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Title

THE EXAMINATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP: THE CASE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

Abstract

There is a strong need to examine the importance of education in african leaders and the role played by education in decisions made by leaders in Africa. Public sector institutions globally, are the hope for the citizens or communities for their needs. The aim of this paper is to show the relationship between poor public service delivery in Africa and lack of education especially economic governance education from african leaders. Africa as the continent is rich in mineral resources but lack of effective leaders who are willing to transform Africa by ensuring that the African economy is developed for Africans. Education status of the African leaders is not a prerequisite for candidates to stand for election in any political leadership position and subsequently into some government positions. Education lays a foundation for individuals to understand policies and it is important for political leaders to have a background of what does it take to hold a senior position in government structure. This paper concludes that political leaders in Africa must have a specific educational background. Candidates must contest political position only if they have specific education qualification and this will minimize political killings and reduce the number of contestants. Findings of this paper are based on the quantitative approached used to analyse the education level of African leaders. The results and conclusions made in this paper show that there is a gap between the demands of the people and the capacity to deliver by african leaders. Public sector institutions in Africa must be led by people who have tertiary qualifications and clear understanding of government administration and economy.

Keywords

Education, leadership, ethics, development, governance, politics, service delivery, government.

Introduction

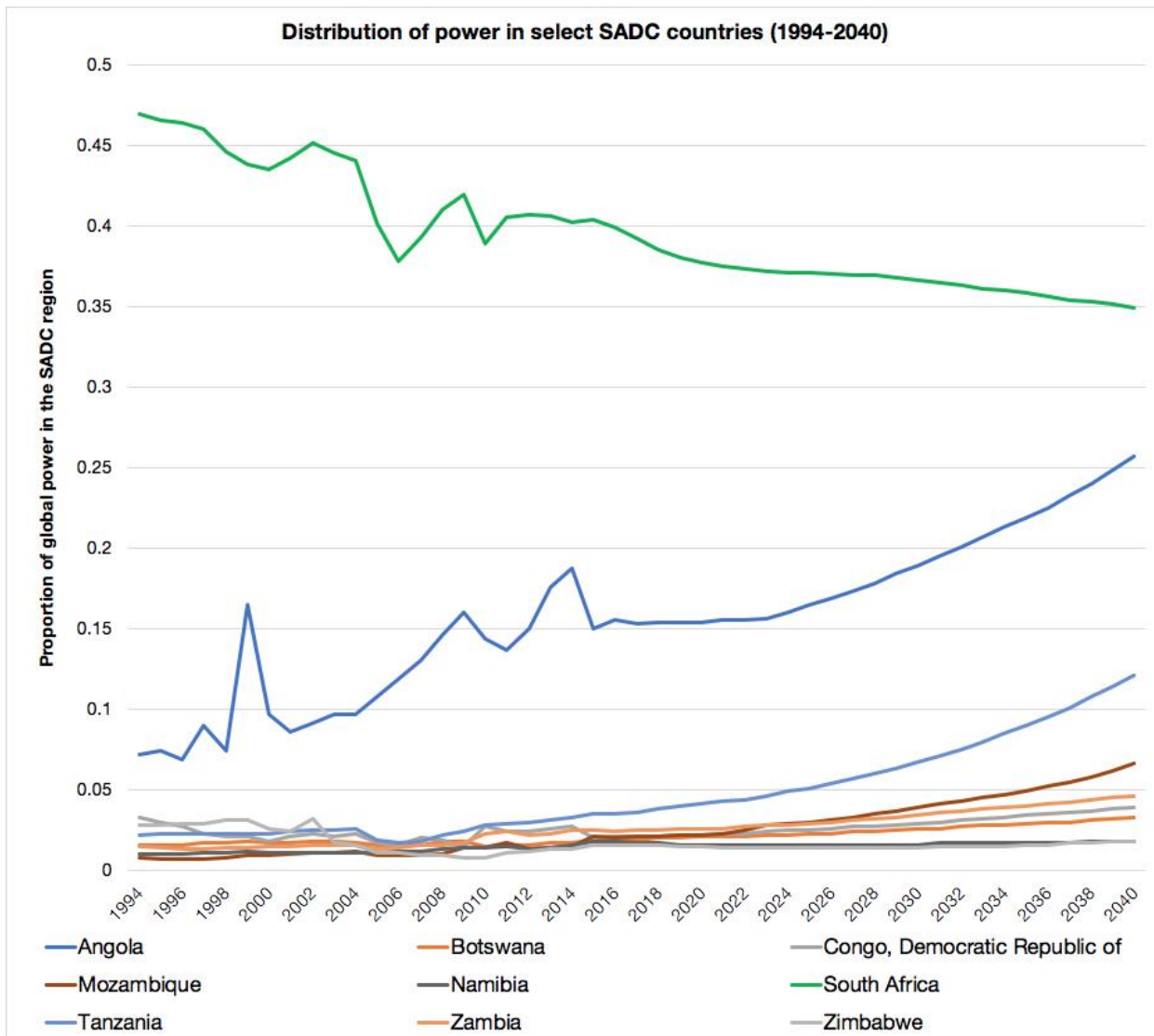
Education plays a prominent role in the development of any country because without education people will not understand the balance of forces. There is no country that can achieve viable economic growth without considerable investment in human capital. Education develops people's understanding of themselves and the world. Education further improves the quality of the people's lives and leads to the broader social benefits to individuals and society (Dubois, Rucker and Galinsky, 2015: 436). Democratic countries are led by political leaders that have been elected through democratic processes. Democracy is impossible without political parties' involvement and political parties cannot add value to a political system under conditions of dictatorship (Cheliotis and Xenakis, 2016: 269). This paper intends to show a remedial perspective to address challenges that are introduced by the democratic systems in the SADC region which do not accommodate everyone. As things stand, the main objective of the SADC region is the following: *"SADC must achieve development, peace and security, and economic growth, to alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration, built on democratic principles and equitable and sustainable development"*. These objectives need leaders who have education and knowledge from the lower level to higher levels (SADC NEWSLETTER, 2019: 02). This paper analyses the education level of local government leaders in the SADC region and their understanding of what needs to be done. It is a common practice in politics that those who are politically deployed do not need a specific qualification in order for them to perform their duties, however, at some point, this brings more challenges hence that staff must be guided by a leader who has an understanding of what needs to be done. The aim of this paper is to show the importance of education in political leaders in the SADC region. The mistakes committed by african leaders as a result of lack of knowledge is discussed in this paper.

