SADC Growth Requires More Infrastructure and Fewer Barriers

JOHANNESBURG - Experts are agreed that a key tool for unlocking the economic potential of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) lies in easing cross-border flows of people, goods, capital and services. However, even if border restrictions can be lifted, a lot more needs to be done in terms of enhancing road, rail, electricity supply and other infrastructure within the region – and in tackling the informal non-tariff barriers in the form of excessive red tape and restrictions which still impede development.

In June, a group of SADC leaders met in Maputo, Mozambique for a SADC Infrastructure Investment Conference. Part of the agenda was a Transport Sector Plan, which looks at the liberalisation of transport markets, the development of transport corridors and the facilitation of cross-border movement.

However, the chief executive officer of consultancy Africa @ Work Dianna Games told TerraViva that while moves are being made to bring down physical barriers to cross-frontier movement, informal barriers are often replacing them.

"As tariff barriers have gone down, there has been a mushrooming of non-tariff barriers – leading to delays at border posts and inefficient border posts, with the worst being the Beit Bridge border crossing between South Africa and Zimbabwe," she said.

"This should have been sorted out long ago – and it suggests that while there is a lot of political lip service being given to trade liberalisation, the countries are as protectionist as ever."

Dr Rose Phillips, the South-Africa based CEO of management consultancy Accenture, told TerraViva that "more facilitation of trade and less reliance on aid is what is needed to accelerate sustainable economic development on the continent. Quite simply, really, we need an Africa that works."

"Regional economic integration and intra-Africa trade are designed to benefit SADC countries and businesses through providing economies of skill and scale, predictability, common standards and regulations and transparency of information in the region - key ingredients for a strong private sector that is competitive. Further harmonisation of trade policies, stronger governance and joint regional cooperation and investment are but some of the actions needed."

She stressed the need for more focused investment in the building and the maintenance of infrastructure, such roads, information and communications technology, rail, water and power supply.

And she also supported the SADC focus on development corridors.

"Accenture research reveals that unreliable power supply alone leads to losses in industrial production valued at six percent of company turnover," she warned.

"Road freight costs (in Africa) are two to four times higher per kilometer than in the US, and travel times along key export corridors are two to three times longer than those in Asia."

South African trade consultant John Mare told TerraViva that while donor support for infrastructure development from bodies such as the African Development Bank is welcome, "the funds must be targeted and managed in an effective manner."

By John Fraser
Será que a Lua-de-Mel Relativamente ao Comércio Entre a SADC e a UE Terminou?

Por John Fraser

J anesnburg - Um diferendo sobre as exportações de lúcumes sul-africanos para a União Europeia não foi a única nota dissonante quando os líderes de ambos os países se reuniram para discussões sobre comércio e outros assuntos em Pretória em Julho.

O Presidente sul-africano, Jacob Zuma, reuniu-se com José Manuel Barroso, Presidente da Comissão Europeia, e com o Presidente do Conselho Europeu, Herman van Rompuy, no dia 18 de Julho, para negociar a forma de agilizar as relações da União Europeia com o bloco comercial da Comunidade de Desenvolvimento da África Austral (SADC).

As actuais negociações irão substituir todos os acordos existentes com a SADC, incluindo o Acordo de Comércio, Desenvolvimento e Cooperação (ACDC, com um Acordo de Parceria Económica (APE) global.)

No entanto, John Mare, conselheiro em relações internacionais, um dos delegados do Fórum Empresarial África do Sul- União Europeia, sugeriu que se tinha registado uma nova atmosfera.

“Penso que as coisas se tornaram muito mais reais para ambos os lados, e que estão prestes a haver graves danos no comércio União Europeia-África do Sul e União Europeia-Africa, assim como nas relações políticas de apoio – numa altura inoportuna para ambos os lados,” opinou Mare à IPS.

Gert Gouws, Director Financeiro da Corporação para o Desenvolvimento Industrial (IDC), empresa estatal sul-africana, que foi um dos intervenientes no Fórum Empresarial, disse à IPS que estava “optimista que se celebraria um novo acordo com a União Europeia.”

“Em geral, as luas-de-mel nunca duram para sempre,” acrescentou.

“As relações a longo prazo precisam de ser construídas sobre alicerces que sejam mutuamente benéficos. Têm-se realizado muitas discussões a nível bilateral, e as empre- sas europeias continuam interessadas em investir na nossa região, em áreas como a energia renovável, que será uma região, em áreas como a energia renovável, que será importante durante muitos anos.”

Tornou-se claro no período que antecedeu a Cimeira que existia uma certa irritação tanto da parte sul-africana como da parte da União Europeia a propósito da actual relação.

O Ministro do Comércio e Indústria da África do Sul, Rob Davies, e o seu principal negociador na área do comércio, Xavier Carim, criticaram a decisão da União Europeia de impor o quozete de Outubro para implementação da nova APE com a SADC, sugerindo que, se isso não fosse alcançado, alguns dos países vizinhos da África do Sul podiam constatar que o acesso preferencial existente referente às suas exportações para a Europa iria terminar sem estar implementado qualquer novo regime.

