



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL DIVISION

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REPORT OF THE 54th SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM PLENARY ASSEMBLY

Port Louis, Mauritius

22 – 26 November 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The permanent delegation to SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) attended the 54th SADC PF Plenary Assembly held in Port Louis, Mauritius from 22 to 27 November 2023. The Plenary Assembly met under the theme “The role of parliaments in promoting coordination for enhanced Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning in the SADC Region”. Plenary Assembly, through a Symposium, reflected on the theme, and considered the respective reports emanating from its Standing Committee Session including the Executive Committee meetings held in October 2023. The Plenary Assembly, through a motion by South Africa, encouraged the SADC Region to explore collaboration opportunities with BRICS Member States and institutions, including the BRICS New Development Bank towards the realisation of the development aspirations of the SADC RISDP 2020-2030 and SADC Vision 2050.

- **Law-making and Oversight:** The Plenary Assembly’s consideration and adoption of the resolutions of Standing Committees and the Plenary’s theme debate presented South African delegates with the opportunity to contribute to key regional policy issues/concerns, as well as share South Africa’s experiences, where relevant. The final adopted motions will strengthen the law-making and oversight role of relevant South African parliamentary committees as they consider these policy recommendations that are informed by regional perspectives. Therefore, the referral of these Plenary motions is important in this regard.
- **Deepening international engagement:** The South African delegation contributed to deepening Parliament’s international engagement and promoting South Africa’s foreign policy position of unifying SADC through (1) tabling a motion on BRICS and BRICS Parliamentary Forum, (2) delivering country reports on the Plenary’s theme and on the implementation of the adopted resolutions of the 53rd Plenary Assembly and (3) making statements on several motions on the agenda and on the Gaza Strip conflict.

The outcomes of the meeting require the following pertinent issues for noting/action by Parliament (i.e., Presiding Officers, the PGIR, SADC PF Permanent Delegation and Secretary to Parliament):

- **South African Parliament’s decision to contribute to the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV/AIDS related services in the Region (2023-2026):** National Parliaments are requested to express their agreement in principle to operationalise the Project at national level, and this will be followed by a Project Implementation Agreement to be signed between the Forum and the national Parliament prior to orientation activities. The Parliaments of Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, and Tanzania are encouraged to join all participating Parliaments and to recruit SRHR Researchers based.
- **Follow-up on the development of a regional Model Law on Climate Change:** Hon. Mohai in support of motion for the adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, amongst others, urged the Forum to champion the development of a regional Model Law on Climate Change, to unite legislative response to the climate crisis in a harmonised and impactful manner.
- **South African Parliament’s decision on the resuscitation of the Resolution to deploy SADC PF Election Observation Mission to all SADC States to consolidate democracy in the Region:** Member Parliaments are urged to revive their interests in Election Observation Missions since they are fundamental to democracy, peace, and security in Southern Africa.
- **Progress on the transformation of the Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament:** The Plenary approved further lobbies with Heads of States and Government and other stakeholders be undertaken, with the facilitation of Hon. Speakers and Presiding Officers of

Member Parliaments, to ensure that the required quorum of 12 Member States sign the Agreement to Amend the SADC Treaty establishing the SADC Parliament. The Plenary Assembly is invited to favourably note that the Republic of Mozambique became the 9th Member State to sign the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty to Establish the SADC Parliament. In this light,

- **Application for renewal of Contract by the Secretary General:** The Plenary Assembly approved the renewal of the contract of the Secretary General for a second five-year term.
- **The 55th SADC PF Plenary Assembly:** the 55th SADC PF Plenary Assembly will be held in Luanda, Angola in July 2024.
- The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) **tabling and referring the 54th Plenary Assembly’s resolutions with the relevant committees of Parliament for noting and/or action (AS FROM PAGE 9 TO 16 OF THE REPORT):**

| Resolution by 54rd SADC PF | Committee(s) to be referred to |
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| <i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on Finance • Standing Committee on Appropriations • Select Committee on Finance • Select Committee on Appropriations |
| <i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development |
| <i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights (DGHR)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources and Energy • Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition • Select Committee on Land Reform, Environment, Mineral Resources and Energy |
| <i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment • Select Committee on Land Reform, Environment, Mineral Resources and Energy • Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • Select Committee on Health and Social Services |
| <p><i>Following deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Plenary Assembly to:</i></p> <p><i>Urge Member Parliaments to enhance the availability, accessibility, and utilisation of essential gender-based violence services and to advocate for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Parliaments are called upon to oversee and ensure full domestication of SADC model laws on violence against women and girls, including child and forced marriages. • Encouragement is extended to Member States to recognise and domesticate regional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Committee on Health • Select Committee on Health and Social Services |

