

# The SADC Organ Challenges in the New Millennium

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## Prologue

In the mid-1990s, the single most topical issue to occupy the security discourse on Southern Africa was the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ for Politics, Defence and Security, usually simply referred to as the SADC Organ. The institution, which is sometimes called by its acronym OPDS, was at times incorrectly associated with its first Chairperson – President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe – and almost impishly referred to as the ‘Mugabe Organ’.<sup>1</sup> Not only were there assumed to be major differences between President Robert Mugabe and President Nelson Mandela of South Africa (then the Chairperson of the SADC) over the relationship between the SADC Organ and SADC itself, but also an unproven claim that Mugabe was ‘jealous’ because he had been ‘eclipsed’ by Mandela’s ever-increasing profile in regional and world politics.<sup>2</sup> Such was the discourse of the time, reflecting the prevailing political undercurrents. Although it is not the aim of this paper to dwell on the debates of that time, it is nevertheless necessary to parry such erroneous deductions about the relationship between the two leaders, while acknowledging the existence of some differences over how best to place the SADC Organ within the regional dynamics.<sup>3</sup>

The extent to which these dynamics were an actual reflection of inter-governmental relations beyond legitimate differences of opinion, as is characteristic in any democracy, is a matter that can only be a subject of speculation – and there is a thin line between speculation and deceit. What is nevertheless fairly evident is that to a number of researchers, academics and representatives from the media – the differences between the states were undoubtedly real and a matter of great concern.<sup>4</sup>

From its beginning, arguments surfaced about what the SADC Organ’s role should be; its composition;

and most critically, how it should relate to national, regional and international dimensions.<sup>5</sup> The extent to which this has continued to feature in the development of the SADC Organ is of practical significance to its development. However, of greater significance is how the operationalisation of the SADC Organ since its creation in 1996<sup>6</sup> and its formalisation in 2001<sup>7</sup> has evolved. Hence, the focus of this paper is on the operational challenges facing the SADC Organ in the immediate future.

The greater significance is how the operationalisation of the SADC Organ since its creation in 1996 and its formalisation in 2001 has evolved

Analysis of the challenges facing the SADC Organ necessarily requires a focus on factors that may affect its ability to fulfil its mission of upholding peace and security in the SADC region. The scrutiny commences with a critical review of the history of the SADC Organ that focuses on the extent to which its principles and objectives meet the challenges of the time. Related to this is the manner in which the goals of the SADC Organ are being achieved through post-2001 structural arrangements following the finalisation of the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO), and the Mutual Defence Pact. Of particular concern is the measurement of achievements as well as the general expectations of the role being played by SADC Organ Chairpersons. An area of concern is the extent to which the SADC Secretariat plays a role as the hub of the regional grouping. In this regard, its role will be examined in terms of the Secretariat’s and limitations in delivery support. Similarly, attention will be given to the actual role of the SADC states in terms of their capacity to fulfil regional objectives and comply with Summit decisions. The paper also seeks to interrogate the extent to which budgetary concerns at the regional and state level mesh with the political will of the leaders in the sub-region. The authors conclude by placing the entire regional security agenda under the microscope by questioning its efficacy in an international environment that appears to favour the will of militarily and economically stronger states.



## Focusing on the Challenges

Trials and tribulations that may befall the SADC Organ may take a variety of dimensions. Some elements of these challenges include inter- and intra-state conflicts such as those in the Great Lakes region which have for some time been a part of the Southern African region. An issue that lingers from the history of the SADC Organ is the extent to which it is the subject of inter-state rivalry, as mentioned earlier. Closely related to this is the issue of sovereignty, alluded to in such legal provisions as Article 4(a) of the SADC Treaty and Article 7(1) of the Mutual Defence Pact. The challenge in this respect is balancing the region's desire for collaboration, as indicated in Articles 5 and 21 of the Treaty, the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ, and provisions of the Mutual Defence Pact, with those of the intent of states on upholding their sovereignty. However, with the passage of time and widespread growth of multiparty systems in the region, what is pertinent is the extent to which structural changes in SADC will meet the demands of the new millennium.

Related to these issues is the challenge of maintaining cooperation among states and the achievement of peace and security without leaving developmental issues at the margins. The all-important and well-known dictum of 'balancing the hoe and the spear' in the face of budgetary constraints is a matter that is significant to the SADC Organ at a time when developmental demands are as critical, if not more so, than those of security in an environment that is largely at peace.<sup>8</sup>

Another area of importance for the future of the region is how the SADC Organ will fit into the 'global' demands where democracy and good governance take centre stage. Then there is the war against international terrorism waged by the United States of America and its allies, which is seen as the defining threat that the world must defeat at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How the SADC Organ relates to these demands and perceives the 'all-time' universal threat to human kind is likely to be significant to its future engagement within and outside of the region.

Yet another set of threats with an international dimension, but with particular significance to the Southern African region, includes geographical and socio-economic challenges. Water and environmental issues have not only been problematic in the past but have the potential to be challenging in the future, despite seemingly being legally resolved.<sup>9</sup> The same could be said about the high level of HIV/AIDS, so rampant in the region that the defence and other security forces of the region are directly affected.

