CHAPTER 3

Southern African Development Community and African Agency Towards Global Powers

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Introduction

This chapter discusses the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s relations with various global powers, or International Collaborating Partners (ICPs). Among others, these powers include bilateral ones, such as the United States (US), Germany and China, as well as multilateral ones such as the European Union (EU), the World Bank and the BRICS group comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In particular, the chapter, which is part of a broader study on 'African Agency Toward Global Powers' undertaken by the African Centre of the Study of the United States at the University of the Witwatersrand seeks to understand the extent to which the SADC, as one of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the Global South, can effectively project and assert its authority in its dealings with global powers, whose interests and presence in the African continent and sub-region has been increasing in recent years. The increase is among others, evidenced by annual and regular gatherings involving global or external powers and the African continent and its sub-regions, such as Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Russia-Africa summit, BRICS summit, Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation conference, and Turkey-Africa Business and Economic Forum to mention but a few. These summits and gatherings discuss a variety of issues, including development partnerships, security co-operations and emerging global issues, such as climate change and pandemics.

The countries that make the SADC region have for many years, if not centuries, interacted with various external powers. Excluding slavery, which affected a few countries, such as Angola, colonialism is perhaps the first formal point of contact between all SADC countries and global powers, as almost all countries in the region were colonised by different colonial powers. These global powers colonised for different reasons. However, the common reason was pursuit of economic benefits and geo-strategic advantages. Indeed, the region is blessed with various natural resources, including oil, minerals, timber and fertile soils, among others. The colonies and the protectorates became even more important at the end of devastating wars, such as the Second World War, which shattered and devastated European economies, leaving colonies and protectorates as valuable sources of food (Darwin 1988). While during colonialism interactions which was mostly with various colonial powers, in the contemporary period, the interaction has broadened to include not only former colonial powers, but hegemons such as the US and China, as well various multilateral institutions and some emerging powers.

To understand the extent to which the SADC can effectively project and assert its authority in its dealings with global powers, the study relied on two main sources of data. Firstly, it relied on secondary data extracted from various published works, including consultancy reports, books and journal articles. These sources are freely available online, as well as in libraries. The secondary sources provided vital data on the SADC's relations with various powers, particularly on forms of assistance received, as well as projects and initiatives that global powers have funded over the decades. Secondly, interviews were conducted at the SADC headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana, in September 2024. The interviews involved two senior officials in the SADC Secretariat, being the Director of Policy Planning and Resource Mobilisation, as well Head of Communications and Public Relations. The interviews were especially helpful in providing information on some of the current projects, the transformations that the organisation has conducted over the years, and some of the strategies the SADC employs in its engagement with global powers.

African agency in international politics

Agency refers to the capacity to exert political influence externally (Cargill 2013). Influence can be exerted through various strategies, including coercive means and through soft power. Regarding the latter for instance, western development partners used sanctions and conditionalities to promote democracy and good governance in various parts of the world in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Crawford 2001). Under the political conditionality regime, donors restricted or suspended development aid allocations to countries averse to democratisation, or those gripped by bad governance and human rights violations (Tjønneland 1998). Thus, in 1990, the then French President, Francois Mitterand declared that France 'will link its financial efforts to the efforts made towards liberty' (Crawford 2001: 4). Similarly, the World Bank made good governance a condition for development assistance, with specific reference to the African continent stated that 'Africa needed not just less government, but better government' (World Bank 1989: 5). With specific reference to sub-Saharan Africa, authoritarian rule and bad governance practices such as corruption were principally blamed for underdevelopment and the failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (Crawford 2001). The SAPs had been imposed on many indebted African countries by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) from the early 1980s. As a condition for lending, African countries had to undertake economic reforms such as market liberalisation and the reduction of the role of the state in the economy (Thomson 2004). Good governance was characterised by the existence of an efficient public service, an independent judicial framework to enforce contracts, the accountable administration of public funds, the existence of an independent public auditor, representative legislature, respect for the law and human rights, a pluralistic institutional structure and a free press (World Bank 1989).

