on current progress. Increases in intraregional trade as well as the SADC’s share of world trade have been minimal.

“For example, member countries need to harmonise, rules of origin for easier circulation of goods in the region. At the same time, things are moving fast internationally, so we have to position ourselves to be competitive globally. The region risks being overtaken unless we change gear”.

The obstacles to greater regional trade are nontariff barriers (NTB) and lack of market information: customs procedures, bureaucracy, border restrictions, high customs charges, licensing, lack of transparency of regulations, communication restrictions and lack of trade finance. Other drawbacks are transport problems, quota restrictions, lack of one-stop facilitation and different standards.

Though almost all members had ratified the 1996 SADC Trade Protocol, not all are implementing the rules, according to a study assessing progress in SADC economic integration. The report in the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa 2006 Yearbook, also finds that tariff phase-down offers by most members are far behind schedule; though tariffs are coming down they are partly replaced by NTBs that become less transparent; the investment climate is not improving consistently and is deteriorating according to some indicators; and there is “no clear increase of trade within the region”.

So long as there is no sustainable good governance and political stability in any member State, regional integration is bound to be slow. Despite the existence of a SADC set of rules and basic standards for good governance, there are still
pockets of the region where national regimes continue to undermine democracy and violate basic human rights.

The practice where each member continues struggling alone for preferential trading arrangements in far away markets can yield only short term benefits.

One of the ways that can lead to poverty eradication and job creation is to invest in Small and Medium Size Enterprises and Skills Development.

Studies show that the Informal Sector globally has more than US$ Trillion and 30% of that is in Africa. SME's are the largest Employers globally.

Most economies around the world are built on SME's. SME's contribute immensely to public finance and have an opportunity to grow to regional and global businesses. They allow for the development of innovative and creative ideas and have the ability to turn them into viable businesses.

The challenge however is that government and private sector invest very little to developing the SME Sector and yet the job creation challenges and poverty eradications lies squarely in the investments we make in creating entrepreneurs.

Our region and our continent need to move away from social welfare and dependency syndrome and use the little resources we have to create businesses which will guarantee the creation of sustainable jobs.

One of the initiatives ASCCI has made was to launch an SME Business Toolkit which is a step-by-step approach for starting and growing sustainable businesses. To date ASCCI has launched this toolkit in 7 countries of the SADC Region, and will continue to launch in the remainder of the 7 countries in 2008.

In June this year, ASCCI will launch the Global Business School of Entrepreneurship, which is designed to address the shortage of Entrepreneurial Skills that our region and our continent face. We all know that most business people we have become entrepreneurs by default not because they have been taught from school entrepreneurship as a career. In most of the countries in the region the school system including tertiary education do not prepare people to be entrepreneurs, business people and creators of wealth. They train them to be employees and administrators of other people's businesses.
The Global Business School will focus on these aspects of the training:

1. Training of SME’s and aspiring entrepreneurs on how to start and run a successful business. To date a revised global toolkit is being developed and will be launched simultaneously with the Global Business School of Entrepreneurship. Studies conducted by Technonet Africa and UNDP show the following constraints by SME’s:

   1) Financial - 85%
   2) Skills Development - 62%
   3) Access to Technology - 32%
   4) Management - 20%
   5) Marketing - 29%
   6) Infrastructure Constraints - 26%

2. The training of business executives at top and middle Management on various courses that will enhance peak performance and business growth. These will include courses on doing business in the region, Africa and the constraints and opportunities for doing so.

3. The training of Chambers of Commerce, Business and Trade Associations, NGO’s and Labour Organisations, on the importance of these institutions and how they can peak perform and be run in a sustainable way. We know that most of these organizations in the region and the continent are completely dysfunctional and under resourced.

Linked to the challenges mentioned above, ASCCI is of the view that one of the hindrances for entrepreneurship development outside of access to information, skills development and procurement opportunities is access to finance.

It is a known fact that most financial institutions still consider funding SME’s very risky and are therefore reluctant to take the risks on SME’s that they would take on big businesses.

It is our view that it is time that governments in the region consider setting up SADC SME Development Bank that would focus exclusively on investing and financing small and medium size businesses. This initiative could be a joint initiative by governments and private sector investors to ensure a mutually
beneficial partnership. In many countries where SME Development Banks exist, the economies of those countries have grown immensely, many jobs have been created and poverty has been eradicated.

