



INSIDE

Lessons from Botswanapage 2
Liberia and the regionpage 3
Rwanda electionspage 4

SADC regional trade

Despite the need for a strong regional position on multilateral trade issues, SADC states have failed to agree on a unified position that enshrines their interests as an economic bloc. Numerous meetings have been held but a lack of capacity and internal consultation has resulted in vague calls for increased access and decreased agricultural subsidies in the North that go no further than the general ACP position. SA membership of the Cairns group on agricultural issues in the WTO further weakens the grouping.

The Cotonou Agreement between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the EU makes provision for the signing of so-called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with countries or regional blocs. Talks of an impending EPA with the EU have dominated SADC deliberations in recent months. They have added impetus to calls for the rationalisation of membership of regional economic communities and the conclusion of free trade and customs union agreements. Although the creation of an EU-SADC EPA could have medium and long-term benefits, some of the current enthusiasm may be misguided. Commentators forget that EPAs can only be signed between an economic bloc that adheres to common external tariffs (i.e. a customs union), and the EU. As such, an individual country can enter into an EPA with the EU, but a free trade area, such as SADC, cannot. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has agreed to establish a customs union among nine of its members by 2004. It is also expected that the East African Community (EAC) — Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda — will sign a customs union agreement in November this year. SACU is already bound into an agreement with the EU under the SA-EU Agreement. Only eight of SADC's members have agreed to negotiate as a region, namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, SA (although not

More of the same in Dar es Salaam?

The SADC summit in Tanzania from 19 - 26 August again underlined the preference for process over substance.

Southern African states are trying hard to transform their co-operative framework from a political club into an economic community. They have begun implementing a free trade agreement (Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, SA and Swaziland are leading the way) and they have discussed ways to reduce non-tariff barriers to intra-regional trade and to diversify their products. However, progress in community building remains slow. Challenges such as HIV/Aids and recalcitrant leaders like Zimbabwe's Mugabe and Swaziland's King Mswati call for urgent action.

Nine of the ten countries with the highest HIV/Aids rates in the world are in SADC and about 14 million people are infected. At the end of a rather inconsequential tenure as chair of SADC, Angolan president Eduardo dos Santos convened an extraordinary summit on HIV/Aids in Maseru, Lesotho in July 2003. Despite very poor attendance by heads of state (only Botswana, Zimbabwe and Lesotho), the summit adopted a declaration and strategic framework for combating HIV in the region. The SADC summit in Dar es Salaam endorsed the framework and approved the establishment of a regional HIV/Aids fund to support the implementation of a five-year multisectoral strategy.

How SADC states will foot the bill of some \$10.5 billion was not explicitly addressed. The organisation will probably appeal to the US and the World Bank, which have undertaken to support the region if 'they are committed to taking concrete actions against HIV/Aids'. However, it is clear that SADC states need to develop a regional policy to maximise the opportunities created by the recent WTO agreement that makes cheaper generic drugs available to developing countries. SADC countries do not yet have a common position on the use of anti-retroviral treatment in the fight against Aids and it is not clear whether South Africa's recent about-turn on the issue will lead to a common regional stance.

Another disconcerting feature of the HIV/Aids summit in Lesotho was the absence of regional civil society organisations. Their role as important actors in addressing the socio-economic consequences of HIV/Aids is recognised globally.

Regional leaders' support for Robert Mugabe and their refusal to allow external pressure to 'ruin the solidarity within the group' attracted the most attention in the days following the summit in Dar es Salaam. SADC leaders called for talks between the government and the opposition to resume 'so the issues are resolved', but these were inadequate in the face of the praise they gave Mugabe, the expression of support for his land reform programme and the calls for the repeal of US and EU sanctions. The revival of the SADC Task Force on Zimbabwe should have been a first step in restoring confidence in the region's commitment to democracy and human rights.

However, it might be valid to suspect that the failure of SADC's leaders to react as expected is based on political expediency rather than regional solidarity. Thwarting Zimbabwe's bid to host the next SADC summit for a second time has allowed Mauritius to fill the vacant slot. Similarly, preventing Zimbabwe from assuming a leadership role in the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, enabled SA to bid successfully for the

continued on page 3

continued on page 2

deputy chairmanship. Some states have also recorded economic benefits because of Zimbabwe's economic decline.

Zambian tobacco exports have increased dramatically over the last two years. Mozambique also stands to benefit from a number of infrastructural developments that will enable the diversion of trade of landlocked countries away from the traditional route through Zimbabwe to SA seaports.

