

SAGCC: Chairperson's Annual Report: Period 18 March 2021 till 18 March 2022

1. **Foreword:** As per the Chair's 2020/21 Annual Report, 2021/22 has again been a 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 slightly increased its already healthy membership numbers.
2. **Membership:** The number of paid members currently stands at 52 courtesy three new members who enrolled during 2021. There have been no resignations from the SAGCC.
3. **Finances:** As of 17 March 2022, and after all expenses paid, the SAGCC has a positive balance of R41 459.13 on its FNB account – the best balance since its inception some nine years ago. This amount is even more remarkable taking into consideration that the payment of the membership fees for 2021/22 has been voided by a Resolution taken at one of our MC Meetings. The exception however was our MC members as it is expected of them to pay their annual fees – which everyone has done.
4. **Membership fees 2022/23:** At a Special virtual MC Meeting held on 18 March 2022 it was decided that the following payment structure would apply:
 - South African Citizens/Individuals: R800 (remain unchanged)
 - South African Companies/Businesses: R1200 (remain unchanged)
 - Foreign Citizens/Individuals: R1200 (reduced from the Euro amount)
 - Foreign Companies/Businesses: R1600 (reduced from the Euro amount)
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 reminded of their respective roles and functions – see attachment.
6. **Website:** The website of the SAGCC has been maintained 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):** It has been put to good use during the past year with regular group or individual coms between MC members.
8. **MoU signed with Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** The MoU was signed by the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson at the Office of HE Ambassador Dvali who observed the proceedings.
9. **SAGCC enrolled as member of Small Business Institute SA (SBI):** This was done in accordance with the approval of the MC. Membership of the SBI offers free access to dozens of locally based and registered business chambers.

- 10. Visits to Georgia:** Our valued Kimberly based member 'CivilSense' under the leadership of Wian Steynberg, paid an official business visit to both Tbilisi and Telavi during November 2021. Our Tbilisi based MC member, Juan van der Westhuizen assisted with the program and the logistics for their visit. HE Ambassador Beka Dvali did important upfront liaison in notifying the relevant Georgian stakeholders of their visit. Two other visits planned for 2021 had to be cancelled and will only be reconsidered towards the second half of 2022.
- 11. Local visits:** A visit was paid to Graham Beck Winery near Robertson on 17 December 2021 providing an opportunity to talk to their two winemakers who participated in Chateau Mukhrani's 2021 harvest season. A meeting was held with Riebeek Valley Tourism on 18 December 2021 in Riebeek Kasteel, Western Cape Province. The outcome of this meeting was an agreement for a Georgia Day to be held at Kloovenburg Wine and Olive Estate in Riebeek Kasteel on 01 April 2022. This day will jointly be hosted by the Georgian Embassy and the SAGCC.
- 12. Winemaker Exchange Program:** Note Para 9 above. Due to the global Covid pandemic only Graham Beck and Chateau Mukhrani wineries participated in this program. It is expected that the exchange program will gradually return to normal during 2022/23, creating opportunities for all the regular stakeholders to participate again. A special thanks to our Western Cape based member, Celia Pienaar for once again being the Chamber's champion on this subject, ensuring that travel arrangements and visits of winemakers run smoothly.
- 13. Rugby exchange program:** Due to the pandemic and the ban on travel no rugby tours or programs took place during 2021.
- 14. Commodities: Enquiries from Georgia via the Georgian Embassy:** The following enquiries were received (not in any specific order):
- a. Seedless table grape seedlings for Georgia
 - b. Vegetable oils all sorts for the Georgian company ETO – aimed at the Chinese market
 - c. Wet coal
 - d. Manganese
 - e. Fertilizers/Pesticides from Georgia
 - f. Veterinary/disinfection/sanitation products from Georgia
 - g. Coffee for Georgia
 - h. The vetting of four 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.
- 15. 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. The Georgian Honorary Consul in Luanda has communicated three Angolan tenders related to the oil/gas and construction industries.
- 16. Fraudulent activities by South African registered businesses:** Again, and on four 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.

17. The 2021/22 AGM: The special MC meeting held on 18 March 2022 decided to present the following resolution proposal to the SAGGC members for their consideration and approval:

Background:

In addition to the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic with its regular changing variants, the Russian invasion of Ukraine brought new challenges to business chambers internationally. Georgia is a direct neighbour of Ukraine. Two regions in Georgia are occupied by Russia. South Africa being a senior member of SADC, is confronted with some of the highest unemployment statistics and corruption cases in the world as well as the growing threat of Islamist insurgents in its neighbour, Mozambique. These circumstances of political and economic instability will require smart planning by the Chamber.

