



AFRITAC SOUTH: QUARTERLY BULLETIN

MAY - JULY 2016

IMF REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA
BUILDING MACROECONOMIC CAPACITY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA



AFRITAC South

Table of Contents

	Page
Highlights	1
By topic area	2
Public financial management	2
Customs administration	3
Tax administration	4
Financial sector supervision	5
Monetary operations	6
Real sector statistics	7
List of TA Reports transmitted	8
AFS-funded seminars and courses	9
IMF online courses	9
Announcements	10
AFS Phase II	10
Country Visits by Center Coordinator	10
AFS Secure website	10
Staff news	10

AFRITAC South

7th floor, Bramer House

Ebene, Mauritius

Tel: +230 401 2500 Fax: + 230 468 1618

Email: afritacsouth@imf.org

Website: www.southafritag.org

hands-on approach to addressing practical issues facing institutions, including institutional and staff capacity constraints.

HIGHLIGHTS

The AFS annual report for FY16 published in June provides an update on the progress made towards the medium-term outcomes set for phase I and highlights the emerging strategic priorities for phase II. This bulletin is an update on the implementation of the FY17 work plan in the first quarter (May -July 2016).

AFS delivered some 122 field person-weeks of technical assistance (TA) across member countries, transmitted 29 TA reports to government agencies, and conducted four regional seminars in addition to the tailored workshops and on-the-job training provided during TA field visits/missions.

Regional Initiatives: The regional seminars included three new topics of significant importance for supporting the implementation of TA recommendations and ongoing reforms, including one on Risk Based Approaches to AML/CFT Supervision, in which the EU Ambassador delivered the closing speech. The high ratings from participants reflect the



The EU Ambassador to Mauritius, Comoros, and Seychelles, Mrs. Marjaana Sall, at the closing session of the AML/CFT seminar

Public financial management: TA included support on the medium-term fiscal framework (Angola and Lesotho), budget baseline costing (Botswana), control of payment arrears (Madagascar), IFMS and transition to GSF2014 (Namibia), PFM regulatory framework (Seychelles), cash management (Lesotho and Swaziland), and macro-fiscal forecasting and output-based budgeting (Zambia).

Customs and tax administration: TA was provided to further simplify customs processes for non-petroleum exporters (Angola), review legislations (Botswana, Comoros, and Namibia), improve applications of TADAT and modernize revenue administration (Comoros, Swaziland, Zambia), further develop post-control audit (Lesotho and Madagascar), and strengthen capacity in customs valuation (Seychelles) and in the administration of mining (Botswana) and telecoms sectors (Zambia and Zimbabwe).



Financial sector supervision: TA focused on risk based supervision, mainly on the stress testing framework (Botswana) and on consolidated and conglomerate supervision (Mauritius).

Monetary operations: TA supported the functioning of the foreign exchange market (Madagascar), the development of an inflation forecasting model (Seychelles and Zambia), and the national payment systems (Lesotho and Swaziland).

Real sector statistics: TA focused on improving export and import price indexes (Angola), rebasing national accounts statistics (Madagascar), and improving GDP compilation--quarterly (Mozambique and Zambia) and annual (Swaziland and Zambia).

BY TOPIC AREA

Public financial management

By Peter Francis Murphy, Sybi Hida, and Imran Aziz

Regional Seminar: The seminar focused on the conceptual framework presented in the IMF's recently published board paper "[Managing Government Compensation and Employment – Institutions, Policies, and Reform Challenges](#)". The lectures and group sessions addressed the strengthening of the key institutions that underpin the effective management of wage bill spending. A number of countries face difficult tradeoffs between the need to expand public services and raise public investment while experiencing severe revenue and financing constraints. In this context, the regional seminar was timely in offering approaches to effectively manage the wage bill given the challenges in the region. The seminar had 36 participants from 12 AFS countries and a summary can be found on the [IMF's PFM blog site](#).



Seminar: Managing Government Compensation and Employment. Ebene, Mauritius.

Angola: A joint FAD/AFS mission assisted the authorities in strengthening the medium-term fiscal framework (MTFF) in light of the declining revenues from the slump in oil prices. The mission focused on strengthening the institutional and legal frameworks and ensuring consistency between the MTFF and the annual budget. AFS input included a training session to help develop consistency in the MTFF by better understanding linkages between different sectors of the economy through a more systematic analysis of the effects of fiscal policy on these sectors.

