

SADCAS CEO PAYS A COURTESY CALL ON NEW MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY, COOPERATIVES AND MARKETING, LESOTHO

The SADCAS Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mrs Maureen Mutasa, SADCAS Scheme Coordinator for Testing Laboratories Mrs Pinkie Malebe and Ms Linda Dirorimwe the SADCAS Training Administrator accompanied by the first National accreditation Focal Point (NAFP) for Lesotho, Mr Motjoka Azael Makara and the Director in the Department of Standards and Quality Assurance Mr Molebatsi Rabolinyane paid a courtesy call on Lesotho's Minister of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and Marketing Honourable Halebonoe Setšabi on 7 October 2019 at the Ministry's Offices in Maseru, Lesotho. The Principle Secretary in the Ministry, Mrs Mojela was also in attendance.



From Left to Right: Mrs P Malebe, Mrs Mutasa, Honourable Setšabi, Mrs Mojela, Mr Rabolinyane and Ms Dirorimwe pose for a photo after the courtesy call

Mrs Mutasa started by introducing the SADCAS team then went on to congratulate the Minister on his appointment. She thanked the Minister for agreeing to meet the SADCAS delegation, noting that it was his first day in the office at this Ministry. She also stated that SADCAS delegation was glad to be the first to meet with the Minister in the new office.

The Honourable Minister Setšabi welcomed Mrs Mutasa and her team to Maseru, Lesotho and indicated that indeed it is his first day at the Ministry but he saw a need to meet with the SADCAS delegation as the Director has already briefed him about SADCAS and the purpose of the visit which he viewed with high importance. Targeted marketing visits such as the one to Lesotho are part of SADCAS' marketing strategy to reach out to SADCAS clients and potential clients operating within the region and introduce to them SADCAS services.

The purpose of the courtesy call was to introduce and to update the Minister on developments in SADCAS and on government contributions towards SADCAS sustainability, and to call upon the Minister to continuously support the office of the NAFP which is housed in the Ministry. Mrs Mutasa informed the Minister that SADCAS had held a successful workshop for conformity assessment bodies (CABs) earlier in the day. She stated that SADCAS saw a need to conduct a targeted marketing visit to Lesotho as the country uptake of SADCAS accreditation services was slow. She mentioned that SADCAS had only run 2 training courses of accreditation matters in Lesotho over the years and up to date SADCAS had not yet accredited any facilities in Lesotho although one applicant was at an advanced stage of the accreditation process.

The SADCAS CEO then gave a brief overview of SADCAS, its establishment, mandate and operationalization. She outlined the need and importance of accreditation stating that accreditation is now considered the passport to global trade. She briefed the Minister about SADCAS achievements thus far in particular the achievement of signatory status in AFRAC and ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangements for Testing and Calibration in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025, Medical testing to ISO 15189, Inspection Bodies to ISO/IEC 17020 and the recent recognition

of the management systems certification bodies accreditation scheme to ISO/IEC 17021-1 which means that the accreditation certificates issued by SADCAS are internationally recognized.

On government contributions, Mrs Mutasa reported to the Honourable Minister that the SADC Ministers of Trade (SADC CMT) at its 29th meeting held on 14 August 2017 approved the proposed support of SADCAS amounting to US\$2.38 million, by beneficiary member states, for the period beginning 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022 as outlined in the schedule of contributions. The support and contributions to SADCAS were further discussed at the SADC CMT meetings of 23 July 2018 and 14 June 2019 where Member States that had not remitted their respective contributions were reminded to do so. Mrs Mutasa advised the Minister of the outstanding amount owed by the Kingdom of Lesotho further mentioning that contributions from Lesotho are minimal as the contribution is based on the number of CABs in the country.

Mrs Mutasa then informed the Minister of the important role played by the NAFP-Lesotho in promoting accreditation and marketing SADCAS services and appealed to the Minister and the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho to support NAFPs activities for enhanced uptake of accreditation.

In closing the Honourable Minister Setšabi thanked the Director, Mr Rabolinyane and the NAFP, Mr Azael Makara for arranging this very important meeting and the SADCAS delegation for making time to visit the Kingdom of Lesotho. He acknowledged the importance of accreditation to the economic and social development of the Kingdom and promised that he will do some “house cleaning” and see how Lesotho can honor the payments as committed. He promised the SADCAS CEO that he will fully engage his team on how the Ministry can further assist. He further pledged his full support and commitment to uplifting participation of Lesotho in the areas of training and accreditation and to support the activities of the NAFP.

The brief but high impact meeting was closed with a photoshoot in the new Minister’s office.

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