

SAGCC: Chairperson's Annual Report: Period 01 April 2020 – 18 March 2021

1. **Foreword:** It has been a completely different year which brought many challenges but also valuable learning experiences – one of which was the effective use of virtual mediums. Where many Business Chambers are struggling to survive (some have even closed), the SAGCC has survived 2020/21 and even maintained its healthy membership numbers.
2. **Membership:** The number of paid members currently stands at 47, with two potential members pending. There have been four resignations from the SAGCC. However, we managed to recruit four new members. There has been one death - unfortunately, our beloved Georgian Honorary Consul in Cape Town, also a founding and honorary member of our Chamber, Dr Wolman passed away.
3. **Finances:** As of 17 March 2021, and after all expenses paid, the SAGCC has a positive balance of R32 726.87 on its FNB account – the best balance since its inception some eight years ago. This amount is even more remarkable taking into consideration that +-80% of our members still must pay their fees for 2021/22.
Remark: The final statement will be adjusted during the AGM as more membership fee payments are expected by the 18th of March 2021.
4. **Membership fees 2020/21/22:** The Deputy Chairperson will discuss this matter under Para 11 (a) and (b) of our Agenda for the AGM.
5. **Job descriptions of MC Members:** As per a resolution taken at our virtual MC meeting on 20 July 2020, the existing MC members have been assigned with designated roles and functions – see attachment.
6. **Website:** The website of the SAGCC has been further overhauled, now offering better service, member inter-action and exposure of members' businesses and activities – see www.sagcc.biz
7. **WhatsApp Group for the Management Committee (MC):** With the help of the Deputy Chairperson a WhatsApp Group for the MC was established to improve and speed up communication amongst the MC members. It has been put to good use during lockdown.
8. **Visits to Georgia:** There has been no visits to Georgia during 2020 due to Covid-19. The initial two visits planned for 2020 had to be cancelled and will only be reconsidered towards the second half of 2021.
9. **Local visits:** A visit was paid to Graham Beck Winery on 16 October 2021 in preparation of Georgian winemakers' participation in the 2021 harvest season.
10. **Winemaker Exchange Program:** Due to Covid-19 the participation of South African winemakers was cancelled for 2020. Prior to the pandemic, 21 winemakers visited Georgia. One winemaker from Chateau Mukhrani in Georgia participated in the 2021

South African harvest season at Graham Beck Winery near Robertson, bringing the number of Georgian winemakers who have visited South Africa so far to 11. 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 visits of winemakers run smoothly.

11. Rugby exchange program: Due to the pandemic and the ban on travel no rugby tours or programs took place during 2020.

12. Commodities: Enquiries from Georgia via the Embassy: The following enquiries were received (not in any specific order):

- a. Availability of Aircraft fuel in South Africa
- b. Frozen fish from South Africa
- c. Fertilizers/Pesticides from Georgia
- d. Veterinary/disinfection/sanitation products from Georgia
- e. Syringes for Georgia
- f. Construction equipment/material from Georgia
- g. Coffee for Georgia, and
- h. The vetting of five South African companies

Remark: The above points were shared with members of the SAGCC and to some of our other Business Chamber associates. 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.

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

14. Fraudulent activities by South African registered businesses: On five 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 within South Africa. A special thanks to our Deputy Chairperson, Marius Jooste. He has developed the capability to verify within in minutes whether trade documents/offers, invoices etc are authentic and whether a transaction is fraudulent or not.

15. The 2019/2020 AGM: As a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic the 2019/20 AGM was cancelled. For the Chamber to move forward and to maintain momentum during Level 5 lockdown, the SAGCC members were consulted. The following two resolutions were approved by them:

- Resolution A: The existing Management Committee (MC) of the SAGCC herewith ask the SAGCC members to approve for them to continue to govern and manage the SAGCC until mid-March 2021 – which should then be the next Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Resolution B: In view of the resignation of two MC members (private and business reasons) the SAGCC herewith nominates Juan van der Westhuizen (Tbilisi based), Maritz Aldum (Pretoria and Georgia based) and CLI Attorneys (Tbilisi based and to be represented by Tamta Jgarkava) to replace the two MC members and in doing so further strengthen our Georgia based

representation. This is in line with the Vision stipulated in the Chairperson's 2019/20 Annual Report.

16. Management Committee (MC) Meetings:

- a. The first virtual MC meeting took place on 20 July 2020.
- b. The second virtual MC meeting took place on 18 February 2021. All MC members as well as Ambassadors Dvali and Groenewald participated in both MC meetings.

17. Other meetings held: Four meetings (and one tele-meeting) were held with Ambassador Beka Dvali. Two meetings were held with Ambassador Grobler, a Foreign Policy expert. A meeting was held with former Minister Roelf Meyer on 03 December 2020 to discuss the crisis in northern Mozambique – this was followed by two WhatsApp meetings earlier in 2021. Two meetings were held with President of Blue Bulls Rugby – once together with Ambassador Dvali – the last one was on 03 December 2020. Two meetings were held during 2020 with the Economist Dawie Roodt to discuss economic matters related to South Africa and some of the SADC countries.

18. Communication: There has been regular email communication with all our members, sharing relevant links, MFA Newsletters, and updates on developments in Georgia. A special thanks to Ambassador Beka Dvali for having availed most of these.

19. 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.

20. Vision for 2021/22: With the Chamber being on solid feet and having shown strong membership growth the past few years, the challenge for the 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 and in accordance with their respective portfolios.
- 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 our members pay their 2021/22 annual fee.

21. Special thanks: I would like to thank:

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

Marius Heyns: Chairperson SAGCC:

Date: 17 March 2021