Indeed, it has been argued by some that the region's contribution to the peacekeeping effort in the region and beyond has been adversely affected.

What can also be identified as a challenge in this era is the advent of a unipolar world power configuration where the sole superpower regards its views and preferences as sacrosanct. How else would one describe the characterisation of some states in the world as an "axis of evil" and, in the specific case of countries that included Zimbabwe, as "an outpost of tyranny"?<sup>10</sup> This adds further dimensions that put regional security arrangements (in particular the SADC Organ) in a more precarious position. Is the SADC Organ, set up in a previous millennium, still relevant in this new one?

## The SADC Organ: Principles and Objectives

Created in 1996 by the Heads of State of SADC in Windhoek, Namibia, the birth of the SADC Organ was a result of the security challenges that the region had been experiencing, particularly from the 1960s to the early 1990s. With a violent history of settler regimes in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa embroiled in Cold War dynamics that saw some major Western states, particularly the USA, France and Britain pitted against the Soviet Union and its partners (notably East Germany, China and Cuba), the scene was set for an urgent desire to ensure regional tranquillity amid frequent distrust among states.

Against the backdrop of this violent past, characterised by inter-and-intra state wars spiced with Cold War geopolitics, the Southern African region was one of the most volatile areas in the world, particularly during the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. The SADC Organ in 1996 was focused on the fulfilment of the SADC Treaty principles of sovereign equality of all states in the region; solidarity, peace and security; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; equality, balance and mutual benefits; and peaceful settlement of disputes.<sup>11</sup> The objectives of the SADC Organ, the major ones being those set out in Table 1, are expected to accomplish those of the SADC Treaty<sup>12</sup>.

With regard to its objectives in respect of military/defence, crime prevention, intelligence, foreign policy and human rights issues, it may be argued that the SADC Organ projects the region's intention to achieve collaboration among the defence and security forces. The same could be said about the foreign policy and general governance issues. Developments in 2001, which subordinated the SADC Organ to the mainstream SADC and the Protocol on Politics

The challenge ... is balancing the region's desire for collaboration as indicated in the ... Treaty, the SIPO and Mutual Defence Pact with those ... upholding sovereignty

**Table 1: Categorized Objectives of the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security**

Military/Defence	Crime prevention	Intelligence	Foreign policy	Human rights
Protect against instability	Close co-operation to deal with cross-border crime	Close co-operation	Promote co-operation and common political value systems and institutions to deal with cross-border crime	Develop democratic institutions and practices
Develop a collective security capacity	Promote community-based approach	Early warning	Develop common foreign policy	Encourage observance of universal human rights
Conclude a Mutual Defence Pact	N/A	N/A	Conflict prevention, management and resolution	Encourage and monitor international human rights conventions and treaties
Develop a regional peacekeeping capacity	N/A	N/A	Mediate in inter-and intra-state disputes	Early warning
			Preventive diplomacy	
			Early warning	
			Encourage and monitor international arms control / disarmament conventions and treaties	
			Co-ordinate participation in peace operations	
			Address extra-regional conflicts which affect the region	

Source: Please refer to Endnote 12

Defence and Security Cooperation, as well as the signing of the Mutual Defence Pact in 2004 at the Dar es Salaam summit, testify to the relevance of the 1996 objectives to future endeavours.

So too are the SADC principles upon which the SADC Organ objectives are premised. These include sovereign equality of all the states in the region as well as respect for both the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. The principles also include attainment of solidarity, peace and security in the region and adherence to human rights, democracy and rule of law. These are all issues that have generally been applicable over time while some of them, such as sovereignty, have since taken on a new dimension. In fact a drive towards regionalism is inimical to the strict adherence to sovereignty. What is nevertheless evident is that while there is increasingly an acceptance of interdependence among states at virtually every level of these principles, the sovereignty of states has largely been maintained. However, the intensity of solidarity among states in the region reflects a movement towards the sharing of sovereignty as the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, the SIPO and Mutual Defence Pact suggest. These are the tools the SADC Organ could use to mitigate challenges in the new millennium.

### Focusing on Tools for Delivery

The decision to formalise the SADC Organ showed the region's serious intention to deal with its political, defence and security challenges. The Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security, the SIPO and the Mutual Defence Pact are an indication of the seriousness with

which the states in the region view the challenges at hand. Therefore to them the challenges are more than a mere academic exercise. A closer examination of the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation is reflective of this conclusion.

### **Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation**

The SADC Summit in Blantyre, Malawi, adopted the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation on 14 August 2001. Projecting a "unity of purpose among the leaders of SADC", the Protocol evolved objectives of the SADC Organ that mirror a genuine promotion of peace and security in the region. The argument is that the SADC Organ Protocol more than *mirrors* the region's intention to achieve amity and well being by their actual accomplishment. Indeed, article 2 (a) to (i) of the Protocol indicates that the objectives of the SADC organ include promoting political collaboration among states, aspiring towards common foreign policy approaches, and enhancing appropriate mutual security and defence arrangements.

