

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS  
IN THE SADC REGION  
HELD IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, 17 – 20 JULY 2018**



In 1992, the 10 founding member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) committed to regional integration, poverty eradication within southern Africa through economic development and ensuring peace and security. When signing the SADC treaty, they also committed to act in accordance with the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The current 15 SADC member States are therefore required to uphold and implement regional and international human rights standards that they have subscribed to. Their National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are or should be uniquely placed to play a bridging role between

stakeholders and promote transparent, participatory and inclusive national processes of implementation and monitoring. Effective NHRIs play an important role in advancing the human rights agenda, good governance and sustainable development.

However, NHRIs in the SADC region and in Africa in general, face various challenges which undermine their effectiveness. Some of the main challenges include weak legal frameworks, inadequate human and financial resources, a lack of political will, invisibility and credibility crises as well as weak or non-existent linkages.

How can the visibility and credibility of NHRIs be enhanced? How can fruitful networks, partnerships and dialogues between the various actors be established? How can the legal frameworks of NHRIs be improved to guarantee an effective protection of human rights and thus a significant contribution to a society based on fundamental rights, democracy and rule of law?

To contribute to this discourse, the KAS Rule of Law Program for Sub-Saharan Africa hosted for the first ever workshop for executive representatives of NHRIs in the SADC region.

The workshop brought together NHRIs' Executive Directors/Secretaries and Chief Executive Officers of 12 out of the 15 SADC member States with the exception of Angola, Seychelles and Tanzania to exchange experiences, challenges and successes and to reflect on the quality of their work. Moreover, the workshop sought to provide a platform for dialogue between the NHRIs to foster closer working relationship among them for the purpose of effective regional promotion of human rights within the SADC region.

By enabling the representatives of the NHRIs to closely interrogate their mandates, roles, resources and goals for the future, the workshop sought to contribute to improvement of the work of the participating institutions and lay a foundation for the crafting of regional best practice guidelines for NHRIs and general promotion of human rights within SADC.

Besides the 12 representatives from the SADC member States, the workshop was attended and enriched by the contributions of Justice Prof. Angelika Nußberger, Vice President, European Court of Human Rights; Mr. George Kegoro, the Executive Director of non-State Kenya Human Rights Commission as well as Prof. Charles Manga Fombad, of the University of Pretoria.