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| <p>policies that explicitly acknowledge the value and role of informal cross-border trade, advocating for protection and acknowledgment of women's contributions within the economic framework and trade policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member States are encouraged to roll out social security initiatives tailored for the informal sector to acknowledge and address the inherent vulnerabilities within this work sector.• Leveraging on the AfCFTA, Member States are urged to enhance financial literacy programs tailored for the informal sector to empower women in informal cross-border trade with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the financial landscape.• Member Parliaments are appealed to harmonise statutory and customary laws protecting women and youths to safeguard their rights to health, including access to sexual and reproductive health rights services and the prevention of child marriages.• National Parliaments are urged to invest in research to comprehend the dynamics of the informal sector, especially concerning the roles and challenges faced by women, resulting in data insights that can guide the development of targeted policies and initiatives. | |
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- Strengthening of women and youth networks is **urged** to facilitate collective negotiation for better terms, resource access, and knowledge sharing in informal cross-border trade.
- Member States are called **upon** to establish cooperation, coordination, and data management mechanisms with neighboring countries to prevent trafficking, ensuring compensation and adequate resources for social and rehabilitation services for child victims of trafficking within SADC.
- Encouragement is extended to Member States to **escalate** positive discrimination to increase resources for people with disabilities and remove physical barriers, facilitating their participation and employment opportunities.
- Member States are **appealed** to promote policies that enhance the registration services and awareness raising to track young girls vulnerable to early marriages.
- Encouragement is extended to Member States to **establish** policies promoting climate change resilience, improved early warning systems, risk reduction training, and community-led disaster management systems.
- Member Parliaments are **urged** to reinforce their oversight role on youth

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| <p>empowerment policies and legislative implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Parliaments are appealed to promote policies that positively discriminate for women, girls, and youth to access vocational training and to advocate for gender balance in parliamentary representation by implementing quota systems or affirmative measures. <p>These are crucial actions and advocacy points that Member Parliaments should aim to incorporate into national legislation and policies to address pressing challenges within their respective countries.</p> | |
| <p><i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Multi-Party Women's Caucus |
| <p>Error! Reference source not found.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition Standing Committee on Finance Standing Committee on Appropriations Select Committee on Finance Select Committee on Appropriations |
| <p><i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs |
| <p><i>Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Joint meeting of the Standing Committees and RWPC</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Multi-Party Women's Caucus Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services Select Committee on Security and Justice |

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the meeting: To deliberate on the theme “the role of parliaments in promoting coordination for enhanced Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning in the SADC Region” and consider and adopt reports of the Executive Committee, Standing Committees, Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee (RPMLOC), and Regional Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC).

Delegation Members:

- Hon. Speaker Ms N. Mapisa-Nqakula, Leader of the Delegation (2022 – 2024 Executive Committee (EXCO) substantive member)
- Hon. S. Mohai, MP – (Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources (FANR))
- Hon. N. Bilankulu, MP (Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD) and Regional Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC))

- Hon. D. Bergman, MP (Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights (DGHR))

Delegation Secretariat:

- Mr X. George: Secretary to Parliament
- Mr D. Sithole: Division Manager – International Relations and Protocol Division (IRPD)
- Mr M. Mothapo: Division Manager – Parliamentary Communication Service (PCS)
- Ms N. Nojozi: Parliamentary and political advisor to the Speaker of the NA
- Mr Z. Mvulane: Head – Office of the Chief Whip: NCOP (National Council of Provinces)
- Ms Z. Mahabeni: Senior Executive Assistant to the Speaker of the NA
- Mr I. Mundell: Protocol Officer – IRPD
- Ms M. Monnakgotla – Content Support – IRPD
- Mr T. Mbadlanyana – Content Support – IRPD
- Mr P. Jikelo – Media Relations Specialist - PCS
- Mr M. Kabeli – Photographer - PCS

2. MEETING OUTCOMES

2.1 Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of the 54th SADC PF Plenary Assembly was held on the 22nd of November 2023 and the opening remarks were delivered by high-level speakers including Prime Minister of Mauritius, Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Chairperson of the Regional Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, Hon. Regina Esparon, Hon. Roger Mancienne, President of the SADC Forum and Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles, Hon. Soorojdev Phokeer, Speaker of the Mauritius National Assembly and the SADC PF Secretary General, Ms. Boemo Sekgoma.

Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, amongst others, highlighted the interconnectedness of nations and the necessity for regional cooperation to address the challenges posed by natural disasters. He stressed the role of parliaments as platforms for informed discussions on disaster management strategies, adaptation of resilient laws and policies, and facilitation of partnerships among various stakeholders. Advocated for the implementation of regional and global DRR frameworks for addressing natural disasters and guidelines for coordinating efforts among SADC Member States and international partners. In addition, called for the collective efforts of parliaments in fostering a more resilient, prosperous, and sustainable SADC region

2.2 Symposium on the theme “The role of parliaments in promoting coordination for enhanced for enhanced Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning in the SADC Region”

The symposium on the theme was led by the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management of Mauritius, Hon. Mohammed Anwar Husnoo. Vice Prime Minister, amongst others, highlighted the severe climate-related events impacting the region, resulting in increased casualties and economic shocks. Emphasised that while Disaster Risk Reduction Framework is executed by the Executive, parliamentarians play a crucial role in disaster reduction including creating and reviewing legislation and availing funding for disaster preparedness and response. In conclusion, emphasised the importance of parliaments in

ensuring that adequate measures are taken for preparedness response to calamities as well as recovery and resilience building effort.

