

CONCEPT NOTE

Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) Symposium

08-09 May 2023

Johannesburg, South Africa

1. Introduction

SADC promotes the objectives of economic growth and development, peace and security, and regional integration. To achieve these objectives, in August 2020 SADC Member States adopted the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and SADC Vision 2050, which envision a peaceful, inclusive, middle- to high-income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom. As the SADC Vision is anchored on inclusive development that impacts on all citizens, RISDP includes the crucial Pillar on Social and Human Capital Development, as well as crosscutting issues on gender, youth and disability inclusion, environment, and climate change among others.

As emphasised in RISDP, the pathway to sustainable development in SADC include measures to harness the demographic dividend arising from the region's youth bulge. The large and fast-growing youth population within SADC highlights the huge scale of the skills development and employment challenge that lies ahead. As the demographic dividend does not accrue automatically, Member States are required to invest in young women and men through responsive education and skills development systems, inclusive labour markets enabling decent work, and efficient health systems in the context of economic growth and political stability.

The above suggests that well-designed, holistic and effectively implemented skills development and employment strategies, especially for young people, are a crucial component of the development process in the region. However, the situation in most Member States points to serious deficits in youth development and empowerment, most notably on account of high rates of unemployment and underemployment, high proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET), as well as the predominance of low-productivity entrepreneurship in the informal economy. The average youth unemployment rate in the SADC region is approximately 12 percent, with young women worse off in most Member States. In 2019, the ILO estimated that more than 50% of all working youth were extremely poor using the international poverty line of US\$ 1.90 (PPP) compared to about 45% of older workers¹. At the same time, there were high rates of youth NEET, in excess of 25 per cent across several SADC countries and with even higher rates for young women². It was also noted that secondary school attainment was considerably poor, with need to expand access to education, with a focus on knowledge and skills that are demanded in the labour market including skills associated with literacy, numeracy, ICT and STEM fields which remain in low supply.

In addition, the SADC is an active part of the unprecedented transformation of work, technology and learning, triggered by the cumulative action of digital and green transition, societal demands, and the fall out of Covid-19. A synergistic approach of the region to reap the opportunities and address the challenges of this time needs to build on more agile and innovative lifelong learning policies and practices and on real time labour market and skills intelligence systems. This time of transformation call for greater fluidity between formal, non-formal and informal learning, validation of skills acquired in different contexts, comparability between qualifications across the region and openness of education and training systems to novel forms and types of credentials and modes of recognition.

¹ These trends are subsequently confirmed in the Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022, which takes into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people and their labour market prospects during the recovery and beyond.

² According to a more recent [Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training \(NEET\) \(15 – 24 years old\)](#) published by UN Women in 2022, NEET rates in Eastern and Southern Africa are between 20 and 30 per cent for youth aged 15-19 years and above 40 per cent for youth aged 20-24 years.

Change is necessary in times of transformation of many reference points of education, training, and skills development systems. TVET policies and practices at national and regional levels can contribute to better outcomes and system performance for individuals, economic players and society in general.

This Symposium builds on the valuable joint knowledge of participants and stakeholders, and will contribute to revisit the key issues, propose the way forward and learn from different international and SADC practices.

2. Overview of TVET Intricacies in SADC Member States

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been highlighted as a crucial sector for the provision of skills and qualifications (or human resources development) to the society and economy and (traditionally) supporting the transition of young people to decent work in the region and globally. In 2022, SADC Secretariat, with the support of UNESCO ROSA, undertook a situational analysis of TVET Intricacies in SADC Member States. The report, which was endorsed by the Ministers of Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation, at their Joint Meeting in June 2022, in Malawi, highlighted the following positive practices: availability of National TVET Policies in most Member States; research on TVET is being done in some Member States; apprenticeship and/or work-based learning programmes are available in most SADC Member States; and considerable awareness has been created on the need to make TVET industry demand-driven. However, the report also revealed the following structural barriers which were prevalent in SADC Member States:

- **Mismatch between skills demand and supply:** Higher youth unemployment rates signal that greater numbers of youths are not being absorbed into the labour market, reflecting employers' preference of work experience that youth do not possess. Programmes of studies offered by TVET providers have often been regarded as not responding to the industry demands for skills, and the changing context requiring new skills for new jobs. These institutions have often been criticized for operating without the indispensable labour market and skills intelligence, limited partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders, employers, civil society and innovation. Furthermore, they are often constrained by the low quality of infrastructure for programme delivery.
- **Long processes and delays in finalising and constraints in efficiently implementing TVET Policies:** Criticisms abound as regards the delays in finalizing TVET policies which are often due to the relatively low attention attached to the sector; the lack of human capacity in delineating relevant policy measures and the high level of red tape and bureaucratic procedures. To make matters worse, the literature is fraught with studies highlighting TVET funding as a major impediment to the sector growth and the over reliance of the TVET Sector on government funding. Finally, there is a significant lack of data on the intricacies operating in the TVET sector across SADC Member States which is also significantly hampering the promulgation of appropriate policy prescriptions which may serve to promote TVET in the region UNESCO, 2013).
- **Lack of comparable standards and qualifications across all training institutions and countries:** In many instances, TVET qualifications are not embedded in national qualifications framework and this impacts on the element of comparability. In addition, in many instances, the absence of quality assurance rubrics for the sector also has a bearing on quality recognition.

