

REPORT ON

Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration

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Implemented by:



Acronyms

GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICPs	International Cooperating Partners
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PRU	Public Relations Unit
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SARDC	Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre
SAT	Southern African Trust
SCPS	SADC Communication and Promotional Strategy
SNCP	SADC National Contact Point
SNMC	SADC National Media Coordinator
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats

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Introduction

The effective use of the media in regional integration can help inform, empower and persuade citizens to actively participate in the integration agenda as well as foster public debate and policy change in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

This Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration, therefore, aims to complement the SADC Communication and Promotional Strategy (SCPS) in defining concrete action plans to enable stakeholders such as policymakers and non-state actors to meritoriously communicate the benefits, opportunities and challenges of belonging to a regional community in southern Africa.

In this regard, this Strategy is designed to help SADC achieve its longstanding vision of a United, Integrated and Prosperous region by adopting new and innovative communications strategies in the past, present and the future. The Strategy thus strives to highlight how effective communications can:

- Ensure SADC citizens understand and appreciate regional integration efforts;
- Change behaviour and increase grassroots support for advancing regional integration; and
- Facilitate two-way and constructive dialogue on enhancing regional integration in SADC.

The Media and Engagement Strategy has been developed by experienced media practitioners and experts on regional integration -- Kizito Sikuka and Joseph Ngwawi -- from the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), with support from the Southern African Trust (SAT) through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The three organizations – GIZ, SAT and SARDC – have a strong footprint on working towards deeper regional integration in southern Africa.

The Strategy is divided into eight sessions. The first session presents a brief background to the strategy, while the second part gives a general overview of the media and engagement landscape in SADC. What follows next is an analysis of the Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that prevails in SADC. Session 4 presents the main objectives of the Strategy, while Session 5 looks at the desired results of the strategy. The targeted audiences are presented in Section 6, while the Tactics, Channels and Tools of the strategy are highlighted in Section 7 with the Messages, as well as Crisis Management presented in Session 8 and 9 respectively.

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1. Background

One of the greatest threats to regional integration in Africa is the absence of information about the benefits, opportunities and challenges of regional integration as well as lack of citizen ownership of integration initiatives.

The Declaration and Treaty that established SADC, formerly the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) acknowledges this assertion by stating that “regional integration will continue to be a pipe dream unless the peoples of the region determine its content, form and direction, and are themselves its active agent.”

The SADC Communications and Promotional Strategy concurs and further notes that “without effective communication, SADC will continue to be misunderstood and its achievements will remain invisible and the organisation will not fully realise its development aim – to eradicate poverty in the SADC Region with its citizens being prime drivers of regional integration.”

In light of this, it is critical for SADC Member States, its Secretariat as well as non-state actors to adopt innovative approaches to enhance the visibility of regional initiatives in order to win popular support for advancing the integration agenda in southern Africa and ensuring that the SADC Vision, Mission Statement and Objectives are fully achieved.

The SADC Mission “is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance, and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy.”

The SADC Vision “is to build a region in which there will be a high degree of harmonisation and rationalisation, to enable the pooling of resources to achieve collective self-reliance in order to improve the living standards of the people of the region.” The vision of SADC is one of a Common Future, a future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the people of Southern Africa.

The main SADC Objectives “are to achieve economic development, peace and security, and growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration. These objectives

are to be achieved through increased Regional Integration, built on democratic principles, and equitable and sustainable development.”

The realization of SADC Vision, Mission Statement and Objectives requires the support and participation of not only its Member States, but also other non-state actors to ensure citizens fully understand SADC and the importance of regional integration. This therefore, underlines the need to create public awareness with a view to influence policy and decision-making through dissemination of information on the importance of regional integration.

This Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration thus provides some guidelines for the effective dissemination of information to allow SADC to realize its goal in regional integration.

2. SADC Media and Engagement Landscape

Since its inception in 1980, SADC has continued to develop a sound infrastructure for crossborder communication, with the media industry in most Member States being increasingly vibrant and diverse. A snap analysis of the media sector in SADC also shows that the general flow of information in the region is marginally improving as more and more newspapers continue to be licensed while the online media is flourishing at a faster rate.

