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Following the announcement of the new Research Programme, SASSCAL has moved more steps forward in realising its vision “To be a leading regional centre in climate change and adaptive land management science services for an improved quality of life in Southern Africa”.

SASSCAL 1.0 research outputs and findings have made a meaningful contribution towards strengthening the region’s adaptation capacity. Communities in Botswana for example have been capacitated to sustainably harvest identified indigenous plants for production of oil and snacks. These value-added indigenous products have a direct impact on the wellbeing of the communities through improving incomes, health, food security and nutrition as well as combating malnutrition. One of the projects implemented in Zambia focused on Capacity Building in bee-keeping and honey production value-chain. Local communities were trained on bee farming. Most of the honey used was sourced from these local communities. On a regional scale, SASSCAL’s WeatherNet network contributes to improved data quality, forecast and early warning systems in the region. This information is used in the day to day weather forecast as well as onward transmission to other meteorological partners and stakeholders.

All the above make SASSCAL a credible institution and showcase its contribution to the region in the area of climate change and adaptive land management. Success is not only measured by an organisation’s outputs but also credibility or having qualified staff members and well-established networks of expertise, but, must be accompanied by assurances that resources are in place to stay the course. The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has provided a sum of €10 Million for research. BMBF has further availed more financial support of €3 Million towards the establishment of a Graduate Studies Programme in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). More Graduate Programmes in the form of centres of excellence are anticipated in the region.

People are the drivers of success in ensuring that SASSCAL’s future plans are realised. To ensure alignment to these realities, it was imperative for my team to convene and map the way forward to ensure alignment to SASSCAL 2.0 strategy. The entire SASSCAL team thus converged in Namibia for a planning meeting and a team building day. Great things happen when teams are mobilized for mapping the way forward. At the end of the planning meeting my team was very optimistic about the future of SASSCAL. Our optimism comes from knowing it, owning it and “actioning” it.

I am genuinely confident that my team and I are ready and have the right structures in place to ensure successful implementation of this new research phase. I know beyond any doubt that optimism is infectious, attitude is everything, and it must be worn as a shield and proclaimed with confidence. I look forward to the 2019 - 2022 implementation and the launch of the various Graduate Studies Programmes.
The Press Statement was delivered by Prof Rene Haak (Head of Division 723, Global Change and Germany Board Member). The media had an opportunity to get first hand information on the importance of research in the region as a key driver to addressing the challenges of climate change.

The overarching goal of SASSCAL II Research Call is to provide scientific input into SASSCAL’s strategic research framework that builds on the achievements of the first phase of SASSCAL and is in alignment with the SASSCAL Mandate. The SASSCAL research framework addresses regional research needs and imperatives within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the AU 2063 Vision and Action Plan, national policies as well as the various SADC action and development plans, especially on science, technology and innovation, as well as on climate change.

The launch of SASSCAL II is a further task that contributes to the Paris agreement. As highlighted by the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there is consensus among governments, decision makers and researchers that climate change is an imminent threat to societies. There is an urgent need for scientifically informed mitigation and adaptation actions, policies and strategies around the world.

To address challenges and threats posed by climate variability and change, decision makers at all levels need scientifically sound information and knowledge to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies and to sustainably develop the southern African environment, economies and societies.

SASSCAL II Research Programme announced

Various media houses convened at the SASSCAL Regional Secretariat on 21 May 2019 for the SASSCAL Press Conference. The aim of the Press Conference was to inform a wider audience about the launch of the SASSCAL II Research Programme, as well as the establishment of the Graduate Studies Programme in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). The Press conference was delivered by Prof Rene Haak – Head of Division 723, Global Change and Germany Board Member. The panel for the press conference was constituted by Prof Rene Haak, Hon Anna Shiweda – Deputy Minister – Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) and SASSCAL Deputy Board Chair who was represented by Mr Joseph Hailwa – Director Forestry and Dr Jane Olwoch – SASSCAL Executive Director.

Pictured at the Press Conference for the SASSCAL II Research Call launch:
From Left : Mr Joseph Hailwa, Prof Rene Haak and Dr Jane Olwoch

SASSCAL STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS & INITIATIVES
Prof Haak invited researchers, NGOs, farmers and the entire scientific community to take advantage of SASSCAL II Research Call, to make meaningful contributions towards addressing the effects of climate change. He further urged potential funding recipients to forge partnerships within the region to ensure regional representation of their projects; partnerships across various disciplines to ensure multidisciplinary and cross cutting projects are developed, as well as forging relationships with German Institutions.