Materials and methods

Peer-reviewed journal articles were used to discuss the problems facing african leaders and particularly in the SADC region. Newspapers and conference reports informed the results of this paper, the leadership challenges and the relationship amongst african countries played a significant role in reaching the conclusions. This paper employed a secondary data research method which is normally conceptualized as the desktop research. Secondary research or desk research is a research method that includes the already existing data. Existing data is summarized and organized to increase the overall efficiency of research. Secondary research includes research material published in research reports and similar documents (Bhat, 2017). For this paper, it was necessary to review qualitative data and quantitative data that was used in other journal articles that are similar to this paper. According to Zhou and Nunes (2016: 308), secondary research is commonly recognized as equate to review literature and make conclusions on a specific problem. This paper relied on books, journal articles indexed in various databases, business reports and qualitative information based on interviews that took place in various television and radio stations.

Results

African leaders need to be united and speak in one voice about African development. The systems that are perceived as effective systems in African countries that are viewed as fast-developing countries must be applied in the countries that are still lacking behind. In the SADC region, South Africa possesses the largest economy in the region and it also has the third-largest population. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the largest population in the SADC region but far behind in the economic development (Vaudran, 2019: 02).



Source: IFs version 7.34

Figure 1: Proportion of the global power

The above figure (figure 1) comprises of the global influence by African countries that are in the SADC region and also the estimated influence up to the year 2040. SADC countries have an influence in countries that are outside of Africa but their influence is minimal and not the same from all countries. The global influence of SADC countries fluctuates from year to year because of the changes in the global economy. South Africa remains the biggest influence in the global economy from 1994 up to date and is also expected to rise over the coming years. African leaders would have more influence on the global market if they had adequate education and expertise to convince other countries that Africa is not consumers of products but producers of products. African countries and leaders in the main do not offer enough financial support to those who want to start formal businesses abroad. Mapuva and Muyengwa-Mapuva (2014: 03) argued that the institutional development programs in the SADC region will only be successful if leaders are equipped with necessary skills. The SADC region must devise a mechanism and a system that will address the issues affecting the communities in Africa. Transformation in Africa will only be realized if African leaders themselves are transformed and allow themselves to be educated and prescribe a minimum qualification for candidates. The SADC region can work effectively if there is an education and skills unit that gives

advice to the electoral commission and political parties. Peer reviews on African leaders must be taken into consideration and proper actions must be made. Those who are perceived as think-tankers in the SADC region leaders and possess the necessary qualifications and skills supposed to provide guidance and review their peers. The achievements made by single countries in the SADC region must be shared amongst the entire region and ideas must be shared accordingly. Regional economic integration must not be excluded from the international economy.

Saurombe (2012: 02) states that the SADC region must expand the scope of work and include the analyses of the capacity of those who are in leadership positions. The biggest challenge in the SADC region is the capacity of those who are in leadership positions and the SADC do not have power over individual countries. Countries have their own electoral systems and requirements for candidates to avail themselves for political positions. The SADC treaty provides supranational governance even though some decisions are not easily implemented in some countries because of the uniqueness of countries. The mandate of the SADC region to develop the economy of the region is not practical if those who are in leadership positions are not properly equipped to accomplish their tasks. The key institution to transform the region is the education institution for those in leadership and the community at large. Interventions and presentations by academics within the SADC region are necessary to advise those who are in the leadership position for future leaders and a form of reference. SADC leaders are clear about the required commitment but necessary skills are lacking which directly affect the progress of the vision of SADC. The Citizen (2017: 02) reported that the SADC regional leadership is mainly concerned about security issues in Africa. Political tensions in African countries is still high despite the intervention of the SADC resolutions. Political violence in individual countries within the SADC region is not properly addressed by SADC leadership. The case of Lesotho is an example where the political violence was not addressed and many people lost their lives as a result of the political violence.

According to Chakwana (2018: 02), the economic growth and reduction of poverty will be achieved if institutions work together. The SADC members have developed a common regional agenda to guide the member states. The SADC has a Regional Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) this plan has to include the capacity of African leaders. Member states are independent but the regional protocols and policies must be followed. The implementation of the gap in knowledge production in Africa must be prioritized as soon as possible. In order to effectively develop the Southern African community, it is important to welcome the contribution by governmental and non-governmental institutions or organizations. Monitoring and evaluation of the development progress are necessary. Proper communication channels in the SADC region needs to be developed and be accessible. African leaders must be allowed to give external stakeholders a chance to contribute their expertise. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (2018: 01) states that Southern African countries struggled more to find the independency compare to other countries in the continent. Colonial system in the Southern African countries is still dominant even post-colonial governments. Colonial system colonized the mind of African people and decolonization of the mind of Africans in the SADC region is still a struggle. SADC is regarded as the richest region in Africa but more of the economy is exploited by European countries. The conflict amongst the people in various countries within the SADC region remains the biggest challenge. Open dialogue between different people who disagree about political matters and economic matters is not properly facilitated. SADC plays a coordination role in all the countries that fall in the SADC.

Centre For Conflict Resolution (2019: 01) reported that the capacity building projects in the SADC region are not given a priority. The conflict in African countries is also caused by the capacity of African leaders and their opposition parties. The areas of priority at the moment for the SADC region is the human rights, gender and peacebuilding issues, HIV/AIDS matters. Issues of leadership and capacity of leaders don't enjoy priority, African leaders don't scrutinize the people that find themselves in leadership positions.

