

**SARPN Civil Society Conference**  
**13 and 14 June 2007**  
**“State of the Region – SADC poverty trends and prospects”**

**Introduction**

The Southern African sub-region incorporates some of the poorest countries in the world, with the proportion of those living on less than US \$1 a day averaging about 40% for the region as a whole. Inequality in the sub-region is manifested through rising levels of impoverishment, the paradox of “jobless growth”, entrenched patriarchal systems, rising unemployment and the inability of the majority of people to access sources of livelihood or basic services

In response, SARPN has initiated a process of producing an annual review of poverty trends in the SADC region. The annual *Poverty Report* would be differentiated from other development publications by the centrality of civil society input, which would take the form of broad civil society interaction on an annual basis culminating in a high level annual publication. This conference constitutes a key stage of that process, and its outcomes will feed directly into the *Poverty Report* publication.

**Objectives of the conference**

The conference will bring together experts from civil society throughout the SADC region to discuss a number of critical areas that can improve our understanding of poverty in the region, including:

- Definitions: Finding an inclusive definition that gives a true reflection of poverty in the Southern Africa region;
- Measurement: Developing indicators and capturing data and trends related to non-income dimensions of poverty (social, political and economic);
- Analysis: Integrating data from sample surveys with information obtained through participatory techniques, for a more holistic understanding of poverty.

All of the above-mentioned issues will be considered with regard to the following drivers of poverty, which have been selected as the chapters of the first volume of the *Poverty Report*:

- Social Protection, Social Safety nets and Poverty
- Land Distribution and Poverty
- Natural resources and the New Scramble for Africa
- Democracy, Governance and Poverty
- Health, HIV/AIDS, and Poverty
- Social Protection and Safety Nets
- Trade and economic justice
- Poverty in the Middle Income Countries of SADC
- Gender, Power, Politics and Poverty

**Outcomes of the conference**

Through focused presentations and discussion, the conference will contribute toward:

- a more comprehensive understanding of poverty in the region
- the development of an agenda for further research
- the development of a programme of action for civil society efforts toward poverty eradication.

In addition to distributing the report of the conference to SARPN's large network, the outcomes of the conference will feed into the chapters of the *Poverty Report*.