

SADC Parliamentarians as Green Growth Leaders

by Michael MacLennan, IPC-IG, reporting on behalf of the Green Guide Project Team

The **Green Guide's** emphasis on 'going green with equity' is not simply a new policy option, but rather, is critical to regional survival. Defined largely by mineral-dependent growth, a number of challenges and lessons relating to the inclusiveness of the recent Southern African Development Community's (SADC) regional growth have emerged (see **One Pager No. 195**). Challenges to the status quo have emerged from project research findings to date related to:

- the distribution of resource-dependent (-driven) wealth throughout society;
- the benefits (monetary and non-monetary) received by communities where such resources are extracted (and how the resulting burdens such as pollution are also shared); and
- resource governance (people, policies and institutions): workers' rights, business sustainability and the changing conceptions of the role of the state.

These demonstrate the potential for tensions and conflicts to arise which could undermine regional as well as national developmental progress.

Increasingly, evidence shows that 'growing now and cleaning up later' (see **Policy Research Brief No. 38**) does not work and, indeed, significantly limits the future opportunities of some segments of society (through illness, influence on mortality rates, lower productivity and other costly externalities). Such unregulated behaviour increases the environmental costs and the subsequent escalation of the social burdens which can result from poor environmental quality and inadequate services. Added to this mix, increasing vulnerability to climate variability and change in the region—in addition to its already visible impacts—heightens the pressure to take swift and game-changing action.

A forthcoming project background research paper (Butler, Burkolter and Perch) makes the case for new policy approaches within the following areas: the Mineral/Extractive Sector; Development Planning; Food Security; Water; and Equity.

Still, clearly all countries, including those within the SADC region, do not possess the same capacities or systems, nor do they have the appropriate tools, with which to change the structure and the shape of their economies. Therefore, parliamentarians must first identify the capacity for change and the degree to which macro-policy transformation pathways are relevant for their country, before applying a number of analytical questions. To begin to respond to the questions of the day, which can also often have significant

implications for tomorrow, this framing or self-location in regards to realistic, forward-looking policy options, combined with other evidence including lessons learned, provides a good starting point to inform decision-making processes.

With both capacity and influence on the policy process, parliamentarians are well placed to be development policy actors, (see **One Pager No. 194**) provide an important scrutiny review of legislation and other development policy and also to ensure that social risks are mitigated while economies are reformed, changed and transformed along more sustainable pathways. A forthcoming (project related) journal article will discuss risk management and the implications for decision-making at the national level.

In this vein, parliamentarians need decision-support frameworks which allow them to consider the short-, medium- and long-term impacts of their decisions in regards to inclusive green growth. Key issues will be addressed in the *Green Guide* in a practical yet transformative way, while pursuing a holistic approach that integrates the social, economic and environmental. It is here that multi-disciplinary conversations are needed, potentially led by parliamentarians themselves.

This is critical to move away from the isolation of single risks and threats to the acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of modern challenges, to enable better anticipation of, and responses to, such challenges as they arise. Parliamentarians possess the power to highlight these issues and to bring a diverse range of experts together to hold meaningful discussions.

References:

- Burkolter, P., B. Butler and L. Perch (Forthcoming). *Aligning political and social contexts for Green and Inclusive Growth in the SADC Region: Where can Growth, Sustainability and Equity Meet?* Brasília, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG).
- Green Guide Core Working Group (2012). *CDKN Action Lab Innovation Fund Proposal*. Windhoek and Brasília, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG).
- Perch, L. (2012). *Outline for the Green Guide for Parliamentarians – the SADC Region* (Presentation). Brasília, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG).

Notes:

- This Project Note is part three of a four-part series outlining the progress of the IPC-IG production of the Green Guide for the SADC Parliamentary Forum.
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