Furthermore, like the rest of the world, SADC has experienced phenomenal growth in Information and Communication Technologies. It is clear that mobile telephones are now a critical communication window for the majority of citizens.

However, the reality on the ground is that the SADC regional integration agenda is not known well enough in the region beyond the government officials who deal with SADC on a regular basis. In the majority of cases, SADC citizens are broadly unaware of the opportunities for socio-economic improvement and poverty eradication through regional integration and thus hardly interested in SADC and its potential.

As a result this has limited wider participation in policy dialogue with a regional impact. For example, media coverage of key regional issues is often low, with most journalists in the region having limited knowledge of regional integration issues. As a result, debate about regional integration is most limited to small circles, who are knowledgeable about such issues.

Furthermore, non-state actors are excluded from effectively participating in the regional integration agenda – a situation that prompted the then Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini Paul Dlamini to urge SADC to interrogate the issue of this “disconnect between SADC and the people of the region and why is it that instead of becoming one and integrated we have become more isolated as a Community.”

As such, this lack of knowledge about some of the most basic regional issues has hampered the development of regional synergies by various stakeholders such as the civil society and the private sector, and ultimately the regional integration project as a whole. In fact, this has diminished the sense of belonging to a regional community by the SADC citizens.

In addition to this, the majority of the media the region tends to be nationalist in its approach, hence issues of regional integration in SADC are not prominent to the citizens. There are also few regional

newspapers or media organizations that focus exclusively on SADC issues, and the most notable ones include the Southern Times (a joint venture between New Era Publications Corporation of Namibia and Zimbabwe Newspapers, as well as Southern Africa Today and the Southern African News Features (published by SARDC)

At the SADC Secretariat, a Public Relations Unit (PRU) was created to support public participation in regional integration, as well as to be the lead executor of SADC corporate communications, including public and media relations, public affairs, protocol and special events management, thus the custodian of communications, branding and promotional strategies.

The PRU also develops plans and executes strategies aimed at generating, packaging and disseminating information with the view to creating an understanding of, and garner support for SADC aims, objectives, policies, strategies and activities. Thus, the PRU strives to establish and maintain lines of communication, mutual understanding, acceptance and co-operation between SADC and its internal and external publics and stakeholders.

At the Member States level, there are SADC National Media Coordinators (SNMCs), who are responsible for SADC public information in their respective countries. In fact, all the 16-SADC Member States have two structures that can be contacted for SADC public information, namely, the SADC National Contact Point (SNCP) and the SADC National Media Coordinator (SNMC).

Despite the existence of the PRU at the SADC Secretariat and SNMCs at Member States, there is still an information gap with most journalists in the region not knowing who or where to get information on SADC issues. In fact, most of the SNMCs are non-visible and not fully functional.

To promote and catalyze dialogue on the development of regional policies that strengthen socio-economic development and integration in the SADC region, there is need for greater awareness and participation of the people of the region and their institutions in the process of regional integration. There is need to bring out the voices of SADC citizens in the whole discourse on regional integration.

Therefore, a comprehensive communication initiative such as this Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration is critical to enable stakeholders such as SADC Secretariat, SADC Member States and non-state actors to effectively communicate the benefits, opportunities and challenges of belonging to a regional community in southern Africa.

3. SADC SWOT Analysis



In any competitive environment, it is critical for organizations such as SADC to fully harness and control their brand in order to remain relevant to the prevailing environment as well as retain their relative advantage and ensure that its citizens fully benefit from its existence.

In fact, control of a brand allows the organization to be in the “driver’s seat” to dictate and manage their operations as well set themselves apart from other competitors or organizations. However, developing a strong and competitive brand of oneself is not an easy task -- it requires an organization to undertake an honest and serious retrospective of themselves.

Figure 1 presents a detailed analysis of SADC in the context of its perceived Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). This analysis extensively borrows from the SWOT analysis done during the preparation of the SCPS.

As indicated in the SSPS, southern Africa as a region has continued to evolve to be a highly regarded and effective developmental community for the southern Africa region, with a strong positive record of delivery. For example, in August 2020, SADC approved two key strategic documents – the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and SADC Industrialisation Strategy Roadmap. These two documents outline SADC's vision towards achieving regional integration and provide tremendous opportunities to align with the organisation's communication objectives.