Lastly, ASCCI and all private sector players remain committed to playing their role in ensuring that the private sector contributes to job creation and poverty eradication.
It is an honour and pleasure for me to address the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development. Allow me to thank the Secretariat and the Organisers of this important meeting for inviting IOM and for the opportunity provided to all of us to enjoy this beautiful island.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and thank personally the Government of Mauritius for its warm welcome. In October 2006, I was here for the Migration Dialogue for Southern African hosted by the Government of Mauritius, soon after Mauritius joined IOM. On that occasion, we agreed to the opening of an IOM Office in Port Louis. I look forward to inaugurating the Office formally during this visit.

I am also pleased to renew my contacts and meet with all the distinguished representatives present here today. Over these next few days of our deliberations, I hope to be able to speak with each of you personally.

As an intergovernmental organization of 122-Member States, IOM is committed to the principle that humane, well-managed and well-informed migration benefits migrants and society. We work to assist Governments across the world in managing the emerging challenges and opportunities presented by global increases in human mobility. We believe regional groupings such as SADC play a crucial role in this, and we aim to support them actively.

Our Conference on the theme “Regional Economic Integration - A Strategy for Poverty Eradication towards Sustainable Development” gives us a chance to understand better the multifaceted and complex relationship between migration, economic development and regional integration.

Migration today represents an integral component of the livelihood and survival strategies of numerous households in Africa, including especially in the SADC region.
Southern Africa is characterized by long-established patterns of intra-regional migration. Foreign labour has been prominent in mining and on commercial farms and plantations since the late nineteenth century. In recent decades, in step with globalization trends, old patterns and processes have undergone notable changes. Most States have become countries of origin, destination and transit at the same time, the outcome being a progressive intensification of mobility throughout the region, with important consequences across a range of policy issues.

Given the theme of this Conference, I would like to focus on two key issues: migration in the context of regional integration and mainstreaming migration in national development planning.

**Migration as an Element of Regional Integration**

Historically migration has been used by individuals in Southern Africa as a poverty reduction strategy. What is new today is the idea of using migration as a regional development tool through strategies that pool and coordinate the expertise and potential of migrants to maximize the benefits of migration and reduce poverty in the region.

The regional dimension of migration management is today to be found all over the world in Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa. Regional dialogue has proven to be one of the most useful tools in IOM’s work.

Under the aegis of the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA), IOM and its partners have for the last eight years sponsored workshops in migration and development themes in the SADC region. I have had the privilege of participating in many of these workshops.

MIDSA began as an informal, non-binding process for senior officials responsible for migration. SADC Ministers and their social partners have recently decided to invigorate MIDSA by raising it to the Ministerial level, a development we all welcome.

IOM works with other regional bodies in Africa, such as the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Community of Sahara-Sahel States (CENSAD), helping them build capacity to effectively manage migration.
Examples of effective regional consultations abound. The Colombo Process, a forum of eleven Asian labour-sending countries, has recently met under IOM auspices with the receiving States of the Persian-Arabian Gulf in the Abu Dhabi Dialogue to discuss and share best practices on overseas employment, to ensure fair treatment for employees and maximize developmental benefits.

In Central and North America, the Puebla Process has moved steadily from issues of border control to questions of development and the human rights of migrants. Its counterpart in South America has focused from the start on the economic and developmental dimension of migration and is starting to show results.

All around the world the regional approach is gaining ground, in the Western Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the former Soviet Union. SADC can be proud of having been one of the first regions to adopt the regional approach.

**Migration as a Poverty Reduction Strategy**

The issue of systematically including migration in national and regional development agendas and poverty reduction strategies has been raised on a regular basis in international fora over the past few years. Unfortunately, this is still a “missing link” in Southern Africa. Migration is still too often portrayed as negative, spreading crime and disease, putting pressure on urban areas, limiting employment opportunities and contributing to the breakdown of family structure. The positive side of migration is generally neglected.

Regional actors as well as individual governments need to rethink this question, lest they miss out on the benefits that migration has brought to so many developing countries all around the world - India, the Philippines, Brazil and many others showing the way. IOM stands ready to support this process.

IOM is particularly supporting efforts to integrate migration into country Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. We are developing a handbook on integrating migration into PRSPs, giving governments a framework to ensure that migration works effectively to fulfill development objectives. Let us work together to make migration an engine of progress and prosperity in Southern Africa, including through the inclusion of migration in poverty reduction strategies.

Finally, and in closing, I would like to make an appeal to those six SADC States which are not yet full IOM Member States to apply for membership in our
Organisation. You still have six weeks before our next Council to add your voices to the 38 existing African Member States. Among the SADC Member States, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe are already there. It would please me enormously to welcome the rest of you at the soonest possible opportunity.