Davies sugeriu que esta situação poderia afectar países como a Namíbia, Suazilândia e Botswana de “maneira brutal, com repercussões socio-económicas e para o em- prego.”

O Comissário do Comércio da União Europeia, Karel De Gucht, sublinhou que os negociadores europeus estão sob pressão por parte dos lobbies agrícolas numa altura em que a economia da União Europeia continua deprimida.

Sugeriu que a União Europeia já concede melhor acesso às exportações sul-africanas do que o oferecido pela África do Sul às exportações da União Europeia.

De Gucht advertiu que a África do Sul não devia tomar como garantido que a Europa iria continuar a fazer concessões a menos que os seus interesses fossem respeitados e que isso também se aplicava ao investimento – uma vez que a União Europeia foi a fonte de 88 por cento dos investimentos diretos estrangeiros na África do Sul no passado.

Mare indicou estar optimista e que, apesar da retórica, “A União Europeia está mais disposta a chegar a um compromisso para uma solução mutuamente aceitável, e para a criação de um novo regime comercial.”

“Somos o maior parceiro comercial da África do Sul e planeamos continuar a sê-lo,” declarou Barroso. “Vemos um grande potencial na relação entre a União Europeia e a África do Sul.”

Zuma concordou: “Valorizamos muito esta parceria estratégica.”

Diminuiu entretanto o holofote sobre a cimeira, pelo que as negociações comerciais entre a União Europeia e os países da SADC vão continuar em sessões mais discretas.

Portanto, depois das recentes duras negociações, o tom das discussões mudou. A África do Sul e os seus parceiros receberam um aviso claro que as boas intenções da Europa permanecem, mas é preciso haver reciprocidade.

A Directora do programa da diplomacia económica do Instituto dos Assuntos Internacionais da África do Sul, Catherine Grant, disse à IPS “Parce entre a África do Sul e a União Europeia deve ser mantido, mas há que as duas partes estarem dispostas a fazer pequenas concessões.”

“A relação é muito frágil, particularmente quanto às questões económicas. Vemos a área do investimento tornar-se um ponto nevrálgico em grande parte das discus- sões.“
Small Businesses Tackle Poverty in Mauritius

By Nasseem Ackbarally

PORT LOUIS - Raja Venkat, a food vendor on the sidewalk of Immigration Square in the centre of Port Louis, the Mauritian capital, sits on his tricycle with a bag full of dhal puris - small, round, flat Indian bread stuffed with pulses - which he sells together with tomato sauce and bean curry.

"Come and taste my dhal puris, you’ll want more. Come, come," he shouts.

Thousands of small businesses like this have sprung up in every town and village on the island since the government eased the procedures for obtaining a business permit a year ago.

"At times, I helped in masonry, in vegetable transportation or washing clothes. I was available for any job, but most of the time I was unemployed," Venkat tells IPS.

The unemployment rate stood at 8.6 percent at the end of 2012, according to figures obtained from Statistics Mauritius, the official organisation responsible for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistical data. And the easing of procedures for obtaining a business permit has been a vital reason for the employment in this Indian Ocean island. Official figures from Statistics Mauritius indicate that the total number of business activities increased from 133,723 to 138,236 in 2012.

Since he started his small business six months ago, after paying the required fee (about 50 dollars a year to the Municipality of Port Louis) for his business licence, Venkat now has a steady income. His wife, Aashna Venkat, cooks the dhal puris in the small wooden kitchen of their home at Terre-Rouge, four km away.

"I now earn enough to feed the family and also to save some money for the future," this father of two children, aged six and three years, says.

Many other people have started similar businesses on the island, selling food, vegetables, fruits, small luxurious items and clothes. Some have opened small mechanical workshops where they repair bicycles and motorcycles. Many women, particularly from Muslim families, have developed the art of applying henna to the hands.

Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives Jim Seetaram tells IPS that there are more workers in these small and medium businesses than in the larger establishments.

"Net employment creation in small and medium business between 2000 and 2011 is estimated to be 67,800, i.e., an increase of more than 36 percent, as compared to an increase of 14,400 in large establishments," he says.

"Small and medium businesses are the main drivers of job creation and contribute in a significant way to economic growth. They employ around 250,000 people, representing more than 44 percent of the total number of jobs."

Mauritius Chamber of Industry and Commerce’s chairman, Ganesheen Mooneesawmy, tells IPS that these microenterprises are very important to the economy because they create jobs.

"A person who has some mechanical skills opens a business of repairing bicycles and motorcycles. He'll need one or two people to help him … So, many jobs are being created in this way and that’s good for the economy. People who earlier had difficulty earning a living are now creating their own businesses in fields that suit them," he says.

Local authorities regulate these small businesses. They are not supposed to get involved in any unusual activity in a residential area, or disturb neighbours at unreasonable hours or pollute the environment with dust, fumes or odours. They are required to comply with the guidelines issued by the Fire Services, the Sanitary Authority and the Environment Ministry. But many feel that these small businesses are not complying with the guidelines.

Ganeshen Mooneesawmy, vice-chairperson of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that issues and monitors business permits in the northern part of the island, is happy that these people are working, but finds that many of them lack discipline in running their business.