SADC currently has a number of projects in partnership with a variety of cooperating partners, and has invested billions of dollars that have seen the successful completion of numerous development projects. These include several initiatives such as policies and guidelines to improve trade and services among SADC countries, the fostering peace and security and efforts to improve health, especially combating HIV and AIDS, food security and gender development as well as to better manage shared resources such as wildlife, water, transport, communications and meteorology, energy, and tourism.

Furthermore, it's more than 342 million of citizens share various historical, cultural and social affinities. The media and communication industry in the region is also fairly developed and vibrant. In terms of peace and security, SADC is one of the most stable regions in Africa.

SADC leaders have expressed their commitment to improving communication in the region through several legal and other enabling instruments such as the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sports, the SADC Declaration on the Role of Information and SADC Declaration on Information and Communication Technologies.

SADC has also has been able to demonstrate that regional integration and cooperation are possible and desirable, and Member States have continued to work together harmoniously in achieving effective results on common problems and issues. This has positioned the region as a strong, competitive and attractive destination.

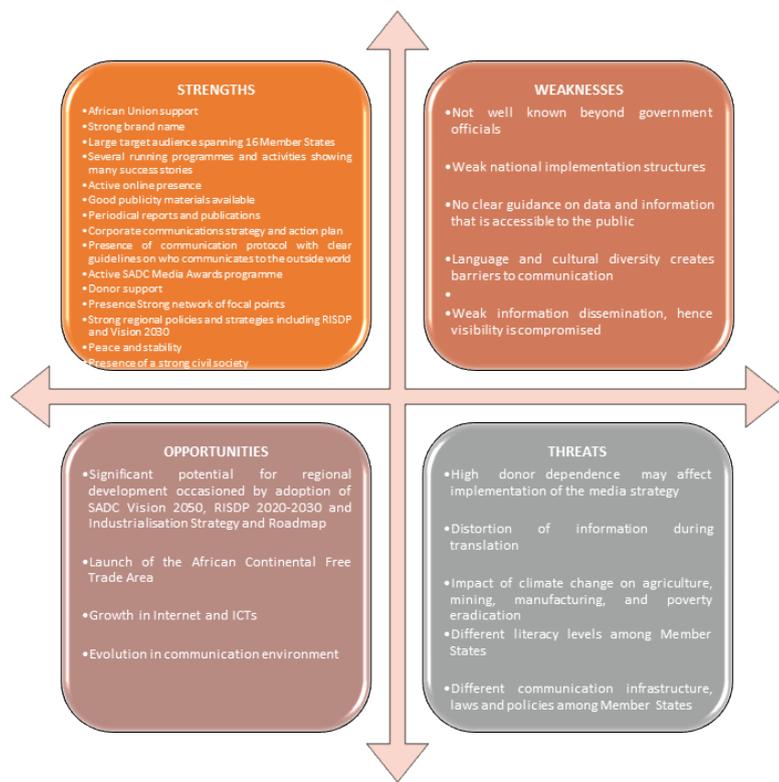
Despite these tremendous assets, the communication capacity of SADC has not kept pace with its other accomplishments. For example, there remains a poor communication culture in SADC as most citizens are still not yet knowledgeable on the benefits, opportunities and challenges of belonging to a shared community in southern Africa.

At the SADC Secretariat, there is lack of financial and human resources that is dedicated to communication functions. The relationship between the regional media and the SADC Secretariat as well as its affiliate organizations is also weak.

However, there are many opportunities to correct this misnomer. For example, there is an increased demand and hunger by the regional media to know more about SADC. Furthermore, each Member State has NMCs, which are ready to be a link between SADC and the media.

In addition to this, the creation of the SADC Media Awards, as well as a provision for the creation of sub-committees of the National Committees that could potentially include a sub-committee for Public Information and Communication attest to leadership commitment to promote and nurture the communications function of SADC.

It is however important to note that even if these opportunities are harnessed, the regional integration story will still prove to be difficult to tell since the media in the region is still nationalist in its approach and most of the journalists lack interest in SADC. Furthermore, there is multiplicity of languages in the region with no readily available denominator as well as low literacy levels.



