



**OPENING ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS' ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA (CRASA)**

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COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS' ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA (CRASA) PROF. JOHN S. NKOMA,
AT THE OPENING OF THE 10TH CRASA MEETING,
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA, 29TH MARCH 2007**

Rt. Honourable Nahas Angula, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Namibia,

Honourable Raphael Dinyago, Deputy Minister for
Communications

Mr. David Imbili, Chairman of Namibian Communications
Commission,

Mr. Jan Kruger, Director of Namibian Communications
Commission,

Members of CRASA Executive Committee,

Members of CRASA,

Ms. Cecilia Mamelodi, Representative of SADC

Secretariat,

Representative of the ITU,

Members of CRASA peer organisations,

CRASA Executive Secretary,

Members of the Press,

Distinguished Delegates,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of CRASA Members and on my own behalf, I thank Your Honour, the Prime Minister for finding time in your busy schedule to officiate at the 10th Meeting of the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA). We all acknowledge that you

have a lot of commitments at the national level. However, your presence here demonstrates the importance you attach to the development of the information and communications sector in the SADC region.

Second, I thank the Government of the Republic of Namibia for accepting to host this meeting and through the Namibian Communications Commission provided facilities that have made our plans a reality.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister, CRASA was established in 1997 in pursuance of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology. The objective was among others to implement the provision in the Protocol that called upon regulatory authorities in

the region to collaborate in harmonisation of policies in order to enhance connectivity of SADC member states telecommunications networks. In addition, the regulators were required to formulate strategies to enhance the regulatory capacity of their members through training, exchange of staff and knowledge sharing.

I am pleased to report that as we mark the 10th anniversary of the Association we have registered a number of achievements including among others:

1. Lobbying and sensitise SADC member states who had not established independent regulatory authorities to do so. This led to the growth of CRASA membership from nine (9) in 1998 to 14

before the withdrawal of the Seychelles from SADC which reduced the number to 13;

2. Formulation of the Action Plan in 1999;
3. Formulation of the model telecommunications bill for use by members states when drafting or revising their communications legislation;
4. Formulation of the model telecommunications policy;
5. Development of the SADC frequency band plan;
6. Formulation of the numbering plans;
7. formulation of the CRASA Human Resources Development and Management Guidelines;
8. Formulation of model guidelines and regulation on interconnection, tariffs and a SADC Regional Frequency Band Plan;

9. Formulation of model guidelines on Universal service & licensing;
10. Formulation of model guidelines on Fair competition and wholesale Pricing;
11. Initiated the establishment of the Network for Capacity Building in ICTs Policy, Regulation and Application (NetTel@Africa);
12. Formulation of and successful implementation the first year Strategic Business Plan in September 2000;
13. Formulation of the second five year Strategic Business Plan for 2007 to 2011.
14. Formulation of the Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Disadvantaged People in information and Communications sector in SADC countries.

Honourable Guest of honour, the impact of implementation such policies have been quite notable at the national as well as regional level. For example in each of our member states investment climate has improved so much that the number of investor seeking licences to provide information and communications services has been growing every year. This has had positive impact on network development and subscriber base, which has increased during this decade for between one hundred and five hundred percent. On network connectivity, efforts to develop a reliable network to improve connectivity of our networks have born fruits as we note with East African Submarine System (EASSy) project.

These achievements are the result of increased cooperation between regulators both on bilateral and multilateral basis since the establishment of CRASA. In addition to such benefit collaboration has made it possible to share experiences in providing solution to pertinent issues such as interconnection, harmful frequency interference; and staff development through peering programme operated through NetTel@Africa. Above all NetTel@Africa, which provides training at the level of postgraduate diploma and masters degree, has attracted great interest from all economic blocks in Africa. This has strengthened the position of CRASA in the information and communications sector worldwide as many countries and associations in the world have been learning from us through presentation in workshops and conferences on invitation by organisers

of such events. We do hope that continued adoption of programmes and policies developed by CRASA by regulatory associations in other African economic blocks will serve as a catalyst for integration of Africa. At the global level CRASA has been coordinating participation by member states to international and regional events including conferences, ITU Study Groups, regulators' symposia, and other related activities. Coordination of members' views and positions in such events has strengthened SADC position as well as giving it a strong voice to pursue its agenda successfully. One of such events include the recent ITU Plenipotentiary Conference held in Antalya Turkey where SADC members carried joint campaigns in support of their candidates.