Speakers and leaders of delegation were afforded the opportunity to present interventions and/or country reports on the theme. Speaker Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula, amongst others, emphasised the significant role played by the South African Defence Forces during the COVID-19 pandemic-related shutdowns. In this context, she urged SADC Member States to incorporate, to the extent possible, their national defence forces in the coordination of Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning

2.2.1 Presentation of Country Reports on Implementation of the 523^d Plenary Assembly Resolutions

The Leaders of Delegations presented their respective country reports to the 53rd Plenary Assembly on 23 November 2023. South Africa's country report was presented by Hon. Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula and highlighted the following as actioned by the South African Parliament:

- On the theme "Modernising Agriculture to address Food Security and Youth Unemployment in the SADC Region" the South African Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development recommended that South Africa accedes to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), emphasizing its importance in conserving and managing plant genetic resources.
- On the domestication and implementation of the SADC Model Laws and Child Marriage and Gender-based Violence highlights, South Africa has established the Draft Marriage Bill, aiming to provide equality and dignity in marriages for all individuals. It also seeks to establish a single Marriage Act for the country and sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 years.
- Regarding the development of the Forum's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, South Africa submits the establishment of SADC PF as a Regional Parliament, strengthening operational and institutional linkages between the SADC Parliament, Organs, and Sectors to promote regional integration, and enhancing linkages between SADC PF or future SADC Parliament with national parliaments through the development of common guidelines for communication and processing of SADC PF decisions. These suggestions are based on South Africa's anticipation of the Forum transforming into a regional parliament during the 2024-2028 period.

Following the deliberations on all the country reports, they were adopted.

2.2.2 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Executive Committee on Policy and Administrative Matters

The Report of the Executive Committee on Policy and Administrative Matters was moved by Hon. Marie Sabrina, SADC PF Vice President:

- **Progress on the transformation of the Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament:** The Plenary Assembly is invited to favourably note that the Republic of Mozambique became the 9th Member State to sign the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty to Establish the SADC Parliament. In this light, approval that further lobbies with Heads of States and Government and other stakeholders be undertaken, with the facilitation of Hon. Speakers and Presiding Officers of Member Parliaments, to ensure that the required quorum of 12 Member States sign the Agreement to Amend the SADC Treaty establishing the SADC Parliament.

In addition, that the SADC Protocol be finalised at the internal level with the SADC Secretariat whilst ensuring that Forum policy is reflected in the Protocol, and pending further comments to be made by Member countries when the Protocol is circulated. These include ensuring that there are transitional provisions in the Protocol which align with approved Forum policy.

- **Digital transformation of the SADC PF and Member Parliaments:** A Memorandum of Understanding to transfer the Southern African ICT Hub (SAHUB) to the Forum was signed between the Forum and the IPU on 24th October 2023. It is expected that the digital transformation of the Forum will in the future encourage Member Parliaments to upgrade their ICT infrastructure with technical assistance from the SAHUB.
- **Contribution to the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV/AIDS related services in the Region (2023-2026):** National Parliaments are requested to express their agreement in principle to operationalise the Project at national level, and this will be followed by a Project Implementation Agreement to be signed between the Forum and the national Parliament prior to orientation activities. The **Parliaments of Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, and Tanzania** are encouraged to join all participating Parliaments and to recruit SRHR Researchers based at their Parliaments as part of fully operationalising the Project from 2023-2026.
- **Resuscitation of the Resolution to deploy SADC PF Election Observation Mission to all SADC States to consolidate democracy in the Region:** Member Parliaments are urged to revive their interests in Election Observation Missions since they are fundamental to democracy, peace, and security in Southern Africa. Not giving MPs an opportunity to observe elections in peer countries would erode democracy and inter-parliamentary solidarity.
- **Pursuing transparency by demonstrating the net value of Member Parliaments' Contributions:** The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that henceforth, when annual mandatory contributions are indicated, the net value of in-kind contributions will also be specified, including secondment of staff or infrastructure to show the real money worth of Member Parliaments' contributions.
- **Application for renewal of Contract by the Secretary General Pursuant to Rule 7.6.3 (ii):** Plenary Assembly approved the renewal of the contract of the Secretary General for a second five-year term.
- **Consideration of Amendments to the Administrative Rules and Regulations of the Forum in relation to Salary Advances and Payment of Gratuity in view of facilitating financial planning of Staff:**

Proposed amendment of salary advances (Rule 6.3.1 (ii): Advances of salary shall not exceed 50% of one month's salary and shall be deducted in instalments amortised over a period not exceeding three months. Deductions shall be effected at the date of the payroll. The number of instalments and the amount of each instalment shall be approved by the Secretary General.