Again, my friends, I thank you for your kind attention and wish you fruitful discussions.
Profiles
The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been in existence since 1980, when it was formed as a loose alliance of nine majority-ruled States in Southern Africa known as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), with the main aim of coordinating development projects in order to lessen economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa. The founding Member States were: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SADCC was formed in Lusaka, Zambia on April 1, 1980, following the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration - Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation.

The transformation of the organization from a Coordinating Conference into a Development Community (SADC) took place on August 17, 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia, when the Declaration and Treaty were signed at the Summit of Heads of State and Government thereby giving the organization a legal character.

The Member States are Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SADC headquarters are located in Gaborone, Botswana.

(Source: SADC)
Republic of Angola

Head of State:
President José Eduardo dos Santos

Capital City:
Luanda

National Day:
11 November (1975)

Languages:
Portuguese and various local languages

Currency:
Kwanza (Kzr) = 100 lwei

Area:
1 247 000 sq. km

Population:
16.403 million (2006)

GDP (at current prices):
US$ 40.265 billion (2006)

GDP per Capita:

Real GDP Growth Rate:
18.6% (2006)

Imports:

Exports:

Literacy:
40%

Urbanisation:
n/a

Natural Resources:
Diamonds, oil products, gas, fish, wildlife, agricultural products, sea and marine resources.

Republic of Botswana

Head of State:
President Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama

Capital City:
Gaborone

National Day:
30 September (1966)

Languages:
English and Setswana

Currency:
Pula (P) = 100 thebe

Area:
582 000 sq. km

Population:
1.720 million (2006)

GDP (at current prices):

GDP per Capita:

Real GDP Growth Rate:
-0.8% (2006)

Imports:

Exports:

Literacy:
78.9% (1993)

Urbanisation:
46%

Natural Resources:
Diamonds, copper, nickel, cattle, wildlife.
**Democratic Republic of Congo**

Head of State: President Joseph Kabila  
Capital City: Kinshasa  
National Day: 30 June (1960)  
Languages: French and various local languages  
Currency: Congo Franc (CDF)  
Area: 2,345,095 sq. km  
Population: 61,532 million (2006 est.)  
GDP per Capita: US$139 (2006)  
Real GDP Growth Rate: 6.4% (2006)  
Literacy: 75% (2001)  
Urbanisation: 60%  
Natural Resources: Gold, diamonds, base metals, coal, oil and gas, wildlife, water, uranium, coffee, sugar, rubber, cotton, fish, wood, banana, cocoa, tobacco, electric energy, copper.

**Kingdom of Lesotho**

Head of State: King Letsie III  
Head of Government: Prime Minister Prof. Pakalitha Mosisili  
Capital City: Maseru  
National Day: 4 October (1966)  
Languages: English and Sesotho  
Currency: Maloti (M) = 100 lisente  
Area: 30,355 sq. km  
GDP per Capita: US$668 (2006)  
Real GDP Growth Rate: 3.0% (2006)  
Exports fob: US$ 0.779 billion (2006)  
Literacy: 78%  
Urbanisation: 17%  
Natural Resources: Diamonds, wildlife, mohair, wool, water.

**Republic of Madagascar**

Head of State: President Marc Ravalomanana  
Capital City: Antananarivo  
National Day: 26 June (1960)  
Languages: French and Malagasy  
Currency: Malagasy Ariary (MGA)  
Area: 587,051 sq. km  
Real GDP Growth Rate: 4.7% (2006)  
Exports fob: US$ 0.897 billion (2006)  
Literacy: 52%  
Urbanisation: 27%  
Natural Resources: Graphite, chromites, mica, bauxite, quartz, semi-precious stones, coffee, textiles, fisheries, livestock, timber.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Republic of Malawi</strong></th>
<th><strong>Republic of Mauritius</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of State: President Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika</td>
<td>Head of State: President Sir Anerood Jugnauth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital City: Lilongwe</td>
<td>Head of Government: Prime Minister Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Day: 6 July (1964)</td>
<td>Capital City: Port Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages: English and Chichewa</td>
<td>National Day: 12 March (1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency: Malawi Kwacha (MK) = 100 tambala</td>
<td>Languages: English and French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area: 118 484 sq. km</td>
<td>Currency: Mauritian Rupee (R) = 100 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: 12.758 million (mid-year 2006)</td>
<td>Area: 2 040 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports fob: US$0.831 billion (2006)</td>
<td>Real GDP Growth Rate: 3.9% (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanisation: 15%</td>
<td>Literacy: 85% (2000 Population Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources: Tobacco, sugar, tea, cotton, groundnuts, coffee, fish, wildlife.</td>
<td>Urbanisation: 43%</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Republic of Mozambique</strong></th>
<th><strong>Natural Resources:</strong> Prawns, fish, other sea and marine resources, coconuts, coal, gems, wildlife, beaches, fauna, flora, gas, wood, precious stones, marble, heavy sands, “areias pesadas”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of State: President Armando Emilio Guebuza</td>
<td>GDP per Capita: US$ 374 (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital City: Maputo</td>
<td>Real GDP Growth Rate: 7.9% (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages: Portuguese and various local languages</td>
<td>Exports: US$2.381 billion (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency: Metical (MT)</td>
<td>Literacy: 46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area: 799 380 sq. km</td>
<td>Urbanisation: 30.9% (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Republic of Namibia**