Botswana: AFS assisted the authorities with a budget baseline costing exercise that will inform the expenditure needs for ministries and agencies over the medium-term. The mission held working sessions with over 60 technical officers over a two-week period based on a pre-designed costing template and standardized methodology for different expenditure categories. A follow-up mission will take place in August 2016 to reconcile the results of the government-wide costing exercise with medium-term fiscal sustainability indicators in the form of a budget options paper to inform fiscal decision-making for the ensuing budget.

Lesotho: A joint FAD/AFS mission assisted the authorities in developing the MTFF, budget planning and cash management, and fiscal reporting processes. The mission focused on reviewing the revenue forecasting model to evaluate forecasting reliability and provided hands-on support for improving the framework, taking into consideration technical capacities. In addition, it advised on how the macro-fiscal framework is integrated into the overall budget process to help improve the credibility of the framework. Workshops were undertaken to introduce good practices in medium-term budget planning and in supporting the development of the budget strategy paper. Cash management and fiscal reporting were also reviewed.

Madagascar: An AFS mission continued the ongoing support to the implementation of actions to control the payment arrears and prevent their resurgence. The mission provided support to the technical working group and the newly formed Inter-Ministerial Committee - *Comité Interministériel de Recensement et de Suivi des Arriérés de Paiement (CIRSAP)* - which are both responsible for addressing the issue.

Namibia: An AFS mission discussed with the authorities the strategies available for strengthening the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) functionality, adopting the GFSM2014 as a basis for the economic classification in the IFMS chart of accounts, and implementing a new budget formulation and management module. The mission also identified actions for strengthening capacity building and oversight of IFMS service providers. An IFMS conceptual framework was developed together with detailed budget module specifications.

Seychelles: AFS assisted the authorities with further development of the PFM regulatory framework. A first draft of an accounting manual was developed and a workshop undertaken to facilitate discussion and comment by a broad range of stakeholders and development of an action plan for completion of the manual.

Swaziland: AFS supported the authorities to strengthen cash and commitment management and support training for the new cash management unit. A revised methodology for monthly cash forecasting was developed that provides a baseline for cash rationing and commitment control. Excel-based templates for commitment recording were developed at line ministries, covering all forms of expenditure. A template for collection of arrears data was also developed. Training was provided to all financial controllers for use of the new methodologies and processes.

Zambia: A TA mission in June focused on supporting the Economic Management Department (EMD) in coordinating different sectoral inputs into their aggregate macroeconomic forecasts through the development of a macro-fiscal working group. Excel templates were developed to help simplify the existing model and the mission team conducted working sessions to train officers. Sessions were also held with the Zambian Revenue Authority to develop tools for in-year tracking of revenue collections against targets to aid the development of revised projections.

A second mission in July shared the findings of the Output Based Budgeting review undertaken in May 2016 with different actors from Ministry of Finance, line Ministries, the Accountant General's Office and other major stakeholders within the Government of Zambia. Following the workshop, the mission team helped the authorities produce a roadmap to support implementation of reform efforts, which was shared with development partners and the World Bank. The workshop had 45 participants from 10 institutions.



Stakeholder workshop: sharing findings of the output budgeting review and developing an implementation roadmap.

Customs administration

By Kenneth Head

Angola: AFS fielded a TA mission to the Customs Department of the General Tax Administration (AGT). The purpose of the assignment was to simplify customs processes for non-petroleum exporters in order to spur economic growth in the areas of export-oriented agriculture and fish processing.



Angola: Participants at a forum on streamlining export procedures facilitated by AFS experts

Comoros: The purpose of the TA was to continue providing help to the Customs Department in drafting the regulations as some provisions in the newly passed Customs Code require to be completed by ministerial

regulations and/or directives from the Director General of Customs. This TA was delivered in collaboration between AFS, FAD, legal expert (LEG) and a customs expert. This input will be followed later in the year by the facilitation of a one-week workshop in Comoros to discuss and review the draft regulations with the relevant authorities.

Comoros: An FAD diagnostic assessment of the tax and customs administration was undertaken in July. Based on a recent Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool (TADAT) assignment, the mission advised the revenue administration on ways to strengthen its organization and processes, and recommended measures to continue modernizing revenue administration, improving compliance levels, and increasing tax revenue collection.

Lesotho: In May an AFS TA helped to further develop the Post Clearance Audit (PCA) function and to monitor progress in implementing the action plan agreed with the Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) in previous AFS assignments. This mission provided practical help to support capacity building and to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the PCA function.