Proposed amendment - Gratuity for Regional Staff & Local Staff in Managerial Positions (Rule 6.1.5.1. (i) : All Regional Staff and Local Staff in Managerial Positions shall be eligible for a gratuity, earned monthly at a percentage rate to be determined by the Executive Committee. **(ii)** The earned gratuity shall be paid to the employee on expiration of their employment contracts, unless otherwise agreed with the employee. **(iii)** Gratuity may also be paid monthly, subject to approval by the Secretary General. **(iv)** Where gratuity is not paid monthly, it may also be paid in two installments, one being paid mid-way into the contract, and the final payment on the expiration of the contract, subject to approval by the Secretary General. Where gratuity is not paid monthly, staff may also take advances against the gratuity upon approval by the Secretary General. **(v)** In the event of a contract being prematurely

terminated, a pro-rata gratuity shall be paid to the employee. (vi) Where an employee fails to pay any amount owing by him/her to SADC PF at the time of leaving service, the Secretary General shall cause such an amount to be deducted from the gratuity.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.3 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Executive Committee on Financial Matters (Treasurer's Report)

Consideration of the Report of the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting (Treasurer's Report) held on 2nd November 2023: Plenary was requested to note and approve the following:

- **Annual Mandatory Member contributions** as at 30th September 2023 (with update as at 31st October 2023): The current annual mandatory contributions from 14 Member Parliaments, stand at N\$1,501,500 per annum, per Parliament. Seychelles contribution is N\$127,050 per annum. The total revenue to be collected from Mandatory Contributions for the financial year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 is therefore N\$21,148,050.
 - ✓ As at 30th September 2023, eight Parliaments had paid their contributions for the current financial year in full and have no outstanding balances. These are Botswana, Eswatini, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Seven countries have outstanding balances for the current financial year, namely Angola, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Seychelles. DRC and Madagascar are still owing for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.
 - ✓ EXCO is requested to encourage those Parliaments with outstanding balances to settle.
- **Mode of Operations/Implementation of Activities:**
 - The budget for the 2023/24 Financial Year ensures that the business of the Forum is conducted within the funds raised from Annual Mandatory Contributions and Retained Earnings, with minimum in-kind contribution from Member Parliaments.
 - In view of the limited financial resources, the 52nd Plenary Assembly approved that, in this financial year, some of the statutory meetings of the institution be held physically while others be held virtually as follows:
 - ✓ Both the 53rd and 54th Plenary Assemblies to be held physically.
 - ✓ Two Executive Committee meetings to be held physically with any additional EXCO meetings to be held virtually. The budget provides for 2 physical and two virtual meetings.
 - ✓ All the EXCO Sub-Committee meetings will take place virtually (FSC, HR & PCD, Legal, & Parliamentary Business). The budget provides for 2 virtual meetings for each Sub-Committee.
 - ✓ For all physical meetings, a provision would be made to facilitate participation through a virtual platform (hybrid system).
 - ✓ Member Parliaments' in-kind Contribution: As per SADC PF established policy, the costs of participation of the membership in the physical meetings shall be borne by their Member Parliaments unless external funding is made available.
- **Update on impact of policy to optimise technology for the implementation of activities:**

- ✓ Virtual Meetings: The institution continues to implement a mix of physical and virtual meetings, which has greatly reduced operational costs. This includes facilitating the engagement of resource persons and interpreters to provide services virtually even where meetings are physical.
- ✓ Paperless environment: The Forum is now operating a paperless environment with all reports and documents for its meetings being electronically.

- **Budget Performance Trend Analysis**

- ✓ Programme Support (68%): The budget is almost depleted as it was used towards the transformation agenda and the attendance of the SADC Summit and the IPU Conference.
 - ✓ Language Translation Cost (88%): Translation costs continue to be high in view of the number of documents produced and the volume of communication to various stakeholders.
- **Tender for External Financial Auditors:** it is recommended that the contract for the services of the External Auditor be offered to Grand Namibia as their proposal was more aligned to SADC PF requirement. The audit fees quoted by Grand Namibia are within the proposed budget for SADC PF of N\$214,500.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.4 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI)

The Report captured the outcomes of the Standing Committee's meeting held in preparation for the 54rd Plenary Assembly under the theme "Amplifying citizens' voices in Regional integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the engagement gap by bringing Parliament to the People" on 17th October 2023. The Committee engaged on the Region's high levels of indebtedness and the need for SADC Parliaments to insist upon transparency and accountability in debt contraction agreements in line with parliaments' oversight. Following its deliberations, the Committee recommended to the Plenary Assembly to:

- **Appeal** to SADC Member States to take advantage of the support from the SADC Secretariat to support SADC member states by carrying out sensitisation workshops for the private sector on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and to facilitate the establishment of a regional coordination forum on the AfCFTA as well as its implementation at member-state through implementation committees.
- **Appeal** to SADC Member States to take on board the processes under the Regional Development Fund that would culminate into a fund which Members states would access for their infrastructure development needs.
- **Urge** national parliaments to advocate for the reform of PFM legislation through the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Public Financial Management, which had provisions on enhancement of parliamentary budget oversight and transparency and accountability in resource mobilisation, appropriation and utilisation.
- **Urge** countries without competition laws to leverage on the Competition Model Law making-process by SADC Secretariat to develop progressive competition laws or revise or reform their existing laws so as to promote the harmonization of trade regulations and to remove unhealthy competition practices in the region that hindered free movement of goods and services.
- **Call upon** Member States to note that some countries in the region had multiple memberships to other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which posed a general hindrance to regional integration, especially if some of the RECs involved were at the level of a customs union or common market. In this regard, the regional political leadership was called upon to negotiate and agree on the way forward because at a technical level it was impossible to have a common external tariff in SADC, in view of other member states' membership to other RECs.
- **Urge** National Parliaments to galvanise parliamentarians to insist upon transparency, accountability and parliamentary approval in debt contraction agreements in line with parliaments' oversight and representative roles. Member States should enact access to information legislation, which was key in facilitating citizens' participation in governance by having information about loans taken on their behalf.
- **Appeal** to SADC Member States to take advantage of the inclusion of Africa as a permanent member of the G 20 to lobby for changes to credit rating models, which were used to determine what interest rates countries were required to pay on loans and to advocate for change to debt sustainability analyses, which were at present the preserve of international lenders like the World Bank.
- **Strongly urge** Member States to avert debt distress by:
 - ✓ pushing for stronger coordination between multilateral, bilateral and private creditors to offer debt relief to all countries in or at risk of debt distress, including; reforming the Common Framework for debt treatment by making the process more efficient, transparent and inclusive.

- ✓ ensure loan agreements provide for the suspension of payments in times of crises like extreme weather, climate events and other disasters; and
 - ✓ refrain from agreeing to stipulations in debt agreements that may undermine governments' ability to meet their economic, social and cultural rights obligations.
- In view of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently, the Ukraine/Russia War, which had led to hyperinflation, loss of jobs, food insecurity, supply chain disruptions especially of food and crude oil, **urge** SADC countries to rise above dependence on other countries by developing laws and policies that would promote exploitation of the diverse natural resources within the region through manufacturing and value addition. This should be accompanied reforming the education system through investments in ICTs, skills and entrepreneurship development from primary to tertiary level.
 - **Urge** Member States to introduce legislation and put in place measures to combat IFFs, which had seen the region lose billions of dollars through tax evasion and other illicit capital outflows.
 - **Recommend** to SADC Governments for the inclusion of SMEs in the development agenda by supporting them with appropriate policies, access to cheap financing and easy movement of their goods and services in the region. Women and youth run SMEs should be given special incentives to promote growth and job creation; and
 - In order to alleviate poverty and its impact on young women and girls, especially in rural communities, **strongly urge** member countries to strengthen their legal and policy framework to protect young women and girls from early and forced marriages as well early unwanted pregnancies. Member states must introduce school re-entry policies, school feeding programmes and make access to education affordable or progressively free, taking into consideration the minimum available resources at their disposal.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.5 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR)

The Report captured the outcomes of the Standing Committee's meeting held on 18th October 2023 in preparation for the 54th Plenary Assembly under the theme "Amplifying citizens' voices in Regional integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the engagement gap by bringing Parliament to the People". Following deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Plenary:

- **Call upon** SADC Member States to promote inclusivity and gender responsiveness towards climate change while at the same time implementing the Paris Agreement.
- **Implore** SADC Member States to secure resources for climate financing to repair damaged infrastructure and mitigate other climate change effects.
- **Encourage** SADC Member States to invest in pro poor clean and renewable energy solutions.
- **Call upon** SADC Parliaments to strengthen their Parliamentary Committees on Natural Resources to adequately exercise their mandate particularly on climate change.
- **Encourage** Member States to open a Sovereign fund so that the proceeds derived from mining sector could be utilised for the benefit of the citizens.
- **Prompt** Member States to formulate legal frameworks that compel miners to consider environmental rehabilitation and regeneration and hold miners accountable for any damage;
- **Urge** Member States to promote citizen's consultations and engagements in decision-making on issues that affect their communities.
- **Encourage** SADC Member States to improve research on climate security and assessment of climate-related security risks in the region to mitigate the risks timely.

- **Urge** SADC Parliaments show political commitment by enacting laws, policies, passing climate financing budgets, and use all available instruments to mitigate climate change consequences to the people and the environment.
- **Urge** SADC to create a regional market where Member States can dictate prices of their minerals.
- **Call** on the Member States to facilitate capacity building for women and youth to promote active engagement in agriculture; and
- **Further call** on the Member States to increase access to clean and affordable Renewable Energy technologies for productive use.