However, unlike western development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, African countries, and African inter-governmental organisations have for many years lacked agency. In fact, when the current world order characterised by the leadership of the United States and international organisations under its control such as the United

Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods institutions emerged at the end of the Second World War in 1945, almost all African countries did not exist as sovereign states. Instead, as previously stated in the case of the SADC region, they were colonies and protectorates of various Europeans powers, particularly Britain, France, Portugal and Spain. It was only since the late 1950s that African countries attained independence, ending not only years of exploitative colonial rule, but also marking their entry into the global political and economic system as sovereign states able to decide their own foreign relations and domestic policies. Even then, African countries were quickly engulfed by the Cold War that followed the end of the Second World War. During the Cold War, which was characterised by ideological and military conflict between the US and the Soviet Union, African countries once again found themselves locked in a system dominated by powerful countries which dominated the global agenda that put their own interests at the centre, rather than that of the continent and its people. Indeed, due to the system of communist containment, some African countries became client states of the two super powers or their allies. In the worst-case scenarios, some African countries, such as Angola and Mozambique, became victims of proxy wars between the super powers. Effectively, the agenda and interests of African countries were secondary to the interests of these powers.

With the Cold War over, which was characterised by the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union, African countries and sub-regional organisations began to engage with more powers, including not only the remaining super power, the US, but many other actors. In their engagement, African countries not only mobilised development assistance, they also attempted to project their power and agency, such that they too could have influence in the global political and economic system. Thus, the period from the late 1990s to the early 2000s was characterised by the emergence of initiatives such as the African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Lala 2018). The African Renaissance for instance, which was championed by the then South African president, Thabo Mbeki, and driven by the ideology of African solutions for African problems, sought to project Africa not as weak and dependent continent, but instead, as an equal partner able to not only take charge of its destiny,

but also influence the global system hitherto dominated by powerful countries and institutions under their control (Landsberg 2011).

Besides, The African Renaissance, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which had been established to among others, liberate Africa from colonial rule, transformed itself into the African Union (AU) in 2001, seeking among others to 'establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations' (African Union [AU] 2001:6). The continent's leading role in international affairs is also envisaged in the AU Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 7, which states that 'Africa shall be a strong, united, resilient, peaceful and influential global player and partner with a significant role in world affairs' (AU 2024). Accordingly, the AU has over the years, demanded African representation in bodies such as the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation (Lala 2018). As previously stated, these institutions emerged at the end of the Second World War, a period in which almost all African countries were colonies that lacked self-determination. Indeed, some of the institutions, such as the UN Security Council with its permanent members, reflects not only countries that were victorious at the end of the Second World War, but also an old order in which many African countries were still colonies and protectorates of various European countries.

The history of the SADC

The SADC was established in 1992, replacing the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC), which had been formed by the former Frontline States (FLS) in 1980 for purposes of reducing economic dependence on white minority ruled South Africa (Isaksen and Tjønneland 2001). The FLS had evolved over the period 1970-1974 through the Mulungushi Club comprising Tanzania (Nyerere), Uganda (Obote), Zaire (Mubutu) and Zambia (Kaunda). Established in 1974, the FLS was an informal grouping of countries which saw their primary role as support for the liberation struggles in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe. It comprised Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. Zimbabwe joined the FLS after attaining its independence

in 1980 (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). To reduce dependence on South Africa, each SADCC member state was allocated a sectoral responsibility, mostly in line with the member state's economic comparative advantage and resources. Thus, oil rich Angola was responsible for energy, Botswana for control of livestock diseases, Malawi for fisheries and wildlife, Zambia for mining, and Zimbabwe for food security, to mention but a few (Weisfelder 1982). While member states had sectoral responsibilities, projects were coordinated at the national level, meaning the SADCC was not closely involved in the implementation of such projects.

With the end of apartheid when the third wave of democratisation reached its peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s, SADC leaders identified the need for a more effective organisation with legal status and powers (Isaksen and Tjønneland 2001). This led to the adoption of the SADC Treaty in 1992 at the Windhoek Summit. The Treaty transformed the SADCC to the SADC and broadened the scope of regional integration from development coordination to economic, security and political integration (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). Article 4 of the Treaty outlines sovereign equality of member states, solidarity, peace and security, human rights and the rule of law, equity, balance and mutual benefit as well as peaceful settlement of conflicts as the guiding principles of the SADC (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). Between 1980 and 1992, the SADC did not have a clearly defined governance agenda, as its focus was more on reducing dependence on South Africa and supporting liberation struggles in various countries. Until the transformation of the SADCC into the SADC in 1992, economic integration was considered paramount over imperatives for political integration. However, since the 1992 transformation, the SADC started to pursue political integration in conjunction with both economic integration and security cooperation. The attainment of independence by Namibia in 1990 and the start of political transformation in South Africa implied that the political anti-apartheid agenda started to lose relevance, meaning the region had to embark on programmes that strove more economic and social welfare through a deeper regional integration (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010).