Recommendation:

- a. For the SAGCC not to get stuck amid all of this, it is now the time to be innovative and creative and to outsmart the pandemic. For the Chamber to move forward and to maintain momentum the following resolution was presented:
 - i. **Resolution:** 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 2023 – which should then be the next Annual General Meeting (AGM)
 - ii. **Remark:** The following existing MC members are willing to continue to govern till mid-March 2023:
 - Marius Heyns, Chairperson
 - Marius Jooste, Deputy Chairperson (and Finance)
 - Adriaan Kruger, Additional Member (and Finance), and
 - Casey Manyama, Additional Member with focus commodities
 - Maritz Aldum, Additional Member with focus Georgia, and
 - Shako Buava, Additional Member with focus Georgia.

18. Management Committee (MC) Meetings:

- a. The first virtual MC meeting took place on 30 September 2021 in which both Ambassadors Dvali (Pretoria) and Groenewald (Kiev) participated.
- b. The second virtual and Special MC meeting took place on 18 March 2022.

19. Other meetings held:

- a. Four meetings with Mr Roelf Meyer – during two of these meetings his colleague and the former CEO of IDASA, Ivor Jenkins was present. During one of the other meetings (a business lunch) Ambassador Dvali was the host.
- b. Three meetings with the Economist Dawie Roodt
- c. Three meetings with the President of Blue Bulls Rugby Union. During one of the meetings (a working breakfast) Ambassador Dvali was the host.

- d. Two meetings each with retired South African Ambassadors Gert Grobler and Hennie de Klerk.
- e. Two meetings with DA MP, Dirk Stubbe.
- f. Regular working meetings with Ambassador Dvali to compare notes and to provide feedback/updates.
- g. Six virtual meetings of which three was with individual MC members.

20. National Day functions attended: Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic no National Day functions were attended. Messages by myself and HE Ambassador Beka Dvali were recorded on 04 May 2021 in honour of the Georgian National Day. These two messages formed part the Georgian Embassy's virtual celebration of the Georgian National Day and viewed on the eve of 26 May 2021.

21. Various other official functions were attended:

- a. Three dinners hosted by the Japanese Ambassador HE Ambassador Norio Maruyama
- b. Two working breakfasts hosted by the Ukrainian Ambassador, HE Ambassador Liubov Abravitova – on one occasion the economist Dawie Roodt accompanied me
- c. Working breakfast during April 2021 with Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Trade and the Chairperson of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- d. Joint birthday celebration function during November 2021 at Silver Lakes Golf Estate hosted by the Ukrainian and Kazakhstani Ambassadors
- e. The official welcome of the newly appointed CEO of Swissport SA
- f. The welcome of the new Deputy Head of Swiss Chamber in Pretoria
- g. The farewell function of the Deputy High Commissioner of Tanzania
- h. The farewell function of the Military Attaché of the Kenyan High Commission
- i. Official working sessions hosted by HE Ambassador Beka Dvali (DTI etc)

22. Activities in general:

- a. Supported Casey Manyama in his liaison with the Georgian company ETO
- b. Liaised with Georgia Rugby, Blue Bulls Rugby, Cheetahs Rugby, and Alan Zondagh on matters to promote and strengthen bilateral rugby ties between South Africa and Georgia
- c. Attended on 14 September 2021 the 2021 Intra-Africa Trade Fair held in Johannesburg
- d. Met in November 2021 with the founder and owner of the Ocean Basket Group to explore franchise opportunities for 'Famous Brands SA' in Georgia.
- e. Assisted Ambassador Dvali and liaised with SARU in the critical and life-threatening case of the coach of the Georgian National Rugby Team who contracted Covi-19 whilst in South Africa.
- f. Various and regular courtesy emails

23. 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.

24. Activities in general:

- a. Updated the 2021/22 SAGCC membership list in conjunction with Adriaan Kruger – ongoing!

- b. Reconcile SAGCC finances and payments made by members to renew their membership in conjunction with Adriaan Kruger – ongoing.

25. Vision for 2022/23: 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 and 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 ensure more benefits for the SAGCC members, and to
- f. Ensure that our members pay their 2022/23 annual fees.

26. 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: 18 March 2022