Looking further at resolving inter-and intra-state conflicts by tranquil means as well as abiding by the universal rule and promotion of democratic institutions and civil rights, article 2 underlines the "protection of people and development". Although ostensibly regarded as the principal focus by the region, this latter aspect is nevertheless often regarded as mere rhetoric. Simon Banza, for instance, regards the SADC objectives as subjectively interpreted. His argument is that SADC represents political elites and that the objectives, although seemingly poised to

address regional challenges, have nevertheless been “privatised by the states”.<sup>13</sup> In his view, the main purpose of the SADC Organ is not as indicated in article 2 (a) to protect people and development, but rather to “protect the state from its people”! He makes the point that the tendency in the region has been adherence to Article 2 of the UN Treaty on the non-violation of internal affairs of sovereign states.<sup>14</sup> He then makes reference to what he calls a “big brother” mentality to mean the habit by heads of states in the region to accord respect to those who have been in power for a long time, to the extent that they are not subjected to criticism even when they have openly erred. He then further argues that only during the DRC intervention by SADC did the SADC Organ exhibit any effectiveness. Hence Banza does not consider the elaborate objectives and principles of the SADC Organ as projected in the Protocol as sufficient to instil any confidence about the Organ’s capacity to meet the challenges in the new millennium.

Banza is not alone in his view about the capability of the SADC Organ. It is, however, not surprising that government functionaries not only hold different views but tend to regard NGOs and some external forces with suspicion and be inclined to accuse them of “seeking to set the agenda” for the regional states.<sup>15</sup> It has also been argued that “enhancement and deepening of security cooperation”<sup>16</sup> would happen at an even faster rate if only the SADC Organ was “left on its own by external forces”.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, interest has been shown in the SADC Organ by research and academic institutions and by some foreign powers.<sup>18</sup> The creation of programmes dedicated to research the SADC Organ by both the ISS and the South African Institute for International Affairs is a case in point.

The extent to which the SADC objectives meet the challenges of the region in the new millennium is a matter to which we now turn.

Article 2 of the Protocol on Defence and Security Cooperation is elaborate in so far as identifying the key issues that require attention if peace and security in the region is to be attained. To argue that the entire dimension is state-centric is therefore not an untruth *per se*. States have, since time immemorial, been the leading component on issues of peace and security. The SADC region is therefore no different. The region has also not been averse to the global trend to broadened security, in which the military element is only one of the components required to achieve peace and security. Article 2 (a), (g), and (i) on the protection of people and development; promotion of democratic institutions and human rights; coordination

with police and other state security services on areas of security closer to the needs of ordinary people, respectively, show the sensitivity and commitment of the SADC member states to its peoples.

How the SADC Organ’s structure, as shown in the Protocol at Article 3 to 10, relates to its objectives, shall determine its success in meeting the challenges facing the institution. With a structure that requires a dedicated interface between the state and regional levels, the region appears to have established a system that is designed to meet the objectives set for it. With overall control of the SADC Organ in the hands of a troika of heads of states; a ministerial committee of ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Public and Security portfolios; and three operational committees – the Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC), the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) and the projected Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff – the SADC Organ would appear to have developed an appropriate structure to this end.

While the objectives, principles and structure of the Protocol that establish the SADC Organ are valuable in understanding Southern African regional security dynamics, the implementation is presented in broad strokes in the SIPO and is therefore central to the success of the SADC Organ.<sup>19</sup>

### **Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ**

When one analyses security developments in SADC, one often forgets that what has been described by SADC itself as two complementary “road maps” – the Regional Indicative Strategic

Development Plan (RISDP) and the SIPO – designed to implement SADC’s strategy for development and security in the region, are based on “six term plans”<sup>20</sup> and do not constitute ‘quick fix’ strategies. It is important to note the interrelationship between the SIPO and RISDP because this is the hallmark of the closely-knit relationship between security and development in the Southern African region – thereby avoiding what Joao Ndlovu, head of the political, defence and security affairs unit in the SADC Secretariat, calls “strategic miscalculations”.<sup>21</sup> Success is seen in the aligned SIPO and RISDP “because the function of defence and security in the development process is to guarantee that the development plans are realised in a climate of peace and security”.<sup>22</sup>

The question that we seek an answer to is the extent to which the “compass that will guide our quest for peace and security in our region”<sup>23</sup>, as Prega Ramsamy describes the SIPO, will enable the SADC

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Organ to mitigate threats in this new era. Critical to this is an early warning system regarded as necessary to keep states informed of changing dimensions with “political repercussions”.<sup>24</sup> A senior Zimbabwean intelligence officer who serves on the SADC Organ supports the decision by SADC to create such a unit to avert natural disasters and harmonise regional collation of data by states. The unit would not have a collection mandate, as that would continue to be the function of state institutions.<sup>25</sup> Without a collection mandate of its own, the SADC early warning unit would only be as efficient as the states want it to be. This is unlikely to have long-term benefits for the region because of its assured failure to include data that may impact negatively on a state. The possible net effect is likely to be failure by the region to accurately predict negative occurrences, some of which could have regional implications. States are therefore critical actors in determining the efficacy of the SIPO and consequently that of the SADC Organ.