"They won’t ask for jobs from the government as there (are) none available … (but) they sell food in an unhygienic manner and they disturb the living environment in their area. We have very few staff to keep a check on them," he tells IPS.

In Goodlands, northern Mauritius, small businesses operate literally on the sidewalks in spite of a law that prevents this. Many of them put their goods in large baskets that they place on wooden or iron stands on the sidewalks.

"Iashok, (full name not given), a vendor, tells IPS he has to do this to attract clients because his business is very small.

"There is so much competition around from big stalls and also from smaller businesses around. If you don’t fight, you don’t eat tonight," he says.

Municipal Councillor Kritanan Beeharry of Curepipe, a town in the southern part of Mauritius, chairs the Municipalities’ Health and Sanitation Committee. He tells IPS that his staff has inspected some of these small businesses after receiving complaints from residents. "The police is also solicited when the need arises," he adds.

However, he finds more positive points than negative ones in these modest endeavours, as "these small businesses are easy to manage".

Since Mauritius eased the procedures for obtaining a business permit a year ago, small businesses are cropping up all over the island. People have started selling food, vegetables, fruits, small luxurious items and clothes.

Credt: Nasseem Ackbarally/IPS

But councillor Prakash Bhunsee of the Flacq District Council in eastern Mauritius believes the situation has gotten out of control.

"I am afraid the police only check the licences of the small entrepreneurs and is not concerned with health, sanitation, environment or pollution matters," he says.

The shortage of staff at the municipal inspectorate level makes it obvious that many of these businesses go unchecked for months.

SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government

SADC Growth Requires More Infrastructure and Fewer Barriers

Continued from page 1 … "I personally support the creation of bodies that are dedicated and linked to certain infrastructural projects, as they can help manage all aspects of the completion of such projects - along with funding management and the inclusion of the private sector in Public Private Partnership structures.

"This all seems to suggest regional authorities should create some suitable body such as the Maputo Development Corridor Board, but with an expanded executive mandate from the start - to work in partnership with all stakeholders and help mobilise as well as manage funding." Phillips stressed the importance of SADC countries working together to tackle the region’s challenges through agreements between governments.

"They are key in promoting and facilitating the creation of new industry opportunities, for example, that Angola and Nigeria are experiencing the highest growth rates in Africa.

"The World Bank, IMF and the WTO should actively promote government legislation which reduces corruption, improving the flow of foreign and cross-regional investments, as well as creating a consolidated platform for sectorial growth." However, she stressed that the opening up of Africa cannot just be left to governments.

"The private sector plays a vital role," she argued.

"Inclusive growth and development that advances the active economic participation of Africans is the responsibility and the reward of the public and private sector alike." Games also stressed the importance of the private sector, noting, for example, that the infrastructure mining companies often need to build to transport their products can also be used for the wider community, and can remain after the mining activity is over.

“They build the infrastructure which becomes public infrastructure,” she suggested.

Phillips said that the development of Africa requires more than money, and that people are also crucial, with human capital a key resource for African development.

"As more and more highly educated Africans are coming home and our talent investment is bearing fruit, we are capitalising on the melting pot of talent that is uniquely African; diverse by nature, education, experience and viewpoint, and innovative by implication," she stated.

Since the SADC summit was convened by the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government has been a platform for discussion of economic and political issues in the region.
Curb Tanzania’s “Land-Grabbing Race”

By Orton Kiishweko

Dar es Salaam - Since January 2013, Tanzania started restricting the size of land that single large-scale foreign and local investors can “lease” for agricultural use. The decision follows both local and international criticism that major investors are grabbing large chunks of land here, often displacing small-scale farmers and local communities.

The Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office Perisel Lyimo confirmed that the government would limit the amount of land leased to investors in this East African nation. Previously, there were no limits.

“For a large-scale investor who wants to invest in sugar, the ceiling has been put at 10,000 hectares. (The limit for) rice is 5,000 hectares. The ceiling for sugar is significantly higher due to the fact that it may also produce electric power,” Lyimo told IPS. Sugarcane fibre is used in the generation of electricity.

According to official documents, seen by IPS, from the Tanzania Investment Centre, a government agency set up to promote and facilitate investment: “Even within a seven-year period, an investor would not be able to use more than 10,000 hectares...”

The move will come as a relief to land rights organisations that have continually called for the government to curb the land grabs here.

In 2008 the Tanzanian government launched the Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First) initiative in order to increase private sector investments in agriculture.

And when the World Economic Forum took place in Dar es Salaam in 2010, the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT), a multi-stakeholder partnership to rapidly develop the country’s agricultural potential, was formed and the government began to invite foreign companies to invest in crops like sugarcane, maize, rice and cassava.

However, civil society organisations like the Tanzanian NGO Land Rights Research and Resources Institute (LARRRI) and the Oakland Institute, an independent policy think tank in the United States, called on the government to review its investment policy to limit the amount of land given to foreign investors.

“Giving tens of thousands of hectares to large-scale investors was hurting small-scale farmers,” said LARRRI executive director Yefred Myenzi.

To date, he told IPS, the government has given 80,000 hectares of land to large-scale investors.

“Land conflicts pitting poor villagers against powerful investors now number more than 1,000 reported incidents. On average, there are five land disputes daily in the country and three of these involve powerful investors,” said Myenzi.