Another summit highlight was the establishment of a mutual defence pact. Although lauded by some as the best way for SADC to play a more direct role in restoring stability and security in Zimbabwe and to address the deteriorating rule of law and civil and political liberties in Swaziland, this might be overly optimistic. It is a classic case of developing structure in the hope that this will address the problem in the absence of political will. This new regional military arrangement reminds of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) that focuses on external military, rather than internal social threats to state security. It represents a compromise between those SADC leaders who supported a military defence pact (Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, DRC) and those who would have preferred a collective security approach based on non-military intervention (SA, Mozambique and Botswana). The new structure has turned out to be a relatively weak military alliance that could be used to legitimise interventions such as those in the DRC and Lesotho.

In addition, although it allows for intervention in the internal affairs of member states it does not provide a mechanism for citizens to appeal to other states in the region to intervene to protect their liberties and human rights. The excitement over the potential of the mutual defence pact to restore and maintain regional security is further tempered by the fact that it cannot enter into force until the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security signed in 2001 has been ratified and enters into force. Two more parliamentary endorsements – including that of SA – are required to turn the protocol into a legally binding document.

Over the last two years SADC's slow pace has been ascribed to the ongoing restructuring of the organisation. With the adoption of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO), and the Study on the New SADC Organisational Structure (or the Job Evaluation), the restructuring process is now nearly complete. Yet, the restructuring and restaffing of the Secretariat will only commence in April 2004. In most states SADC National Committees are also still functioning at minimal levels.

Another indicator of low commitment and slow reform is membership contributions. Although the individual membership contributions are not made public, indications are that the DRC has made some payments and is now again actively taking part in SADC meetings at all levels. The Seychelles who is furthest in arrears announced its withdrawal from SADC claiming that it was not getting value for its annual membership fee. Ironically the Seychelles' relentless campaign to reform the membership schedule to take population and GDP size into consideration and to develop a sliding scale had eventually paid off. No-one will lament its departure. But it will be interesting if Madagascar succeeds in its ambitions to fill the gap left by the Seychelles.

President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania is the new chair of SADC. The Tanzanian government is under pressure from local businesses to make up for the benefits they lost when Tanzania withdrew from COMESA in 2001. Tanzania is currently the third fastest growing economy in the region with an annual growth rate of 6.2%. Tanzania is expected to push for the expeditious implementation of the SADC Free Trade Protocol. Yet at the same time Tanzania is entering into a customs union agreement with its north-eastern neighbours under the East African Community.

Such contradictions in its regional agenda might limit its ability to push the SADC agenda further.

Lessons from Botswana

Turning down participation in the Nepad peer review, Botswana nevertheless remains the exception to the instability that wracks other resource-rich African countries.

In turning down participation in the African peer review mechanism last year, Botswana said that it felt that it had 'already opened its economy to enough international scrutiny, while the political review process will be too difficult to implement because the issues are not quantitative'.

However, it is probably one of the few countries on the continent that would be rated fairly highly in such a review. The economic history of Botswana provides an almost classic example of how a developing country with determined leadership can help itself. At independence in 1966 the country was one of the poorest in the world, with gross national income per capita of \$160 in 1970. By 2000, it had transformed itself into a middle-income country with a per capita GNI of \$3,300. In the midst of the African initiatives aimed at advancing democratic principles and good governance, there are three key developments where Botswana can offer lessons for other developing countries.

Firstly, the pattern of responsible leadership in Botswana has been key to the country's political and economic stability. This sense of public responsibility began with the country's founding president, Sir Seretse Khama, who emphasised participatory and ethical government and commitment to service delivery. This leadership style continued with Sir Ketumile Masire and currently President Festus Mogae. Contrary to his counterparts in the region, Mogae speaks straightforwardly to the media and visitors, refuses motorcades, and eschews expensive private jets. Unlike many of its neighbours, Botswana has always enjoyed and now actively expects honest and visionary leadership, good governance and a macroeconomic regime supporting economic growth. At the same time, the relatively low level of crime and harsh punishment of serious crime, provides a conducive environment for economic growth and foreign investment. Botswana's economy grew by an annual average of 10.3% in 1980-90, 4.7% in 1990-2000 and 5% in 2002.

Secondly, an associated factor contributing to Botswana's success is its political stability. Since independence, leadership transition has always been smooth and democratic, although the

Liberia: How far into a peaceful future?