Hon. Mohai, in supporting the adoption of the report, emphasised the need for the Forum use its influence and responsibility to urge our respective governments to set more ambitious emissions reduction targets, develop sustainable long-term adaptation strategies, and establish credible financing plans to support these efforts. Also, urged the Forum to facilitate the development of a regional parliamentary oversight toolkit on the outcomes of COP28, thus enabling SADC member parliaments to bolster their domestic oversight strategies effectively. In addition, for the Forum to champion the development of a regional Model Law on Climate Change, to unite legislative response to the climate crisis in a harmonized, impactful manner.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.6 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights (DGHR)

The Report captured the outcomes of the Standing Committee's meeting held on 16th October 2023 in preparation for the 54th Plenary Assembly under the theme "Amplifying citizens' voices in Regional integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the engagement gap by bringing Parliament to the People". Following deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Plenary Assembly to:

- **Urge** SADC Member States to expedite the collaborative implementation of the SADC Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy and prioritise the alignment of their anti-terrorism legal provisions with international humanitarian laws to ensure access to humanitarian activities for those in need and strict adherence to international humanitarian laws.
- **Call** for support of policies that effectively promote women's active and meaningful participation in peace and security in line with United Nations resolutions:
 - ✓ Developing, effectively implementing, and continuously monitoring national action plans aimed at advancing women's involvement in peace and security decisions.
 - ✓ Prioritizing the production of educational materials on women's participation in security and the training of women as peace negotiators.
- **Call** for decisive measures to protect women in conflict situations, especially in Cabo Delgado, given their vulnerability, by combatting terrorism in a gender-responsive manner and ensuring the incorporation of gender-sensitive approaches to address the unique challenges faced by women in conflict zones.
- **Call** for urgent and deliberate measure to encourage and facilitate youth participation in electoral processes by creating policies and frameworks that reflect the needs and concerns of young people, amplifying their voices through organised platforms for engagement, and making electoral fees affordable for young people to enable their participation.

- **Call** for immediate actions to counter the recruitment of youth by rebel groups and their susceptibility to violent extremism by offering enhanced educational and economic opportunities to engage them constructively, alongside implementing reforms to safeguard the rights of young people in the region.
- **Urge** the SADC PF Secretariat to consider the feasibility of conducting pre-election missions virtually to mitigate financial challenges faced by National Parliaments in funding Election Observation Missions (EOMs), thereby reducing costs and ensuring continued engagement of electoral stakeholders across the region to promote democratic elections and advocate for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Election.
- **Call** for further engagement of National Parliaments to consider allocating resources for Election Observation Missions (EOMs) in their operational budgets to ensure the ongoing deployment of parliamentary EOMs, recognising their vital role in promoting democratic elections and monitoring the implementation of the SADC Model Law on Elections.
- **Urge** national Parliaments to prioritize awareness-raising on the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and advocate for adherence to these principles by Member States to enhance the quality and credibility of elections in the region.
- **Urge** SADC Member States to prioritize discussions on the rapid development and deployment of autonomous weapon systems powered by artificial intelligence, recognising their potential risks to regional peace, security, and international humanitarian law; collaborate in developing regional guidelines for regulation and strengthening monitoring, including through parliamentary mechanisms; and actively engage in international dialogues and global diplomatic efforts to address these concerns and promote the ethical and responsible use of such systems in warfare.
- **Call** upon Parliaments to fully utilise their legislative and oversight mandate to advocate for and facilitate the effective implementation of comprehensive measures aimed at combating corruption, including the protection of whistleblowers, as this pervasive issue not only undermines good governance but also threatens human rights and the efficient delivery of services, emphasising the urgent need for the enhanced domestication and implementation of the SADC Protocol Against Corruption.
- **Call** for the implementation of effective measures to protect vulnerable women and girls from sexual abuse and exploitation, specifically addressing the issue of sextortion, which constitutes a form of corruption, and emphasise the importance of integrating sextortion into gender-based violence policies to ensure the establishment of a safe and secure workplace environment for all individuals.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.7 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD)

The Report captured the outcomes of the Committee's meeting held on 12 October 2023 in preparation for the 54th Plenary Assembly under the theme "Amplifying citizens' voices in Regional integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the engagement gap by bringing Parliament to the People". Following deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Plenary Assembly to:

- **Urge** Member Parliaments to enhance the availability, accessibility, and utilisation of essential gender-based violence services and to advocate for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence.

- Member Parliaments are **called upon** to oversee and ensure full domestication of SADC model laws on violence against women and girls, including child and forced marriages.
- Encouragement is extended to **Member States to recognise and domesticate** regional policies that explicitly acknowledge the value and role of informal cross-border trade, advocating for protection and acknowledgment of women's contributions within the economic framework and trade policies.
- Member States are **encouraged** to roll out social security initiatives tailored for the informal sector to acknowledge and address the inherent vulnerabilities within this work sector.
- Leveraging on the AfCFTA, Member States are **urged** to enhance financial literacy programs tailored for the informal sector to empower women in informal cross-border trade with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the financial landscape.
- Member Parliaments are **appealed** to harmonise statutory and customary laws protecting women and youths to safeguard their rights to health, including access to sexual and reproductive health rights services and the prevention of child marriages.
- National Parliaments are **urged** to invest in research to comprehend the dynamics of the informal sector, especially concerning the roles and challenges faced by women, resulting in data insights that can guide the development of targeted policies and initiatives.
- Strengthening of women and youth networks is **urged** to facilitate collective negotiation for better terms, resource access, and knowledge sharing in informal cross-border trade.
- Member States are called **upon** to establish cooperation, coordination, and data management mechanisms with neighboring countries to prevent trafficking, ensuring compensation and adequate resources for social and rehabilitation services for child victims of trafficking within SADC.
- Encouragement is extended to Member States to **escalate** positive discrimination to increase resources for people with disabilities and remove physical barriers, facilitating their participation and employment opportunities.
- Member States are **appealed** to promote policies that enhance the registration services and awareness raising to track young girls vulnerable to early marriages.
- Encouragement is extended to Member States to **establish** policies promoting climate change resilience, improved early warning systems, risk reduction training, and community-led disaster management systems.
- Member Parliaments are **urged** to reinforce their oversight role on youth empowerment policies and legislative implementation.
- National Parliaments are **appealed** to promote policies that positively discriminate for women, girls, and youth to access vocational training and to advocate for gender balance in parliamentary representation by implementing quota systems or affirmative measures.
- These are crucial actions and advocacy points that Member Parliaments should aim to **incorporate** into national legislation and policies to address pressing challenges within their respective countries.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.8 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus

The Report captured the outcomes of the RWPC's meeting held on 16 October 2023 in preparation for the 54th Plenary Assembly under the theme "Amplifying citizens' voices in Regional integration in Southern Africa: Bridging the engagement gap by bringing Parliament to the People". Following deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend to the 54th Plenary Assembly to:

- Resolve that the SADC Parliamentary Forum should develop a Model Law on Youth Protocol as an instrument to guide Member States in addressing critical issues of youth participation, inclusion, empowerment and development.
- **Appeal** to Member States to find means of addressing the challenges encountered by epileptic women by, among others:
 - ✓ enacting anti-discrimination laws that protect epileptic women from all forms of Gender Based Violence so that they have equal opportunities and are not denied opportunities due to their condition in areas such as education, employment, vocational training; and
 - ✓ ensuring that women with epilepsy have access to affordable and comprehensive healthcare services, including affordable medication, especially in the government-funded healthcare facilities.
- **Urge** Member States to devise mechanisms that would promote women’s participation in politics and decision-making position by, among others:
 - ✓ removing all structural, legal and social barriers that hinder women’s participation in politics and decision-making;
 - ✓ organizing tailor-made training programs for women on political systems and women’s right to participation, and roles in decision-making;
 - ✓ introducing quota systems and inclusive, gender-sensitive leadership pathways to help bring women into political spheres;
 - ✓ putting in place deliberate policies to promote women in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels; and
- **Appeal** to Member States to issue directives to all employment institutions in their respective countries to develop workplace policies against women sexual harassment. Ultimately, to make laws with stiff punishment or penalties against perpetrators of sexual harassment in workplaces.

Hon. Bilankula, in supporting the adoption of the report, emphasised the adoption of policies that emphasise gender mainstreaming across all parliamentary structures, serving as a fundamental step towards achieving true gender equality and inclusivity within the region.

Following deliberation, the Report was adopted.

2.2.9 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee

The Committee held one meeting from 28th to 29th August 2023 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa during which it deliberated on the theme “*Garnering insight into the pace of Signature and Ratification of SADC PROTOCOLS*”. The Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee resolves and recommends to the 54th Plenary Assembly to:

- **Urge** SADC Member States to ratify and domesticate the SADC Protocols to ensure the harmonization of laws in addressing issues of mutual interest in the SADC region.
- **Implore** SADC Parliaments to push for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage and for the enforcement of the laws that are put in place at national level.

- **Encourage** SADC Member States to sign the SADC PF Transformation Agreement to fast track the process of transforming the Forum to a SADC Parliament to ensure the full implementation of its programmes and initiatives as a Regional Parliament; and
- **Authorise** and direct the Secretariat to continue to request member Parliaments to encourage member countries to sign the Agreement to amend the SADC Treaty to give effect to the SADC PF Transformation to a SADC Parliament and to continue in familiarizing SADC Member Parliaments with SADC Protocols which are developed under the SADC Treaty with a view of promoting regional integration by domestication and achieving a harmonization of legal norms at national level.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.10 Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Joint meeting of the Standing Committees and RWPC

The Report captured the outcomes of the Joint meeting held for the 53rd Plenary Assembly under the theme “Accelerating the domestication and implementation of SADC Model Laws on Child Marriage and Gender-based Violence”. Following deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend to the Plenary Assembly to:

