

SAGCC: Chairperson's Annual Report:
Period 08 March 2019 – 31 March 2020

1. **Membership:** The SAGCC is growing from strength to strength. Where many Business Chambers are struggling to survive (some have even closed), the SAGCC has grown its membership the past year by a further 30%. The number of paid members currently stands at 47, with 02 new members soon to enrol. There have been two resignations from the SAGCC – Petro Kruger and Gerda Heyman - both for business reasons.
Thanks: A special thanks to Petro Kruger and Gerda Heyman for their valued contributions and participation in the growth and well-being of the SAGCC. They will be missed – we wish them the best for the future.
2. **Finances:** Financially the SAGCC is in its healthiest position since establishment seven years ago.
 - a. Payment of membership fees stand at +90%. Four members have not yet paid their 2018/2019 fees. The Deputy Chairperson is in contact with them.
 - b. With all expenses paid and as of 27 March 2020, there is R25 395.37 on the Chamber's FNB account. Most of the 2020 membership fees are still due, which further underlines the Chamber's healthy financial position at the beginning of the 2020/21 financial year.
 - c. Most Georgian Honorary Consuls in the SADC countries have enrolled as fully paid members of the SAGCC. The newly appointed Honorary Consul to Angola is expected to enrol soonest.
 - d. During the past year the Chamber was able to pay for the flight tickets and accommodation of four of its members to participate in the Georgia Seminar held in Durban from 06 till 07 November 2019.
 - e. The Chamber also paid the travel expenses of the Chairperson during an official visit to the Western Cape (24 till 27 February 2020) during which he accompanied Ambassador Dvali to various meetings related to the activities of the Embassy and the SAGCC.
3. **Website:** The web-site of the SAGCC has been overhauled, now offering better service, member inter-action and exposure of members' businesses and activities – see www.sagcc.biz
Thanks: A special thanks to Petro Kruger for her dedicated effort with the overhaul of the website.
4. **Whatsapp group for the Management Committee (MC):** With the help of the Deputy Chairperson a Whatsapp group for the MC was established in order to improve and speed up communication amongst the MC members.
5. **Visits to Georgia:** There has been no group visits to Georgia during 2019. The 2019 Rugby World Cup held in Japan made visits from South Africa to Georgia difficult during the months of September and October.

However, the following SAGCC members have individually visited Georgia either in the interest of the SAGCC or of their own businesses:

- a. Petro Kruger (IT/Innovation Hub)
 - b. Solomon Adamashvili in Namibia (Innovation Hub/Tourism)
 - c. Billy Pienaar (IT)
 - d. Maritz Aldum (Investment/Property Development)
 - e. Juan van der Westhuizen (Property, Investment, Mining)
 - f. Charles Melville (Property, Farming, Food Retail)
 - g. Fred Hume (Food Retail)
 - h. Steven van Zyl (Rugby, school sport)
 - i. Ivan van Zyl (Rugby, school sport – both South Africa and Namibia)
 - j. Jay J Botes (Rugby, digital marketing).
 - k. Remark: Visits to Georgia took place by people who closely associate with the SAGCC include Dawie Roodt (Senior Economist) and his family as well as Bennie van der Westhuizen (Agriculture), former Deputy Chairperson of the SAGCC.
6. **Sport - Rugby:** Probably the biggest achievement was the signing of an Agreement between the Rugby Unions of South Africa and Georgia which will in future allow for Georgian players and Georgian teams to participate in the South African *Curry Cup* and *Vodacom Cup* competitions – an initiative which has been carefully cultivated the past five years by Ambassador Beka Dvali and the Chairperson. This will give the hospitality industries of both countries (and global Airlines) a much-needed boost.
Remark: Special mention needs to be made of the initiatives by our members Steven van Zyl, Ivan van Zyl, Adriaan Kruger and Jay J Botes for promoting schools rugby, educational and cultural exchange programs.
7. **Georgia Seminar held in Durban, KZN Province:** A highly successful seminar on Georgia was co-hosted in Durban on 07 November 2019 by *Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal*, the SAGCC and the Embassy of Georgia. The seminar was attended by 47 persons including members of the SAGCC and staff from the Georgian Embassy in Pretoria.
8. **Winemaker Exchange Program:** Three South African winemakers participated in the 2019 Georgian harvest season (September/October) – bringing the total number of South Africans to participate since the inception of the program to 21. Two Georgian winemakers participated during the 2020 South African harvest season (January/March 2020) - bringing the number of Georgians to participate since the inception of the program to 13. On 25 and 26 February 2020 Ambassador Dvali and the Chairperson visited the following participation SA wineries: Robertson, Graham Beck, Excelsior and the latest addition, Groot Constantia Estate. The visit also offered an opportunity to meet with Mr Kobus du Plessis, Senior Executive of the Cape Winelands District Municipality (CWDM) to discuss action points related to the signed MoU between CWDM and Kakheti Wine region.
Thanks: A special thanks to our Western Cape based member, Celia Pienaar for being the Chamber's champion on this subject, ensuring that travel arrangements and the visits of winemakers run smoothly.
9. **Academic Exchange Program:** The signed MoU between the Faculties of Wine Sciences of the University of Stellenbosch and the Telavi State University gained new momentum when the Deans of the two faculties met on the side-line of the *International Erasmus+ VitaGlobal*