4. Objectives of the Strategy

The overall objective of this Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration is to ensure that all stakeholders in the SADC integration agenda are able to effectively communicate the benefits, opportunities and challenges of belonging to a regional community in southern Africa.

The specific objectives of this strategy are aligned to the objectives of the SADC Communication and Promotional Strategy:

- **Specific Objective 1:** Increase awareness of and knowledge about SADC, its activities and impact in all Member States and globally;
- **Specific Objective 2:** Provide a platform for improving access to, and exchange, of information and knowledge by SADC Member States and the region's ordinary citizens;
- **Specific Objective 3:** Strengthen the relationships between the SADC Secretariat and the media, and strengthen the capacity of journalists to competently report on SADC; and
- **Specific Objective 4:** Contribute to efforts to increase SADC's strong online and social media presence, with a focus on creating shareable multimedia video and image content.



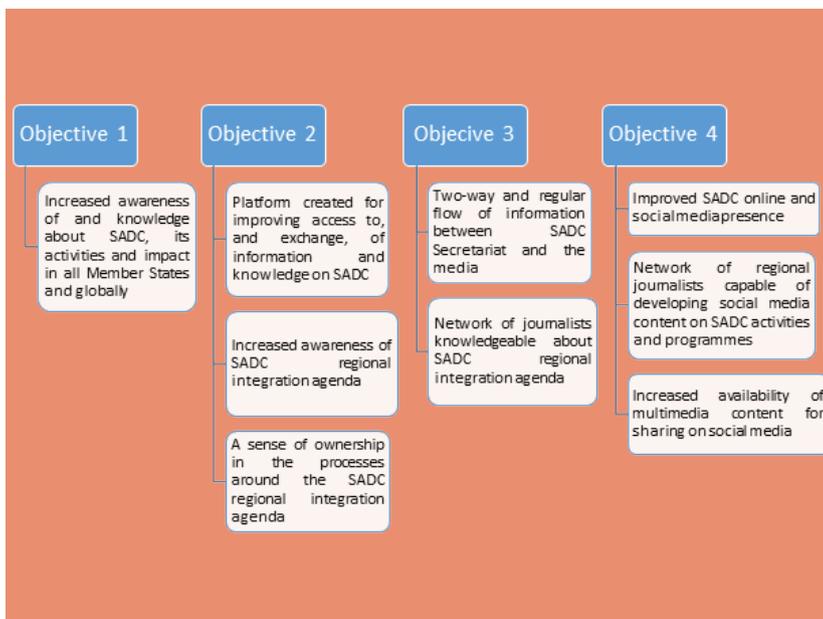
5. Desired Results of Media Strategy

Often, when asked what the desired outcome of the Media Strategy is, people come up with the goal for the strategy. On the contrary, effective media engagement is not an outcome, but a means to achieving an organisation's goal and objectives.

Therefore, the Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration desired results are designed around the organisation's goal and objectives which are aligned to SADC overarching aim of a united, prosperous and integrated region. This media and engagement strategy should thus enable stakeholders to widen and deepen regional integration in the SADC region so that policies can work for the SADC citizens.

Figure 2 presents the desired outcomes of the media strategy. The outcomes are aligned to the specific objectives of the strategy, which are, in turn, linked to the objectives of the SADC Communication and Promotional Strategy.

Figure 2: Media strategy desired outcomes



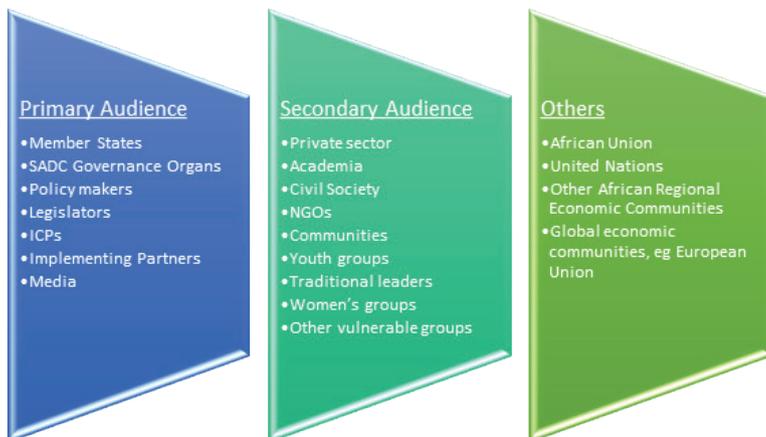
6. Targeted Audiences

Understanding the target audience is one of the most important elements of any media strategy. It should be noted that targeting actions and/or interventions to a specific target audience inevitably brings about desired results faster.

