CRASA REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ACTIVITIES ON INTERCONNECTION AND IXPs IN SADC REGION

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BACKGROUND

Apart from Madagascar and Seychelles

- **Established in year 1997 under the Article 10.7 (b) of the SADC Protocol on TCM**
- **A consultative body to deal with the harmonisation of ICT regulatory framework in SADC**
- **Merged with SAPRA in June 2011 (Ministerial directive) and current focus in harmonisation of postal and ICTs regulatory frameworks (maximisation of value and benefits of a converged policy and regulatory environment)**

BACKGROUND

- **Implementation of SADC ICT and Postal Policies and Strategies to assist SADC to achieve SADC "Digital 2027"**

- **Enhance regulation and promote regulatory framework Harmonisation in SADC**

  - **Promote investment in the ICT and Postal sectors**

  - **Promote regional integration (Merge the small national ICT and Postal markets to relatively larger ones and enable firms to exploit the achieved economies of scale)**

  - **Promote universal network development and universal access to postal and ICT services;**

- – **Promote the adoption of best practices, exchange of ideas and information and expertise**

- – **Act as a common voice for SADC Postal and ICT regulators on international arena (credibility, visibility and better negotiating outcomes at the international fora)**

- – **Developed various regulatory guidelines including Interconnection of Electronic Communications Guidelines**

BACKGROUND

- **Current CRASA Focus (Projects)**
  - Harmonisation of cross border communication (Spectrum).
  - Cost Effective Pricing of Electronic Communication eg Roaming
  - Open Access to submarine cables esp for Landlocked Countries
  - Development of frameworks for harmonisation postal regulation and Postal Strategy
  - Monitoring of national adoption of model guidelines into national frameworks
  - Capacity Building in various regulatory fields
  - Review of Interconnecting Guidelines in SADC

CRASA ACTIVITIES ON IXPs

❑ **CRASA has been active on the AU African Internet Exchange System (Axis) Project as Steering Committee Member with SADC and a host of others**

➤ The AXIS project mainly focuses on capacity building in all member states that do not have IXP.

❑ **CRASA has also been active on the SADC Internet Governance Forum (SIGF)**

➤ Encouraging Member States to set up National IXPs.

ISSUES FOR REGULATORS

- **Price of retail services** must fall to broaden access across population

- **Quality of service** – latency and responsiveness of service improvement to broaden use of internet services beyond basic web search to transactional activities

- **Regional scale and routing of traffic** – capabilities to build regional scale in traffic routing

  - Attracts international content to co-locate reducing need for African ISPs to pay international transit

CONCERNS OF REGULATORS

- ❑ **Platform for African content / providers to reach broader market efficiently**

- ❑ **Majority of internet traffic (from end users) ultimately will not need to leave continent as International content mirrors on continent and regional routing maintains traffic within region**

- ❑ **Removal of barriers and boundaries to trade – internet enables efficient markets by separating "information" from physical goods enabling markets across region to collaborate and integrate**

- ❑ **Region must have low cost, fast, reliable access to internet**

- ❑ **Reliance on international backhaul for internet access is both costly and poor technical solution and ultimately a barrier to mass take up**

- **CRASA Assisted with regulation of interconnection of national communications network (Allows regulator to set rules for setting of the Interconnect charges as well as assisted with ex-ante regulation where the regulator is required to intervene where negotiations fail);**

- **The Guidelines ensure effective and efficient interconnection pricing as has fundamental link on the introduction of effective competition in communications**

- **Not much guidelines provided for the ISP interconnection or cross border interconnection**

Conducted Annual Forum on IP Interconnection and past forums noted:

- Increase in internet usage in SADC;

- lack of essential infrastructure to enable cross border interconnectivity;

- the high interconnection rates that affect the end user prices;

Annual Forum on IP Interconnection and past forums noted cont...:

- the challenges being met to exchange internet traffic across the borders and, among them, the high pricing of the cross border internet traffic exchange among the SADC countries;

- need to reduce the cost of internet traffic exchange across the SADC borders as well as provision of enabling environment for additional applications which has a multiplier effect on the economy of the SADC

- To align the existing SADC Interconnection Guidelines to the technological developments especially IP Interconnect:
- develop SADC Cross Border Interconnection Guidelines that would allow for seamless connectivity across the SADC borders
  - ex-ante regulation and dispute resolution procedures
  - Transparency in Cross Border Interconnect charging

- develop SADC Harmonised Quality of Service Regulations that would include IP and ISP service provision

- Support growth of at least one of the National Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) into a regional IXP hub

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