



**REPORT ON THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES (SADCOPAC) CONFERENCE
AND ELECTION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

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Report on the SADCOPAC Conference and Election Annual General Meeting Held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe on September 07 – 14, 2024

Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Southern African Development Community Organization of Public Accounts Committees (SADCOPAC) conference and its 20th Annual General Meeting (AGM), where elections for new office bearers were conducted. The conference's discussions revolved around fiscal accountability and capacity building, while the AGM focused on governance issues, financial management, and election proceedings. Key outcomes include the election of new officials and resolutions.

Introduction

The SADCOPAC conference and 20th Annual General Meeting in Victoria Falls brought together member states to address key issues in public financial management, accountability, and governance. The event was marked by discussions on enhancing fiscal transparency, leveraging technology, and strengthening the role of Public Accounts Committees (PACs) in overseeing public resources.

The keynote address was delivered by the Right Honorable Jacob Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, who emphasized the need for stronger oversight in government debt management. He called on member states to reinforce their fiscal responsibility frameworks and ensure that public borrowing is transparent and aligned with national development goals.

The National Assembly of Lesotho was represented by a delegation consisting of Hon. Machabana Lemphane-Letsie, Hon. Makatleho Motsoasele, Hon. Mootsi Lehata, and Mr. Kali Vitalis Monese, reflecting the country's active involvement in regional governance discussions.

In a forward-looking announcement, it was confirmed that the National Assembly of Lesotho will host the 17th SADCOPAC Annual Conference and 21st Annual General Meeting in September 2025, reaffirming its commitment to promoting good governance and fiscal responsibility in the region.

This conference provided a platform for member states to share experiences, propose resolutions, and elect new office bearers, reflecting a collective commitment to promoting good governance and accountability across the region.

Conference Overview

Theme and Objectives

The conference's central theme was “**Strengthening Oversight and Accountability in the SADC Region**” with the objective of addressing critical issues related to domestic resource mobilization, fiscal transparency, and the integration of technology in public finance management. Member states presented proposals aimed at improving governance and accountability.

Agenda

The conference agenda was structured around six key sessions, where member states delivered presentations and proposed resolutions:

a) Promoting Sustainable Development through Domestic Resource Mobilization

- **Presenter:** Zambia and Namibia
- **Summary:** This session focused on enhancing self-reliance through improved tax systems, business growth, economic diversification, and better governance. Zambia and Namibia highlighted the need to curb illicit financial flows, broaden the tax base, and increase transparency in public procurement.
- **Resolutions:**
 1. Strengthen tax administration through technology, education, and enforcement.
 2. Promote formalization of the informal sector and incentivize business growth.
 3. Diversify economies by adding value to raw materials and expanding trade.
 4. Enhance fiscal transparency and governance, including better procurement oversight.
 5. Engage in global tax discussions and adopt international best practices.

b) Ensuring Accountability through Fiscal Transparency

- **Presenters:** Lesotho and Ghana
- **Summary:** This session emphasized the role of Public Accounts Committees (PACs) in promoting fiscal transparency. Discussions focused on timely reviews of Auditor General

reports, stronger enforcement of fiscal laws, and the need for comprehensive asset management frameworks.

- **Resolutions:**

1. Prompt review and action on Auditor General reports.
2. Strengthen legislation to meet international standards of fiscal transparency.
3. Improve capacity building for PACs with technical staff and resources.
4. Enforce compliance with PAC recommendations, with penalties for non-implementation.

c) The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Public Finance Management in the Public Sector

- **Presenters:** Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, and South Africa
- **Summary:** This session focused on how AI can enhance public finance management by automating processes, improving resource allocation, and detecting fraud. However, challenges such as data privacy, regulatory compliance, and technical issues were raised.
- **Resolutions:**
 1. Develop regulatory frameworks for AI adoption in all SADC member states within one year.
 2. Establish a regional council to oversee AI implementation in line with the SADC Framework on AI.