As shown in Figure 3, SADC has a multi-layered target group, ranging from the governance structures such as the SADC Summit, Council of Ministers, SADC Secretariat and Member States. Other key target groups include the following;

- Policymakers;
- International Cooperating Partners (ICPs);
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- The private sector and investors; and
- Media and SADC citizens.

Figure 3: SADC regional integration target audiences



It is important to prioritise its target audience in order to be more effective. Prioritising the target audience helps with making messages specific to a particular audience and this makes measuring impact easier. The target audiences have been categorized into three broad groups: Primary, Secondary and Others.

Primary target audiences are those groups that have high levels of interest in SADC issues and are in a good position to help achieve the set communication objectives. These are organisations or bodies that are able to make decisions that will directly influence relevant policies, practices or behaviours.

Groups classified as secondary target audiences are those with low levels of interest in what SADC does, but they potentially have high influence on and/or have the ability to facilitate achievement of the regional organisation's objectives.

Those classified under the "Others" group have a shared interest in SADC work but they have little direct influence on or ability to achieve the objectives. Table 1 presents some of the main roles as well as issues or challenges for each of the three broad groups.

Table 1: Roles and Challenges of the Targeted Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Role	Issues/Challenge
Primary Audiences	Awareness creation and coordination of SADC activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate flow of communication • Capacity constraints • Underutilization of the information resource centre for information and knowledge sharing
Secondary Audiences	Discuss and seek solutions to advance regional integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge on SADC • Buy-in of the SADC integration agenda
Others	Support regional integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for harmonized policies and protocols • Challenges of multiplicity membership

7. Tactics, Channels and Tools

The success of this media strategy will depend on the identification and implementation of an array of tactics, channels and tools.

7.1 Tactics

- Tactics are essentially strategies to be employed in order to effectively meet the objectives of this media strategy. Some of the tactics include:
- Sponsoring of a radio or television programme to discuss SADC regional integration issues;
- Creation of WhatsApp and SMS groups for journalists from the region. These could be sector-specific groups where journalists are grouped according to their areas of specialisation;
- Organise field visits and/or familiarisation tours to showcase progress on some of the programmes or projects being implemented;
- Introduction of a sustained media training programme to build the capacity of journalists to report knowledgeably on SADC issues;
- Production of reference material on priority SADC regional integration issues. This can include country specific or thematic based fact sheets, and policy briefs to enable the media to have background information;
- Introduction of regular briefings or update reports on the various regional programmes and activities as a way of bridging the gap between the regional body and the media;
- Creation of a SADC Media Partners Platform to facilitate sustained interaction with journalists;
- Establishment of a SADC Researchers Hub to act as a “feedlot” for analysis to inform reportage on SADC by the media; and
- Creation of a SADC Experts Database.

SADC Media Partners Platform

MEDIA PARTNERS

The online media and partner's platform will allow SADC and its partners to easily interact and interface more efficiently with the regional media. SAT and SARDC proposes to establish and maintain the platform, which will be regularly updated to ensure it remains relevant.

A section will be created on the platform where journalists can also receive guidance on how to develop their regional stories. Another section will be depository of key information resources such as SADC Summit Communiqués, regional reports and news articles on regional integration in southern Africa.

SADC Researchers Hub



Another important platform is the establishment of a SADC Researchers Hub intended to keep the regional research network in contact with each other. The hub will also provide alerts on SADC policy documents and research from the network and up-coming events.

Ultimately, the main aim of the SADC Researchers Hub will be to provide research report and academic materials on SADC to scholars to promote learning, as well as the general public to improve their understanding on regional integration.

The SADC Researchers Hub will thus be a centralized and searchable online platform that stores multiple file types on SADC regional integration to help users to quickly and easily find the information they need.