Through the regional disaster management systems guided by the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communication and Meteorology, such threats would appear to be adequately covered. We therefore find the claim that the region has little regard for the non-military dimension, preferring instead to focus on military threats, inaccurate.<sup>26</sup> This deduction ignores the SADC Food Summit in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania during April 2004 as well as numerous policy statements from other summits as well as the holistic coverage of human security issues by national intelligence systems. Nevertheless, states in the region are likely to continue to be more dominant than their collective entity on issues of defence and security. However we argue that providing appropriate roles for civil society in the dynamics of the region’s early warning system can only serve to enhance its efficacy. In this regard we do not consider intelligence systems and even their replication at the regional level and early systems as mutually exclusive. The differences between early warning systems and state or national intelligence systems are matters of interpretation. Jakkie Cilliers is, in this respect, accurate when he refers to the former as a “disinterested intelligence system”.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, while civil society participation in an early warning system would not be regarded as problematic due to their reliance on generally open sources and a general lack of obtrusive means of collecting information, the *modus operandi* of an intelligence systems is different only to a qualitative degree in respect to the former. The latter places a greater emphasis on the reliability of its sources and accuracy of the information provided as well as application of technical and other means not generally available to the former. In this respect we view the

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conceptual arguments raised by Cilliers on differences between early warning and intelligence systems as open to debate.<sup>28</sup> However, what remains undisputed, is the necessity of an active civil society input into an early warning system – particularly that of SADC. Adekeye Adebajo compliments Cilliers’ and our view when he observes that the SADC “secretariat has thus kept something of a distance from civil society, with the ironic result that a sub-region with world-class security institutions does not reap the full benefits of this readily available knowledge”.<sup>29</sup>

### SADC States: A Question of Capacity, Compliance and Political Will

The effective participation of states in the operation of the SADC Organ is a function of several factors, one of which is the capacity of states to play the role required of them by the resolutions of the SADC Organ or indeed by the SADC summits. Another factor is the issue of political will.

The states’ capacity to enable the SADC Organ to fulfil its objectives and live up to the principles it seeks to project is largely dependent on their financial situation. Table 2 shows that the gross domestic product (GDP) in the region is not only low but also very unevenly distributed. This not only makes burden sharing uneven but also leads to a reduction in the region’s capacity to meet the SADC Organ’s goals.<sup>30</sup>

What augurs well for the SADC region is the willingness by South Africa to place its massive resource capability at the service of the region in a manner that has not reflected the much written about

**Table 2: SADC GDP Estimates**

Country	GDP (US\$ billion)		
	2002	2003	2004
Angola	11.2	12.1	17.0
Botswana	5.7	7.8	8.7
DRC	5.3*	–	–
Lesotho	0.7	1.1	1.6
Malawi	1.6	1.5	1.6
Mozambique	3.6	4.4	5.3
Namibia	3.0	4.3	5.5
South Africa	445.6	466.5	492.7
Swaziland	1.2	2.1	3.1
Zambia	4.1	4.8	6.0
Zimbabwe	4.8	4.6	4.5
Tanzania	9.4	9.2	9.7
Mauritius	4.7	5.7	6.2
Total	500.9	524.1	561.9

Sources: <http://www.sadc.int/>; Economic Intelligence Unit estimates



**Table 3: HIV Prevalence in SADC Members States**

Country	Population	HIV Prevalence %	People with HIV	Death 2001	Orphans
Angola	1,352,700	5.5	350,000	24,000	100,000
Botswana	1,554,000	38.8	330,000	26,000	69,000
DR Congo	52,552,000	4.9	1,300,000	120,000	930,000
Lesotho	2,057,000	31.0	360,000	25,000	73,000
Malawi	11,572,000	15.0	850,000	80,000	470,000
Mauritius	1,171,000	0.1	700	< 100	No Info
Mozambique	18,644,000	13.0	1,100,000	60,000	420,000
Namibia	1,788,000	22.5	230,000	13,000	47,000
South Africa	43,792,000	20.1	5,000,000	360,000	660,000
Swaziland	938,000	33.4	170,000	12,000	35,000
Tanzania	35,965,000	7.8	1,500,000	140,000	810,000
Zambia	10,649,000	21.5	1,200,000	120,000	570,000
Zimbabwe	12,852,000	33.7	2,300,000	200,000	780,000
SADC	193,534,000	19.02	14,690,700	1,180,000	4,964,000

Source: UNAIDS 2003

'hegemony' thesis.<sup>31</sup> With this support and the region's strong capacity to project unanimity of purpose, the task of meeting the challenges in the new millennium has not only been made lighter but a reality.