Conference held in Stellenbosch from 25 – 29 February 2020. Ambassador Dvali and the Chairperson attended the official opening function on the eve of the 25th of February 2020 in Stellenbosch.

10. **Commodities:** Various commodity enquiries from Georgia have been referred to the SAGCC the past year. Some of these were:

- Manganese
- Medical/pharmaceutical equipment/products
- Chicken
- Frozen fish
- Certain type of beans, and
- other such as fashion (lady's shoes and handbags)

Thanks: A special thanks to Casey Manyama for having facilitated most of these. The assistance of Georgian Honorary Consul in Zambia, Chabuka Kawesha in finding the correct manganese specs in Zambia, deserves mention.

11. **Georgian tenders:** On three occasions tenders related to construction, infrastructure and mining have been communicated with our members. Recently Juan van der Westhuizen attended the one on mining in Georgia.

12. **Fraudulent activities by South African registered businesses:** On three occasions the SAGCC managed to detect fraudulent activities by South African registered businesses, and in doing so, prevent financial losses by Georgian companies. Most of these entities seem to be either run by Nigerians or Zimbabweans operating illegally from South Africa. One Georgia company however lost a rather large sum of money. Unfortunately, in this case the SAGCC was only consulted afterwards - but the SAGCC could confirm that the transaction was fraudulent, assisting the Georgian Embassy to refer this fraudulent activity to DIRCO.

Thanks: A special thanks to our Deputy Chairperson, Marius Jooste. He has developed the capability to verify within minutes whether trade documents, invoices etc are authentic and whether a transaction is fraudulent or not.

13. **National Day functions attended:** The SAGCC was represented at the National Day functions of Georgia, Austria, Ukraine, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Pope's Day, Slovakia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kenya and Qatar. The highlight was the Georgian National Day celebrations held on 23rd of May 2019 at the Safari Conference Centrum in Pretoria. It was well attended by SAGCC members. The Chairperson was instrumental in the arrangements to the run-up of the event. He also had the honour to be the *Master of Ceremony* at this event.

14. **Various other diplomatic and business functions were attended** such as food-wine paring, working lunches and lectures on topics related to international trade/economy. Two courtesy meetings were held respectively with the *Austrian Trade Office* in Sandton and *SwissCham* in Pretoria.

15. **Management Committee (MC) Meetings:**

- a. The 2018/19 AGM of the SAGCC took place at 14h00 on Thursday 07 March 2019 at the GE Embassy. This was followed by a networking session for SAGCC members with drinks and snacks being served.

- b. Two MC meetings were held at the Embassy of Georgia respectively 05 September 2019 (with a networking session afterwards) and on 13 February 2020.
- c. The MC's Whatsapp group has been used to great effect
- d. **Other:** The Chairperson held various informal meetings with the Deputy Chairperson, individual MC members and with all the new SAGCC members who have enrolled the past twelve months.