Mr Joseph Hailwa advised the various media houses present that MAWF’s mandate is to ensure food production and food security as well as water management supply and security. He thus called on the entire research community especially young researchers to embrace the call to develop systems and mechanisms to assist the country and the region in climate adaptation. “Funding is not easy to get, this is your chance young people and you need to be keen to investigate how best the region can cope” he added. Mr Hailwa reaffirmed MAWF’s support for SASSCAL as well as further commitment towards the payment of the country contributions to ensure SASSCAL’s sustainability. He also thanked Germany for their support towards the regional Initiative.

The media plays a very pivotal role in information dissemination. No matter who we are, information gives us more power because the more we know, the more we can effect change at various levels. One way we acquire knowledge is through the media, whose role is to disseminate information to an audience, thereby empowering them.
SASSCAL and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) have announced the SASSCAL II Research Call to address regional research needs that investigate aspects of global change that affect the well-being and sustainable development of southern Africa with collaborative and trans-disciplinary research.

BMBF has committed € 10 Million towards the implementation of SASSCAL II Research Programme which be implemented from 2019 to 2022/23. SASSCAL II is underpinned by the SASSCAL's Science Plan, which calls for relevance, excellence and innovativeness, capacity development and regional integration.

The research needs of the SASSCAL II Research Call were identified during a consultative and participative process that informed the SASSCAL Science Plan and aims at contributing to providing evidence-based knowledge for

- a better understanding of the dimension, dynamics and impact of global environmental change in southern Africa,
- a better understanding of the implications of these changes for decision making at all stakeholder levels, and
- stimulating and supporting innovation, capacity building and decision making in responding to these challenges.

The research shall address the Research Priority Areas (RPAs) defined in the SASSCAL Science Plan, namely food security, water security, biodiversity conservation, sustainable forests and woodlands and climate service provision.

More information on the SASSCAL II Research Call expectations, requirements and details on the different types of projects, please visit our SASSCAL Website: Call in English or Call in Portuguese.
Graduate Centers of Excellence

SASSCAL, with the support of the Germany Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), aims to establish Graduate Centers of Excellence in every SASSCAL Member Country:

- **Angola**
  - Food Security, Agriculture and Land Management
- **Botswana**
  - Natural Resource Management and Human Health
- **Namibia**
  - Integrated Water Resource Management
- **Zambia**
  - Sustainable Forests and Woodlands Centre
- **South Africa**
  - Climate Data and Services Centre

The first such Graduate Studies Programme is to be implemented in Namibia.

SASSCAL hosts IWRM Graduate Studies Programme Stakeholder Workshop

SASSCAL with the support of BMBF and in collaboration with the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), hosted a stakeholder engagement workshop on 21 May 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia, marking a major milestone towards the establishment of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Graduate Studies Programme.

The establishment of the Graduate Studies Programme is envisioned to strengthen national and regional capacity in water resources management.

The Graduate Studies Programme in IWRM will be the first in a process of establishing Graduate Centres of Excellence in the region. This effort is complemented by various stakeholders including regional and international collaborating institutions and universities.

Prof Pramanathan Govender, Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Research and Innovation at NUST, in his welcoming remarks, emphasised the need for the region to develop technical and managerial expertise that can respond to the complex environmental challenges that plague southern Africa. Prof Govender also highlighted the inadequate capacity in the region, in terms of qualified professionals to assist with adaptation and mitigation measures.

Professor Rene Haak, Board Member from Germany, stated in his opening remarks that the joint vision for the BMBF and SASSCAL is to establish a group of graduate schools of excellence in the region. These centres will further strengthen the regional capacity through human and infrastructural capacity development. Prof Haak expressed confidence in the SASSCAL Executive Director, Dr Jane Olwoch as the ideal person and office to drive this vision to realisation.

Mr Abraham Nehemia represented Hon Anna Shiweda the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, and, SASSCAL Deputy Board Chair. “The need to build capacity in the country, within SASSCAL Member States, as well as the en re region, cannot be over emphasised”, stated Mr Nehemia. With the current climate change projections, it has become imperative for the region to be well equipped with the right expertise to address these challenges.
The Paris report of 2015 refers explicitly to international research cooperation, first and foremost, in order to help the most affected countries to adapt to climate change and to reduce emissions. To address challenges and threats posed by climate variability and change, decision makers at all levels need scientifically sound information and knowledge to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies and to sustainably develop the southern African environment, economies and societies. The IWRM programme is key in addressing the gap in the regional expertise.