The prevalence of socio-economic problems in the region, such as the pervasiveness of HIV/AIDS, compounds the situation at a time when the region needs to build up its peacekeeping capacity to meet the challenges of conflicts in the region and beyond. Although there are no reliable statistics relating to the impact of HIV/AIDS in the military, its impact must inevitably be exceptionally high "with up to 20% of the population of some states ... being infected".<sup>32</sup> This scourge is clearly a major challenge for the future (and the present) and an intensive study on the extent to which it has affected the defence and security institutions in SADC is thus a policy necessity. This is clearly evident when extrapolated from the regional figures, as table 3 shows.

However, apart from the impact of HIV/AIDS, Cedric de Coning finds it "difficult to conceptualise a common peacekeeping system for Southern Africa in 2010 or 2015".<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, by making reference to a peacekeeping system, he raises another dimension of a capacity problem facing the SADC Organ. The existence of the SIPO and Mutual Defence Pact do show that the region has a plan. The "financial realities"<sup>34</sup> mentioned by de Coning as a constraint to a viable peacekeeping system are indeed a valid concern. With a coordinated approach to the challenge and ample assistance by the international community, this constraint may be mitigated. However,

the argument that the region's peacekeeping capacity is limited, due to lack of experience by the region, is no longer valid in view of the extensive involvement of states in the region in a variety of peacekeeping missions.<sup>35</sup>

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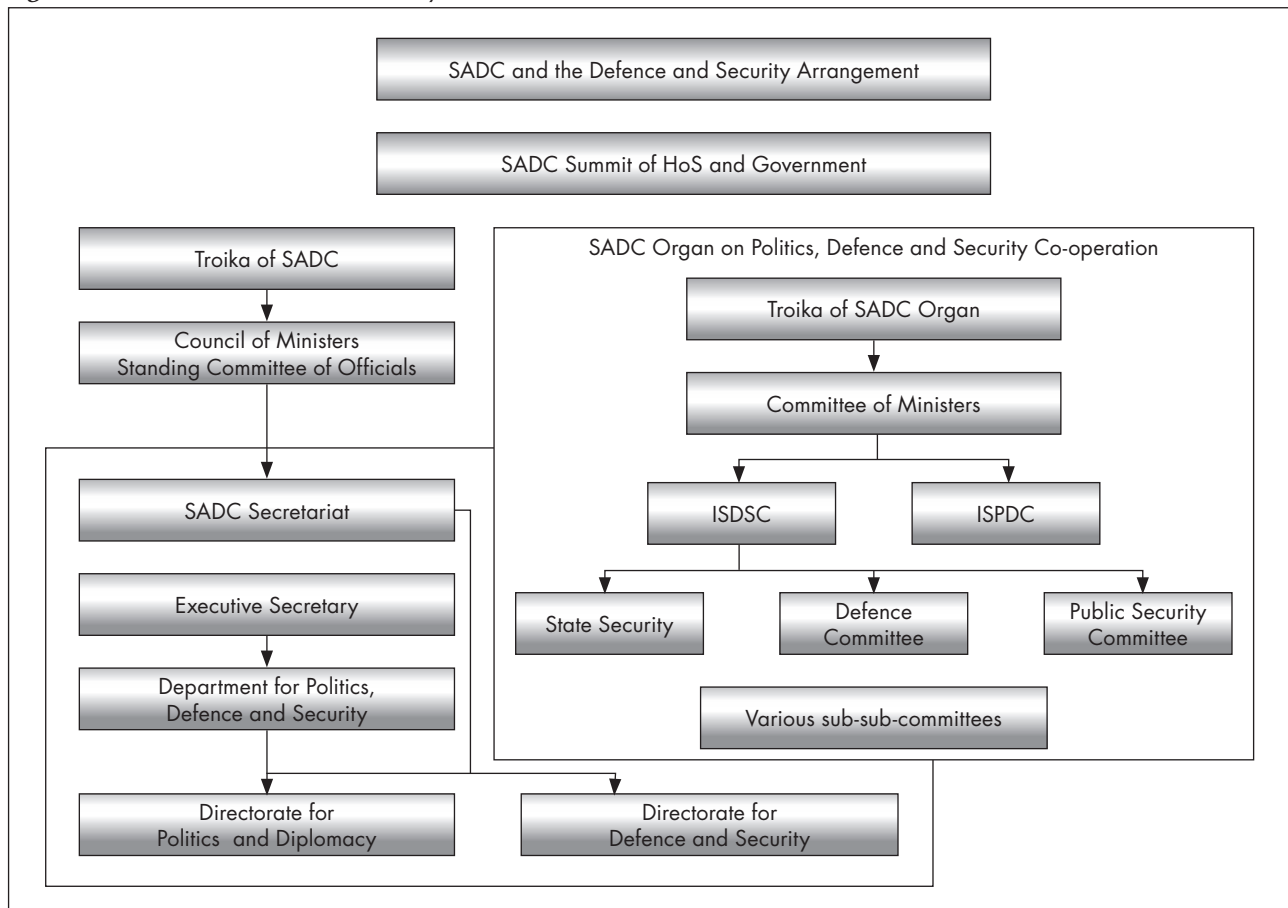
Almost as important an issue as peacekeeping is the argument that there is a lack of political will by the states in the region on what are considered to be the 'hard' issues.<sup>36</sup> These have generally been identified as an unwillingness to undertake austerity measures together with other 'good governance' demands, such as multi-party elections. However, the challenge has been meeting stringent conditions such as levelling of the political playing field and transparency under the critical observation of