16. Other meetings held:

- a. Support has been given to Mr Roger Latchman, newly appointed Georgian Honorary Consul in Johannesburg for hosting an info session on Georgia (with emphasis on tourism) in Johannesburg during the morning of 07 March 2019
- b. The Chairperson met with the Georgian Honorary Consul to Zambia during his visit to Pretoria/Johannesburg on 07/08 March 2019
- c. The Chairperson accompanied Ambassador Dvali to a meeting with the Director of Blue Bulls Rugby at "*Loftus Versveld*" on 28 March 2019
- d. The Chairperson hosted a working breakfast on 02 April 2019 with the new SA Ambassador to Kiev, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova, Mr Andre Groenewald
- e. The Chairperson attended a working breakfast on 04 April 2019 on invitation of former Minister Mr Roelf Meyer
- f. A meeting was facilitated on 07 April 2019 between Mr Giga Chkheidze (Global Diplomat and member of the SAGCC) and the owner of the Cafe41 Group to explore franchise opportunities for Georgia
- g. A meeting was held on 28 April 2019 with Alan Zondagh, Director of Blue Bulls Rugby
- h. The Chairperson accompanied Ambassador Dvali and his wife on 10 May 2019 to the Blue Bulls/Crusaders Rugby match as guests of the President of the Blue Bulls Rugby Union
- i. A meeting was held on 13 May 2019 in Pretoria with Dr Theo de Jager, President of the "World Farmers Association" (WFO) to discuss bilateral agricultural matters
- j. Met on 08 August 2019 with representatives of TIKZN and Ambassador Dvali at the Georgian Embassy to discuss the *Georgia Seminar* to be held at the Durban Country Club on 07 November 2019.
- k. Hosted Senior Economist Dawie Roodt on 08 August 2019 a light working lunch to discuss the political and economic situation in South Africa
- l. Met on 21 August 2019 with the CEO/Owner "*Travel and Sport*", member of the SAGCC to discuss their interaction with GE Sport/Rugby

17. Activities in general:

- a. Updated the 2019 SAGCC membership list – ongoing!
- b. Reconcile SAGCC finances and payments made by members to renew their membership – ongoing
- c. Members attended on 23 September 2019 at the Embassy of Georgia the Georgia/Wales Rugby World Cup match.
- d. Members attended a function on 05 October 2019, hosted by Ambassador Dvali at the Embassy of Georgia in honour of the team of visiting Georgian rescuers
- e. Met on 09 October 2019 for working dinner with Ambassador Dvali and Solomon Adamashvili, a SAGCC member based in Namibia to discuss SAGCC activities in Namibia for the next year

- f. Members attended a Rugby World Cup “big screen event” on 11 October 2019 at the Embassy of Georgia to watch the Australia/Georgia match
- g. Attended together with Ambassador Dvali, the World Cup Rugby Semi-final “big screen event” (South Africa against Japan) held at the Japanese Embassy on 27 October 2019
- h. Met with Mr Kobus du Plessis, Head of Sustainable Economic Development of the Cape Winelands District Municipality (CWDM) for a light working lunch on 15 November 2019 in Stellenbosch to discuss matters related to the MoU between Kakheta Region and the CWDM.
- i. Courtesy Adriaan Kruger, a meeting was held on 19 November 2019 with two Executives of the *Curo Independent Private School Group* to discuss sport/cultural/historic exchange programs between South Africa and Georgia
- j. Gauteng based SAGCC members attended the annual Georgia Day held at the Georgian Residence on 23rd of November 2019
- k. Attended a meeting on 11 December 2019 with Ambassador Dvali and Jay J Botes from the digital brand manager of *Blue Bulls Rugby* regarding his earlier visit to Georgia.

18. Vision for 2020/21: With the Chamber being on solid feet and having shown strong membership growth, the challenge for the new MC is to take the Chamber a few steps forward: The following would apply:

- a. Revising opportunities for commodities trading – both retail and minerals – in other words to explore the sea freight/trade opportunities between the SADC region and the Black Sea region
- b. To better explore business, trade and investment opportunities – not only between South Africa and Georgia, but between Georgia and the other 12 SADC countries which are covered by the SAGCC
- c. To better co-operate/interact with the SADC based Georgian Honorary Consuls:
 - i. To get them more involved in the activities of the SAGCC
- d. To become more project driven – hence the need for all MC members to champion those projects approved
- e. To improve communication between the Chamber and its members – including the Georgian Honorary Consuls:
 - i. More regular interaction
 - ii. The use of technology such as Web and Skype conferencing
- f. To better co-ordinate the interaction amongst the Georgia based SAGCC members
- g. To assess the challenges and opportunities the Covid-19 crisis brought to the SADC region
- h. To ensure more benefits for the SAGCC members, and to
- i. Ensure that all members pay their annual fees

19. Special thanks to:

- a. The MC and all SAGCC members for their participation and support
- b. Ambassador Beka Dvali and staff at the Embassy of Georgia – for hosting our members at various events and availing the Embassy for SAGCC meetings
- c. South African Ambassador Andre Groenewald based in Kiev and responsible for Georgia for his initiatives and support