Madagascar: A TA mission assessed the state of development of the PCA function; assessed progress against the action plan agreed with the authorities following the TA inputs in 2015; strengthened the links between the PCA unit and other functions involved in post clearance activities especially in the compliance program; and provided practical advice on audits.

Namibia: AFS fielded a mission to support the Customs and Excise Department (CED) to develop a framework, including systems and tools, to improve management controls in the CED to ensure that the objectives of the organization will be achieved more effectively and efficiently; and that both management and operational decisions are better recorded and more transparent. The TA included interactive workshops with the senior management team.

Namibia: A separate assignment was undertaken to the CED to follow-up on previous work to restructure the excise function, develop secondary legislation, including regulations and rules, and design a training program and draft guidelines and key performance indicators (KPIs) for excise officers. The main purpose of the input was to strengthen monitoring and control in excise by ensuring that work is done towards agreed KPIs and to ensure CED makes full use of the advice and guidance provided in previous TA assignments.

Seychelles: The Customs Administration Advisor led a mission to the Seychelles Revenue Commission to help develop and support capacity building in customs valuation. This assignment provided practical help to support the effectiveness and sustainability of the function. In addition, the mission assessed the status of implementation of the recommendations made by the FAD diagnostic mission in January 2016.



Participants from the Seychelles Revenue Commission and an AFS expert at a Customs Valuation workshop in July

Tax administration

By *Thabo Letjama*

Regional seminar: A joint AFS-East AFRITAC seminar on managing performance in revenue administrations was held in May. The workshop trained 37 tax officials from 18 countries on the importance of the International Survey on Revenue Administration (ISORA) in enhanced management reporting and benchmarking the performance of revenue administrations. This event also covered broad principles



Seminar on measuring and managing performance in tax administrations using ISORA

of performance management relevant to a tax administration. ([Press release](#))

Botswana: A workshop in July provided training to BURS officials from the large taxpayer unit (LTU) and other related areas to better enhance compliance in the mining sector. The workshop also covered strategies to address current challenges in the taxation of the mining industry. In parallel meetings were held with the BURS' Commissioner General and other senior managers and representatives of the EU delegation, the World Bank, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from the Regional Economic Integration Support program. The meetings' aim was to ensure a coordinated and sustained support to BURS in developing capacity.



Mr. William Nkitseng, General Manager for the LTU, closing the training course on taxation of the mining industry

Botswana: A LEG mission visited Botswana in July to initiate the process of reviewing the revenue laws with a view to supporting BURS to effectively manage taxpayers' compliance.

Swaziland: A mission in July provided TA to the Swaziland Revenue Authority to further enhance the capability of the LTU in managing compliance based on risk.

Zambia: AFS TA assisted the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) to establish a High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) unit. This assignment was aimed at enhancing compliance in this group of taxpayers. The assignment provided advice on steps the ZRA needs to take to ensure a successful implementation of the HNWI unit.

Zambia and Zimbabwe: TA missions provided training to officers of ZRA and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) on enhancing compliance within the telecoms sector. The officers were trained on advanced techniques for analyzing bulk data and on using computer assisted audit techniques to audit the complex telecoms industry.

Financial sector supervision

By Ravi Mohan P.R.

Regional seminar: In May AFS conducted a seminar on the Risk Based Approach to AML/CFT Supervision. The seminar was designed for mid- to senior-level supervisors of banks from the central banks/prudential supervisory agencies and officials from Financial Intelligence Units who have supervisory responsibilities under their domestic AML/CFT legal framework. The overarching goal of the seminar was to update participants on the concepts, methodologies and outcomes of ML/FT risks and reinforce the regulatory perspectives that are evolving in recent years by international agencies such as the Financial Action Task Force and the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision. ([Press release](#))

MCM/ATI regional course: In July the AFS resident advisor participated as a key resource person in a course on Core Elements of Banking Supervision delivered by the Africa Training Institute (ATI) with 35 participants from 16 countries across the continent. The seminar included a number of case studies/exercises on banking supervision. It was highly rated and in their feedback participants requested similar programs in the future. At the closing, the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius in his speech advised participants to use the additional skills and knowledge acquired from the course to proactively support the



Governor of Bank of Mauritius addressing participants at course on Core Elements of Banking Supervision

prevention of financial crises in their respective jurisdictions. [\(Read more\)](#)

Botswana: A TA mission assisted the Bank of Botswana (BoB) on risk based supervision (RBS) with specific focus on enhancing the skills of the supervisors in stress testing, including the introduction of a stress testing framework covering solvency and liquidity risks for BoB and providing technical input and practical training to staff. The mission focused on developing the skills and capacity of the supervisory staff so as to enable them to implement stress testing effectively.