external forces, some with their own agendas. For instance, although the recent elections in Zimbabwe were conducted under the SADC guidelines on elections and generally regarded as having adhered to internationally accepted democratic norms by regional observer teams, the landslide victory by the ruling party was found wanting by Western observers many of whom declared the elections neither free nor fair before the first ballot was even cast. This explains the apparent unwillingness by states in the region to cast their lot with the more powerful international regimes over removal of regimes considered to be inimical to international peace and order.

While it is evident from Table 2 that the individual states in the region do not have sufficient capacity to address the numerous challenges which SADC faces (or may face) during this new millennium, (such as the high unemployment and poverty levels in the region) as a collective, the challenge may be surmountable.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 1: SADC Defence and Security Architecture**



Source: N. Ngoma, 2005

However, critical to this success is the extent to which the SADC Secretariat rises to the occasion. Figure 1 above shows its location in the entire Defence and Security architecture.

### The SADC Secretariat: A Hub without Spokes?

It is a fair point that the harmonisation of policies, programmes and activities in the Southern African region is a role that the secretariat ought to play. Chris Landsberg has made the point that the SADC Secretariat lacks substantial capacity and that this factor has contributed to the lack of delivery capability of the regional organisation.<sup>38</sup> The requirement to build the capacity for the Secretariat has been a matter that the organisation has long acknowledged.<sup>39</sup> Adebajo makes a striking comparison between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and SADC when he observes that “(a)bout 40 full-time staff are currently working on security issues in the ECOWAS secretariat, while the SADC employs two staff members in this area”.<sup>40</sup> While the conception of the SIPO and indeed the RISDP constitute evidence of this recognition, the question that may now arise is whether the structure of the Secretariat is right for this undertaking. A question that may be asked is whether the SADC Organ can meet Len le Roux’s four ‘As’ – adequacy, appropriateness, accountability and affordability<sup>41</sup> – as it faces the challenges in this

millennium. The answer to this is a critical matter of concern.

With a unit of barely four individuals at the SADC Secretariat, it may be asked whether SADC has adequate capacity to perform as a hub for the SADC Organ. In the final analysis, the role of such a severely constrained structure could hardly be expected to do more than fulfil a recording and storage function. What is missing from this is an adequate advisory and monitoring capability with a functional policy research competence. The implementation plans for the Organ contained in the SIPO and on the verge of being implemented (amongst others through an aggressive drive by the regional body to recruit human resources for the Department for Peace and Security) are indeed a positive development. However, Joao Ndlovu makes the point that the seeming “reluctance for planners to disburse funds that were budgeted for the defence and security sector because they give preference to developmental issues”<sup>42</sup> will impact negatively on the development of human capacity for the SADC Organ.

The extent to which the department shall function, taking into consideration Len Le Roux’s characterisation of an efficient entity that delivers the intended output as stipulated, shall determine the ability of the SADC Organ to fulfil its objectives. The SADC Secretariat,

through its unit dedicated to the operations of the SADC Organ, will indeed play a decisive role in determining whether or not the Organ meets the challenges at hand. Critical too is the role of SADC Chairpersons. Although the manner in which the troika interacts, as well as the nature of the debate in the summit, will be critical to the proper guidance of the institution, the amount of resources and political will the Organ's Chairpersons wield is a notable factor. In the absence of a large pool of financial resources, the assumption, which may be made, would be that the ability of a country holding the chair to fulfil the decisions of the summit would be greatly enhanced where the country has resources to use. However, in the case of SADC this has not arisen. The practice, which has held firm, is that all scheduled engagements have taken place irrespective of the country's economic condition. The host country has been responsible for costs pertaining to venues, catering and stationery while the visiting states have met their travel and accommodation costs. In this manner, the organisation fulfils its principles of "solidarity in equality and mutual benefits".<sup>43</sup> Economically better resourced countries, such as South Africa, would therefore not disadvantage their 'poorer cousins' when fulfilling summit decisions.

Whether the Chairperson's political will is significant in steering the direction of the SADC Organ is a matter that is difficult to ascertain because of the seemingly collective approach by all member states. It is this strong unity of purpose, which could be said to explain SADC's engagement with the international environment.

### **The International Environment: The Demise of Regional Security?**

Although generally we make the point that the sustainable success of the SADC Organ will not only depend on a rigorous institutional shake-up, both within the Organ and SADC overall, the role of the external environment in determining SADC's ability to fulfil its mission cannot be over-emphasised. The engagement or non-engagement of donors like the USA, UK, and the EU in SADC programmes has a profound effect on its performance because of the significant amount of resources their participation could bring. For instance, the offer of US \$20 million by the USA to fund some aspects of the SADC Organ would have gone a long way toward contributing to the functioning of the SADC Organ had it not been conditional on marginalising Zimbabwe.<sup>44</sup>

Given the increasing interdependence in the world, the magnitude of the conflicts in the region, and the relatively poor performance of the economies in the

region, assistance from outside the region is a clear necessity. Therefore, without the significant resources donors can bring, it may be asked whether the SADC Organ can manage to adequately meet the challenges posed by the new millennium.