Currently, the SADC has sixteen member states, being Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini,

Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Some SADC member states are also members of other regional economic communities. For instance, Angola and the DRC are members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (Economic Community of Central African States 2024). Alongside Tanzania, the DRC is also a member of the East African Community (East African Community 2024). Furthermore, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa are members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) (Southern African Customs Union 2024), while South Africa is a member of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa group (BRICS) (Brics 2024). In terms of governance, except for the Kingdom of Eswatini, which is an absolute monarchy, all the other fifteen countries in the SADC region, including the DRC, are multi-party democracies. However, the countries are at different stages of democratic development, with some such as Botswana, South Africa, Mauritius, Seychelles and Namibia having attained the status of liberal democracies that are gradually consolidating, as they combine electoral democracy with constitutionalism, rule of law and respect for human rights (Matlosa 2017). Although elections are regularly held in others, such as Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Lesotho, there is occasional political turbulence, especially around election time. Finally, others, such as Zimbabwe, Angola and the DRC do hold elections whose credibility is often questionable, owing among others to violence and electoral management bodies and processes that lack integrity (Lotshwao 2021).

The SADC's principal objectives as expressed in the 1992 SADC Treaty, which was amended in 2001, are to achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration; promote common political value, systems and other shared values which are transmitted through institutions that are democratic, legitimate and effective; consolidate, defend and maintain democracy, peace, security and stability; promote self-sustaining development on the basis of collective self-reliance and the inter-dependence of member states; achieve complementarity

between national and regional strategies and programmes; mainstream gender in the process of community building as well as to strengthen and consolidate the long-lasting historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the region (South African Development Community [SADC] 2001).

To achieve its objectives following transformation in 1992, the SADC established several directorates, each responsible for various sectors and policies under the envisaged broadened regional integration project. Currently, the organisation has eight directorates, each headed by a director. These are Industrial Development and Trade, Finance, Investment and Customs, Infrastructure. Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. Social and Human Development. Policy, Planning and Resource Mobilisation, Finance and Human Resources and Administration. Besides directorates, the SADC also has several units focussing on specific issues, such as gender, and relations with the AU. All the directorates work under the supervision of the secretariat, which is headed by the executive secretary. The creation of directorates came as a result of the amendment of the 1992 SADC Treaty in 2001. The amendment sought among others, to give the organisation a new institutional structure that would allow it to address the new objectives and challenges (Tjønneland 2006).

In terms of decision-making, the supreme decision-making body is the summit, which comprise of heads of governments of member-states. Specifically, the summit provides policy direction and oversees the organisation's functions; and adopts protocols, declarations, conventions and other legal instruments (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). The summit also elects SADC's rotational chairperson and vice-chairperson (SADC 2005), as well as the executive secretary, who heads the secretariat that oversees the organisation's day to day operations (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). The summit meets once a year, while extra-ordinary summits are convened when the need arises. Stemming from the summit, there are other organs with different responsibilities and mandates. These are the organ on politics, defence and security cooperation; the council of ministers; ministerial committees; the standing committee of senior officials; SADC national committees and the secretariat and the SADC administrative tribunal (SADC 2024b). Previously, there was the

SADC tribunal, whose mandate was to ensure adherence to, and proper interpretation of the provisions of the SADC treaty and subsidiary instruments, and adjudicates upon disputes referred to it (SADC 2005). However, the tribunal was suspended in May 2010 before being disbanded in 2013 (Van der Vleuten and Hulse 2013). The tribunal had become unpopular among member states for attempting to exercise oversight over them, particularly on issues of governance and human rights. Indeed, the tribunal's suspension and disbandment came after it had ruled against Zimbabwe's land expropriation policy (Nathan 2013). The SADC also operates a troika system, comprising of the chair, incoming chair and immediate past chair. The troika system seeks to ensure continuity and also make the organisation more effective in responding to issues of regional interest.

