
PRESS RELEASE

23 April 2009

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) was launched on 23 April 2009 at the Grand Palm Hotel, Gaborone, Botswana. The occasion was graced by dignitaries from the SADC member states, diplomats from various countries and the SADC Executive Secretary Dr Tomaz Augusto Salomão. The Botswana Minister of Trade and Industry Honourable Daniel Neo Moroka was the guest of honour.

SADCAS is a regional accreditation body established in terms of the SADC Memorandum of Understanding on standardization, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology to provide accreditation services to SADC member states. The first multi-economy body in the world, SADCAS was incorporated in December 2005 as a non-profit limited company and was approved by the SADC Council of Ministers in August 2007 as a subsidiary organization of SADC.

SADCAS whose set up is being funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is to provide internationally recognized cost effective regional accreditation services for SADC member states aimed at supporting regional and international trade, enhancing the protection of consumers and improving the competitiveness of SADC products and services in both the voluntary and regulatory areas. Accreditation is the process of providing recognition to an organization for its competency in performing a specific task. It involves the assessment of technical competence of testing/calibration laboratories, certification and inspection bodies.

In his speech the guest of honour noted the key role that accreditation plays in socio-economic development and welcomed the establishment of SADCAS. He urged conformity assessment service providers to take up the services offered by SADCAS as a demonstration of competency and a means to build trust/confidence amongst trading partners. He further noted that all stakeholders including the general public stand to benefit from accreditation. The Minister also encouraged SADC member states to facilitate the acceptance of SADCAS in their own countries and to continually support the National Accreditation Focal Points which are the administrative links between SADCAS and member states.

In conjunction with the launch, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on general cooperation was signed between SADC, represented by the SADC Executive Secretary Dr Tomaz Salomão and SADCAS represented by the Board Chairman Mr Riundja Kaakunga (Othy). The MoU formalizes the operational relationship between SADC and SADCAS.

In her closing remarks, Mrs Maureen P Mutasa the Chief Executive Officer of SADCAS emphasized SADCAS' vision of being a leading regionally accepted and internationally recognized regional accreditation body aimed at supporting and enhancing industry and government's efforts and to be at the cutting edge of accreditation service delivery. She also said that SADCAS' vision will only come to fruition with the continued support of donors and also of importance going forward, the take up of SADCAS' accreditation services by clients in member states.

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