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Executive Secretary  
SADC Secretariat  
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Pretoria, 22 October 2014

## **SADC Energy – Achievements and Challenges**

Excellency,

I have the honour to write to you in my capacity as present Lead International Cooperating Partner (ICP) of the SADC Energy Thematic Group (ETG). Please allow me first of all to underline the many positive developments that have occurred in SADC's work in the energy sector, and particularly since the ETG meeting of February 2014, when Austria assumed its chairmanship.

The ICPs welcome the six (6) months extension (up to December 2014) of the Contract of the Programme Officer-*Energy*, Mr. Odala Matupa, under the Member States' budget after the expiry of the Norwegian funding in June of this year. This step assures the continued functioning of the Energy Division following the retirement of the Senior Programme Officer in March 2014. The launch of the recruitment process for the position of SPO- *Energy* is highly appreciated and we are looking forward to its final outcome.

Being a major prerequisite for sustainable development, energy is an essential part of the infrastructure pillar of SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) as well as the Regional Infrastructure Development Plan, which allows the Secretariat to realize its infrastructure objectives under the RISDP. The ICPs will therefore continue to support the efforts of the Secretariat in order to assure that energy remains high on the SADC Regional Integration Agenda.

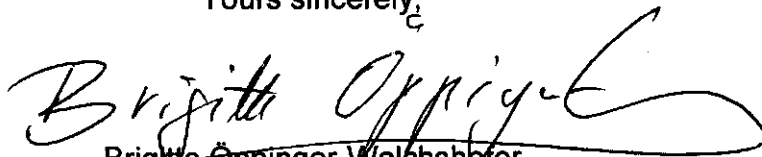
However, while ICPs, including Austria, have undertaken substantive efforts to support SADC in those and other energy related activities, and will continue to do so in the future, **long term solutions to the capacity challenges can only be sought within the structures and systems of the SADC Secretariat itself.**

Given the small size and limited capacity of SADC's Energy Division, which only consists of one substantive Senior Officer and a Technical Assistant, who has been seconded for a limited period of time, the ICPs at their last meeting in September of this year again voiced concern about the long-term sustainability of SADC's energy programmes. I was informed that the positions of Programme Officer-Oil, Programme Officer-Gas and Programme Officer-Power, which theoretically exist within the SADC structure, have been frozen due to budgetary constraints, which leaves the Energy Division with only limited professional resources.

On behalf of the International Cooperating Partners working in the energy sector, I would therefore like to appeal to the SADC Secretariat through your good office to continue its efforts in seeking sustainable financial support from its Members States so as to enhance the capacity of the Energy Division in order to ensure ownership and leadership in the delivery of the SADC energy programme as well as to maintain and possibly increase SADC's engagement in the continental and global energy dialogue.

In the hope to have the honour to meet you in the near future I remain

Yours sincerely,



Brigitte Öppinger-Walchshofer  
Ambassador of Austria