Other research and policy publications, including the 2018 AU *Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, point even more clearly to a systemic weakness of TVET, particularly with respect to its strategic function as an interface between education and the world of work. Unresolved issues related to fragmentation of delivery, inadequate funding, limited capacity to respond to rapidly changing labour market demands, poor quality of both infrastructure and training provision, lead to an overall negative perception and image among both employers and learners.

It is against the above background that the Ministers of Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation endorsed the convening of a SADC TVET Symposium to delineate the various intricacies operating in TVET systems in the Member States and to propose measures geared towards strengthening TVET systems in the Member States. It was also emphasised that there is a need to rethink TVET - as a valuable, relevant, cost-effective, attractive and trusted system, as a recognised and equitable component of the NQF and as being essential for decent and productive employment and lifelong learning of individuals.

3. The SADC TVET Symposium

a) The Rationale

The SADC TVET Symposium, to be convened between May 08-09, 2023, in Johannesburg, South Africa, will facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders in the TVET system, as well as industry players and international cooperating partners, with a view to deepen understanding of the elements impeding the effective implementation of TVET measures in the Member States. The ultimate aim is to promote TVET as an integral part of efforts to enhance skills and employability and ultimately sustainable and inclusive development in a context of accelerated transformation.

b) Dialogue Objectives

The TVET Symposium seeks to promote skills development to enhance access to productive employment and entrepreneurship, especially among young people, and to improve productivity in the region. The Symposium will identify key enablers and constraints operating in the TVET sector and propose practical solutions. The Symposium will also facilitate peer learning and exchanges on what has worked in the Member States and in other parts of the world.

Among other issues and drawing from delegates' practical experiences, the dialogue will address pertinent issues such as:

- Rethinking TVET governance and financing systems;
- Aligning TVET with labour market needs and industrialisation processes;
- Articulation of TVET Qualifications; and
- Equipping TVET to deliver skills for Just Transitions and the Future of Work.

The importance of ensuring availability of inclusive and equitable quality technical and vocational education and training will be covered across all thematic areas.

4. Organisation of the Dialogue

a) Participation

The symposium will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 08-09 May 2023. The participants will be mainly government officials from the Ministries responsible for TVET in SADC Member States and Representatives from TVET Service Providers. Representatives from the Private sector will also be invited. SADC Secretariat, with the support of the European Training Foundation (through the ACQF project), UNESCO and the ILO, will be convening the Symposium.

b) Format

As per the draft programme, the Symposium will facilitate open and highly interactive exchanges, with moderation and facilitation by experts with global and regional experience in the subject matter.

c) Outcome

Through dialogue, the Symposium is expected to facilitate knowledge sharing and consensus on key priorities to promote creation of knowledge, skills and competences for improved employability,

adaptability and the green and digital transition. The outcomes and recommendations will be submitted to the SADC Committees of Senior Officials and Ministers responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation to facilitate implementation. It is expected that an online repository of good practices and innovative approaches will also be created as a result of the dialogue, with a view of encouraging exchanges and cooperation across SADC Member States.



Technical and Vocational Training Education (TVET) Symposium

08-09 May 2023, Johannesburg, South Africa
Final Programme

Day One: 08 May 2023	
08:30 - 09.00	Arrival of Participants
Opening session	
09:00 – 10.00	Welcome Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Wells, Head, Education Unit, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa • Joni Musabayana, Director, Decent Work Team for Eastern and Southern Africa, ILO • Eduarda Castel Branco, Senior Human Capital Development Expert, ETF • Ms. Angele Makombo N'tumba Deputy Executive Secretary, Regional Integration – SADC Secretariat • Permanent Secretary, Ministry Responsible for TVET, DRC
10.00-11.00	Presentation on TVET Intricacies in SADC Member States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoosen Rasool
11.00 – 11.15 Tea Break	
Technical session continued	
11.15-12.00	TVET Intricacies in SADC Member States Discussants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Agnes NyaLonge, Minister Labour (Malawi) • Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO Education Sector, Paris • Ms Phyllis Kasonkomona, Director Planning and Member of SESA PSC, Zambia • Hendrina Doroba, Division Manager - Education and Skills Development - Africa Development Bank • Unami Mpofu, Team Lead – Skills and Employment, AUDA NEPAD
12.00 – 12:30	Moderated dialogue and experience sharing session
12.30 - 12.45	Overview of the Programme
12.45 – 13:45 Lunch Break	
Technical session continued	
13.45 - 15:15	Enhancing relevance and effectiveness of TVET Break Away Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TVET Policies and Governance in SADC Member States • Skills for Jobs – TVET Responsiveness to Labour Market
15.15 - 15.30	Tea Break
15.30 –17.00	Break Away Sessions: (Continue)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TVET Policies and Governance in SADC Member States • Skills for Jobs – TVET Responsiveness to Labour Market
17.00	End of Day One
Day Two: 09 May 2022	
Technical session continued	
09.00 - 10.30	Break-Away Sessions (Continue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation • Skills for Digital and Just Transitions
10.30 – 10.45	Tea Break
10.45 – 12.15	Break-Away Sessions (Continue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation • Skills for Digital and Just Transitions
12.15 – 13.30	Reports from thematic groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Rapporteurs
13.30 – 15.00	Lunch Break
Dialogue Outcome	
15:00 - 16:00	Presentation of Key Messages Rapporteur: Hoosen Rasool
16:00 - 16:30	Take aways and Next steps
16:30 - 16:45	Closing
End of Meeting	