



**REPORT OF THE BENCHMARKING STUDY VISIT BY THE ETHIOPIAN
PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN'S CAUCUS DELEGATION TO THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM 05 - 06
JUNE 2023**

1.Purpose of the Report

To report on the benchmarking visit by the Ethiopian Parliamentary Women's Caucus delegation to the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa on 05 – 06 June 2023

2.Background

The Embassy of Ethiopia in South Africa initiated the visit.

3.Objective of the visit

The purpose of the benchmarking study visit was to interact with counterpart Committee, learn and share experiences on various matters relating to the role and responsibilities of the Multi Party Women's Caucus of the Parliament of the RSA, among others.

3.1 Ethiopian Parliamentary Women's Caucus delegation :

Hon L Bedo Kumbi – Deputy Speaker (Delegation leader); Hon M Haile Masresha, - Clerk of Parliament; Hon K Jundi Hamdo, MP; Hon A Abebe Itsa, MP; Hon A Kefitawu Dachu, MP; Hon F Ali, MP; Hon Dr M Mokonnen Yetneberk, MP; Hon Dr B Mohammed Ibro, MP; Hon N Filate Jira, MP and Ms D Abebe Teferi – UN Women.

The delegation held meetings with the officials of the Parliament of the RSA namely: Mr L Sibanda, Manager: Office of the Secretary to Parliament. Ms S Sibeko – Finance Analyst: Parliament Budget Office and Ms R Begg – the Division Manager: Core Business Support. Mr Z Cawe – from IRPD supported the meetings.

4. Meeting discussions (Monday, 05 June)

The visiting delegation held separate meetings with the above – mentioned officials of the Parliamentary Service. The first meeting was with Mr L Sibanda, Manager: Office of the Secretary to Parliament. In his presentation, the focus was on the structure, working procedures of the Secretariat. Mr

Sibanda highlighted that the office of the Secretary to Parliament constitute what could be referred to as the Administration arm while the Political arm could be referred to as the Executive Authority led by the Presiding Officers (Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairperson of the NCOP). He informed the delegation about the current staff compliment which has been at 1130 despite many unfilled posts. On skills sets, 60% with legal qualifications. He also indicated that most of the staff are in Languages, Research and Committees that constitute the Core Business Support Division. He further highlighted the staff turnover as a major challenge.

The second meeting was with Ms S Sibeko – Finance Analyst: Parliament Budget Office to discuss the role and responsibilities of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO). In her presentation Ms Sibeko cited the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act which provides for the establishment of the PBO headed by a Director. The main objective of the PBO had been the provision of independent, objective, professional advice, and analysis to Parliament on matters related to the Budget and other Money Bills.

On roles and responsibilities, Ms Sibeko highlighted the provision of support in relation to Money Bills Act by assisting with research and analysis to Finance and Appropriations Committees of both the NA and NCOP. The PBO further provides the following:

- Annual reviews on documentation Tabled in Parliament in terms of Money Bills.
- Provide advice and analysis on proposed amendments to the fiscal framework, Division of Revenue Bills and Money Bill, etc.
- Monitor reports Tabled and adopted by Houses, among others.

The third meeting was with Ms R Begg – the Division Manager: Core Business Support. Her presentation was mainly on the Constitutional mandate of Parliament, oversight mechanisms, joint oversight, Committee system, among others. On current mechanism for oversight and accountability by Committees, Ms Begg highlighted oral or written evidence and reports,

oversight visits petitions, public hearings, sectoral engagements, NCOP: Taking Parliament to the People, Provincial week, local government week, etc. On Committee system, she pointed out that the Portfolio Committees in the NA had been linked to government departments while Select Committees had been clustered portfolios. Currently, 27 NA Portfolio Committees plus 11 Select Committees. Five Joint Committees namely: Intelligence, Defence, Financial Management of Parliament and the one dealing with the Constitutional Review. She also mentioned the institutions supporting constitutional democracy as the ones that enhance Parliament's oversight functions because they account and expected to Table reports once a year in Parliament.

In conclusion, Ms Begg stressed that the current focus areas had been on oversight on planning, resourcing, and ensuring implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Agenda 2063 and the National Development Plans, among others.

It should be noted that in the above meetings clarity seeking questions, comments, etc were entertained and responded to. The delegation was satisfied.

5.Day Two: Tuesday, 06 June – Meeting with Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP.

It should be mentioned that the delegation was scheduled to meet (working lunch) with the Multi-Party Women's Caucus. Due to unavailability of the MPs serving in the Multi-Party Women's Caucus of our Parliament the meeting had to be called off. At a short notice, a meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the NA, Mr L Tsenoli, MP and the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms SE Lucas, MP had to be arranged. They were joined by Ms S Mohai, MP – the Chief Whip of the NCOP and Ms Tebogo Modise, MP.

In her opening remarks, Deputy Speaker of the NA, Mr L Tsenoli, MP welcomed the delegation to Parliament and called for unity among countries in Africa and commended women empowerment agenda especially in Forums

where women issues are on the agenda. He thanked the delegation for visiting the Parliament of the RSA and stressed that their visit was very important to Parliament. He further encouraged the engagements among MPs in the continent and urged MPs to share experiences.

In her response, Hon L Bedo Kumbi – Deputy Speaker (Delegation leader) thanked the Deputy Speaker and the NCOP Deputy Chairperson for availing themselves to interact with the delegation and impressed on them, the view that RSA would always be an important strategic partner of Ethiopia. She explained the purpose of their visit which was to share experiences on key challenges facing women, among others. In her input, Ms Lucas – the deputy Chairperson of the NCOP stressed that “women issues are women issues NOT political party matter”. She urged that the countries Budgets should address the challenges and issues of gender parity. On the question of women representation in higher echelons of government, Ms Lucas, MP highlighted that 15 of 17 Cabinet Ministers in the RSA are women. Out of 400 MPs in the NA – 49 % of them are women. The meeting deliberated on various issues including women participation, organisational structure of the women’s caucus, among others. All questions were answered to the satisfaction of the delegation.

6.General outcome of the meetings

The deliberations and outcomes of the meetings were as follows:

- I. The delegation expressed disappointment for not having an opportunity to meet with their counterparts - the Multi-Party Women’s Caucus, however, they cherished the opportunity of meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the NA, Mr L Tsenoli, MP and the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms SE Lucas, MP
- II. It became clear that “women issues are women issues NOT a political party matter”.

7.Recommendations and/or Action by Parliament

None