### **Conclusion**

The SADC region faces many challenges. While a number of them may be resolved through cohesive and determined work by regional political leaders, others such as the conflicts in the Great Lakes region will take much longer. This may also be the case with the intra-state rivalry in Zimbabwe in which some external actors appear to be determined to stay the course and consequently effectively put the regional body on a collision course with countries such as the USA and the UK, who have taken a particularly hard line on the country. It is this hard line, which is the basis of this paper's pessimism on the outlook of the region in the new millennium. The badly skewed financial base of the region, as Table 2 shows, also places comparatively greater pressure on a few countries. Although this is not currently a concern, the potential exists for tensions.

It is the capacity  
for solidarity in the  
face of adversity  
that gives the  
SADC region a  
unique ability to  
remain cohesive

There is nevertheless some basis for optimism. The elaborately outlined principles and objectives of the SADC Organ indicate a well thought-out structure and regional security architecture. The structure of the objectives outlined in Table 1 shows that the region is at least looking towards a broadened approach to security. The region's seriousness in implementing the SADC Organ objectives is seen in the development of what have been identified as 'delivery tools', i.e. the

Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security, the SIPO and the Mutual Defence Pact. It is of course a valid point to argue that the objectives, the Protocol, SIPO and Mutual Defence Pact are not worth anything if they cannot be seen to be in practical use. Engaging the region's conflicts and averting potential conflicts such as in the Great Lakes region, Zimbabwe and other areas would be taken as vindicating cases.

Positive points include the restructuring of the SADC Organ at the Secretariat, the planned revitalisation of the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe and the strong political will the states in the region appear to be exhibiting in the face of severe pressure by the world powers. It is the capacity for solidarity in the face of adversity that gives the SADC region a unique ability to remain cohesive. It is probably this that will be the leading factor as the SADC organ faces its many challenges in the new millennium.

## Endnotes

- 1 The reference to the regional institution in this manner was apparently a desire to signify President Mugabe's presumed dominance of the SADC Organ. The authors do not hold this view, as there is ample evidence to show close-knit collaboration during his Chairpersonship of the SADC Organ. See Christof Maletsky, "Regional defence organ wrested from Mugabe", *The Namibian*, 12 March 2001; "Mandela, Mugabe in dispute", *Dispatch Online*, September, 11, 1997; and Naison Ngoma (2004) Ph.D. thesis.
- 2 There have been several articles and commentaries on the presumed differences between President Mugabe and President Mandela. See Gary Younder, "Comrade Bob", *Guardian Unlimited*, September 4, 2001; James Barber, "The New South Africa's International Relations", United Kingdom Parliament, <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk>>.
- 3 See "Mini Summit Supports Intervention in Congo", September 3, 1998, <<http://southmovement.alphalink.com.au>>.
- 4 See Mark Malan, "Regional Power Politics Under Cover of SADC: Running Amok with a Mythical Organ", *ISS Occasional Paper*, 19, 1998; Walter Tapfumaneyi, "Regional Security Cooperation in Southern Africa: A View from Zimbabwe", *Global Dialogue*, 4 (2), August 1999.
- 5 The SADC Organ handled and continues to be involved in issues of politics, defence and security, thereby exhibiting the macro dimension of matters of the states at both the singular and plural levels.
- 6 The activities of the SADC Organ can be traced to the much earlier period of the Frontline States (FLS), during which the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) closely interacted with the states of the then 'black bloc'. For a more elaborate analysis of the 'black bloc', see Ngoma (2003 and 2004) and W. Breytenbach, (1995). "Conflict in Southern Africa: From Frontline State to Collective Security", *The Arusha Paper*, 2.
- 7 See the Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Windhoek, Namibia, 9 March 2001, <<http://www.sardc.net/Editorial/sadctoday>>; SADC Summit Final Communiqué, Blantyre, Malawi, 14 August 2001; Munetsi Madakufamba, "Blantyre Summit's Quiet Endorsement of Restructuring Misses Media Attention", *Southern African News Features*, no. 15, August 2001.
- 8 The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the only state in the region that continues to experience widespread violence, while internal political upheavals in Zimbabwe are also of great concern. Angola is no longer at war as the former combatants are now trying to rebuild.
- 9 "International Legal Society of International Law", *American Society of International Law*, vol. xxxlx, March 2000; *African Bulletin*, December 1–31, 1999, p 13789.
- 10 Rupert Cornwell, "From the 'Axis of Evil' to the 'Outposts of Tyranny'", *Commondreams News Centre*, April 10, 2005, <<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines05/0120-01.htm>>.
- 11 See SADC Treaty; Jakkie Cilliers and Mark Malan, "The SADC Treaty: Building Security in Southern Africa, An Update on the Evolving Architecture", Monograph No 43, 1999.
- 12 Cilliers and Malan provide a more elaborate tabular form of these objectives.
- 13 Interview on 23 March 2005 with Simon Banza, a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe.
- 14 See Article 2(1) of the UN Charter, <<http://www.un.org/>>.
- 15 A senior member of the Zimbabwean security services in an interview on 22 March 2005.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 See Francis Kornegay, "The Geopolitics of Redress: Reconfiguring Africa's Diplomacy", *Global Insight*, no. 13, October 2001; Mark Malan, "Regional power Politics Under Cover of SADC: Running with a Mythical Organ", *Occasional Paper* no. 35, October 1998.
- 19 The SIPO was launched at the Mauritius Summit in August 2004. See 2004 SADC Summit Final Communiqué, Grand Bay, Mauritius, 16–17 August 2004.
- 20 See Bayano Valy, "SADC regional development strategy 2005", *SADC Today*, Vol. 7, No. 6, February 2005, pp 1–3.
- 21 Ibid, p 4.
- 22 SADC Executive Secretary, Prega Ramsamy, quoted in Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Quoted in Ibid.
- 25 Interview on 22 March 2005 in Zimbabwe.
- 26 Bester Gabotlale, "SADC to have intelligence unit", 3 April 2005.
- 27 See Jakkie Cilliers, "Towards a Continental Early Warning System for Africa", *ISS Paper* 102, April 2005, p 1.
- 28 Ibid, pp 1–2.
- 29 Adekeye Adebajo, "ECOWAS and the SADC: a tale of two invalids?" *City Press*, May 22 2005, p 26.
- 30 See also Colin McCarthy, "Towards a Common SADC Currency?", <<http://www.tralac.org/scripts/content.php?id>>.
- 31 See Defence Portfolio Committee, "Common African Defence and Security Policy; Support Towards the Creation of the African Standby Force; SADC Mutual Defence Pact Ratification Briefings", *Parliamentary Monitoring Group*, 3 February 2004, <<http://www.pmg.org.za>>; See also Communiqué of the Meeting of the Committee of Ministers for the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, Luanda, Angola, 17–18 December 2001.
- 32 Maxi Schoeman, "Regional Security in Africa: Can the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Deliver Peace and Security in Southern Africa?", *DPMN Bulletin*, vol. lx, no. 3, June 2002, p 1.



