

**Welcome Remarks by Mr Hubert René Schillinger, Resident Representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Namibia, at the Annual SADCOPAC Conference, Windhoek, 14.08.2006**

Your Excellency, The Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia,  
Mr Nahas Angula,  
Your Excellency, The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia,  
Mr Theo-Ben Gurirab,  
Hon. Vincent Smith, Chairperson of SADCOPAC,  
Hon. Johan de Waal, Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee of Namibia,  
Honourable Members of Parliament  
Auditor Generals and Distinguished Delegates from the SADC-Region,  
High Commissioners & Ambassadors,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

as representative of one of the co-organizers and sponsors of this event I am grateful for the privilege to also welcome you all here this morning.

I am talking to you with a feeling of amazement, satisfaction and pride.

Amazement, because of this huge turnout of distinguished Members of Parliament and Auditor-Generals from all over the region who converged here in Windhoek, not because any friendly donor sponsored their trip, but because their own institution did send them here at their own cost.

This is something which for me, as the representative of what some would call a “donor organisation” (although we don’t like that word and it is certainly not exactly what we are...) is a rather unusual experience, an experience, which, to say the least, I don’t encounter everyday. Therefore, don’t be surprised, if I attach some significance to this very fact. In my mind, this means that those who have come here despite their busy schedules do so, because at SADCOPAC they expect to get something in return, receive value for their money by participating in this conference. This is significant also, because I expect an audience which is by nature or profession a very critical one, due to the fact that at home it is their mandate, mission, task or job to see to it that their nation’s taxpayers are getting exactly that: value for the money they have to pay to their respective treasury.

And this is then also where my feeling of satisfaction and pride comes in. It is the satisfaction and pride about my own organisation’s wisdom and foresight to have lent its unwavering support to this still very new, very young and up to now perhaps not very well known regional parliamentary organisation, SADCOPAC, from its foundation in 2003 until today. If YOU are all here today, WE can’t be wrong! Later in the conference, there will be a discussion on performance management and performance auditing and all the necessary instruments like performance indicators. Your presence here today to me is a perfect performance indicator for the excellent work done by SADCOPAC since its foundation three years ago!

For the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) whose main mission is to support democracy, the cooperation with parliamentary institutions always has been an important component of its work. Although our parliamentary support is traditionally concentrated on the national level – and to some extent the local government one – we have extended our co-operation for quite some time now also to the supra-national level, mainly the regional level that is. In Southern Africa, we therefore support the activities of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, based here in Windhoek,

and those of SADCOPAC, and we also actively encourage first attempts by the two regional parliamentary organisations to come and work together more closely. We actually think there is quite some scope for synergies between the two when it comes to fostering good governance, accountability and with regard to the fight against the scourge of corruption, nepotism, mismanagement, waste and fraud.

Generally speaking, in the promotion of good governance and accountability through parliamentary action, we see the *regional level* as having a specific and increasingly important role to play. The role of regional bodies like SADCOPAC and their activities, in our view, is primarily one of knowledge-sharing, peer-learning, exchange of experience and the highlighting of lessons learned and good practise among neighbours who have many things in common.

The experience in other parts of the world also show that regional comparisons have the potential of fostering a healthy sense of competition among neighbouring states, triggering improvements with a view to mutually outperform each other. Furthermore, 'good performers' can set an example for others by providing the benchmarks for common norms and standards to be established regionally. As in other areas, such common norms and standards could become an effective tool for the improvement of national systems and procedures on the parliamentary level. We believe that through mechanisms and tools like the one I just described, an organisation like SADCOPAC can add significant value to national parliamentary standards and have a beneficial impact on national practices by providing the necessary competent platform for knowledge-sharing, peer-learning, exchange of experience, standard-setting etc.

But the role of SADCOPAC should perhaps not be limited to what I have just outlined. Together with its sister organisation SADCOSAI, which is the umbrella body of the Auditor Generals in Southern Africa, SADCOPAC is also well placed to become itself a lobby organisation for good, responsible and accountable governance. I am probably not the only one who thinks that some aggressive lobbying for more competencies and more human and financial resources for the whole accountability complex would not be such a bad idea. Public accounts committees and Auditor Generals need teeth. As long as Auditing offices are largely understaffed and under-funded and AGs reports can be ignored by Government and Parastatals without impunity there is a lot that still needs to be done. Conferences such as this one can provide a platform to voice these grievances and come up with some practical recommendations on how to address and overcome them.

However, this year's annual conference has some very specific issues to be discussed, which are not only highly relevant, but, at least from a Namibian perspective, also highly topical. I don't need to elaborate much, as, for instance, issues related to the topic "prudent investment policies for public funds" are still very fresh in everybody's mind. Acronyms like "SSC" or "ODC" will have to suffice. Issues related to the performance, governance and control of state-owned enterprises are also still part of the public debate, especially in connection with the recent legislation on the governance of SOEs in Namibia, which has triggered quite some controversy.

Finally, the issue of performance standards, performance agreements, related performance audits for state-owned enterprises and government departments alike in my mind is and will remain a key governance issue, even far beyond Namibia and the SADC region as a whole. Performance measurement and performance contracts for public entities has been and in many countries still are at the centre of the debate of public sector reform as part of an international trend called "New Public Management". This debate was initially triggered in the early 1990s by the nowadays

famous book written by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler titled “Reinventing Government”. And with a quote from that book I want to conclude my short remarks.

In making their case for performance measurement this is what Osborne and Gaebler have to say:

- What Gets Measured Gets Done
- If You Don't Measure Results You Can't Tell Success From Failure
- If You Can't Tell Success From Failure, You Can't Reward It
- If You Can't Reward Success, You Are Probably Rewarding Failure
- If You Can't See Success, You Can't Learn From It
- If You Can't Recognize Failure, You Can't Correct It
- If You Can Demonstrate Results, You Can Win Public Support.

I am convinced that this annual SADCOPAC conference will demonstrate measurable results and add value to governance and accountability in the region. Do we have performance indicators for that? Well, we haven't actually formulated any, but if, for instance, in the next annual conference the number and proportion of delegates who attend without donor support will be as high as this time, this to me again would be a clear indication that these type of conferences continue to add value.

I THANK YOU!