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Considering Growth and Equity in SADC Today

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The Green Guide project (see One Pager No. 194) funded by the Climate Development Knowledge Network, provides an important opportunity to carry out action-oriented research and to explore some of the innately complex political issues which arise in the process of re-calibrating economies for greener and more inclusive growth. The trajectory of growth within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) presents potential and real opportunities for the guide to provide insight on sustainable and equitable growth. The lessons learned from the project could potentially also be applicable to a broader cross-section of other developing countries.

Background research conducted by members of the Core Working Group (see forthcoming background paper by Butler, Burkolter and Perch) highlights the following patterns and groupings among the region's economies:

- dependent on mineral resources: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia;
- dependent on agriculture: Swaziland, Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe;
- dependent on manufacturing: Mauritius;
- dependent on fishing/tourism: Seychelles, Madagascar; and
- mixed economy: South Africa.

The following shared challenges to achieving sustainable and inclusive green growth in the SADC region also emerge:

- **Resource inequality** reinforces and perpetuates **structural inequalities** that forestall inclusive and equitable growth, by maintaining high levels of extreme poverty and preventing millions of people from maximising the potential use of resources and services that exist.
- **Weak governance** exacerbates instances of corruption and rent seeking, withholding the equitable and productive distribution of resource rents within nation-states.
- The **intensification of agricultural practices** as a result of population growth, the greater need for expanded food supplies and the escalation of extreme dependence on agriculture for employment and subsistence strategies throughout the global South have led to the degradation of scarce tracts of land available for agriculture. The role of the agricultural sector in fostering rural growth and development is clear, as is its potential to reduce levels of resource consumption and advance an alternative development trajectory that incorporates climate management strategies.

An evolving Development Pathways approach (developed by Butler, Burkolter and Perch) seeks to enable parliamentarians to assess and consider the present and short-term realities and potential ways to initiate a transformative growth that is low-carbon, resource-efficient, equitable and inclusive that shares burdens equally across society and the economy.

Building on ongoing research in Latin America <<http://nrpathways.scienceontheweb.net/Consolidated%20paper.pdf>> that identifies potential pathways for transforming sectors that are dependent on natural resources,

a four-pathway approach was developed (i.e. path-repair, path-transformation, path-transition and path-linking). The critical relevance of this research in Latin America for the *Green Guide* project is its analysis of the structural challenges to transformation of the agricultural, mining and forestry sectors—sectors that are equally dominant in the SADC region.

These four options underpin the conceptual framework of the *Green Guide* and the definition of context-specific policy insights. For example, parliamentarians could consider their country's present readiness for a full-scale transformation and carefully assess the barriers to such a transformation, alongside the nature of such barriers and the level to which they are structural or practical barriers to such transformation and change. The following considerations may apply depending on the context:

- *Do development proposals fit any of the four pathway options? If so, how? Or how do they not?*
- *Within the proposal being discussed, what are the possible trade-offs between the economy, society and the environment in the short, medium and long term?*
- *Can the project or new initiative help deliver educational and/or health benefits at the same time? If so, how?*

Adequately addressing such considerations requires a number of policy, governance and institutional framework reforms. Parliamentarians sit at the crossroads of development policy, decision-making and democratic participation, all of which are elements of the socio-political context within which growth and development are defined, designed and executed. When decisions are being made and debated about growth, parliamentarians are among the most capable of fusing macro-level discussions with local realities, which is vital to ensuring sustainable and equitable green growth across various scales.

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Notes:

- This Project Note is part two of a four-part series outlining the progress of the IPC-IG production of the Green Guide for the SADC Parliamentary Forum.
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