The carefully crafted exit of the Liberian leader does not alleviate the burden on the region to ensure the settlement of the Liberian crisis, nor does it exonerate Taylor from prosecution in Sierra Leone.

The departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia and his exile in Nigeria has once again raised the question of justice versus political expedience. Assurances of a safe passage to Nigeria were no doubt a strong incentive to encourage him to leave, but victims of his destabilisation policies throughout West Africa would rather see him brought to book. The question is whether Taylor should be afforded more rights than Slobodan Milosevic?

The Liberian crisis harnessed the efforts of a wide variety of actors to help end the immediate crisis. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent peacekeepers, while the presidents of South Africa, Ghana, and the current chair of the AU, Mozambique, ensured through their presence Taylor's ordered exit from Liberian politics. The US fell short of deploying troops but did not shirk from making its position quite clear on the need to remove Taylor.

It could be argued that Taylor's removal from Liberian politics will be the most important element of a lasting solution to the crisis. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo's offer of asylum to Taylor was critical in this regard. His departure creates an opportunity for an end to the impasse. Already an agreement between the interim president, Moses Blah, the two rebel movements and the civilian opposition, will see the establishment of a two-year national transitional government by mid-October, headed by Gyude Bryant, a businessman.

But as much as it has created these opportunities, it has also given rise to questions about the justice of allowing an indicted war criminal to live in relative comfort in exile.

In June this year Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and charged with 'bearing the greatest responsibility' for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious

violations of international humanitarian law committed during Sierra Leone's civil war. He has escaped arrest to date.

There are other African leaders, who although not indicted by any court are guilty of gross human rights violations committed while in power, but who are now living in comfortable retirement away from their erstwhile citizens: Milton Obote lives in Zambia, but his forces killed 100,000-300,000 civilians in Uganda between 1980-85; Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia lives in Zimbabwe, but is responsible for the killing of tens of thousands of political opponents, as is Hissene Habre of Chad, who now lives in Senegal. And who can forget the late Idi Amin's brutal excesses in Uganda?

The action taken by African leaders in supporting the removal of Taylor is unprecedented, although by no means a reflection of a consistent approach to presidents who assiduously violate and transgress human rights and the rule of law. The way in which ECOWAS and the African leaders handled the crisis was a positive step for the principles that Nepad espouses. It is an indication that African leaders have begun to review the behaviour and actions of their peers.

Yet this needs to go further. A new leaf must be turned to ensure that leaders understand that they are accountable for their actions. This will also serve as a lesson to the emerging leadership that comfortable exile is not a tool with which to reward bad leadership. With emerging dedicated, capable and accountable leadership on the continent, such bad behaviour should be addressed through the relevant institutions like the AU, SADC and ECOWAS. The Nepad framework is put to the test if situations like the one in Liberia arise and can induce doubt in the international community about Africa's ability to solve its own problems.

In order to ensure peace, respect

for human rights and the rule of law, and accountable leadership, ECOWAS should support the mandate of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. Taylor should be compelled to appear before the court. There is a humanitarian as well as political obligation for him to answer for his involvement in the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone. The Special Court has to be given the maximum respect and co-operation by all parties concerned, because it is one way to ensure that leaders within Africa are not a law unto themselves.

Taylor's co-operation with the Special Court would demonstrate that the Nepad framework of accountability and good governance is guiding African governments and leading them to take charge of Africa's destiny. This would also provide Taylor himself with the opportunity to convince the court of the innocence that he claims.

Princess Tabata

SADC trade continued from page 1

actively taking part in the negotiations), Swaziland and Tanzania. The enlargement of SACU and the weakening of SADC as an economic grouping seem more plausible than ever.

SADC countries' inability to maximise upon the opportunities created by the Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement with the EU and the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), makes it imperative that SADC is more proactive. SADC states should support the growth of intra-regional trade, while identifying opportunities for increased trade with external markets.

SADC should also involve the business community and civil society more (as provided for in its treaty and numerous operational guidelines), to develop an appropriate plan for the integration of the region into the world economy and for ways of maximising their competitive advantage.

Overcoming the ghost of genocide?

With the 1994 genocide still fresh in people's minds, the results of the August presidential election in Rwanda seem to have endorsed the 'Rwandanness' ideology espoused by the RPF. Whether that is a triumph for democracy or temporarily hides latent divisions remains to be seen.

