

CUTS, SDGCA trains regional media on SADC integration



CUTS Country director Ms. Angela Mulenga opening the SADC regional media workshop

In order to increase citizen's awareness on SADC regional integration agenda, and accelerate development, CUTS has implored the media to assist in disseminating information on programmes and projects that are significance to the regional grouping.

On May 15, 2023, CUTS in partnership with the SDGCA, held a half-day regional media training workshop to educate journalists on the value of involving the public in SADC regional integration.

CUTS and the SDGCA are implementing a 17 months' project titled "Engagement for Results: Capacitating Regional Civil Society Organisations and their networks to effectively participate in the SADC regional integration process". This project is part of the Integrated Institutional Capacity-Building (IICB) by the SADC Secretariat for CSO Stakeholders financed under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).

The project is being implemented in the SADC region in Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Welcoming the delegates, CUTS country director Ms. Angela Mulenga said the media plays a critical role in disseminating the right information and engaging citizens in SADC regional integration.

"The effective use of the media in regional integration can help inform, empower and persuade citizens to actively participate in the integration agenda as well as foster public debate and policy change in SADC," Ms. Mulenga said.

The training attracted journalists from Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and was aimed at enhancing the capacity of media and their participation in generating quality reporting on SADC integration matters at national and regional level.

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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Mr. Wazha Omphile on the far right.

SADC Calls for Public Awareness on RI Civic Duties

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has asked for the establishment of forums that promote dialogue on regional integration to raise public awareness on civic responsibility. Speaking at the regional media training workshop organized by CUTS and SDGCA, SADC official Wazha Omphile emphasized

the significance of the media in fostering regional integration within SADC.

Mr Omphile acknowledged the information and knowledge gap among citizens regarding SADC regional integration and emphasized the media's role in providing accurate information and empowering citizens to contribute to the integration agenda.

He emphasized the need to continue creating platforms for such conversations to increase accountability among citizens. He urged the media to report truthfully and educate SADC residents about their role in regional integration.



Ms. Dorcas Raymond a business journalist from Tanzania

Lack of Resources Hinder SADC Integration Media Coverage

Journalists from Southern Africa have cited lack of information and resources as some of the major challenges hindering effective news coverage on Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Regional Integration agenda.

Mr Tatira Zwinoira, a business journalist from Zimbabwe cited difficulties in accessing information from SADC, especially for private media as a factor limiting coverage on regional integration.

'The public media have better access to government ministries and accessing information often requires going through government channels which can be

challenging due to hostility towards the private media,he said this in Lusaka during the SADC regional media training on SADC integration.

Speaking at the same training, Ms. Dorcas Raymond a business journalist from Tanzania urged SADC secretariat to provide journalists with

necessary information and for member states to take ownership in informing journalists on important issues.

"Most stories covered by journalists on SADC are event-oriented and there is

reluctance by media owners to fund journalists covering SADC issues," Ms Raymond said.

And Mr. Daniel Sikazwe, a journalist from Zambia noted that despite various ministries having SADC desk officers to help journalists with information, they are frequently transfers posing a challenge.

Mr. Sikazwe also emphasized the importance of journalists familiarizing themselves with policy documents and regularly engagement with SADC desk officers and Civil Society Organizations to enhance their news reporting.

CSO Advocacy Forum to Address RI formed in Malawi

In order to push forward the SADC regional integration, the SDGCA has called for effective collaboration between the media and Civil Society Organizations.

Addressing journalists from Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe during a workshop held in Lusaka, SDGCA programmes director Dr. Ambrose Aheisibwe emphasized the importance of the media in fostering regional integration.

Dr Aheisibwe cited lack of information flow and limited media coverage on SADC regional integration as some of the major challenges affecting regional integration agenda.

"Media engagement should occur at every level of CSO strategy development, as it is crucial for efficient advocacy work...While there is sufficient infrastructure at both



Dr Nyorekwa making a presentation

national and regional levels, the lack of proper information flow and limited media coverage on regional integration within SADC is also another challenge affecting SADC region integration," he said.

Speaking at the same meeting, SDGCA senior economist Dr Enock Nyorekwa acknowledged the challenges of promoting free trade due to

revenue loss from tariffs but emphasized that deeper economic integration brings long-term benefits.

He emphasized the importance of intra-trade within Africa and being part of a larger integrated market to boost continental economic growth, peace, and the improvement of human lives.

SADC Countries Scrap Roaming Charges



Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana have agreed to scrap mobile roaming charges. The move comes into effect in August and takes the Southern African Development Community closer to a single digital market.

Mobile users in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana will no longer be charged extra when they cross borders.

The initiative in the four Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries is

part of a move to create a One Network Area (ONA), which is already in place in East African Community.

Cross-border travelers in Africa generally face high internet and mobile roaming tariffs. Mercy Kachere is a Malawian businesswoman who traverses Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe says the move to scrap roaming charges will mean staying in touch with her family in Lilongwe while on business trips.

"This is good news to any citizen from these countries. As a business lady, I travel a lot to these countries to buy different goods for my stationery and textile retail shops in my home country Malawi," Kachere told DW.

She had come to consider high roaming costs another fixed overhead expenditure.

"My only request is that it spreads across Africa if communication on the continent is to improve as it affects many business operators." – Source DW



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