d) The Success of Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) Implementation in the Region

- **Presenters:** Zambia and Malawi
- **Summary:** This session discussed the role of IFMIS in enhancing public financial management by improving transparency and ensuring fiscal discipline. Key issues included strengthening oversight, reducing corruption, and promoting capacity building for PACs.
- **Resolutions:**
 1. Strengthen PAC oversight of IFMIS to ensure transparent and efficient operation.
 2. Advocate for IFMIS to reduce corruption and improve accountability in public finance.
 3. Promote capacity building for PACs and government officials to fully utilize IFMIS.
 4. Secure financial and technical support for IFMIS implementation and maintenance.
 5. Advocate for strong legislative frameworks to support IFMIS integration.
 6. Foster regional collaboration and knowledge sharing on IFMIS best practices.

e) The Role of Public Sector Accountants and Auditors in Ensuring Transparency and Accountability in the Use of Public Resources

- **Presenters:** Tanzania and Eswatini
 - **Summary:** This session highlighted the critical role of public sector accountants and auditors in maintaining transparency and accountability in managing public resources. Discussions focused on fraud prevention, proper asset management, and the challenges of overregulation in procurement processes.
 - **Resolutions:**
 1. Equip and adequately compensate public sector auditors and accountants.
 2. Implement continuous capacity-building programs for auditors, accountants, and PAC members.
 3. Streamline public procurement processes to maintain transparency without overregulation.
 4. Expand the scope of audits to include performance evaluations of resource utilization.
 5. Strengthen collaboration across the accountability chain, including PACs, anti-corruption bodies, and courts.
 6. Ensure that Public Sector Accountants hold qualifications comparable to those in the private sector.
- f) Implementing (IPSAS) in SADC countries**
- **Presenters:** Auditor-General of South Africa
 - **Summary:** This session highlighted the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, emphasizing the need for improved financial accountability and transparency in public sector entities.
 - **Resolutions:**
 1. Formal Adoption Plan: Each member state must develop a formal plan for adopting the IPSAS Accrual Accounting system within one year.
 2. Implementation Deadline: All member states should fully implement the IPSAS Accrual system by December 31, 2030.
 3. Annual Progress Reports: Member states are required to submit annual reports on their implementation progress during the SADCOPAC yearly conference.

Election AGM Proceedings

Election of SADCOPAC Office Bearers

The election of SADCOPAC Office Bearers took place during the 20th Annual General Meeting held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The elections were officiated by the Auditor-General of Lesotho, ensuring a fair, transparent, and democratic process. Member states nominated and elected candidates to fill various leadership positions.

The newly elected SADCOPAC Office Bearers are as follows:

- **Chairperson:** Zambia

- **Vice Chairperson:** South Africa
- **Secretary General:** Eswatini
- **Deputy Secretary General:** Lesotho
- **Treasurer General:** Malawi
- **Deputy Treasurer General:** Seychelles

These officials are tasked with leading the organization towards enhanced oversight, fiscal transparency, and improved governance across the SADC region. Their leadership will be crucial in achieving SADCOPAC's goals of accountability and financial management reform.

Conclusion

The SADCOPAC conference and AGM held in Victoria Falls were pivotal in addressing critical issues of fiscal transparency, accountability, and public financial management. The discussions on domestic resource mobilization, the impact of AI, and the implementation of IFMIS provided valuable insights and resolutions aimed at strengthening governance across the region. The election of new office bearers marks a renewed commitment to leadership and oversight, ensuring the organization continues to promote good governance and accountability in public finance. Through collaboration and capacity building, SADCOPAC is well-positioned to drive positive change across SADC member states.

Looking ahead, National Assembly of Lesotho is set to host the 17th SADCOPAC Annual Conference and 21st Annual General Meeting in September 2025, further emphasizing its commitment to promoting good governance and transparency within the region. Through continued collaboration and capacity building, SADCOPAC is poised to drive meaningful reforms in public financial management across its member states.