The SADC also has some subsidiary institutions, which are formally not part of it, though affiliated to it. One such institution is the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), which is a regional inter-parliamentary body comprising of SADC parliaments. SADC-PF, which was established in 1997, seeks to improve regional integration in the region through the involvement of SADC parliaments. While the forum has several objectives aimed at advancing regional integration, its most important objective with regard to democracy and governance is its determination to promote peace, security and political stability in the SADC region, thus, also contributing to the creation of an environment conducive for socio-economic development (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). Beside the SADF-PF, there is The Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC (ECF), which was formed in 1998 by the region's electoral commissions. The ECFs objectives are to strengthen cooperation and support among member countries on electoral issues and democracy building, to promote conditions conducive to free, fair and transparent elections in the SADC, to promote democracy as a political system of responsible government through the electoral process and finally, to encourage active participation of a citizenry which is well informed about the electoral process (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010).

The SADC, however, is still far from embarking upon the democratisation of its regional integration agenda. Lack of broad-based

civil society engagement with the SADC agenda is ironical given that Chapter 7, Article 23 in the 1992 Treaty clearly stipulates that

> "SADC shall seek to involve fully the people of the region and key stakeholders in the process of regional integration. SADC shall cooperate with and support the initiatives of the peoples of the region and key stakeholders … in order to foster closer relations among the communities, associations and people of the region" (SADC 1992: 17).

The SADC secretariat has yet to make strides to live up to this noble commitment. Likewise, organised civil society has not mounted sufficient political pressure to exhort the SADC ruling elites to live up to the expectations of this noble principle.

SADC's relations with great powers

The SADC has a long history of working with great powers. In fact, the SADC's predecessor, the SADCC, was to a large extent a mechanism for facilitating aid coordination and mobilising development finance for purposes of funding projects that could reduce economic and infrastructural dependence on apartheid South Africa (Tjønneland 2006). The assistance provided to the SADC by global powers mostly take the form of budget support, funding for special projects as well as technical assistance aimed at building the organisation's capacity (Isaksen and Tjønneland 2001). The high reliance on development partners for funding is partly caused by the fact that annual contributions from member states is insufficient and does not even cover half of the organisation's annual budget (Woolfrey and Verhaeghe 2017). In 2015/2016 for instance, development partners accounted for US$ 42.6 million of SADC's US$ 80.8 million annual budget (Woolfrey and Verhaeghe 2017). The assistance from development partners has been directed at the organisations' priorities, as stipulated in its various policy documents and frameworks, including the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO), which was adopted

in 2003/2004 and mandated to promote the development of democratic institutions and practices by member states (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). Besides SIPO, another priority policy framework has been the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), and its revised version, the revised RISDP (2020-2030), which is a 10-year development agenda for addressing social, economic, political and governance issues in the region. In a departure from past practice, the RISDP 2020–2030 brings together issues previously presented separately under the revised RISDP and SIPO (SADC 2020a).

The inclusion of peace, security and governance matters in the RISDP 2020–2030 is an innovation that recognises their foundational importance to ensuring the necessary preconditions for achieving the other priorities. In recent years, the organisation introduced another set of priorities in the form of SADC Vision 2050, which envisions 'a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle- to high-income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom' (SADC 2020a: 1). SADC Vision 2050 has three priorities, being industrial development and market integration, infrastructure development in support of regional integration, and social and human capital development, all built on a foundation of peace, security, and good governance (SADC 2020b: 3). The SADC's relations with global powers are conducted through several channels that include diplomatic engagements with diplomats accredited to the SADC, as well as attendance of international gatherings such as the United Nations General Assembly, and bilateral forums such as the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (interview with SADC Head of Communications and Public Relations, 20 September 2024).