In Tanzania’s northern Loliondo district, which is known for its wildlife, much of the land has been leased out to international hunting concessions, which has resulted in large-scale eviction of the local population — although the government refuses this. A major U.S. energy company, AgSól Energy, has also been accused of engaging in land grabs in Tanzania that would displace more than 160,000 Burundian refugees, according to a report by the Oakland Institute. The report states that AgSól Energy is benefiting from the forcible eviction of the refugees, many of whom are subsistence farmers, and leasing the land — as much as 650,000 acres — from the Tanzanian government for 25 cents per acre.

Myenzi said that of the 1,825 general land disputes reported in 2011, 1,095 involved powerful investors.

“The country has unbearable land disputes. This calls for concrete remedial actions. Government actions currently focus on large-scale farming, but there should be a clear plan on how they can coexist with the small-scale farmers who are in the majority,” he said.

According to Tanzania’s Ministry for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, small-scale farmers produce over 90 percent of the country’s food.

Of Tanzania’s 94.5 million hectares, only half — 44 million hectares — is arable land. And according to the National Sample Census for Agriculture of 2002/2003, only 9.1 million hectares is under cultivation.

“Only a few own huge land resources (in Tanzania). What is happening now is that the well-to-do from within and outside the country are in a land-grabbing race,” Myenzi said.

Damian Gabagambi, an agricultural economist at Sokoine University of Agriculture, the largest agricultural university in Tanzania, said that major investors should provide for the population’s food security.

“While we encourage large-scale investors in the agricultural sector, Tanzania must limit the amount of land they can acquire, so that they rely on small-holder farmers for most of their supplies. Small-scale traders are more important for the country’s food security,” Gabagambi told IPS.

Tanzania has an estimated population of 42 million people and 12,000 villages, but only 0.02 percent of its citizens have traditional land ownership titles.

Advocate Harold Sungusia from the Legal and Human Rights Centre told IPS that in order for the government to control conflicts with investors over land, it should create an equitable balance between the interests of its people and those of investors.

He said the role of state machinery such as laws, institutions and resources have changed from protecting the majority of smallholders interests in the 1970s and 1980s, to facilitating the acquisition of land from communities by a few elite and foreign companies.

“In Tanzania from 2001 to date, the land laws have been changed eight times, for whose interest?,” however, director general Aloyce Masanja of the Rufiji Basin Development Authority, a government organisation that manages the 183,000 square kilometre basin, issues water permits to both large-scale and smallholder farmers along the basin area, and mediates in conflicts, said the government largely depends on the private sector to make SAGCOT a success.

“Land is given out to a private investor after careful evaluation. The private sector can perform better... it has strong links with other areas of economic activities that are linked to agricultural development,” he told IPS.
At the Bottom of Lake Nyasa is ‘Rare Earth’

By Thembli Mutch

A RUSHA - The local Tanzanian community bordering Lake Nyasa is no nearer to understanding what the conflict between their country and Malawi is about, nor why so much is at stake, as mediation efforts between Malawi and Tanzania are expected to begin soon.

The 29,000-square-kilometre tranquil lake, known as Lake Malawi by Malawians, is a tourist spot, source of revenue and food for local populations. But since July 2012, it was discovered that the lake could potentially be a lucrative oil and gas source, and it rekindled a border dispute between the southern African neighbours over who owns the lake.

Malawi claims sovereignty over the entirety of the lake that straddles the borders of Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. Meanwhile, Tanzania says 50 percent is part of its territory.

In Mbeya Region, in southwest Tanzania, members of the community bordering the lake have been working with national NGO Hakikyanda (Swahili for ‘understand’), known as the Land Rights Research and Resources Institute, to understand their water rights.

“We know that we have agreed to disagree with Malawi on this one, but these communities depend completely on fishing and the lake for their lives. There’s been no consultation at all with us about how we benefit if there is oil here, none at all. How do we gain from this? The land issue is new for us here: we have no experience,” Saad Ayoub, the organisation’s assistant programme officer, told IPS by phone.

Local residents echo this feeling. Richard Kilumbo, a resident from Kyela district, which borders Lake Nyasa, told IPS that he could not understand the reasons for the dispute.

“We have relatives from Mazu, Malawi and were going to attend a wedding (there last year). We are shocked and panicked. We do not know why this is such big thing amongst our African neighbours over who owns the lake. It was agreed that the lake could potentially be a lucrative oil and gas source, and it rekindled a border dispute between the southern African neighbours over who owns the lake. Malawi claims sovereignty over the entirety of the lake that straddles the borders of Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. Meanwhile, Tanzania says 50 percent is part of its territory.

“A question we are often asked is: What is the purpose of these exercises? We serve to protect the lake and the surrounding areas from pollution, and as a source of livelihood for the local communities,” Mwakyembe said.

Yet, so far, it does not seem local communities understand this conflict, nor their rights in the process.

Nyanda Shuli, the media and advocacy manager of local civil society organisation Haki Elimu, or Your Rights, told IPS that the emphasis must be on financial accountability and transparency, and that the flows of income and investment must be directed towards the communities.

