

# THE ROLE OF TRANSPORT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE SADC REGION

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology, went through its consultative process in 1995 and 1996, and was approved by the SADC Heads of State and Government in Maseru, Lesotho in September, 1996. Article 13.13 of this protocol provides for among other things, the formation of associations of service providers in the various modes of transport. It has been understood, that associations could comprise operators, regulators and any other entity with an interest in or is directly affected by transport activities. Experiences from around the world provided valuable lessons in the process of definition and development of the structures and functions of Transport Associations in SADC.

## 2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Much the same as in many parts of the world, the various SADC states constituted key players in provision of both infrastructure and operations. Consistent with global reforms, the various governments have seen it fit to disinvest in provision of these services, more so in areas where the private sector is deemed to provide a more efficient service at a cost lower than the public sector.

Hitherto to this era, the SADC inter-governmental body, namely SATCC, took charge of operational harmonisation, co-ordination of standards as well as development of a transport policy framework at regional level. The governments were therefore both a player and referee in this scenario.

The advent of the SADC Transport Protocol ushered a new era, wherein the governments assured the role of regulator and provider of an enabling environment for economic growth and sustainable investment. On the other hand, the private sector has since assumed the role of service provider, with the public sector still operating in special circumstances.

With these clear cut demarcations of responsibilities, the need arose for a mechanism of communication between the regulator and the service provider, to facilitate consultations on issues of mutual interest. It was on this premise that the concept of associations of service providers was perceived as the best medium to facilitate these issues on a consultative basis with SATCC, member states and any other pertinent stakeholders.

Some of the active Associations include the Southern African Railways Association (SARA), the Federation of East and Southern African Road Transport Associations (FESATA), Telecommunications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (TRASA) and Southern African Telecommunications Association (SATA), to mention but a few.

### **3. ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF TRANSPORT ASSOCIATIONS**

- Coordinating operating and technical standards of the ever increasing number of service providers, owing largely to the enhanced private sector participation.
- Formation of strong, objective and effective lobby groups to interact with SATCC at regional level and SADC member states at a national level, with the view to furthering legitimate causes, in respect of attainment of equity in transport.
- Raise awareness on the economic importance and place for each transport mode in particular and the transport industry in general.
- Contribute to regional national transport policy formulation to ensure the provision of equitable and fair transport policy in the region.
- Monitoring and informing regarding effective law enforcement of transport policy and allied regulations in the SADC region.
- Establish and maintain a forum for the exchange of ideas and expertise; joint problem solving and maximisation of transport economic efficiency in SADC.
- Develop, implement, enforce and evaluate infrastructure, equipment and operating benchmarks and standards, to ensure the attainment of minimum acceptable standards of service delivery in all modes of transport
- Where necessary, undertake training to prescribed regional certification/proficiency standards as a guarantee for equitable but minimum standards of performance along all transport corridors.
- Create a cost effective, regionally integrated, seamless and predictable transport service based on where possible, an inter-modal approach.
- Monitor global trends and developments with the view to introduce value added modern features and practices for enhanced operational and cost efficiency in transport in the SADC region.
- Consult and join forces with other strategic partners to facilitate service design standards aimed at enhanced efficiency, and tailor made customer service standards.
- Development of transport standards that promote competitiveness of SADC products on international markets as well as minimisation of landing prices of SADC imports, thereby maximising the welfare of SADC nationals.
- Co-operating with other global Associations the world over, freight logistic service providers, equipment suppliers, research bodies and other key stakeholders in an effort to foster the concept of continuous improvement in service quality.
- Implementation, monitoring, validation and enforcement of regional and international standards and practices as enshrined in international conventions pertaining to UIC, ICAO, IATA, WMO, amongst others, to which SADC countries are signatories

- Assisting SADC and member states with implementation of the SADC Transport Protocol.
- Implementation of appropriate real time information systems for informed operational and business decision making, advance customer information and other commercial applications (RSIS, ACIS, Port Tracker, Road Tracker, etc)
- Fostering collective responsibility in the creation of a market driven healthy transport environment characterised by fair competition.
- Transport Association to constitute part of the solution and not part of the problem towards the harmonisation and efficient provision of transport services in SADC, through submission of legitimate proposals to all stakeholders.
- Actively participate and co-operate on corridor development initiatives involving all stakeholders and parties.
- Undertake impact assessments of adverse developments with direct impact on quality or capacity or transport delivery (e.g. floods, fuel shortages) and formulate desirable interventions in consultation with all stakeholders to alleviate the situation in the regional and national interests.
- Undertake evaluations on regional and national preparedness for short and medium term high capacity demands as well as formulation and implementation of measures to accommodate freight and passenger traffic upsurges.
- Assist in formulation and implementation of sustainable measures and premises for the levelling of the playing field based on "*the user pays principle*" and "*total infrastructure cost recovery regime*"

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it has to be said that an undisputed role exists for Transport Associations to indulge in dialogue involving all stakeholders; defining and creating an enabling environment and systems for efficient transportation in SADC. An all encompassing forum involving the key private and public sector players, such as the said Associations, is an ideal option and medium, for this interaction.

It is however important, for each such Association, to ensure that it serves the interest of all the diverse parties within its membership spectrum, if the Associations are to survive the test of times.

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**Brief CV:**

Remmy Makumbe graduated from the then University of Rhodesia with an Honours Degree in Electrical Engineering in 1975. He also read for a B Com in Economics and Transport Economics at the University of South Africa. He joined the National Railways of Zimbabwe Signal Department in 1980 where he rose to the post of Chief Signal Engineer at the time of his departure in 1995. He joined the Southern Africa Transport and Communications Commission Technical Unit (SATCC – TU) in Maputo, Mozambique, the same year as Railway Technical Expert for the SADC Region. He worked on, *inter alia*, harmonization and promotion of railway infrastructure and equipment, railway operations performance improvement, the drawing up of the SADC Transport Protocol and formulation of the framework for the restructuring of Southern African Railways. In 1998 he joined the Southern African Railways Association where he is currently the Executive Director, concentrating on advocacy for the rail industry in SADC as well as strategies for the creation of an efficient seamless service in that region .