

Building Regional and International Consensus Workshop Madagascar: Lessons Learnt in the Process of Moving from an Illegal Government to a Legitimate Government



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Southern Sun Hotel, 7 Main Road, Newlands, Cape Town

Executive Summary

This Building Regional and International Consensus workshop on *Madagascar: Lessons Learnt in the Process of Moving from an Illegal Government to a Legitimate Government*, was addressed by the Deputy Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and President Jacob Zuma's special envoy to Madagascar during South Africa's tenure as Chair of the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security, Marius Fransman. Marissa van Rensburg (SALO) chaired the meeting, and opening remarks were given by Molly Dhlamini (SALO).

Molly Dhlamini: SALO Researcher, a Member of the ANC International Affairs Sub-Committee and a former International Relations Coordinator: National Union of Mineworkers



Molly Dhlamini welcomed all present and introduced the main speaker, the Honourable Deputy Minister Marius Fransman. She then briefly contextualised the current state of affairs in Madagascar, expressing that Madagascar has shown chronic political instability and declining economic trends over the past few decades.

Honourable Marius Fransman: Deputy Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), and President Jacob Zuma’s special envoy to Madagascar during South Africa’s tenure as Chair of the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security

The Honourable Fransman explained that none of the negotiations reached or achievements made in the process of shaping the Road Map to elections in Madagascar would have been possible if it were not for the use of a particular methodology of cooperation, sacrifice and engagement between South Africa, SADC, the AU, the EU and occasionally the United Nations and civil society stakeholders.

The Deputy Minister asserted that South Africa’s foreign policy objective in Africa is to create a peaceful environment within SADC and within Africa; believing that with peace comes development, and with development comes peace. There is an obstruction to this peace when illegitimate governments emerge in the region. When this occurs, it becomes the responsibility of the collective SADC group to find mechanisms to put an end to the impasse. In the case of Madagascar’s impasse, SADC decided that the mechanism to end the impasse should be to put in place a roadmap to elections, and for all stakeholders of the roadmap to move towards a transitional arrangement.

He indicated that the initial SADC roadmap was formulated under the President of Mozambique, Honourable Joaquim Chissano, as he led that process in the period before South Africa took over the responsibility as the chair of the SADC Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. South Africa during its tenure as chair of the Troika, then carried out this task as set out by SADC. Whilst the road map was being negotiated, a transitional government needed to be put in place. It was agreed that that transitional government needed to comprise of the various “*mouvances*” – which refers to political groupings within Madagascar.

According to Fransman, one of the lessons learnt during this process is that one should refrain from making assumptions regarding what the various political actors in a particular country will do in a given situation. If the various political groupings are all able to agree on the need for stability in their country, it can act as a unifying common denominator, enabling the different groupings to work through the various political issues towards a negotiated outcome.

He stated that SADC, amongst the other regional and international stakeholders, entered Madagascar in September 2011 to begin the process of negotiating and consolidating the Roadmap to Elections as well as the setting up of the transitional government. This process was conducted smoothly, except for one blockage that occurred- when the memorandum for the Roadmap was to be signed at a meeting in the Seychelles, facilitated by South Africa, between the various Malagasy political groupings, the Malagasy Military, honourable Deputy Minister Fransman, the then SADC executive secretary, and the Foreign Minister of Mauritius. The Malagasy military, loyal to then President Andry Rajoelina, went into this meeting with the intention of refusing to sign the roadmap in its then-present form, which made provisions for the return of former President, Marc Ravalomanana. The only alternative that the military was willing to agree to was a version of the Roadmap which did not include provisions for the return of former President,



Marc Ravalomanana. This logjam persisted as the military and the other groupings could not reach consensus around the return of former President Ravalomanana. A conclusion was eventually reached in the early hours of the morning, and for the first time since the 2009 coup d'état in Madagascar SADC was able to get all political parties to sign the agreements (except for former President Ratsiraka). Following these negotiations, the collective immediately moved ahead and set up the transitional government.

Deputy Minister Fransman shared several 'lessons learnt' from the aforementioned negotiations process, including:

❖ ***The importance of good governance in institutions, to actively check and balance centres of power within a state.***

Referring to the lack of checks and balances of power in Madagascar, the Deputy Minister said that there is “something in the instruments of governance of the country that create the opportunity for coup d'états”. Such instruments include the powers of the president, the relationship between the presidency and the legislative arm, the relationship between the presidency and the administrative arm and the relationship between all of these bodies and municipalities. He stated that a lack of checks and balances of power naturally creates insecurity in a political space. Proper instruments of accountability, which allow for the questioning of powers and functions of the various institutions in the administration and in the governance system need to be established where lacking and strengthened where present in Madagascar. The Deputy Minister advised that the strengthening of such institutions could be taken through the SADC processes, amongst others.

- ❖ ***The importance of remedying weak organisational culture within party politics.*** In Madagascar, there is a lack of meaningful engagement of citizens within the context of party politics. There are political parties or “mouvances”, but they do not have strong party structures or constituencies; this leads to consistent instability due to a lack of grounding. The Deputy Minister referred to South Africa, putting forth that stability has been maintained through strong party structures with large memberships; wherein party support is built around policies rather than individuals. It should be that a party is larger than any of its members, so that individuals can come and go without affecting the party’s strength or characteristics. The Deputy Minister stated that governance in Madagascar has evaded stability in the past, because it revolved around a small group of elite individuals – this is attributed to the lack of sound organisational culture and mass mobilisation within party politics.

- ❖ ***The important role of the international community in supporting the negotiation process.*** The Deputy Minister commended the international community for supporting the SADC regional strategy on Madagascar, with no country taking decisions outside of the ambit this regional strategy. He put forth that this may have been as a result of SADC’s deliberate consultation and engagement, to ensure that some of the deeper and more sensitive issues were taken offline and dealt with in smaller forums, wherein the different stakeholders were able to consult and engage to reach consensus.

- ❖ ***“Cracking the moment of breakthrough” in negotiations.*** The Deputy Minister explained that former President Andry Rajoelina, had been complying consistently with all the terms of the negotiation, until he refused to agree to the proposed return of former President Ravalomanana, and his amnesty. This could have become an unravelling point within the thus far successful process, however through intense engagement, Rajoelina was made to concede to this condition of the negotiations. Following this brief impasse, Rajoelina willingly chose not to stand for elections after he was consulted by SADC and other groupings around the various options available to him (including that neither Rajoelina nor Ravalomanana should stand), this was a key step towards political stability.

The Honourable Deputy Minister Fransman concluded by stating that civil society must do all that they can to integrate themselves into the international community. In the case of Madagascar, support mechanisms must be created in order to break the cycle of coup d’états that occurs frequently. This cycle can only be broken completely, if the diplomats, the international community and civil society in Madagascar, together with the political actors (who has access to the legislature) work collectively to play that role.

- **END** -

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