“Whatever the outcomes of this current dispute, we need daring thinking to try and tackle the bigger issues of how our communities in rural areas develop, find imaginative ways for people know their rights, and what they can expect, from the poorest marginalised fishing communities around Nyasa, to other communities involved.

“At the moment decisions are taken in the capital, Dar es Salaam, and there’s no connection or meaningful dialogue with the regions at all. It’s more complicated because the distances are so huge, and the transport, telephone networks and roads so poor,” he said.

Amidst the obscuration and disagreements, there is one thing that needs to be remembered. There is “rare earth” (a colloquial name for complex and valuable minerals mostly used for engineering) below the lake, and potentially a lot oil and natural gas.

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To date, there is no documentary evidence that either of the local fishing communities, on both sides, Malawi or Tanzania, stand to gain much.

But for now, Kilumbo believes there is enough to go around.

“Yes, I can say the Malawians get the bigger fish, but that’s because we Tanzanians like the smaller, younger fish. But there’s enough to go round. I have no idea about oil plans, none at all.”

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La croissance de la SADC requiert plus d’infrastructures et moins de barrières

Por John Fraser

Les experts conviennent qu’un outil clé pour libérer le potentiel économique de la Communauté de développement de l'Afrique australe (SADC) réside dans la facilitation des flux transfrontaliers des personnes, biens, capitaux et services. Cependant, même si les restrictions frontalières peu- vent être levées, il reste encore beaucoup à faire en termes d’amélioration des voies, chemins de fer, de la fourniture d’électricité et d’autres infrastructures à l’intérieur de la ré- gion - et de la levée des barrières non tarifaires informelles sous forme d’une bureaucratie excessive et des restrictions qui continuent d’entraver le développement.

En juin, un groupe de dirigeants de la SADC s’était réuni à Maputo, au Mozambique pour une Conférence sur les investissements dans les infrastructures de la SADC – avec le président sud-africain Jacob Zuma qui avait annulé sa propre participation à la dernière minute en raison des in- quiétudes au sujet de la santé de l’ïoïne malade, Nelson Mandela.

Une partie du programme était un Plan pour le secteur des transports, qui examine la libéralisation des marchés des transports, le développement des corridors de transport et la facilitation des mouvements transfrontaliers.

Toutefois, la directrice générale du cabinet-conseil Africa @ Work, Diniane Games, a déclaré à IPS que bien que des démarches soient entreprises pour faire tomber les barrières physiques à la circulation transfrontalière, des obstacles in- formels les remplacent souvent.

"Pendant que les barrières tarifaires ont baisé, il y a eu une multiplication d’obstacles non tarifaires - entrainant des retards aux postes frontières et des postes frontières inefficaces, le pire étant la traversée de la frontière de 'Beit Bridge' entre l’Afrique du Sud et le Zimbabwe", a-t-elle in- diqué.

"Cette situation aurait dû être réglée depuis longtemps - et elle suggère que bien qu’il existe un semblant de grande efficacité, le pire étant la traversée de la frontière de 'Beit Bridge' entre l’Afrique du Sud et le Zimbabwe", a-t-elle in- diqué.

"Une harmonisation plus grande des politiques com- mercials, une gouvernance plus forte et une coopération régionale commune ainsi que des investissements sont quelques-unes des actions nécessaires".

Elle a souligné le besoin pour des investissements plus ciblés dans la construction et l’entretien des infrastructures, telles que les routes, les technologies de l’information et de la communication, les chemins de fer, la fourniture d’eau et d’électricité.

Et elle a également soutenu l’accent de la SADC sur les corridors de développement.

"La recherche d’Accenture révèle qu’une fourniture peu fiable d’électricité seule entraîne des pertes de production industrielles évaluées à six pour cent du chiffre d’affaires de l’entreprise", a-t-elle prévenu.

"Les coûts de transport routier de marchandises (en Afrique) sont deux à quatre fois plus élevés par kilomètre qu’aux États-Unis, et les temps de voyage le long des cor- ridors clé d’exportation sont deux à trois fois plus longs que ceux d’Asie".

"Finalement, nous devons diversifier les industries de la SADC dans lesquelles nous investissons, (que nous en- courageons et développons) à l’échelle régionale, au-delà de la frontière nationale", a déclaré Diniane Games.

Phillips a souligné l’importance des pays de la SADC de travailler ensemble pour faire face aux défis de la région à travers des accords entre les gouvernements. Les obstacles à la frontière, les files d’attente sont généralement très longues, alors que le temps nécessaire pour s’approvisionner.

"Ils jouent un rôle clé dans la promotion et la facilitation de la création de nouvelles opportunités industrielles étant donné, par exemple, que l’Angola et le Nigeria connaissent les taux de croissance les plus élevés en Afrique".

Toutefois, elle a souligné que l’ouverture de l’Afrique ne peut être réussie sans l’aide des gouvernements. "Le secteur privé joue un rôle vital", a-t-elle affirmé.

La croissance de la SADC requiert plus d’infrastructures et moins de barrières

Por Mantoe Phakathi

Les commerçants transfrontaliers du Swaziland sont à peine capables de joindre les deux bouts en raison des taxes élevées et des droits de douane qu’ils doivent payer lorsqu’ils importent des marchandises par les postes-frontières de ce pays d’Afrique australe.

