SADCC: The Southern African Development Coordination Conference

What is SADCC?

The Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) (pronounced "saddick") is an association of nine majority-ruled states of southern Africa. Through regional cooperation SADCC works to accelerate economic growth, improve the living conditions of the people of southern Africa, and reduce the dependence of member states on South Africa. SADCC is primarily an economic grouping of states with a variety of ideologies, and which have contacts with countries from all blocs. It seeks cooperation and support from the international community as a whole.

Who is SADCC?

The Member States of SADCC are:

- Angola*
- Botswana*
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique*
- Swaziland
- Tanzania*
- Zambia*
- Zimbabwe*

The liberation movements of southern Africa recognized by the Organization of African Unity (the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress and the South West Africa People's Organization) are invited to SADCC Summit meetings as observers.

What Are the Objectives of SADCC?

- The reduction of economic dependence, particularly on the Republic of South Africa;
- The forging of links between member states in order to create genuine and equitable regional integration;
- The mobilization of resources to promote the implementation of national, interstate and regional policies;
- Concerted action to secure international cooperation within the framework of SADCC's strategy of economic liberation.

At the inaugural meeting of SADCC, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia said:

Let us now face the economic challenge. Let us form a powerful front against poverty and all of its offshoots of hunger, ignorance, disease, crime and exploitation of man by man. Let us form an African
Movement to wage a militant struggle against poverty. Let this Summit be our workshop for sharpening our tools, forging new weapons, working out a new strategy and tactics for fighting poverty and improving the quality of life of our peoples.

**When Did SADCC Begin?**

In May 1979 the Foreign Ministers of the Front Line States met in Botswana to discuss economic cooperation. In July 1979, a conference was convened at Arusha, Tanzania, to consider economic policies and objectives and it was agreed to invite the other majority-ruled countries in southern Africa to participate in drawing up a regional plan for the development of southern Africa. SADCC was formally launched by the Lusaka Declaration, Southern Africa: Toward Economic Liberation which was adopted by the Lusaka Summit of the nine majority-ruled countries of southern Africa in April 1980. The Summit also adopted a Program of Action covering food and agriculture, industry, manpower development, and energy. The Heads of State identified transport and communications as the main priority for SADCC cooperation.

**How Does SADCC Work?**

SADCC makes decisions by consensus, depending on discussions between heads of state (the Summit) or ministers (the Council of Ministers) to reach agreement on priorities and programs which will be of benefit to the region and to the member states.

The implementation of SADCC programs is decentralized. Each member state coordinates the work of SADCC in particular areas, for example: transport and communications (Mozambique), food security (Zimbabwe), agricultural research (Botswana), fisheries, wildlife and forestry (Malawi), soil and water conservation (Lesotho), manpower development (Swaziland), industrial development (Tanzania), energy conservation and development (Angola), and mining (Zambia).

Although SADCC has mobilized some local resources for projects, it has had to seek funding—about $5 billion a year—from the international community. It organizes an annual conference with donors at which priorities and projects are presented. SADCC has been open to discussion, suggestion and criticism, but has sought to limit the extent to which donors may impose their own priorities.

**SADCC and South Africa?**

SADCC is a threat to South Africa’s plans to dominate southern Africa, and a rejection of its apartheid-led “con-

*The six Frontline States form a political grouping which overlaps but is not synonymous with SADCC. Frontline States are starred in the list in column one of the front page.*