Honourable Prime Minister, CRASA is still committed to continue fulfilling its obligation under the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology. However, as it may be noted CRASA's ability to continue formulating and implementing various policy guidelines is dependent on availability of financial resources to support research and development activities. This is one of the challenges facing the Association as its primary source of funding has been membership subscription. Due to varied level of independence and financial capability, some members have not been able to fulfil their financial obligation to the Association. I appeal through you to SADC member states to accord CRASA essential support by facilitating effective participation by their regulatory authorities into

CRASA activities through payment of their annual subscription.

Honourable Guest of Honour, the establishment and development of CRASA was made possible by support of organisations and individuals who acknowledged the important role played by regulatory authorities in the development of information and communications sector and the regional economy at large. I wish to recognise the unquantifiable assistance granted to CRASA by the following institutions:

1. The United States International Development Agency (USAID), who financed the initial cost of establishment of the Association under the Telecommunication Restructuring Project (RTRP),

and part of the cost of establishment of NetTel@Africa;

2. The Government of the Republic of South Africa who provided office accommodation and services to CRASA Secretariat during the first year of operation;
3. The Government of the Republic of Botswana for accepting to serve as the host country for CRASA Secretariat. In addition, the Government of the Republic of Botswana through its regulatory agency Botswana Telecommunications Authority provided office accommodation and services to CRASA Secretariat for six years, and to date they are continuing to provide accounting services free of charge. This has saved CRASA considerable

amount of money which was spent in implementation of its development activities;

4. UK's Department of International Development who financed the CATIA Project through which CRASA received support towards development of the One Stop information centre, and development of Policy guidelines on Wireless Technologies for SADC region; and implementation of NetTel@Africa Peering programme;
5. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for providing technical assistance in the form of Programme Manager;
6. Swedish International Development Association (Sida) for their financial support to NetTel@Africa;
7. Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) for assistance towards development of the

Human Resources Development and Management
Guidelines and regulatory capacity building;

8. Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)
assisting in development and delivery of basic
telecommunications regulation course;
9. SADC for their support during the CRASA's
formative stage.

In addition, to entities which contributed generously to
CRASA, there are individuals who devoted their time
and energies in the establishment and building CRASA
towards achievement of its mission. With due respect I
wish to name and through commend few of them as
follows:

1. Mr. Eddie Funde of South Africa who served as
the first Chairperson;

2. Mr. Cuthbert Moshe Lekaukau of Botswana, who until his retirement from the regulatory authority had been serving as the Treasurer;
3. Mr. David Kapitolo of Zambia who served as Vice Chairperson;
4. Ms. Elizabeth Nzagi of Tanzania who played host to CRASA founding meeting;
5. Mr. Jan Kruger of Namibia, one of the founding leaders;
6. Joao Jorge of Mozambique, one of the founding leaders;
7. Mr. Simon Moshiro of Tanzania, the first Programme Manager; and others whom due to limited space and time we could not list by name.

Honourable Guest of Honour, as we celebrate our 10th anniversary, we have a number of challenges ahead

that need to be countered in order to sustain the achievements as well as continue serving the information and communication sector effectively.

Some of the challenges include:

1. Inadequate financial resources to sustain the operations of the association;
2. Inadequate capacity in terms of human resources to effectively address the needs of SADC members;
3. Commitment by stakeholders;
4. Keeping in pace with technological evolution;
5. Adoption of policies to guide members in implementation of convergence of technologies and services;

We appeal to governments and organisations and all stakeholders within and outside the region to continue supporting CRASA to overcome these challenges.

Honourable Guest of Honour, to conclude let me once again renew our gratitude to you for availing yourself to grace the opening of the 10th CRASA Annual General Meeting.

Thank you for your attention.