Dr Jane Olwoch, in her welcoming remarks added that SASSCAL is well suited and has adequate structures, collaborations and partnerships to strengthen the regional capacity through training of professionals. “For these professionals to have a meaningful impact in the region, they will be trained at high academic levels, especially at PhD level, in collaboration with established German Universities and well renowned universities in the region, to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer,” she added.

The workshop concluded that there is a need for a follow up technical workshop. The proposed timeline (illustrated below), to enrol the first batch of students by 2020, while very ambitious, is possible. There will be very strict entry requirements to ensure program excellency. The programme will focus on PhD qualification. NUST will host the Graduate Studies Programme in IWRM. It is likely that the programme curriculum will include up to six months’ capacity development or integrated research based learning at a leading IWRM programme in Germany.
The activities focus on the training of doctoral and Master’s students as experts, to understand, protect and valorize biodiversity and ecosystem services in the face to climate change. The vision is to become a Reference Center of Excellence in capacity building and innovative research, in the face of global change, for Africa.

The Graduate Studies Programme consists of ten Doctoral programmes and two Master programmes. Each of the ten doctoral programmes and two master’s programmes is autonomous and based at one lead university. The Graduate Studies Programme is implemented on an Interdisciplinary Approach. This is enabled through cross-linking of various experts and university institutions between the ten identified priority areas. It involves teaching, student supervision, and exchange of cross-border experiences.

To ensure knowledge and technology transfer, the programmes are implemented in partnership with German partner universities. The German partner universities collaborate with the Doctoral Programs and Master Programs through curriculum development, visiting professorships and co-supervision of graduate students. In addition, West African students and faculty members are given the opportunity to conduct research at German universities or to visit counterpart research institutions. The overall programme is coordinated by the Capacity Building Department located at WASCAL Headquarters in Accra.
The relationship between the two institutions is envisioned to culminate in the generation and usage of accurate climate data, forming the foundation on which Namibia’s climate change adaptation projects are built on. SASSCAL’s Open Access Data Centre (OADC) is well positioned to provide free access to this data. SASSCAL augments provision of accurate climate data through its WeatherNet, which boasts of 154 weather stations within the region. The EIF has mobilized funding for 4 climate change adaptation projects from the Green Climate Fund and hopes to scientifically quantify the outcomes of the projects during the implementation phase, as well as at the end-of-project phase.

Speaking at the signing, the Chief Executive Officer of the EIF, Benedict Libanda, reiterated the importance of data in climate change adaptation projects. “Access to weather and climate information is crucial in establishing early warning systems for the implementers of projects financed through the EIF. The work of SASSCAL therefore complements our efforts and more importantly the work of the farmers, conservancy members and community-based organisations currently working on implementing climate change adaptation projects”, said Libanda.

Dr Olwoch, the SASSCAL Executive Director, highlighted some of the services and knowledge products that were developed under the SASSCAL 1.0 Research Portfolio, that will enable the EIF to sustainably manage its portfolio of climate change projects. “SASSCAL is an internationally recognised reliable Science Service Centre encorced on Research, Capacity Development, Products and services. It is well suited to assisting the EIF in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating its programmes and projects” added Dr Olwoch.

Under this MOU, the two parties have charted joint obligations for research and educational activities, for the purpose of enhancing awareness and mutual understanding. Dr Olwoch committed the institution to providing the EIF with science services including research assignments, capacity development initiatives and the development and provision of services and data products to enable the EIF to sustainably manage its portfolio of climate change projects.

The MoU is effective for an initial period of five years and may be renewed for a period and on terms to be agreed upon by the Parties.
The Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management (SASSCAL) and Helmholtz Zentrum Geesthacht Climate Service Centre Germany (HZG/GERICS) have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).

SASSCAL Executive Director Dr Jane Olwoch and GERICS Director Prof Daniela Jacob signed the MoA on 20 March 2019 at the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF).

Through the MoA, SASSCAL and HZG/GERICS have established a formal link between both institutions to provide a framework for the performance of joint programs, projects and other joint activities in the field of climate science, climate service provision, knowledge transfer and capacity building.

