



**COUNTRY REPORT ON PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE
55th PLENARY ASSEMBLY:**

SOUTH AFRICA

28 NOVEMBER 2024

Hon. President, Hon. Members of the Forum, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I present to you the report on South Africa's implementation of the 55th Plenary Assembly resolutions. Following the assembly in Luanda, Angola, our delegation diligently prepared a comprehensive report detailing all resolutions for consideration within our Parliament. The central theme of the 55th Plenary Assembly focused on "The Role of Parliaments in Promoting Renewable Energy Policies in the SADC Region and Creating a Single Regional Energy Market".

In line with this theme, in May 2024, our Parliament passed the Electricity Regulation Amendment, which was signed into law [assented to] by the President on 20 August 2024. The Bill provides for additional electricity generation capacity, infrastructure and provides for an open market platform that allows for competitive electricity trading and creation of a single regional energy market. Most importantly, it opens the door to new opportunities for South Africa to export energy across borders, generating significant economic benefits and strengthening regional energy security.

Furthermore, our committees strengthened their oversight on renewable energy issues. For instance, On 23 August 2024, the National Assembly's Portfolio Committee on Electricity and Energy held discussions and received a briefing on the Reviewal of the Integrated Energy Plan & Integrated Resource Plan. The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) serves as South Africa's long-term electricity infrastructure plan, aiming to forecast electricity demand, supply, and associated costs. Its primary goal is to ensure a secure energy supply while balancing environmental concerns and overall cost. South Africa's commitment to a diversified energy mix aligns with its emission reduction plan, and the IRP serves as the strategic framework for the country's energy supply planning. The primary focus is to align future energy demand with available resources and necessary capacity additions.

Furthermore Hon. President,

Between August and November 2024, our Portfolio Committee on Electricity and Energy received briefings and deliberated on the following key issues:

- Review and deliberations on the South African Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to forecast electricity demand, supply, and costs, emphasizing a need for a diversified energy mix to ensure security of supply and compliance with emission reduction plans;
- Update on the Solar Water Heating Program (SWH program), highlighting the government's goal to install 1 million solar water heaters in households, aiming to save electrical demand. Additionally, the Department of Energy is revising the program rollout methodology following the closure of the previous delivery model;
- Briefing on the progress of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) and the Risk Mitigation Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (RMIPPP) as part of the South African Government's efforts to invest in renewable energy generation and;
- Future plans to include a briefing by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy on the Just Energy Transition Plan, implementation thereof, and a house debate on the increase in electricity costs and measures to protect vulnerable citizens from rising living expenses.

Hon. President,

In line with resolutions related to enhancing the role of parliaments in empowering women for economic prosperity in the SADC Region and removing barriers to financial inclusion of women. Our Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment received briefings from various entities, including the Commission for Gender Equality on the progress on representation and policies to encourage procurement from women-owned enterprises. The Committee urged the Department to address these issues and implement gender-sensitive policies to enhance financial inclusion for women.

Other equally important developments to report on regarding the issue of gender-based violence include the signing into law of the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Bill on the 24th of May 2024 by the South African President, H.E Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa. The National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide will coordinate and provide strategic leadership to the fight against GBV and femicide, and be multi-sectoral, drawing on the expertise of all stakeholders, including civil society, labour and business. The establishment of the council was one of the resolutions of the first Presidential Summit on GBVF convened in 2018. In addition, our Parliament has been considering the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill since 2018. After rigorous scrutiny, debate, and public consultations by both Houses of Parliament, the Bill was

passed and on 14 May 2024 the President signed it into a law. Amongst others, the Prevention and combating of Hate Crimes and Hate speech Act, 2023 seeks; to give effect to the Republic's obligations in terms of the Constitution and international human rights instruments concerning racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in accordance with international law obligations and to provide for offences as hate crimes and the offence of hate speech and the prosecution of persons who commit those offences.

Hon. President,

The 55th Plenary Assembly also adopted various resolutions related to advancing the African Union (AU) Agenda 2040 for Children: Strengthening Parliamentary Engagement for Child-Centred Legislation and Policies. In relation to this, I am pleased to inform you that a Draft Marriage Bill has been developed in South Africa and is currently being processed by the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs. The Bill seeks to give effect to the White Paper on Marriages in South Africa, which Cabinet approved in March 2022, and empowers the Department of Home Affairs to develop a single Marriage Act for the country. The Marriage Bill seeks to ensure that all persons, regardless of race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religious or cultural beliefs, are treated equally and with dignity. As regards child marriage, the Bill states that "any person who wishes to enter into marriage must be 18 years of age or older", and that "consent to the marriage [must be obtained] from the prospective spouses in the prescribed form and manner".

