

THE IMPACT OF SADC SOCIAL PROTECTION INSTRUMENTS ON THE SETTING UP OF A MINIMUM SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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SUMMARY

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed to promote the political, economic and social wellbeing of the region. Some of the social objectives of the SADC are the promotion of social development and the alleviation of poverty, the enhancement of the quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and the provision of support to the socially disadvantaged. In order to achieve these objectives, SADC member states have concluded a Treaty and various social protection-related instruments which aim to ensure that everyone in the region is provided with basic minimum social protection. Although the formation of the SADC (and the conclusion of some of its social protection-related instruments) preceded both the minimum social protection floor concept and the Social Protection Floor Initiative, the Treaty and instruments can be seen as complying with the requirements of both the concept and the initiative within the region. This article analyses the extent to which the SADC social protection-related instruments fulfil a minimum social floor function at the SADC regional level. The positive and negative aspects of the *SADC Treaty* and social protection-related instruments in this regard are evaluated. In addition, the article reviews the impact of the SADC social protection-related instruments in the setting up of social protection programmes aimed at ensuring a minimum social protection floor in some of

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the SADC countries. The successes of such country initiatives and the challenges faced are discussed. This is then followed by some concluding observations.

KEYWORDS: Minimum social protection floor concept; Social Protection Floor Initiative; social protection guarantees; Southern African Development Community; SADC social protection instruments