Les vendeurs ambulants qui importent des habits d’occasion du Mozambique voisins, un pays limitrophe au Swaziland à l’est, se plaignent qu’ils payent des taxes très élevées par rapport à leurs homologues sud-africains. Le Swaziland est limité à l’est par l’Afrique du Sud et le Mozam- bique, et la plupart des commerçants obtiennent leur stock à partir des deux pays.

Dudu Fakudze vient de vêtements d’occasion à Mbabane, la capitale du Swaziland, et la plupart de ceux qui sont importés du Mozambique.

"Nous sommes obligés de payer soit £450 (45 dollars) par balle ou de débourser entre £3 et £5 (30 et 50 cents) par article pour les habits d’occasion", a indiqué Fakudze à Ter- raviva. "Et le fait de bénéficier à peine à cause du montant que je paie à la frontière." Les vendeurs ambulants qui importent des habits d’occasion du Mozambique payent plus par rapport à ceux provenant de l’Afrique du Sud. Il a attribué cela au fait que le Mozambique ne fait pas partie de l’Union douanière d’Afrique australe (SACU), dont sont mem- bres le Swaziland et l’Afrique du Sud.

"Nous avons établi un accord avec le Trésor du Swaziland (SRA) imposant une taxe de 14 pour cent pour le valore ajoutée (TVA) pour les march- andants provenant d’Afrique du Sud. Cette taxe formule différente s’applique à celles qui sont importées du Mozambique. Cela nous oblige de payer soit £3,250 (2,50 dollars/100) de droits de douane et la TVA à l’importation soit utilisé pour une gamme de produits généralement im- portés", a-t-il dit.

Des responsables corrompus du SRA en rajoutant égale- ment à la tension, s’est plaint Mpho Masabo, un autre ven- deur ambulant à Mbabane. Il a déclaré qu’il a été forcé de payer des pots-de-vin à l’entrée de la frontière.

"Les vendeurs ambulants passent souvent jusqu’à six heures à la frontière et quand vous arrivez devant la queue, vous êtes souvent très frustré", a déclaré Masabo. "C’est-à- dire lorsque vous êtes obligé de payer un pot-de-vin".

Il a souligné que certains petits commerçants achètent leurs marchandises auprès des vendeurs ambulants en Afrique du Sud qui ne délivrent pas de reçus. Bien que le SRA soit conscient de cette situation, a-t-il dit, les agents des douanes refusent d’accepter les prix déclarés par les com- merçants.

Dilmani du SRA a indiqué que l’organisation détermi- nera les postes qui ont besoin de plus de personnel grâce à l’utilisation d’un modèle clairement défini conforme aux normes de service à la clientèle.

Dilmani a déclaré que depuis la création du SRA en 2011, l’organisation a renouvelé la carte de son personnel qui s’est engagé dans un comportement de corruption ou cor- trai à l’éthique. Il a souligné que le SRA a reçu des plaintes émanant des importateurs revenant du Mozambique.

"Toutefois, lorsque vous désirez plus de détails, les infor- mations manquent", a ajouté Dilmani.

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"C’est toujours frustrant d’aller chercher le stock du Mozam- bique parce que les droules ne considèrent pas la valeur à laquelle vous avez acheté le produit", s’est plaint Fakudze.

Alors que le Trésor du Swaziland (SRA) impose une taxe de 14 pour cent pour le valore ajoutée (TVA) pour les march- andants provenant d’Afrique du Sud. Cette taxe formule différente s’applique à celles qui sont importées du Mozambique.

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Assouplir les règles bancaires pour une expansion à travers la SADC

Par John Fraser/Michelle Chifamba

JOHANNESBURG/HARARE - Vivian Zivira, 40 ans, une négociante de produits agricoles à Nyanga, dans la province du Manicaland au Zimbabwe, affirme que beaucoup de femmes comme elle, ayant une terre communale, font face à d'importants défis pour obtenir des prêts pour démarrer des projets générateurs de revenus. C’est parce que les banques mettent trop de temps pour traiter leurs demandes, et exigent des taux d'intérêt élevés. “Il m’a fallu environ six mois pour accéder à mon premier prêt parce que les banques voulaient des garanties, que j’ai finalement fournies grâce à mon mari. Elles m’ont donné 5,000 dollars avec 25 pour cent d’intérêt. Malgré un très bon dossier de remboursement, la banque n’a pas pu augmenter le second prêt”, a déclaré Zivira à IPS.

Les principaux banquiers sont préoccupés par le fait que l’environnement réglementaire dans certains États d’Afrique australe leur empêche d’offrir une gamme complète de services aux particuliers et aux entreprises à travers la région. Des services financiers efficaces et abordables sont essentiels à la fois pour le développement des entreprises et des projets infrastructuraux à l’intérieur de la Communauté de développement d’Afrique australe (SADC) - et pour élargir l’accès, à la banque, de millions de personnes qui sont actuellement en dehors du système.

