

**SADCAS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF SERVICE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION**

To mark 10 years of accreditation service delivery and achievement of international recognition SADCAS hosted a dinner on 14 March 2019. The dinner which was attended by 150 guests was held at the Safari Court Hotel in Windhoek, Namibia during the week of SADC TBT Structures meetings. The dinner was graced by Honourable Mr Tjekero Tweya the Namibian Minister of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development and Member of Parliament.



Guests at the Dinner

In his welcome address Mr Steve Bruce Sidney, The Chairman of the SADCAS Board of Directors, reminisced on the journey that SADCAS had travelled from conceptualization, establishment, operationalization and achieving international recognition. He then shared with guests the challenges that SADCAS had faced especially financing the establishment and operationalization of the vision, the breakthrough of which came when SADCAS secured funding from the Norwegian Government through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Thereafter the Governments of SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS came to the party by funding the operational budget for SADCAS which they are funding up to now. The other challenge that he mentioned is operating in a region where there are 3 official languages thus requiring SADCAS to service in all 3 languages. He prided in the fact that SADCAS the first multi economy accreditation body in the world is now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year of operation and had up to date accredited 96 facilities in all the SADC Member States it services except Lesotho whose one application was still under process. Signatory status in the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation's Mutual Recognition Arrangement was achieved in 2015 and 2017 for four of the accreditation schemes offered by SADCAS namely: Testing/Calibration/Medical Laboratories and Inspection Bodies Accreditation Schemes. "Thus, the certificates issued by SADCAS on these four schemes are internationally recognized" he

proudly declared. On plans for the future, Mr Sidney informed guests that SADCAS would continue to consolidate SADCAS service delivery focusing on areas of demand and strengthening SADCAS' capacity to accredit in French and Portuguese. He paid tribute to all who had contributed towards SADCAS success.



Mr Sidney giving the welcome remarks



Honourable Mr Tjekero Tweya giving the key note address



Mrs Mutasa giving the vote of thanks



Ms Kuena Molapo the Director of ceremonies proposing a toast

The key note address was made by Honourable Mr Tjekero Tweya who highlighted the importance of accreditation to the trading processes and in ensuring a level playing field for exports as well as ensuring that imports meet internationally recognized levels of performance and safety. “Accreditation provides assurance and recognition of conformity assessment bodies’ technical competence in performing specific tasks. It is the basis of trust amongst trading partners.” he said. He also noted the importance of accreditation not only to the region but to Africa as a whole especially with the launch and signing of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in March 2018 and the Tripartite Free Trade Area in August 2018. “Accreditation is poised to play an even greater role as a transparent and non-discriminatory means of assuring technical competence of conformity assessment providers” he said. The Minister expressed his pleasure in the progress made by SADCAS over the years since its launch in April 2009. He then concluded his key note address by encouraging the different stakeholders to take up the services offered by SADCAS and the reasons thereof.



Guests at the dinner toasting to SADCAS success

Long service awards were presented by the SADCAS Board Chairman Mr Steve Sidney to Mrs Mutasa, Ms Jeanne Ranorovelo, the SADCAS technical Manager and Ms Linda Dirorimwe, the Training Administrator who have each been with SADCAS for more than 10 years and to Mrs Lauren Gudo who has been with SADCAS for more than 5 years.



Mrs Mutasa receiving 10 years long service award Ms Ranorovelo receiving 10 years long service award



Ms Dirorimwe receiving 10 years long service award    Mrs Gudo receiving 5 years long service award



Vice Chair of the SADCAS Board of Directors, Ms Verily Molatedi and other Directors, Messrs Davlin Chokazinga left and Emmanuel Jinda lead in a dance with other guests 2<sup>nd</sup> left

The vote of thanks was given by Mrs Maureen Mutasa, the Chief Executive Officer of SADCAS who thanked the Honourable Minister for gracing the occasion and cooperating partners who have supported SADCAS over the years especially NORAD and PTB Germany. She also thanked her team at SADCAS who have put in everything into their work contributing to SADCAS' success and an equally committed Board of Directors currently led by Mr Steve Sidney. Past Board members and the SADCA Project Management team were also recognized quoting from a Yoruba proverb which goes "If we stand tall it is because we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us". She then concluded her vote of thanks by thanking the organizing team for working so diligently and the Director of Ceremonies Ms Kuenta Molapo for directing the occasion so well.

Guests were treated to a sumptuous 3 course meal and dance afterwards to celebrate the ten years milestone.