The established agreement includes, among others, efforts to train mainly young scientists and to develop climate service products in order to support the countries of southern Africa in their efforts to adapt to climate change. SASSCAL, through its Human Capacity Development is in the process of establishing its Alumni Programme. The Programme is expected to nurture and provide further support to former SASSCAL scholarship holders and graduates. The Agreement will thus augment SASSCAL’s pursuit of strengthening the regional human and institutional capacity development.

The Agreement was signed at a crucial time before the launch of the SASSCAL II Research Call. The signed cooperation will strongly support SASSCAL II initiatives.

Furthermore, the Agreement will provide a platform for the exchange and joint use of equipment that should expose SASSCAL researchers to international ground breaking technologies.

The exchange of data, tools and information relevant to research priorities of both institution will further strengthen the regional capacity to participate in international climate change conversations.

SASSCAL cements partnership to champion climate services in the region

SASSCAL STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS & INITIATIVES
SASSCAL held its annual planning meeting from 24 to 26 April 2019 at Midgard Country Estate, Okahandja, Namibia. The SASSCAL Regional Secretariat and all National Nodes participated.

The two-day planning meeting provided an opportune time to reflect on where we have come from as SASSCAL, our successes, our failures and lessons learned towards a successful second phase for SASSCAL.

In her opening remarks, Dr Jane Olwoch, SASSCAL Executive Director (ED), reiterated that the most successful organisations are those where everyone works together cohesively. SASSCAL provides a conducive environment for staff growth, productivity, contentment, creativity and innovation. Dr Olwoch reminded staff of the importance of continued full commitment to their responsibilities that continues to produce a high impact team. “Each member must devote to advancing the SASSCAL mandate and recognise that everyone’s effort matters, because every effort contributes to the whole”, she added.

In order to be more focused and successful, each staff member is also required to see clearly how their daily activities align with SASSCAL’s Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives.

The SASSCAL team possesses a wide range of professional competencies and is thus fully equipped to meet a wide range of needs, expectations and challenges, to contribute to the region’s research agenda. This is especially important, considering the unique niche in which SASSCAL is nested. As a regional Science Service Centre, SASSCAL has a unique role for advocating and promoting science diplomacy across the region. “SASSCAL’s role of providing decision makers with credible knowledge to inform policy requires the team and the organisation as a whole to continue to ensure its alignment to both the regional and international agendas, as well as the SDG’s (Sustainable Development Goals) and requirements in the Paris Agreement”, emphasised Dr Olwoch. The ED also reminded staff members of the importance of open lines of communication to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the team.

The planning meeting was held just before the launch of the SASSCAL II Research Call, to focus attention on the objectives of the upcoming Call and the implementation and attainment of the SASSCAL II strategy.

Planning enables teams and organisations to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. The team was thus reminded of the objectives of SASSCAL II which will guide their
operations towards the realisation of SASSCAL’s Vision. The team reviewed its existing Operational Plan and ensured its alignment to the regional and international research agendas, as well as the SDGs.

The Planning meeting was concluded by an award ceremony in appreciation of long serving staff members who celebrate more than four years of service. Tracy-lee Van Wyk, Elvi Aron, Charity Angula and Sylvia Thompson were honoured with these awards.

The key drivers of organisational success are its employees. Employee performance is critical to the overall success of the organisation. Employee performance is an integral aspect which leads to the successful attainment of organisational goals. It is well documented that SASSCAL provides a conducive working environment that promotes employee growth and development. Long term serving employees are valuable assets of the organization and are custodians of organisational culture and institutional memory. Employees are also valuable marketing assets through advocacy. Thus, SASSCAL congratulates its long serving employees.

The award ceremony was presided by SASSCAL Executive Director, Dr Jane Olwoch and SASSCAL Director of Administration and Finance, Mrs Chipo Chirefu-Toto.
SASSCAL recently recruited three technical experts to further strengthen and diversify its pool of expertise. All three new staff members are under the Directorate of Science and Technology/Capacity Development.

SASSCAL welcomes the SASSCAL Open Access Data Centre (OADC) Coordinator Mr Samson S Mwinga. Mr Mwinga has over 10 years of professional experience in software project implementation and management. Mr Mwinga will be based at the SASSCAL Regional Secretariat in Windhoek and will lead a team of technical experts at the OADC towards delivering innovative tools and services for decision and policy makers in southern Africa.