The Windhoek Declaration

The SADC, it should be mentioned, does not have a foreign policy framework guiding its relations with global powers. In the absence of a foreign policy shaping its agenda, the SADC's interaction with partners is guided by the Windhoek Declaration (interview with SADC Director of Policy Planning and Resource Mobilisation, 18 September

2024). The declaration, which was adopted in 2006, emphasises the organisation's principles of cooperation, which are ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability (SADC 2006). The Windhoek Declaration is heavily influenced by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which emphasises ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability (see OECD 2005). While the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration by THE SADC is commendable, the fact that it is built around the Paris Declaration is somehow problematic, as it confirms that the SADC, like many regional organisations in the developing world are not norm setters, but consumers and takers of what is initiated and led by the development partners. In other words, it is not clear why the SADC chose to localise the Paris Declaration instead of initiating its own framework that would govern relations with partners. In the sections below, the study looks at the SADC's relations with some leading partners, particularly the EU, Germany and the US. The focus is on priority areas such as infrastructure development, industrial development and market integration, peace and security cooperation and special programmes. These priority areas are expressed in SADC policy documents such as SIPO, RISDP (2020-2030) and SADC Vision 2050.

SADC's relations with the EU

The EU is one of the global powers that the SADC engages with. The relations between the SADC and the EU have been in place for several decades. In 1986, the two organisations signed the Regional Indicative Programme under the Lome Convention that guided relations between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries on issues of development assistance and trade (Van der Vleuten and Hulse 2013). Since 2000, relations between the SADC and the EU have been conducted under the successor framework of the Lome Convention, the Cotonou Agreement, which operates through the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs). The EPAs, which the EU has with various regional groupings in the ACP countries aims at the eradication of poverty through the establishment of a trade partnerships, the promotion of regional integration, economic

cooperation, good governance and the integration of the SADC states into the world economy (Van der Vleuten and Hulse 2013).

In terms of EU support for trade and relation programmes, the EU have in recent years spent approximately € 112 million on various trade related SADC programmes. These include the Support Programme towards Industrialisation and Productive Sectors (SIMS), whose aims are to facilitate stronger dialogue between private and public sectors, as well as to improve the development and governance of regional leather and pharmaceutical value chains, including enhancing local manufacturing (SADC-EU 2023). Besides SIMS, the EU has also provided funding for the Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP). TTTFP, which involves 26 African countries, seeks to boost economic efficiency by harmonising road transport laws, regulations and IT systems in Southern and Eastern Africa (SADC-EU 2023). Another EU funded SADC project is the Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP), which seeks to foster intra-regional trade by strengthening the capacities for streamlining border processes and monitoring and resolving non-tariff and technical barriers to trade. Furthermore, TFP aims at promoting implementation of the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement to facilitate the integration of SADC and other ACP countries into global value chains, which is envisaged would create jobs and generate wealth in the SADC member states (SADC-EU 2023).

Considering the EU's support for infrastructure development, the EU and SADC have launched the US$ 20.2 million worth Southern African Development Community Project Preparation Development Facility in 2022 (SADC PPDF). The initiative involves twelve regional infrastructural projects covering sectors such as energy, transport and water. Some of the projects to be undertaken under this initiative include the Second Alaska-Sherwood powerline in Zimbabwe; the Angola-Namibia transmission interconnector; Kasemeno-Mwenda toll road and Luapula hydro power development both between DRC and Zambia; Mulembo Leyla Hydro in Zambia; the North South Rail Corridor involving Botswana, the DRC, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe; Mauritius Wastewater Pumping Station and Wastewater Treatment Plant; MOZISA power interconnector project between Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe; Africa Green

Co projects (all SADC member states); Kazungula Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Zambia) and Lomahasha Namaacha Cross (Eswatini and Mozambique) (SADC 2022).

Finally, the EU's support and funding for peace security and cooperation in the SADC is directed exclusively at the activities of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. The Organ was established in 1996, and tasked with the promotion of regional coordination and cooperation on matters related to security and defence and establishment of appropriate mechanisms to this end; promotion of the development of democratic institutions and practices within member states and encourage the observance of universal human rights as provided for in the charters and conventions of the AU and UN; protection of the region's people from the breakdown of law and order, intra-state conflict and aggression; and prevention, containment and resolution of intra- and inter-state conflicts. Thus, EU support has been directed at conflict prevention and resolution, early warning systems and the strengthening of the capacity of electoral management bodies among others.