Le directeur général du groupe ‘BancABC’, Douglas Muthu, a déclaré à IPS qu’en surface, les règles bancaires sont librement disponibles entre les États de la SADC diffère à travers les différents produits offerts et les clients servis par les banques”, a-t-il indiqué à IPS. “Dans le système bancaire à travers les États” a-t-il dit à IPS. “La mesure par rapport à laquelle les services bancaires sont librement disponibles entre les États de la SADC diffère à travers différents produits offerts et les clients servis par les banques”, a-t-il indiqué à IPS.

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Il a aussi insisté sur le fait que “l’environnement réglementaire dans certains pays est encore relativement faible. Les infrastructures constituent un autre problème, en particulier les télécommunications. L’incertitude politique dans des pays comme le Zimbabwe est un autre sujet de préoccupation”. Le chargé des opérations de la banque ‘FNB Africa’, Levary Ntalihai, a affirmé qu’il n’y avait pas de problèmes majeurs qui affectent l’offre des services bancaires entre les États.

L’Association pour les services bancaires de la SADC travaille avec le Comité des gouverneurs de Banque centrale de la SADC pour développer un système intégré de paiements et de règlement, qui améliorera considérablement le système bancaire à travers les États” a-t-il dit à IPS. Cependant, il a prévenu que “l’environnement réglementaire dans certains pays est encore relativement faible. Les infrastructures constituent un autre problème, en particulier les télécommunications. L’incertitude politique dans des pays comme le Zimbabwe est un autre sujet de préoccupation”.

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Southern African Trade Talks Stall, and the Clock Ticks

Windhoek: Southern Africa has to settle in for another round of negotiations after talks on Economic Partnership Agreements failed to produce results in June, bringing countries closer to losing access to the lucrative European Union market.

A high-level visit to the region by EU Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht in July highlighted there are still many differences.

The troublesome trade negotiations between the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)–EPA grouping that includes Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (BLNS), as well as Angola, Mozambique and South Africa, have stretched five years past their 2008 deadline.

South Africa joined the negotiations two years back and is looking to improve the terms it has under the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement, especially for agricultural products.

For the BLNS, which import about 80 percent of their trade from the continent’s economic powerhouse and are joined with Pretoria in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), have stretched five years past their 2008 deadline.

Fisheries contribute at least 10 billion dollars to African economies every year and in Angola and Namibia they are vital economic drivers. Fishermen carry their boat in from the sea in Doring Bay, 350km north of Cape Town.

Further reporting on the 2013 Summit in English, French and Portuguese is available online at www.ipsnews.net/africa
Mugabe Receives Hero’s Welcome at Summit

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe was welcomed with loud cheers and two standing ovations by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegates at his first major regional appearance since his party’s landslide election victory in July. Mugabe’s popularity in the region seems undiminished, judging by the warm reception and the words of praise from his fellow leaders.

Mean while at home opposition party the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai (MDCT) has withdrawn its legal challenge disputing the election results.

Mugabe, who was seated in the centre of the panel next to SADC executive secretary, Tomaz Salomão, was congratulated on Zimbabwe’s “peaceful” elections by incoming SADC chair and Malawi’s President Joyce Banda. African Union chair Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma also added words of praise.

“I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate my dear brother, his excellency comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe and the people of Zimbabwe for conducting peaceful elections. We wish to assure the government and the people of Zimbabwe of our continued support as a member of this family,” said Banda.

SADC was quick to declare the polls in Zimbabwe free and fair last month, with Botswana President Ian Khama being the only voice of dissent. Earlier this month Khama called for an independent audit of the Zimbabwean election to be held at this head of state summit.

However, the other leaders seemed disinclined to discuss the Zimbabwe issue in depth. As his colleagues closed ranks around the octogenarian Zimbabwean leader, Khama snubbed the summit and sent a representative.

Mugabe, now 89 years old, has been in power for three decades and over the past decade oversaw controversial land reforms that left the economy in tatters, while by and large achieving the goal of returning land to black ownership. Subsequent indigenisation laws saw multinationals shedding sizeable stakes to Zimbabwean shareholders in recent years. After Mugabe won the elections he announced further legislation to promote local ownership, instilling fears in investors.

The summit is an opportunity for Mugabe to regain the confidence of the region and renew old alliances.

What does the Summit mean for gender equality?

By Kervin Victor and Dan Chan

I n a passionate speech as she took over as chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Malawian President Joyce Banda vowed to uplift the poor and reform the regional body to address the needs of rural communities and the youth.

“We must start with the war against poverty. We must fight the war to end the contemporary, deliberate and savage violence of poverty and underdevelopment of our people, particularly those in our rural communities,” Banda said on Saturday, Aug. 17, upon assuming the position of chair person of SADC.

“We cannot afford to leave the youth behind. We cannot afford to leave women behind. We cannot afford to leave the poor to look after the poor,” Banda continued to the sound of cheers from the packed auditorium.

Banda also announced she would place emphasis on agricultural development in the region. “For much of our region, agriculture is the largest employer, the largest component of GDP and the biggest generator of foreign exchange,” Banda said.

She called for a more innovative approach in agriculture and public-private partnerships.

Malawi pulled out all the stops for the SADC heads of state summit, which is being held on Aug. 17 and 18. Two dozen motorcades arrived in rapid succession at Lilongwe’s Bingu International Convention Centre on Saturday morning, carrying the presidents and prime ministers of the region – along with their entourages.