Ms Tuwilika P Nangombe joined SASSCAL as a Data Management Officer. She will be based at the Regional Secretariat in Windhoek, Namibia. Ms Nangombe has vast experience in Data Processing.

SASSCAL welcomes its new Officer for Programming and Software Developer Mr Baptista Joao. Mr Joao is an experienced Software Engineer with a demonstrated history of working in the Information Technology and Services industry. Both, Ms Nangombe and Mr Joao will be responsible for the SASSCAL WeatherNet.
In this article, we present part of what the Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive land Management (SASSCAL) has done in Zambia in the last six years, the programme mode of implementation and conclude by articulating how similar regional initiatives can step up strengthened climate action based on the lessons learnt.

The vacillation over climate change action is now only limited to a small segment of our global society compared to the unrivalled consensus. And those that are part of the undecided are made to do so by concerns over the economic welfare of people that rely on activities detrimental to our environment for their livelihoods that have no immediately identified and actionable alternatives. It does not matter whether the tumult from average global temperatures going beyond the 1.5°C mark will only be for a moment in time or the conditions will be permanent and continue declining, action is necessary. The recent poignant events in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe with tropical cyclone causing 947 deaths in Mozambique and Zimbabwe and damage to infrastructure estimated at $36 million are not things that humanity can afford to live with. Numerous initiatives have sprung up to deal with the different aspects of climate change. However, the problem is enormous and despite scaling up climate action we may not, as observed in the IPCC special report on 1.5°C global warming and the Global Deal for Nature (GDN), meet our targets and avoid the climate related calamities. It is, therefore, necessary that climate change interventions are well coordinated, aligned with global and regional frameworks, most importantly the Paris Agreement Rulebook, GDN and particularly for Africa the Agenda 2063 and various regional strategic documents to ensure effective holistic execution.

Through a network of 10 partners, among them government departments, research institutions and universities, 14 projects were implemented in Zambia with thematic focus on Agriculture, Biodiversity, Climate, Forestry and Water. These were delivered according to the SASSCAL’s three-pronged approach by conducting relevant research that addressed societal land management needs, provision of scientific products and services and building the capacity of individuals and institutions to proficiently deliver the foregoing.

Relevant scientific knowledge was generated and delivered to beneficiaries that included small scale farmers, beekeepers, honey production associations, traditional authorities, government staff within the study localities, agricultural extension staff, municipal workers, community resource boards and game scouts through trainings, workshops and stakeholder meetings.

As the research was being carried out, members of the communities within and around the study areas were involved in the management of experimental sites, evaluation of crop varieties and farming technologies. The Zambia Agricultural Research...
As the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) was conducting research in the Lumimba Game Management Area (GMA) to understand human and wildlife conflicts, stakeholder inclusive consultations involving the traditional leaders, municipalities, the National Heritage and Conservation Commission, Department of Agriculture, Department of Fisheries, Forestry Department and community associations were conducted.

This process led to the development of a legally binding game management plan for the Lumimba (GMA). With the game management plan in force the number of human and wildlife conflict cases recorded by the DNPW in the GMA have reduced.

By identifying the right hive orientation to improve bee occupation, right honey processing and storage requirements and conditions, evaluation of bee baiting materials and development of new pest management and honey processing technologies suitable for small scale producers, Mulungushi University generated relevant knowledge for the sector which was transferred to small-scale honey producers and beekeepers through technology transfer workshops. Furthermore, the University through its Mulungushi University Honey brand has created a market for small scale producers that supply honey to supplement the production from the University apiaries. This flagship outcome has demonstrated how relevant scientific knowledge can spur commercially viable sustainable livelihood options that are an alternative to unsustainable forestry dependent activities such as charcoal production and slash and burn shifting cultivation.

A water quality and quantity database for Western Zambia that covered part of a basin of regional importance with ecosystem and water security implications was developed by the University of Zambia's Integrated Water Resource Management (Figure 4). The fluctuations that they observed in the water quality that were consistent with the changes in the flooding regime, can help municipalities and water and sanitation agencies make precise plans and decisions.
From the above snippet of the findings and outcomes from over five years of research, it can be discerned in many ways how this work contributes to climate change adaptation. Many opportunities that could generate social, economic and environmental benefits and well-being of communities were identified. The adoption of the knowledge resources that were generated in creating maximum benefits for the communities in a broad sense is not certain albeit it has already been realised at a small scale through the farmers that participated in the various projects practicing some acquired techniques, trained technical staff operating at different and better levels of proficiency and some of the involved scientists and experts integrating the generated knowledge in their decision making. Evidence-based information and knowledge of this nature is supposed to be intensively and extensively utilised particularly when dealing with an issue such as climate change where it is feared that the desired out-comes may not be realised.