Discussion

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a region that consists of 16 Member States; Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (SADC, 2012: 2). Education and particularly the higher education system in the SADC region have to be uniform in order to be able to fully address the issues of governance and public service delivery in the SADC region. The region must develop an education model that will also assist government leaders in the SADC region and identify the required training for individuals to assume leadership responsibilities. The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) is working with the Southern African Development Community to provide guidance about the relevant skills that are required. Regional development relies mainly on Universities to develop strategies and build human capacity (Dell, 2017: 2).

According to Carriers in Local Government Management (2017: 2), the local government needs people who have a passion for public service delivery. The public service should be about what those in leadership can offer to the people and not about what leaders can benefit in local government and from the citizens. For an individual to stand for election it is important to identify that a person has good leadership qualities, skills, innovatively, and good relationship with the community. It is also important for the SADC region to align the objectives with the necessary training that is expected from the local government leaders. Macuphe (2012: 2) stated that the region is not doing its best to produce educated people and this is also happening to government leaders. SADC region does not have a proper guideline on who can be elected by the community members to lead the interests of the community in government institutions. Countries in the region use electoral systems that do not reflect on what is needed by the communities on the ground.

Kotecha (2012: 05) argued that higher education in the SADC region is still lacking behind. African leaders do not prioritize higher education and that affect the economic development in the SADC region. African leaders themselves in the main, do not hold higher education qualifications. The development in the SADC region will be more possible if those who are in the forefront, properly understand economic concepts and have an idea of what needs to be done. According to Prinsloo (2017: 105), African leaders and particularly in the SADC region do not prioritize education. SADC regional leaders view the importance of education as something that is important to other people but not to them. The economy of the SADC region requires leaders to have a full understanding of what is happening in the society and constant learning is necessary.

The capacity of government leaders in the SADC region and mostly the political leaders is necessary. Reddy and Kauzya (2015: 205) argue that the SADC leaders must provide leadership in government leaders and also to the society at large. It is, therefore, difficult to provide leadership if there is a lack of knowledge or information from those who are entrusted with leadership responsibilities.

Warner (2015: 56) states that Africa does not have an effective institutional framework which compels Africa to be always on leadership crises. The institutional framework is required for the purposes of capacitating African leaders. An effective response to African challenges by African leaders is necessary however, without necessary knowledge and skills, it is impossible to win a battle against challenges. The continental identity by African leaders is important for the purposes of protecting African people. The institutional framework that guides African leaders is required to guide how leaders are elected in Africa and also to identify who qualifies to be in a leadership position. Capacitating African leaders will, therefore, need the support of academic institutions in Africa focusing on the African context. Louie, O'Grady, Van Acker, Szablya, Kumar and Podmore (2015: 09) also argued that the African development needs a forum that will discuss a number of issues affecting African people. Knowledge, education, and skills are important for leaders in order for them to be able to engage in various discussions on issues affecting the African continent. The organization complexity and independency of different countries in the SADC region must be taken into consideration however, common issues must be addressed uniformly. Technical issues and issues of public services

in the SADC region is the common issues and the SADC needs to pay more attention on how issues of lack of information or knowledge by those who are entrusted with leadership positions are attended. Individualism by African leaders in the SADC region must be discouraged at all costs.

Dreher, Fuchs, Hodler, Parks, Raschky and Tierney (2016: 03) suggests that the African leaders and particularly the SADC region must initiate a research committee that will specifically deal with African issues. The most important issue highlighted was the issues of education in African leaders. The committee will investigate the education level of African leaders and suggest the impact of education of African leaders in the service delivery. Nevertheless, the research committee will also focus on the ways of increasing the economy of the African continent. African leaders are proud of their cultures and it is therefore important to explain to them the importance of adapting to cultures of other people. The research committee will also deal with issues of financial management of African leaders and cascade the findings and recommendations to all African people. The committee would also conduct a study on how the European countries sustain their economy and also unpack how education is an advantage for those countries. Africa also needs to be discouraged on using financial aid from other countries particularly the European countries.

Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2015: 32) indicated that the importance of education in the African continent and particularly in the SADC region must be on top of the agenda. Prior knowledge and indigenous knowledge of African leaders is important to guide the community however, contemporary education is required to equip leaders with skills and knowledge. Changes in the global economy require leaders to have more economical knowledge and the SADC region is not excluded to this global requirement. Political leaders in Africa are responsible for the governance of governments in African governments and it is necessary for leaders to have more knowledge in order for them to be able to provide leadership. Political leaders in Africa don't view education as an important component to assist them in performing their duties. African leaders have military credentials mostly and this prevents politicians who have expected education and skills to occupy strategic leadership positions because of the lack of military credentials.

On the other hand, Aidoo and Hess (2015: 107) argued that the SADC will not achieve its objectives unless there is a clear policy. A policy that guides leaders in the SADC region is an important element for development purposes. A policy that provides guidelines of who must be elected as the leader in the SADC region is necessary. The policy needs to pay more emphasis on who is elected and what qualifications are expected from those who want to be elected. The same requirements that are needed from government servants must be expected to political leaders. Political leaders play an oversight role and government servants perform the actual work however, political leaders must know what work is done and how is it done. Political leaders who are clueless about public service delivery and rely only on the reports and decisions made by public servants are at risk. Government employees need proper guidance from political leaders however, clueless political leaders fail to provide leadership in most cases because of lack of education.

Williams (2015: 02) states that leaders in the SADC region might have information and plans to develop Africa but the agreements made between African individual countries becomes a problem. Decisions between America and African countries on economic issues affect the work of the SADC. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) compel some African countries to make business with the American government. The African development and African product are suppressed by America and this Act kills the African local market and products. African leaders don't seem to have properly studied the AGOA agreement hence the idea of job creation in Africa is highly affected by this Act. The relationship between African countries and America don't seem to develop Africa but primarily meant to exploit Africa and Africans as consumers of American products. America suffocates the local market by offering products at low prices and sometimes on poor quality. African leaders must be trained and be educated on how to protect the local markets and local citizens. Globalization and investment by European countries must be properly regulated and the local people must be the greatest beneficiaries in any bilateral agreement. The imports

of goods from other countries must be regulated and local goods must be promoted and secured by the governments. The economic relations between America and African countries must be of mutual interest.

According to Nhamo (2017: 228), Africa as a developing continent must be open to learning new things and new ideas from developed countries. African community must not be deprived of an opportunity to be part of the global community. African leaders must be educated on how to factor in the development of other countries in the African continent. African countries are competing with European countries which are more privileged. Africa needs leaders that will have a vision and their vision must be guided by what is happening in other countries globally. The African agenda has to be in line with global developments. SADC must sustain the principle of unity amongst the SADC countries and freely engage in trade matters. African leaders must create an environment that is flexible for African people to compete with other people globally. The political environment in the African countries must not be hostile to African people and aspiring politicians in particular. Carbone and Pellegata (2017: 1965) argued that the development in Africa is not going to be fast because post-colonial governments in Africa are still using colonial systems. The electoral system, political systems, and leadership responsibilities are still embracing the colonial system. Political leaders and the functioning of governments in Africa have not changed. The education system and the skills of African leaders still embrace the ideas of the colonial governments. African leaders acquired political power but did not produce new ideas to govern, democratic governments but inherited the same leadership responsibility. The political power obtained by liberation movements in Africa was just a ticket for people to lead the government and the readiness and capacity was not properly considered. Most African governments are democratic but the political instability and the number of riots and terrorism is high. Ordinary citizens in Africa are always victims of circumstances, during the colonial system ordinary people were oppressed and during the democratic government, they are still oppressed.