Mauritius: Meeting session at the FSC

Mauritius: In June AFS extended support to the Bank of Mauritius (BoM) and the Financial Services Commission (FSC) on RBS, consolidated supervision, and conglomerate supervision. The mission helped the BoM and the FSC to adopt a risk-based approach for the oversight of the entities they regulate respectively and to monitor financial conglomerates, with particular emphasis on the systemic ones and their mutual interconnections. It also worked towards developing a more robust structure for the supervisory cooperation between the two agencies. The major achievements were enhancing the supervisors' skills and improving coordination.

Monetary policy framework operations

By Carina Selander and Faith Stewart

Regional seminar: An AFS seminar on Central Bank Communication held in May brought together a mix of policy makers, management, and staff from the central banks of Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zambia. In a peer sharing environment, participants exchanged their experiences of different aspects of communication. Experts from central banks with more advanced communications shared their knowledge and supervised hands-on workshops. Mr. Vladimír Tomsík, Vice Governor of the Czech National Bank, stressed during one of his presentations that communication and transparency have become key elements of monetary policy implementation in the 21st century, providing accountability and boosting the effectiveness of monetary policy. Mr. Stefan Ingves, Governor of Sveriges Riksbank, made a presentation on communication in which he stated: "A large part of my work involves translating complex issues into everyday language. Speaking so that people understand is an important part of a central bank governor's work". The seminar was well received by participants and will in some cases be followed up by customized TA. [\(Press release\)](#)



Seminar participants: Monetary policy communications

Madagascar: An AFS mission visited the Banque Central de Madagascar (BCM) focusing on improving the functioning of the foreign exchange market. The mission had two components - an off-site part to review and harmonize the documents regulating the foreign exchange market and central bank interventions, and an on-site part where the suggested changes to these documents was discussed and agreed with the BCM. The on-site part also assessed the functioning of the foreign exchange market based on the findings from interactions with the BCM, the commercial banks, and other relevant agents in the market.

Seychelles: An AFS mission supported the Central Bank of Seychelles (CBS) on inflation modeling and forecasting. The mission worked with CBS staff on building a core macroeconomic model, how to understand the different building blocks, and the economic theory behind it. The mission also worked with staff in refining the model and adjusting it to the Seychelles economy. This was the fourth mission in a series to build CBS capacity for forward-looking monetary policy. The aim of the project as a whole is to develop a framework for inflation forecasting that is suited to the CBS. This will enable the CBS to have a tool that incorporates the reserve money target and will improve the ability to assess the macroeconomic implications of the policy stance.

Zambia: A TA mission assisted the Bank of Zambia (BoZ) on inflation forecasting and modeling. This was a scoping mission for supporting the development of a forecasting and policy analysis system (FPAS) for the BoZ. The mission overlapped with the mission from Norges Bank on inflation forecasting in order to facilitate a smooth transition of knowledge and information between the two teams. The purpose of the AFS mission was to establish a baseline for the different aspects of FPAS and to agree with the authorities on a plan for moving forward.

Lesotho: AFS funded a diagnostic and capacity building mission to train the newly-appointed staff of the Central Bank of Lesotho on payments system fundamentals and risk-management concepts. The training also introduced staff to international standards, the CPSS-IOSCO Principles for financial market infrastructures (PFMI) – 2012. Building on its earlier successes, management recently approved the new vision for 2016-20 to guide the second phase of its reform agenda. Among the targeted initiatives is the implementation of a local switch for processing retail payment, including cards and mobile payment services. This will allow the clearing and settlement of these transactions in local currency more safely, while removing reliance on external service providers. Importantly, it will also facilitate lower prices and greater national access to electronic payment services.

Swaziland: AFS funded a diagnostic and capacity building mission to the Central Bank of Swaziland (CBS) to support the Bank's reform agenda for the national payments system. The CBS has made good progress in this area, achieving nearly all the milestones set out in its Vision and Strategy document 2016. The mission provided guidance for the drafting of the updated Vision & Strategy document (2021) and made recommendations to strengthen organizational arrangements for the payments function. A new Oversight Policy Framework document was drafted to align the Bank's policy stance with the international standards. It is envisaged that further TA will be needed to enhance the legal framework and synchronize the existing laws related to the payment, clearing, and settlement of financial transactions in the country.