- 33 Cedric de Coning, "Towards A Common Southern African Peacekeeping System", Center for International Political Studies, No.16, 2004, p 5.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Most of the states in the region have been participating in peacekeeping missions on the continent and beyond. Of late, South Africa has been participating in a much more robust manner – much to the benefit to both the SADC region and the African continent. For details see <<http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/index.asp>>.
- 36 Lauriel Nathan, "Organ Failure: A Review of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security", *Regional Integration for Conflict and Peace Building in Africa: Europe, SADC and ECOWAS*. President Mkapa urged for more policy lucidity and enhanced political will within the region if its vision was to be realised. See paragraph 4 of the 2004 SADC Summit Final Communiqué.
- 37 See Khabele Matlosa, "Challenges for Development Financing in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region, Paper prepared for the Southern African Grants Makers Association Annual Conference on the Theme "Innovations in Southern African Development Funding", Thaba Ya Batswana, Johannesburg, 18-19 September 2003 and United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Annual Report 2005*, 6 April 2005.
- 38 Chris Landsberg of the Institute for Policy Studies was interviewed on a South African radio station, SAFM, on 4 April 2004.
- 39 The Summit has been very critical of the slow pace of the Secretariat in implementing its decisions on the restructuring exercise launched in 2001. For details see Munetsi Madakufamba, "SADC shows determination towards self reliance", *Southern African News Features* 4, No. 79, August 2004.
- 40 Adekeye Adebajo, Ibid.
- 41 Len Le Roux, "Challenges for Defence Management in Africa", in Len Le Roux, Martin Rupiya and Naison Ngoma, *Guarding the Guardians: Parliamentary Oversight and Civil-Military Relations – The Challenges for SADC*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2004, p 86.
- 42 Bayano Vally, "Regional defence body says peace and security is key to development", *Southern African News Features*, No. 113, December 2004, p. 1.
- 43 Schiby Lopes of SADC Secretariat on 30 June 2005.
- 44 See Artwell Manyemba, "SADC in Solidarity with Zim", *Sunday Mirror*, 10 August 2003.

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## About this paper

The SADC Organ, formed in 1996 to harmonise regional security issues, has been the single most important security-related development in the Southern African region of late. The focus of this paper is on some of the challenges the SADC Organ faces in this new millennium. These challenges include inter- and intra-state conflicts; balancing state sovereignty with collaborative approaches; budgetary constraints; as well as political intransigence and intolerance. The paper suggests that, in an unstable international security environment, the SADC Organ appears destined for a challenging period, which can only be managed through the development of a cohesive resilient regional body with functional structures.

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