Mamman and Zakaria (2016: 246) states that the social conditions, economic conditions, and political conditions affect the African community but African leaders are also not exceptional. African leaders primarily those that are in government space are directly affected by the societal conditions and they themselves are the product of the society. The society that doesn't value the importance of education will, therefore, not undergo the process of education and training. The African population is rich with intellectuals and individuals who want to bring change in Africa however, they are not given a chance and a space to operate. Good governance systems suggested by different forums including the SADC will only be possible if leaders themselves are equal to the tasks given to them and also train the community on what is expected from them and from the leaders. Developing good policies might be a good idea to secure Africa and also to speed up the development but without knowledge and skills from the drivers of the development, chances of success are slim. The solution will be on the masses of the people to use their voting power and vote for credible and educated leaders with a variety of expertise. Creative thinking is necessary to effectively develop the African continent but those in leadership must have a vision and means to advance that vision, which is the education tool. Regional policies are developed by various government employees and experts in different fields however, not all of them will share the vision of leaders. For this reason, it is, therefore, necessary to have leaders that have a full understanding of what is happening. Cloete and Maassen (2015: 03) argued that as much as the African continent has registered progress in economic development but there is a lot that still needs to be done. African Universities produce graduates on a yearly basis but those who are at the helm of African development, particularly the politicians, have not gone through the education system. Those who are in leadership positions and do not have qualifications will therefore not fully understand the importance of education. Politicians and government leaders usually rhetoric about the importance of education however, young people in Africa resort in joining political parties. Young people in Africa see politicians and politics as the short cut to wealth because of the image portrayed by African leaders. African leaders must walk the talk and don't talk the walk, young people pay more attention to what people are doing rather than what they are saying.

Juma (2015: 03) argued that scientific and technical knowledge is important for African leaders in order to make an informed decision. The biggest hindrance in African development is the lack of information and knowledge not only

in the African leaders but also to the African community at large. Constant technological changes force African leaders and the population to adapt to the new developments. Africa is slowly developing and by the time Africa tries to find its foot, the technology advance to the next level. African leaders must be the type of people that are flexible and adapt easily to change. Leadership opportunities in Africa must be given to those who are educated and politically clear on what is needed by the people and devise a proper strategy on how to address the problems of the people. African leaders must also open a space for academics to engage in African development without any fear and victimization. Changes on how leaders are elected in the African countries is important and this will also allow those who have a vision about the country to participate. Political party systems and electoral systems in Africa still need serious scrutiny. Hallinger (2018: 363) is of the view that educational leadership in Africa is not receiving enough attention. African leaders are mainly obsessed about how to get their hands in the African economy and sometimes their intervention is not assisting the community but themselves. There is a serious call to have educated leaders in government leadership positions. Educated leaders close a vacuum and a gap between the expertise of the government servants and the political leaders. If African leaders were concerned about the education they were going to develop an education system that has the content that speaks to African development. The content offered in various education systems in Africa do not speak about what is happening in Africa and it is important to have African leaders who have a vision about the African development in all facets not only in the economy. The way African leaders are managing their affairs should be in a public space and nothing must be hidden for the people and that includes the education status of all government leaders and politicians.

According to Ado and Su (2016: 41), the African continent and the SADC region is part of the global economy and decisions made in this platform affect the global economy. Africa as the continent and African leaders must not be apologetic about decisions made. African leaders must be continuously be trained about how to resist the pressure of the European countries. African leaders amongst other responsibilities are to lay a foundation and guidelines of what type of expertise is required for candidates in political positions. The wealth of Africa is most exploited by European countries because of the lack of knowledge in African leaders and the economic pressure from European countries. African countries are undermined by many countries, industries that are dominant in Africa are not African countries but foreign companies.

Conclusions

The education level of SADC leaders has never been tabled for discussion in the SADC meetings and most of the discussions in the SADC meetings engage in developmental matters. The guideline in terms of the education level of political leaders must be tabled in the SADC meetings and thorough discussion must be made. Resolutions about the level of education of leaders must be cascaded down to individual countries and subsequently to all levels of governments. Capacitating leaders in the SADC region must be prioritized and the same mechanism must be used to capacitate leaders of all countries within the SADC region. The projects designed by the SADC leaders without the proper implementation strategy will always remain a dream. The basic intervention that is needed in the SADC region is to change the electoral process and to classify the type of people that are eligible to stand for election. Classifying the skills required and type of people to stand for elections in the African political leadership positions will minimize chaos (Centre For Conflict Resolution, 2018: 02). Electoral procedures in Southern African countries must be discussed in the SADC region and the best system must be applied across. The preferred system must include the type of skills that are required for people that will lead the government and political positions.

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