Real sector statistics

By Gregory Legoff

Angola: An expert identified potential data sources for the compilation of export and import price indexes. A substantial part of the mission focused on training on price indexes. Special attention was dedicated to team organization with a presentation of the main steps to start a project. A feasibility study will determine the future of this work.

Madagascar: Two AFS experts provided assistance for rebasing national accounts statistics and strengthening the national statistical system. The rebase of national accounts from 1984 to 2007 using updated methodologies is a major undertaking. The series of reference for 2007 were reviewed and the compilation of rebased estimates is progressing according to plan. Rebased estimates up to 2016 should be published in mid-2017. The mission also assisted with the formulation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics and in improving the visibility of the statistics office as well as the relationship with key users and data providers.

Mozambique: A mission assisted in improving data sources for the compilation of quarterly GDP estimates by better integrating the index of industrial production, the production price index, and results from the monthly business survey in the quarterly estimates. Training was provided on specific aspects of national accounts including benchmarking techniques to align quarterly with annual GDP estimates. The mission collaborated with an expert from the Scanstat project on a better measurement for capital expenditure in relation to mineral exploration.

Swaziland: A TA mission worked in collaboration with the African Development Bank to assist in improving data sources and methodologies for the compilation of annual GDP estimates. Recommendations from the previous mission conducted in April 2016 were partly implemented with the official dissemination of rebased national accounts estimates for the period 2000-14. Access to tax records was improved and related data should be gradually incorporated in the national accounts estimates. A follow-up AFS mission will assist in reviewing the draft 2015 GDP estimates before their release in October 2016. A compiler from Zambia will join the upcoming mission to share his experience in compiling quarterly GDP estimates and in using tax data.

Zambia: AFS assisted in improving methodologies for the compilation of annual and quarterly GDP estimates with a focus on price deflators and volume indicators used to measure the agriculture and mining industries. Training was provided on the supply-use framework which is used to compile series of reference and reconcile different measures of GDP estimates.

TA REPORTS TRANSMITTED TO COUNTRY AUTHORITIES

Public Financial Management	
Botswana	Strengthening Macro-Fiscal Analysis, Strategic Budget Techniques, and Public Investment Management
Namibia	Review of Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS)
Zambia	Macro-fiscal Management and Budget Formulation
Tax and Customs administration	
Swaziland	Developing the Risk Management Function in Customs
Zambia	Strengthening Risk Management in the Zambia Revenue Authority
Namibia	Evaluation of the Betting and Gaming Industry and the Organization of Telecommunications in Namibia with a view to Strengthening Tax Administration and Expanding the Tax Base
Lesotho	Developing the Post Control Audit Function in the Customs Administration
Namibia	Implementing a Revenue Authority
Monetary operations	
Lesotho	Training and Capacity Building to Support National Payments System Development
Seychelles	Strengthening Compliance with the CPSS-IOSCO Principles for Financial Market Infrastructures
Mozambique	Strengthening internal and external communication of monetary policy
Botswana	Strengthening internal and external communication of Monetary Policy
Angola	Inflation Forecasting
Mauritius	Expert Mission on Developing a Forecasting And Policy Analysis System at the Bank of Mauritius
Zambia	Developing and Improving on the Existing Business Opinion and Expectations Survey
Seychelles	Strengthening Liquidity Forecasting and Implementation of Monetary Policy
Financial Sector Supervision	
Lesotho	Implementing Risk-Based Supervision
Swaziland	Strengthening Compliance with Basel Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision
Lesotho	Implementation of Basel II
Comoros	Renforcement des capacités de la Banque Centrale des Comores dans le domaine de la supervision des institutions financières
Seychelles	Implementation of Basel II
Swaziland	Strengthening the Stress Testing Framework
Namibia	Compliance with Basel Capital Adequacy Framework- Implementation of Basel II
Angola	Macroprudential Analysis/ Analyse Macroprudencial
Real Sector Statistics	
Comoros	Rapport en Comptabilité Nationale
Lesotho	Report on the National Accounts Statistics
Mauritius	Report on the National Accounts Statistics
Zambia	Report on the National Accounts