But the summit skirted around controversial issues such as the disputed results of Zimbabwe’s Jul. 31 elections, and the upcoming polls in Swaziland. The issue of Madagascar – whose chair remained empty as the country is still suspended after a 2009 coup d’etat – is also still unresolved.

In the run-up to the summit in Malawi’s capital, Lilongwe, civil society organisations voiced concern about the slow pace of reforms in SADC, and talked concerns about women’s rights and regional economic integration. The representation of women in politics and key business positions is still low in the region despite a protocol on gender being adopted by the member states.

For cross-border traders and companies in the export sector, intra-regional remains hindered by red tape and high cost. It is one of the bottlenecks Banda plans to address during her term.

“We have taken steps to open our markets for the movement of goods, I believe we need to strengthen our efforts on the free movement of people. We cannot meaningfully talk of regional integration if our people are not actually free to move within the region,” she said.

Mozambican President Armando Guebuza, who handed over as chair, said good progress had been made on regional economic integration. “Because of the notable progress that we have had in removing tariff and non-tariff barriers, conditions have improved to raise the intra-SADC trade indices. This led to the creation of a framework for the industrial development of SADC,” Guebuza said.

SADC to Focus on Rural Communities and Agriculture

By Mutale Kapekele, Emelda Mwitwa, Collins Mtika, Rui Correia & Servaas van den Bosch

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**CSOs: “Give Us a People’s SADC”**

By Emelda Mwitwa

We need to move freely from one country to the other. For example, if I find a job in Zimbabwe, I should not be stopped because am not Zimbabwean,” said Matale, a Zambian citizen. “We want simplification of border procedures. If I am travelling from the DRC to Mozambique and my goods have been cleared in Zimbabwe, I should not find another roadblock in Malawi,” said Matale. Apart from Zambia, SADC states have not acceded to the 2005 Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons. Therefore, non-tariff barriers to trade such as double taxation remain firmly in place. Collins Magalasi, executive director of African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFFOD), also feels betrayed by the SADC states. “As civil society, we have to pressure the government to stop taking its masses for granted, but to rather include them in various issues,” he said this week at the launch of a ‘stand up and speak out’ campaign by the SADC Council of NGOs. “We need to ensure that the wishes of the public are addressed, whenever the leaders meet,” Magalasi commented.

However, Malawi’s deputy minister of foreign affairs Abel Kayembe has defended the decision, saying the issue is being handled by former heads of state. “They are discussing with both parties and Malawi and Tanzania are waiting for a report,” said Kayembe.

Malawi President Joyce Banda has threatened she will take the matter to the International Court in The Hague if the current mediation efforts fail to produce results.

**SADC Mum on Lake Malawi Dispute**

By George Mhango

Civilians are concerned that the lake border dispute between Malawi and Tanzania is not on the agenda of the SADC Summit. The 50-year-old dispute over who owns the northern part of the lake recently flared up when Malawi granted oil exploration rights in the disputed area to a United Kingdom-based company.

According to SADC social commentator Collins Magalasai, leaders have betrayed citizens of the two countries. “As civil society, we have to pressure government to stop taking its masses for granted, but to rather include them in various issues,” he said this week at the launch of a ‘stand up and speak out’ campaign by the SADC Council of NGOs. “We need to ensure that the wishes of the public are addressed, whenever the leaders meet,” Magalasi commented.

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**West Cold Shoulders SADC Infrastructure Plan**

By Collins Mitka

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is developing a new fund to implement its Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP). The RIDMP will cost SADC 500 billion dollars over the next 15 years. The decision follows a lack of interest from Western nations and multilateral finance institutions to invest in infrastructure projects in southern Africa.

“I have been to Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and many other countries, nobody has come forward to fund any of the projects we have outlined,” SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration Joao Samuel Cahol told TerraViva, before announcing SADC will start its own infrastructure fund.

“What is holding SADC back is our inability to fund our own programmes. Therefore, a sustainable funding mechanism has to be established if we are to show that we are committed and progressive.”

The infrastructure master plan aims to deal with the region’s deficit in roads, railways, ports, power supply, communication and water infrastructure to reduce the cost of doing business and make the region more attractive to investors.

“SADC has the potential and we are asking for the goodwill of all member states. Let them put down the seed money that will be shared among states in the future so that African states remain the majority shareholders,” said the Deputy Executive Secretary.

Modelled on the European Investment Bank and other regional funding ventures, SADC countries will initially pump in 1.2 billion dollars into the SADC Infrastructure Fund. Of this, 51 percent will be contributions from member states who will gain shareholding in the fund; 37 percent needs to be financed by the private sector; the remaining 12 percent will come from international partners.

Contributions from SADC states should commence in 2013 and run over the next five years. Payments to the Fund, noted Cahol, are based on the country’s budget, institutional capacity and other criteria.

“If after five years a country fails to pay its contribution shares it will be recalled and distributed among the complying states so that African states remain the majority shareholder,” Cahol told TerraViva. He added, however, this does not necessarily mean member states that are in default would not be able to access funds for development projects.