



Regional Governing Council Chairperson, Jeremias Langa

Welcome remarks to the MISA Regional Strategic Planning Meeting

7 May 2026

Lusaka

Zambia

Members of the Regional Governing Council
National Directors
Secretariat Facilitators

Greetings!

Our inaugural MISA Regional Strategy 2021-2026, which is in its final phases, continues to be successfully implemented through our teamwork and the deliberate efforts we collectively set in motion.

It is pleasing to note the results we have achieved in implementing our set targets and goals with such speed and commitment across the breadth and depth of MISA structures.

Our presence here at this timely forum is evidence that we are indeed working at the necessary accelerated pace towards defining the future of this very important institution, central to the defence of expression in Southern Africa.

The next two days thus gives us the impetus to forge the successor strategy to the MISA Regional Strategy 2021 – 2026 with even greater zeal and commitment to our values, mission and vision for the next five years.

As I prepared my speech, I went back to the archives and came across my predecessor's welcoming remarks at the Regional Governing Council meeting on the sidelines of the Multi-stakeholder Regional Internet Governance Forum in Harare on the 4th of June this year, in which he called upon MISA to take the lead and said

"...Today, in this defining moment, and at this turning point, we must and should take a firm position to lead.

"I say this with unshakable and unrestrained conviction because I know the levels of goodwill out there to support a rejuvenated MISA regional network, which is geared to confront and conquer the historical challenges with the future in mind...

"I hazard to say, as the world trends continue to evolve at a fast pace, if MISA does not renew and position itself in the orbiting challenges confronting the region on expression – others will step in and render the institution redundant.

"With all hands-on deck, the best foot forward and commitment to engage in business unusual with speed, effectiveness and efficiency – we have an opportunity to sustain the reconstruction of a competitive institution that stands tall among others in shaping the course of expression, access to information and media freedom in the SADC region, continentally and globally."

These historic strides show that you chose to lead. As we gather here, we are making decisions that will propel our institution into orbits of thought leadership.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the next strategy will rally and marshal our forces to attain our collective targets and goals over the next five years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, if I had my way, I would propose a long-term 10-year strategy that would be reviewed annually, but the environment has become too fluid and unpredictable to commit our efforts so far, with limited control over the outcome.

The untimely, and for most of us, surprising closure of the Regional Office in 2015 left the organisation's structures and its key resource – the national chapters – in disarray.

This led to the subsequent collapse of Chapters in Namibia, Angola and Eswatini.

The surviving Chapters limped on in their respective silos in the wake of the regional coordinating arm's absence. Throughout the tenure of this strategy, we also grappled with the turbulent Chapters in Tanzania and Lesotho.

I am, however, happy to announce that Lesotho has overcome the turbulence. We thus remain seized with the challenges in Tanzania.

This reality is clear testimony that we have lived through both worlds – impactful regional coordination and disarray - but have since chosen the former, driven by our newfound determination to get things going again.

While we hail from diverse backgrounds, our collective destiny remains the same as defined by our values, mission and vision statements.

As we pause and breathe today, after this long and turbulent journey, epitomised by the collapse of the then regional office, to consult on our strategic planning map, the challenge before us over the next two days is to chart a common path for the years ahead.

For this to happen, we must start by agreeing on our destination as we transition from the predecessor strategy to a new guiding campus.

As we leave this place, renewed and reinvigorated, our actions should be guided by a common vision and strategic goals.

Contextual issues & strategic direction

It is therefore my humble and inward-looking analysis of the current situation, subject to your esteemed consideration, that the successor strategy should not set us apart as we engage with the ever-complex external environment in this age of poly-crisis.

We need to craft a strategy that answers the hard questions for the next 5 years as a formidable network.

This speaks to the ability to strategically deploy our unique assets to attract new avenues of funding and to address the going-concern question by responding to questions of viability and sustainability.

This speaks to MISA's ability to expand its work as the enabler of the ecosystem by competing for funding in spaces previously dominated by international intermediaries and utilising those funds to strengthen the ecosystem in the Global South.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this requires clarity on the sustainability question and a broadening of the scope of our convening power and conversations on topical issues.

This will require reconfiguring MISA to move into spaces that demand speed and capacity in this technology-driven era.

To succeed, the strategy will require a business-unusual approach, deliberately designed to ensure we all rise to the occasion for the demands of our interventions and engagements.

Culture eats strategy for breakfast!

As we arrange our ducks in a row, let's remain alive to the need for a 360-degree shift in the way we do business and avoid the pitfalls which in some way led to the collapse of the first centre as I alluded to earlier.

Our strides will be in vain if strategy comes alone, without a new culture of service for our diverse stakeholders.

This entails being responsive, effective, and efficient as we journey towards the realisation of our collective strategic objectives.

Since we are in the knowledge economy, information is our primary currency for delivering solutions to our stakeholders; hence the need to pull down all the walls that hinder the seamless deployment and exchange of this currency.

As we trudge this journey of modernising the network, we do so bearing the burden of accountability to stakeholders, who are increasingly demanding that we deliver more with less.

With this, I hope we will create a strategic fit between a competitive strategy and a responsive culture to better address the 21st-century challenges to expression in the region.

For the regional network to remain relevant, it requires timely, relevant information from our respective chapters.

Without this culture of speed and accuracy, we will just be another ordinary institution.

If we act in unison towards this strategic fit, MISA will move with speed, precision, efficiency and effectiveness in all that we seek to achieve and thus remain fit for purpose.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The success of this institution lies in your collective hands. I am confident that through this meeting, we are reaffirming our commitment to reclaim our lost space and leap-frog into new territory.

That said, it would be remiss of me not to thank you all for the preceding pre-strategy consultations we held to establish a common understanding and setting the pace and pulse for this meeting.

The commitment you showed is indeed very humbling.

Our resource persons over the next two days are seasoned in their respective fields. We are grateful that they have agreed to be part of our journey. As they take us through their respective components, you will agree with me that it will indeed be a privilege and time well spent.

May you join me in giving the Regional Director and the team a round of applause for all the planning and for making this process a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome once more. Please feel free to engage in honest, robust, firm and constructive discussions that will spur us to reach new and greater heights.

As I conclude, I remain inspired by the words of my predecessor, Golden Maunganidze, as he concluded his foreword in the 2021 – 2025 strategy saying:

“ ... To this we make a declaration that we dare not and will not fail!”

And indeed, I say unto you: “We dare not and will not fail”.

I Thank You.