All projects were conceived with regional considerations. However, the implementation was through similar projects being executed in isolation from those in other countries. Thus, some of the countries may miss out on some of the benefits from the isolated lessons that were not experienced in those countries. For example, the same model was employed to strengthen the bee keeping value chain in Zambia and value addition and marketing of climate smart emerging crops to improve food security in Botswana. Despite the two research teams having had exchanges during their research, the application of the bee keeping technologies and recommendations in Botswana and domesticating the results of the value addition of climate smart emerging crops in Zambia may not yield much benefits or not work at all compared to if the respective studies were conducted in both countries.

Thirty people out of the 37 that received SASSCAL scholarships were trained at Masters and PhD levels. Ten (10) of these were female and the rest were male. Despite the fact that there was no gender consideration in selecting the students according to their speciality, the number is impressive for the first cohort of the capacity building programme. Training programmes under which they were enrolled were dependent on the needs and priorities of the institution that took leadership of the research consortium.

Only highlights of a portfolio of 14 projects that were implemented in a period of more than five years can be provided in a single article. However, it is worthwhile to provide a glimpse of the achievements especially at this time when the research call for the second set of research projects whose implementation will be shaped according to past successful and challenging experiences. The direction that SASSCAL programmes are taking are that are embedded in the call criteria such as multi-country research consortia, research topics that are inter and transdisciplinary in nature with a regional focus and relevance will reposition the research programme in the positive direction. It will facilitate increased knowledge transfer and exchange between the researchers more than before. Climate change has many facets to it and for regional initiatives of a magnitude of SASSCAL, it is very easy to get lost in the maze of things and ultimately achieve no substantial and focussed impact. For SASSCAL, the direction of its programmes is now clearer and much limited to its frame work of strategic direction.

References
SASSCAL GEARS UP TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS ALUMNI NETWORK

SASSCAL recognises the importance of human capacity development as a capital investment in human capital and this increases labour productivity and furthers technological innovations to address the challenges of global change.

SASSCAL’s objectives evolve around three pillars namely, Research, Capacity Development and Provision of Services and Products.

Through the research pillar, SASSCAL supports student research through various platforms, including bursaries. This educational support imparts learning to an individual so that firstly, they may have their own place in the society but most importantly, that the regional human capacity is developed and strengthened. This is especially important for Southern Africa which requires experts to assist with adaptation measures.

The Botswana National node, on 18 to 19 March, 2019 hosted the Coordinator Human Capacity Development (HCD), Mr Kevin Stephanus. During the visit the HCD held various meetings with former and current SASSCAL funded students as well as SASSCAL 1.0 Project Investigators. The visit is part of the process of establishing the SASSCAL Alumni network. Data gathered during such visits will assist in building of a database which will present a clear picture of SASSCAL graduates in terms of who they are, what they do, their plans, challenges and their needs during and post the SASSCAL scholarships. The perspectives gathered will help SASSCAL to develop and tailor make effective programmes for prospective students and Alumni in the future. The focus was also to highlight the particular Strengths, weaknesses, or challenges and opportunities that could facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of the Human Capacity Development Programme.

In Botswana, SASSCAL funding supported 59 students to obtain degrees some of which are still busy with their studies. The total supported per graduate level is presented below:

- 4 PhD student (1 already graduated)
- 17 Master students (12 already graduated)
- 30 Bachelor students (all 30 already graduated)
- 8 Students-Certificate level (Completed)
- 25 technicians -Short Courses (Completed)

Discussions during the meeting with SASSCAL students at Botswana National Node on 18 March.
SASSCAL staff joined the rest of the African continent to celebrate Africa Day by wearing their diverse beautiful African ethnic attires. **Africa Day** is the annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity on **25 May** 1963.

Johanna (left) in a traditional Owambo outfit.

Rikondjerua (right) in the traditional Ohorokova, or Herero dress.
SASSCAL 2019 TEAM BUILDING IN PICTURES
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