Head of State: President Hifikepunye Pohamba  
Capital City: Windhoek  
National Day: 21 March (1990)  
Languages: English and various indigenous languages  
Currency: Namibia Dollar (N$) = 100 cents  
Area: 824,116 sq. km  
Real GDP Growth Rate: 2.9% (2006)  
Literacy: 81% (15 years and older, 2001 Census)  
Urbanisation: 27%  
Natural Resources: Diamonds, uranium, cattle, fish, wildlife, sea and marine resources.

**Republic of South Africa**

Head of State: President Thabo Mbeki  
Capital City: Cape Town (legislative) and Pretoria (executive)  
National Day: 27 April (1994)  
Languages: English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, SeSotho (south), SiPedi (North Sotho), SiSwati, Shisonga, SeTswana, TshiVenda, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu  
Currency: Rand (R) = 100 cents  
Area: 1,219,090 sq. km  
Population: 47,391 million (mid-year 2006)  
Real GDP Growth Rate: 5.0% (2006)  
Literacy: 85.9% (1996)  
Urbanisation: 56% (Census 2001)  
Natural Resources: Gold, coal, platinum, iron ore, copper, timber, sugar, fish, sea and marine resources.

**Kingdom of Swaziland**

Head of State: King Mswati III  
Capital City: Mbabane  
National Day: 6 September (1968)  
Languages: English and SiSwati  
Currency: Lilangeni (E) = 100 cents  
Area: 17,364 sq. km  
Real GDP Growth Rate: 2.1% (2006)  
Literacy: 81.3% (1997)  
Urbanisation: 22.6% (1997)  
Natural Resources: Sugar, food products, wood pulp, wildlife.
### United Republic of Tanzania

**Head of State:**
President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete

**Capital City:**
Dodoma (political) and Dar es Salaam (administrative, commercial)

**National Day:** 9 December (1961)

**Languages:**
KiSwahili, English and various local languages

**Currency:**
Tanzanian Shilling (TZS) = 100 cents

**Area:**
945 200 sq. km

**Population:**
38.524 million (2006)

**GDP (at current prices):**

**GDP per Capita:**

**Real GDP Growth Rate:**
5.8% (2006)

**Imports:**

**Exports:**

**Literacy:**
71% (2002)

**Urbanisation:**
23.1%

**Natural Resources:**
Cotton, coffee, cloves, sisal, cashew nuts, tea, tobacco, minerals, wildlife.

### Republic of Zambia

**Head of State:**
President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa (SC)

**Capital City:**
Lusaka

**National Day:** 24 October (1964)

**Languages:**
English and various local languages

**Currency:**
Zambian Kwacha (ZK) = 100 ngwee

**Area:**
752 612 sq. km

**Population:**

**GDP (at current prices):**

**GDP per Capita:**

**Real GDP Growth Rate:**
5.9% (2006)

**Imports:**
US$ 2.785 billion (2006)

**Exports:**

**Literacy:**
67% (2000 Census)

**Urbanisation:**
35% (2000 Census)

**Natural Resources:**
Minerals, Wildlife, timber and natural vegetation, water.

### Republic of Zimbabwe

**Head of State:**
President Robert Gabriel Mugabe

**Capital City:**
Harare

**National Day:** 18 April (1980)

**Languages:**
English, Shona and Ndebele

**Currency:**
Zimbabwe Dollar (Z$) = 100 cents

**Area:**
390 757 sq. km

**Population:**

**GDP (at current prices):**
US$ 5.540 billion (2006)

**GDP per Capita:**

**Real GDP Growth Rate:**
-4.4% (2006)

**Imports:**

**Exports:**

**Literacy:**
97%

**Urbanisation:**
33.56%

**Natural Resources:**
Asbestos, gold, copper, nickel, tobacco, platinum, chrome.