The presidential election in August, which saw incumbent Paul Kagame retain the presidency, is the first multiparty election since Rwanda's independence in 1962 and the first under the new constitution approved by referendum in May. The Rwandan Electoral Commission announced that President Kagame had won with an overwhelming majority, capturing 95% of the votes. Some 96% of the country's 3.9m registered voters took part in the elections.

While most election observers, including SA and the AU, endorsed the elections as free and fair, and 'a reflection of the will of the Rwandan people', the EU observer mission stated that the elections were free and democratic, but optimal conditions were not entirely met. The intimidation of supporters of the main opposition candidate and the discrepancy between the number of counted ballot papers and the number of people on the voters register were the main reasons for this position.

The Netherlands, one of the largest funders of the elections, kept back half its funds because the government had not given it a satisfactory explanation about the disappearance of five political opponents of the RPF regime.

In the run-up to the presidential elections the main opposition party, the *Mouvement Democratique Republicain* (MDR), which had been in alliance with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) since 1994, was dissolved by parliament for propagating a 'divisive' ideology; and Faustin Twagiramungu, the MDR's candidate and Rwanda's first prime minister of the post-genocidal government, was accused of 'ethnic divisiveness'. Twagiramungu dismissed these allegations as a ruse to discredit him. He in turn accused the RPF government of harassing and

intimidating his supporters. Only the RPF was allowed to hold political rallies. All the other candidates' attempts were stifled. Under the new constitution, political parties can exist but are prohibited from grassroots political activity.

The 1994 genocide was the defining moment in Rwanda's recent history. Its impact on the psyche of Rwandan society and the body politic cannot be underestimated. Since 1994 the RPF has sought to play down the divisions of the past by emphasising a new ideology of Rwandanness. But this has also been a useful tool to lambast and delegitimise any opposition to the RPF government.

Kagame described the elections as a big democratic step for Rwanda. On the surface all seemed well. For the first time Rwandans had the choice of more than one presidential candidate and voting proceeded peacefully on election day.

However, the short timeframe between the new constitution's adoption and the date of the presidential and parliamentary elections, has raised concern that opposition parties will have insufficient time to organise and campaign.

The Rwanda government has been a successful recipient of international aid, and is very aware of the international community's criteria of good governance and transparency for continued assistance. Rwanda has also signed up to the Nepad African peer review mechanism. The government hopes that it has increased its legitimacy by the mandate expressed during the elections. However, it remains to be seen whether the parliamentary elections that are scheduled for 29 September will deepen Rwanda's fragile democracy or the fractures within it.

Botswana

continued from page 2

political opposition has never come to power. This is due to a number of constitutional rules favouring the ruling party (for example, the first-past-the-post electoral model; minimum voting age of 21 years and stringent citizenship qualifications). However, the major reason for democratic leadership transition and the dominance of the Botswana Democratic Party is the party's performance, which transformed the country from a low to a middle-income country. Equally important, Botswana is recognised as the least corrupt country in Africa.

Finally and related to the first point, Botswana's economic success to date is traceable to a dedicated government leadership and its determination to lessen its dependence on other countries. Botswana's economic growth has been fostered by the successful exploitation of its diamonds and the successful working relationship between the government and De Beers – they share a 50-50 stake in Debswana. Unlike countries such as the DRC and Sierra Leone, where diamonds have fuelled intra/inter-state conflicts, Botswana has approached the diamond trade in a serious and responsible manner. Diamonds have made Botswana the most prosperous non-oil producing nation in Africa. The country exports about \$2.2bn worth of diamonds per annum and the industry employs more than 6,000 Botswana. Moreover, Botswana has the highest credit rating in Africa, with an 'A' rating from Moody's and Standard and Poor's.

Yet the successes of the last 35 years are under threat not because of irresponsible government planning but because of the HIV/Aids pandemic. The country has the world's highest recorded HIV prevalence rate (38%). Life expectancy at birth is now 39 years. However, the government has been proactive. Botswana was the first country in Africa to implement the widespread distribution of antiretroviral drugs through its public health system under a programme aptly named *Masa* (new dawn), a symbol of hope for those living with HIV/Aids. In addition, the Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone provides anti-retroviral therapy to over 4,500 patients.

In spite of its tiny size, Botswana provides a 'best practice' model for other African countries. Moreover, the situation in Botswana is not only about remarkable good governance; it is about how the country is run for its people, not for a ruling minority.

Nuria Giralt

Sipho Seakamela