Swaziland	Report on the National Accounts
-----------	---------------------------------

SEMINARS AND COURSES

AFS Seminars/Courses-Recently held and forthcoming Venue is AFS, Ebene Mauritius, unless otherwise stated	
Title	Dates
Revenue Administration-Fiscal Information Tool	May 9-13, 2016
Risk Based Approaches to AML/CFT Supervision	May 16-20, 2016
Monetary Policy Communications	May 23-27, 2016
Managing Government Compensation and Employment	June 20-23, 2016
Financial Market Analysis	August 1-12, 2016
Central Government Finance Institutions	August 15-19, 2016
Tax Administration Compliance: Extractive Industries Taxation	October 17-21, 2016
CPSS-IOSCO Principles for Financial Market Infrastructure: Challenges & Strategies	October 24-28, 2016
Senior Level Seminar on Evolving Monetary Policy Frameworks	November 3-4, 2016
Evolving Monetary Policy Frameworks	November 7-11, 2016
Enhancements to the Basel Process-Revision to standardized approaches for Credit, Market and Operational risk & Developments relating to Basel III (Venue: South Africa Reserve Bank (SARB) Academy, Pretoria, South Africa)	November 14-18, 2016
Public Investment Management	November 28-December 2, 2016
Compilation of National Accounts	December 5 -9, 2016
Strengthening Budget Formulation Processes to Better Inform Fiscal Decision Making	February 20-24, 2017
Macroeconomic Diagnostics	February 27-March 10, 2017
Addressing Integrity in Customs Administration	April 3-7, 2017
Compilation of Price Statistics	April 10-14, 2017
Debt Sustainability Analysis using the joint World Bank-IMF Debt Sustainability Framework for Low-Income Countries (LIC DSF)	April 17-21, 2017
Debt Sustainability Analysis using the IMF Sustainability Analysis for Market Access Countries (MAC DSA)	April 24-28, 2017

FORTHCOMING IMF ONLINE COURSES

Available to government officials and, in some cases, to the general public through www.imf.org/institute-online

Forthcoming courses include:

- **Financial Programming and Policies, Part 2: Program Design (FPP.2x)**
Language: English
August 31, 2016-October 19, 2016 (7 Weeks); apply online by August 24, 2016
- **Financial Programming and Policies, Part 1: Macroeconomic Accounts & Analysis (FPP.1x)**
Language: French
September 14, 2016-October 26, 2016 (6 Weeks); apply online by September 07, 2016
- **Macroeconomic Forecasting (MFx)**
Language: English
September 14, 2016-November 9, 2016 (8 Weeks); apply online by September 07, 2016
- **Financial Programming and Policies, Part 1: Macroeconomic Accounts & Analysis (FPP.1x)**

Language: Russian

November 2, 2016–December 14, 2016 (6 Weeks); apply online by October 26, 2016

- **Debt Sustainability and Debt Management for Low-Income Countries (DSLx)**

Language: French

November 9, 2016–December 7, 2016 (4.2 Weeks); apply online by November 02, 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AFS phase II (FY18-22) consultations with both internal and external stakeholders are in progress to discuss capacity development priorities for the region for the five year period starting on May 1, 2016.

Country Visits by Center Coordinator: As part of her coordination and outreach visits to AFS country authorities and external partners in the region, the Center Coordinator, Ms. Psalida, visited Botswana, Comoros, and Madagascar in June and July. Discussions centered on the implementation of the AFS FY17 work plan and preparations for AFS’s phase II, with a special emphasis on further strengthening regional harmonization.

The AFS secure website, which provides Steering Committee (SC) members a platform to access TA related information, including TA reports, remains open for registration. Requests from organizations without signed confidentiality agreements will be followed by a text of the agreement for signature. Members wishing to register can submit their requests to Mr. J. Kawal (JKawalJeewan@imf.org) with copy to Mr. D. Chundungsing (DChundungsing@imf.org).

STAFF NEWS

Ms. Brenda Sylvester will join the center as Resident Advisor on results-based management (RBM) on September 5, 2016. Ms. Sylvester comes from the Monetary and Capital Markets Department of the IMF.

Mr. Jeetendra Kawal joined AFS in June 2016 as administrative assistant. He replaced **Ms. Padma Chiran** who returned to work for the government of Mauritius after five years at the center. AFS thanks Ms. Padma for her contributions and welcomes Ms. Sylvester and Mr. Kawal to the AFS team.