SADC Experts Database



Complimentary to the SADC Researchers Hub, a SADC Experts Database will be created and a list of the experts will be classified according to their thematic areas, and this list will be constantly be updated.

The database will be crucial to the media as it will allow them to easily contact the experts when

developing their stories on regional integration in southern Africa. The general public and other stakeholders will be free to access the database and contact the experts for their services.

7.2 Channels and Tools

Communication channels and tools go hand in hand. One may not succeed communicating a message without the either of the two. Below is a list of key channels and tools that that various stakeholders could use to communicate regional integration in southern Africa.

- Field visits or facilitation tours;
-
- Public engagements with SADC officials;
-
- Radio and TV programmes and/or panel discussions;
-
- Fact sheets;
-
- Policy briefs;
-
- Workshops/Webinars; and
-
- Social Media – WhatsApp and SMS messages, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Blogs/Vlogs.

8. Key Messages



As one of the eight recognized RECs in Africa, SADC finds itself in the competition space among other RECs. This means that a lot of information on RECS and regional integration agenda has been shared, thereby causing information overload. Therefore, it is critical for SADC stakeholders to

develop innovative and strategic messages that is targeted to specific stakeholders.

The messages are the basis for actual messages which should be developed by SADC stakeholders. Message development is a process and this strategy can only outline core information that should run through all messages and activities.

Based on the three broad targeted audiences identified in Section 6 of this Media and Engagement Strategy on SADC Regional Integration, the key messages for each of the stakeholders are presented in Table 3.

Stakeholders	Key Message/s
Primary Audiences	Coordination and implementation of regional integration activities, programmes and projects depends on you You are the SADC Ambassadors Your decisions shape regional integration SADC making progress to promote regional integration SADC facing challenges to raise enough resources to ensure ownership of regional activities, programmes and projects
Secondary Audiences	Your research, opinion and contribution shapes regional integration SADC belongs to you and please take advantage of its opportunities
Others	SADC is a credible partner

As alluded in the SCPS, the messages will be publicized at various national, regional and international events. The messages will also be based on the priority intervention areas that has been identified by SADC and contained in various strategic documents such as the SADC Vision 2050 and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-30

These priority intervention areas include Trade; Economic Liberation and Development; Infrastructure Support for Regional Integration and Poverty Eradication; Sustainable Food Security; Human and Social Development; Combating HIV and AIDS pandemic; Gender Equality and Development; Science and Technology; Information and Communication; Environment and Sustainable Development; Private Sector Development; and Peace and Security.

9. Crisis Management

One of the main functions of a media strategy is to provide crisis management, particularly when the need for such management arises in an organization. In fact, "every important aspect of the life, organization...is in extraordinary crisis", implying that a crisis is always bound to happen in any organization, hence organizations should remain alert to the need to deal with a crisis at some point in their operations.

Therefore, in the event that a crisis occurs within SADC or the integration agenda in the region, various stakeholders must put in places precautions designed to prevent and lessen the crisis from further damaging the image or reputation of SADC.

Crisis management can be divided into three different phases namely pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis. In this regard, the concept of crisis management mainly seeks to help an organization to identify, act on and recover from a crisis. Some of the practical measures and initiatives which could be considered by SADC and its stakeholders to manage the three different phases of the crisis include the following.

Precautions to Manage the Pre-Crisis

- Invest a lot of time planning and preparing how to relay the message to the public/citizens or concerned stakeholders because timely provision of such information is important as it will guide and empower the concerned audiences to make some important choices.
- It is also critical to choose and employ the right tactics in conveying the message to the concerned audiences.

Precautions to Manage a Crisis Response

- There is need for SADC and its stakeholders to be quick, accurate, and consistent with its information to the public/citizens so that the organizations' side of the story is heard.
- SADC and its stakeholders should speak with one voice on the matter at hand.
- There is need to engage a wide array of media organizations so that the response reaches

out to public/citizens quickly

Precautions to Manage a Post-Crisis

- Continue to engage the media and public/citizens about how remedial measures are being implemented to ensure that a similar crisis will be avoided and addressed in the future.
- SADC and its stakeholders may also consider confronting the person or group claiming something is wrong with the organization or the integration agenda in southern Africa.