In 2023, the EU and SADC renewed the EU funded Support to Peace and Security Programme (SPSS), aligning with the priorities of RISDP 2020–2030. Firstly, the programme aims at strengthening the capacity for electoral assistance in the SADC by among others training election observers on ICT election observation, building the capacity of election management bodies, providing training on domestication of the Revised Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, and support for the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) pre- and post-election missions (SADC 2023). Secondly, the programme seeks to enhance capacity in the SADC for gender sensitive conflict prevention, management and resolution by among others developing a gender sensitive conflict tracking tool, facilitating member states with gender sensitive national social cohesion strategies, training SADC member states officials in counter terrorism, as well assisting with training for the Regional Peace Keeping Training Centre to ensure the SADC Standby Force is ready for deployment when the need arise (SADC 2023). Last but not least, the SPSS programme seeks to enhance SADC member states capacity to uphold and enhance cross border safety and security

by reviewing and strengthening Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) protocols that include SADC protocol on control of firearms, ammunition and other related materials, as well as developing the regional integrated strategy to prevent and combat transnational organised crime and its action plan (SADC 2023).

Furthermore, in recent years, the EU provided € 15 million to the SADC Mission (SAMIM) in Mozambique (Hendricks et al. 2023). SAMIM comprised of SADC peacekeeping contingents from several SADC member state states, including Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania and Lesotho. The support to SAMIM aimed at strengthening its peacekeeping operations in the Cabo Delgado province where, since 2017, Islamic insurgents invaded some districts killing thousands of civilians and displacing many others. The insurgency—there is consensus—could be a result of the Cabo Delgado's underdevelopment and exclusion by the Mozambican government.

SADC relations with Germany

Although a member of the EU, Germany has strong bilateral relations with the SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. The German support, which has been provided since 2004, is channelled primarily through the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), which is an agency of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Thus far, Germany has provided assistance worth € 400 million. In particular, GIZ has sought to provide support for initiatives aimed at preventing and resolving armed conflicts, as well as building the capacities of electoral bodies, enhancing civic education and strengthening the capacity of civilian peacekeepers. Between 2010 and 2014, GIZ also supported the revision of SIPO to ensure it is in a position to attain its objectives of creating a peaceful and politically stable environment that enables the region to meet its socio-economic objectives (GIZ 2015).

In recent years, GIZ has supported the Cooperation for Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE) project, which seeks to improve cooperation between the SADC secretariat, SADC

member states and the relevant sector bodies, thereby deepening economic integration in the region, exploiting the potential for greater added value at the regional level, supporting the economic empowerment of women and contributing to good governance and peace in the region (SADC 2024a). Cesare has four priority areas; trade facilitation to support regional economic integration and industrialisation; support towards industrialisation and the productive sectors in the SADC region; engagement of SADC member states in peace, security and good governance and support for women economic empowerment (SADC 2024a). Furthermore, alongside the EU, from 2019 Germany was also involved in the Support towards Industrialisation and the Productive Sectors (SIPS) in the SADC region programme, which seeks to address factors impeding industrialisation in the SADC region.

SADC relations with the US

The relations between the SADC and the US were for many years conducted under the Southern African Development Community-United States (SADC-US) Forum. The relations centred on four priority areas: regional economic integration; strengthening the region's ability to address security challenges; tackling the scourge of HIV/AIDS and building the capacity to prepare for and manage disasters (US Department of State 2000). Thus, over the years, the US has provided funding for various SADC projects and special initiatives. In 2023, the US and SADC signed a five-year Regional Development Objective Agreement (DOAG) in which the US pledged over $ 223 million for projects aimed at fostering among others, economic growth, peace and stability, democracy and good governance in the Southern African region for five years (2023–2028).

As the region worst affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the SADC has received generous support from the US under the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Among others, the funding and assistance has been directed at prevention and social mobilisation; improved access to care, counselling, testing treatment and support; acceleration of development and mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS; intensification of resource mobilisation and strengthening institutional

monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (SADC 2009). Besides HIV/AIDS, the US has also through the US$ 32 400 000.00 worth Resilient Waters Programme funded by USAID helped improve health and sanitation in the SADC region by increasing access to clean water and sanitation (US Embassy Botswana 2023). Furthermore, the project seeks to improve the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in the region; improve the management and security of transboundary water resources and strengthen the ability of key institutions and communities to adapt to climate change.

