

**Igor Koulkov**

**COOPERATION BASIS**

Cooperation between Russia and the countries of Southern Africa has a long history which makes an excellent foundation for bilateral economic cooperation at present and in the future.

Southern African countries united into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) possess valuable experience of national as well as regional consolidation and development. This experience was crucial addressing socio-economic issues for about 210 million population in 14 countries of the region. The importance of regional cooperation was underlined by the President of Namibia Sam Nujoma in his annual address to foreign diplomats accredited in Namibia in December 2002: “We believe that sub-regional economic groupings are the pillar of the African economic community. Regional integration will hasten the process of continental integration and the integration of the African continent into the global economy on competitive basis ...”

The same tendency is developing in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which unites 12 countries of the former Soviet Union. Agreement signed on 23 February 2003 by the Presidents of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus — states with the population of about 220 million — makes provision for the establishment of unified economical area and the development of regional integration.

Potential cooperation between the Russian CIS participants and the Southern African SADC includes, therefore, not only bilateral but regional levels in various fields such as those of economics, industry, science and socio-cultural relations.

**1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

The ultimate goal of any society’s economical activity is solution of social problems: economical provision, physical health and inner world evolution of human being. Economic, ecological and social tasks are interdependent as was argued at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. This aim was reflected in the Summit Action Plan in the fields of natural resources, clean energy, health, water supply, and agriculture.

Sustainable development is one of the main principles of the SADC countries’ development programmes and long-term regional and national projects such as 10-year SADC Protocol on Transport, Meteorology and Communication, 25-year (2000 – 2025) Southern African Vision for Water, Life and Environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 30-year Vision of Namibia development and other programmes of SADC countries development.

Russia also strives to establish a new economy, based sustainable development of this country’s national industry and on comprehensive scientific technologies. This task underscores the foundation of the newly created State Strategy of Russia’s Sustainable Development.

Russian scientists from the University of Nature, Earth and Human Being “DUBNA” and its branch the Institute of Sustainable Development and Innovation

were the first in the world to create a new educational program for the subject “Planning sustainable development of socio-nature systems”. There are models developed by Russian scientists that chart regional integration such as, for example, for the Moscow Region, as well as for the consolidated entry of Russian scientific organizations, enterprises and Science-cities to international markets.

Cooperation in this field will be of mutual interest for both Russia and Southern African countries and will lead to considerable gains in shared practical experience in establishment of the new economy of sustainable development.

### **2. SECTORS COOPERATION**

“Strengthening of the partnership ‘state – private sector’ is one of the most important direction of the program ‘New Partnership for Africa development’ (NEPAD)”, remarked the South Africa President Tabo Mbeki in his speech on 30 October 2001. This partnership offers solutions to global problems which will benefit society as a whole including state sector, private sector and all members of the society.

This idea was echoed by the Russian President Vladimir Putin in his speech during Russian Ambassadors meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 July 2002: “Foreign Affairs resources consist not only of federal departments. They also include efforts of national companies and business communities as well”.

Cooperation of Russian and Southern African partners will enrich their experience to a mutual benefit of state and private sectors.

“Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Russian federation and the Southern African Development Community on Basic principals of relations and cooperation” signed in September 2003 by the SADC Executive Secretary H.E. Dr. Prega Ramsamy during his official visit to the Russian Federation and by H.E. Igor Ivanov Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation will definitely serve to development of economic cooperation as well.

### **3. NEW ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT**

The main task of the Southern African countries after political liberation is completion of liberation process by development of independent economy.

This task was highlighted by the President of Namibia Sam Nujoma in his speech in December 2003: “The task facing Africa today is one of creating a favorable environment for economic recovery, growth and sustainable development”.

In Russia, undiversified development of economy during recent years in the context of persisting natural monopolies and oligarchic structures has complicated adequate development of other fields of industry and science at the core of national economy.

Economics diversification, liberation of raw-materials economy, development of strong national economy are common tasks for Russia and the SADC countries. One of the main goals in both regions is increasing one’s own national production and development of high technology industry that may serve as a pillar of the establishment of new economy, based on cutting-edge industry and technology.

This goal should become the main basis of cooperation between Russian and Southern African partners in the field of industry and science for the establishment of new economy.

Development of middle and small business as active part of new economy is very important for fulfillment of national economical tasks in Russia and in the SADC countries.

The countries of South Africa accumulated considerable experience on state assistance to active involvement of national middle and small business in development of national economy, including international business. Examples of these policies include the state support of the national “BEE” companies in South Africa and of export production in Namibia as well as other incentives of the SADC countries.

This similarity of general goals of new economy development and new partnership creates additional favorable environment for mutual cooperation between Russian and the Southern African partners.

#### **4. PARTNERSHIP CHOICE**

Overcoming dependence on undiversified economy of natural monopolies and on oligarchic structures is an urgent task of the Russian economy.

Liberation of dependence of foreign monopolies is a vital task of Southern African countries. The South African President Tabo Mbeki clarified this task in his speech on 30 October 2001 in which he stressed that “National natural resources will not be used at the narrow interests of foreign monopolies and national elites”.

General economical aims determine choice of partnership for international cooperation between the Russian and Southern African organizations, enterprises and companies.

The result of international cooperation depends on political choices and economic orientation, which should allow the most efficient cooperation between Russia and Africa for mutual benefit.

#### **5. NEW ECONOMY. NEW PARTNERSHIP. NEW BUSINESS.**

The new economy requires new partnership and new type of business relations. The new economy of 21<sup>st</sup> century, a century that starts the new Millennium, has to create a new type of businessperson.

Such a businessperson should consider developments of the new economy, new business relations, and new partnership from the vantage point of the long-term mutual benefit. He or she should clearly see that roads are being built not only for profit from road construction and that oil is being extracted not only for profit from oil itself. Such a person should realize that roads are being built and oil is being produced for the interests of economies, industry and science development that have as their final targets the economical provision, physical health and inner world evolution of human being.

Conference “Africa’s Millennium: Trade, Investment and Growth” to be held in South Africa in September 2003 shall make a seminal contribution to the creation of principles of the new economy as well as to the elaboration of principles of new partnership and the new generation of business community for the solution of 21<sup>st</sup> century tasks of establishing sustainable society.

**Victor Koulkov, economist**  
**Igor Koulkov, economist**

**1 September 2003 Moscow**  
**E-mail: [igorkoulkov@yandex.ru](mailto:igorkoulkov@yandex.ru)**