- **Encourage** SADC Parliamentarians, Parliaments and Standing Committees to build consensus and commitment on the need to fight all forms of GBV and eradicating Child Marriage through domestication and implementation of the SADC Model Laws;
- **Urge** SADC Member States to review domestic legislation to align with the SADC Model Law on Child Marriage, particularly to set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years without exception;
- **Further urge** SADC Member States to ensure compliance with regional and international human rights standards by following a human rights approach to Child Marriage and GBV by reviewing laws on Child Marriage and GBV to ensure compliance with these regional and international human rights standards, on which the two SADC Model Laws are based.
- **Encourage** SADC Governments to adopt a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to child marriage, sexual and reproductive health rights and GBV in view of the crucial and complimentary role of different stakeholders which constitute of both state and non-state actors;
- **Encourage** SADC Member States to prioritise school re-entry for pregnant and married girls; repeal existing discriminatory laws and policies which ban, prevent or discourage married and pregnant girls from attending schools and integrate comprehensive sex education in the education curriculum.
- **Encourage** SADC Governments to recognise the link between the Sustainable Development Goals and the prevalence of GBV and Child Marriage in the region, which entails that at current rates of progress, developmental targets set in the SADC Vision 2050, the AU Agenda 2063 and UN Agenda 2030 will not be reached, and that it is necessary to address the nexus between poverty and vulnerability to rights violations, including Child Marriage and GBV.
- **Call upon** SADC Governments to ensure adequate budget allocations and to promote innovative financing means to achieve sexual and reproductive health rights and eliminate Child Marriage and GBV.
- **Urge** SADC Parliaments and parliamentarians to deliberately monitor and evaluate progress on domestication by exercising oversight over the relevant Government bodies and departments which administer GBV and Child Marriage issues.
- **Urge** SADC Member States to develop and implement strategies for awareness and disseminate messages on the prevention of GBV and Child Marriage, bearing in mind the

need to develop advocacy materials which are adapted to local languages for better assimilation.

- **Implore** SADC Member States to unite and achieve the shared goal of addressing GBV and Child Marriage through accelerating the full domestication and implementation of the SADC Model Laws on Child Marriage and Gender-Based Violence.

Following deliberations, the Report was adopted.

2.2.11 Members' motions

- South Africa drafted a motion on BRICS and BRICS Parliamentary Forum. The motion was moved by Hon. Prof. Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of Namibian Parliament and seconded by Hon. Tlohang Sekhamane, Speaker of Lesotho. The motion, amongst others, encourage SADC Member States to explore collaboration opportunities with BRICS Member States and institutions, including the BRICS New Development Bank, towards the realisation of the development aspirations of the SADC RISDP 2020-2030 and SADC Vision 2050, and facilitate the accelerated the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Hon. Mohai, in supporting the adoption of the motion, amongst others, noted that the 9th BRICS Parliamentary Forum's Declaration and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) marked a seminal transformational milestone that reflect a shared vision to fortify relations within the BRICS nations, and importantly, with Africa, aiming to propel inclusive growth and sustainable development forward.

2.3.12 Statement by the Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa, Hon. N. Mapisa-Nqakula on Ending the War and Human Rights Abuses in the Gaza Strip, pursuant to Rule 45 of the SADC PF Rules of Procedure

- Speaker Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula delivered a statement on Ending the War and Human Rights Abuses in the Gaza Strip. The statement calls upon SADC PF Member States and the broader SADC region to unite with the international community in pressuring Israel to cease its military aggression through a comprehensive ceasefire. Furthermore, it encourages the SADC region and the broader international community to use their influence to urge all parties to refrain from actions that violate human rights and to lift the complete blockade of Gaza. The statement also advocates for reforming international mechanisms, particularly those within the UN Charter, to ensure swift and impartial responses to actions that threaten global peace and stability.

3. RECOMMENDED ISSUES FOR NOTING AND/OR ACTION BY PARLIAMENT

Parliament is advised to note and/or action the following:

- **South African Parliament's decision to contribute to the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV/AIDS related services in the Region (2023-2026):** National Parliaments are requested to express their agreement in principle to operationalise the Project at national level, and this will be followed by a Project Implementation Agreement to be signed between the Forum and the national Parliament prior to orientation activities. The **Parliaments of Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, and Tanzania** are encouraged to join all participating Parliaments and to recruit SRHR Researchers based.

- **Follow-up on the development of a regional Model Law on Climate Change:** Hon. Mohai in support of motion for the adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, amongst others, urged the Forum to champion the development of a regional Model Law on Climate Change, to unite legislative response to the climate crisis in a harmonised and impactful manner.
- **South African Parliament's decision on the resuscitation of the Resolution to deploy SADC PF Election Observation Mission to all SADC States to consolidate democracy in the Region:** Member Parliaments are urged to revive their interests in Election Observation Missions since they are fundamental to democracy, peace, and security in Southern Africa.
- **Progress on the transformation of the Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament:** The Plenary approved further lobbies with Heads of States and Government and other stakeholders be undertaken, with the facilitation of Hon. Speakers and Presiding Officers of Member Parliaments, to ensure that the required quorum of 12 Member States sign the Agreement to Amend the SADC Treaty establishing the SADC Parliament. The Plenary Assembly is invited to favourably note that the Republic of Mozambique became the 9th Member State to sign the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty to Establish the SADC Parliament. In this light,
- **Application for renewal of Contract by the Secretary General:** The Plenary Assembly approved the renewal of the contract of the Secretary General for a second five-year term.
- **The 55th SADC PF Plenary Assembly:** the 55th SADC PF Plenary Assembly will be held in Luanda, Angola in July 2024.
- The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) **tabling and referring the 54th Plenary Assembly's resolutions with the relevant committees of Parliament for noting and/or action (AS SUMMARISED IN PAGE 3):**

ENDS