SADC relations with China

The relations between the SADC and China are conducted under the broad framework of the FOCAC. However, in recent years, China has strengthened its partnership with the REC. In 2019, for instance, China and the SADC celebrated the finalisation of the SADC and China Framework Agreement on Economy, Trade, Investment and Technical Cooperation, which seeks to enhance cooperation between China and the SADC in line with the priorities of FOCAC, which are outlined in the FOCAC Action Plan, which outlines China's priorities in its relations with Africa and its sub-regions. Still in 2019, a Chinese delegation visiting the SADC secretariat extended an annual grant worth US$ 100 000.00 to the SADC secretariat to support its operational needs and implement activities that are in line with SADC priorities (SADC 2019). Besides relations with the SADC, China, through their companies involved in trade and construction, have relations with many SADC member states. These relations have been ongoing for decades, especially after China's rapid industrialisation of the 1990s which has forced the country to seek markets and raw materials abroad. And through the Belt and Road Initiative, China is bound to increase its presence and economic relations with many countries, including those in the SADC region.

Findings and recommendations

The chapter has made several findings. Firstly, while the cooperating

partners are guided by foreign policies and frameworks guiding their relations with the SADC, the latter does not have a foreign policy framework shaping its agenda and guiding relations with the partners (Cisse 2014). Even the SADC Treaty is mute on positions that the SADC should adopt in its relations with partners or the positions that it should adopt on many pressing global issues, such as international trade, the reform of the UN system, and global warming, to mention but a few. This differs sharply with organisations such as the AU and the EU, which have foreign policy frameworks and strategies in place to shape and influence the global order. Worth mentioning, however, is that in recent years, the SADC attempted to establish a foreign policy that will going forward, guide relations with global powers. Thus, in 2023, the organisation advertised a 'Consultancy to develop the SADC foreign policy framework, defining common values to be upheld by member states and guiding the adoption of common foreign policy positions' (SADC 2023: 1).

Secondly, besides a lack of foreign policy as a tool of agency, the SADC comprises states that are economically weak. As a result of economic weakness caused by factors such as weak, undiversified economies and states designed to primarily serve elite interests, the SADC continues to rely on global powers and partners for development finance. This dependence undermines the SADC's agency. Indeed, there is no way that an organisation that depends on other actors for survival can hope to exert some level of influence in its relations with such patrons. This dependence, which undermines agency, is an opposite of what transpires elsewhere. Because of economic growth and developmental states, the Gulf Cooperation Council is for instance, able to assert influence and agency, as the organisation is not dependent on global powers for economic survival. Nevertheless, rather to strive to establish developmental states, SADC countries seem more concerned about the construction of neoliberal states. Neoliberal states are states designed for purposes of facilitating the integration of national economies into the global economy. The construction of neoliberal states is driven among others by global powers and multilateral agencies. While such states may drive economic growth, the danger lies in the fact that such economic growth mostly benefit investors and those connected to them locally,

leaving countries and the majority of their people still dependent on development assistance. Thus, SADC states are not only neoliberal, but also very predatory.

Thirdly, SADC's agency is undermined by the fact that almost all of the organisation's members are members of other regional organisations, such as ECCAS, EAC and SACU. This dual membership is counterproductive, as SADC member states are pursuing multiple agendas instead of putting their weight behind the agenda of one regional organisation. This weakens the organisation's voice and agency. Although countries with dual memberships may reap the benefits, such dual memberships could suggest a lack of confidence in the SADC to advance the holistic interests of the member states.

Regarding recommendations, the SADC should initiate and adopt a foreign policy framework that would guide its relations with global powers and also communicate the world order that the SADC envisions. Secondly, the SADC should encourage its member states to construct developmental states that could drive economic growth that creates wealth and benefits all. Not only would this result in improved living standards for citizens of SADC countries, it would also liberate SADC states from dependence on global powers for development finance. As previously stated, such dependence undermines agency as the SADC engages with global powers as a weaker partner whose very survival is made possible by the financial assistance from the global powers. Finally, the SADC must consider the issue of dual memberships by some of its member states.

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Interviews

Interview with Barbara Lopi, SADC Head of Communications and Public Relations, 20 September 2024.

Interview with Dr Mubita Luwabelwa, SADC Director of Policy Planning and Resource Mobilization, 18 September 2024.