Moreover, the Bill provides for offences and penalties for any person who enters into a marriage with a person who is not at least 18 years old, or any person or institution who knowingly provides consent for a minor to enter into marriage.

Further to that, on 29 August 2024 – the Portfolio Committee on Social Development has resolved to defer the Children's Amendment Bill to the Department of Social Department to allow it to redraft the 126 clauses the previous Committee did not process. The department will redraft these clauses, taking into consideration the substantive submissions and proposals made by stakeholders and the public during the committee's public participation process on the Bill.

Hon. President,

The 55th Plenary Assembly also adopted various resolutions on enhancing the role of parliament in mitigating electoral risks and building greater resilience into electoral processes in the SADC Region. Amongst others, the resolution urges SADC national Parliaments to leverage their legislative mandates to enact and oversee laws that focus on electoral risk prevention and management and the

enhancement of resilience in electoral processes to ensure the integrity and credibility of elections across the region.

In relation to this, I would like to report that on 07 May 2024, President Ramaphosa signed into law the Electoral Matters Amendment Act 14 of 2024. Amongst others, the Act seeks: to amend the Political Party Funding Act, 2018, so as to provide for the regulation of the private and public funding of independent candidates and independent representatives and matters incidental thereto.

Hon. President,

The 55th Plenary Assembly also adopted resolutions on the progress, opportunities, and challenges for SADC Member States under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), Agenda 2063, and Programme for Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA), emphasising the role of Members of Parliament in regional trade and economic integration.

In response to these resolutions, several actions were taken:

- Firstly, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Upstream Petroleum Resources Development Bill on 31 October 2024, aimed at accelerating petroleum exploration and development with participation by black South Africans, promoting the nation's social and economic advancement;
- Secondly, the National Council of Provinces held a ministerial briefing session on the challenges facing the timely delivery of viable public infrastructure projects to communities, addressing the progress and challenges in delivering such projects to communities;
- Thirdly, the Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition was briefed on Trade Relations & Negotiations; SEZs & Industrial Parks, emphasizing the importance of supporting the manufacturing sector as a key priority for sustainable growth and job creation, within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and;
- Lastly, South Africa became the first among the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) countries to start trading as part of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and launched trade under the new preferences set out in the AfCFTA, following its publication in the Government Gazette.

Hon. President,

The 55th Plenary Assembly also adopted resolutions related to climate change, food security, sustainable agriculture, sexual and reproductive health rights, and effective governance of natural resources. In response, the South African Parliament considered and ultimately passed the Climate Change Bill, which was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 18 July 2024 and published as the Climate Change Act, 2022 on 23 July 2024.

The Act marks the establishment of a comprehensive legal framework to regulate the impacts of climate change in South Africa, with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, aligning with the country's commitment under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

Furthermore, various Portfolio Committees and Select Committees in Parliament continue to monitor developments regarding the Climate Change Response Fund, as announced by President Ramaphosa in February 2024. The fund aims to bring together all levels of government and the private sector in a collaborative effort to build resilience and respond to the impacts of climate change. Additionally, the National Treasury is reviewing disaster response grants to enhance efficiency in managing climate-related fiscal risks. The government has also secured significant funding from multilateral development banks and international finance institutions to support climate change, energy, and just transition objectives.

Looking ahead, Parliament will maintain oversight over the Climate Change Response Fund and the implementation of the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan to achieve the nation's commitments outlined in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and contribute to the goals of the Paris Agreement. This oversight will be a crucial part of the 7th parliamentary term's agenda.

Lastly Hon. President,

Since we were requested by the SADC PF Secretariat to include in our country reports assessment of progress made on live matters and in implementing resolutions of the 55th Plenary Assembly- I wish to conclude by reporting the following:

- Regarding progress at national level for giving comments on the draft Protocol on the Establishment of the SADC Parliament- our Parliament has received correspondence from our International Relations and Cooperation Ministry confirming receipt of a letter from the SADC Secretariat informing our government on the entry into force of the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty. As per our legislative processes, our National Assembly's Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation and the Select Committee on Security and Justice in the National Council of Provinces will receive briefings on matters relating to the Draft Protocol and transformation of the Forum to a SADC Regional Parliament. It is envisaged that this will form part of the fourth term parliamentary programme at the beginning of 2025 and the two Committees in both houses will then be seized with the matter.
- On the question of whether our Parliament is agreeable to a (twenty) 20% increase in Mandatory Member Contributions- I can report that our Parliament agrees with the Exco decision that the proposed mandatory member subscription fee be increased by 50% effective on 01 April 2026.

- Finally, regarding recruitment of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Researchers, I would like to report that our Research Unit located within the Knowledge and Information Services Division is seized with the matter. The recruitment panel is to be established at the beginning of 2025, and it is envisaged that the contract for this position will run for a period of two years. Amongst others, our parliament will also provide office space, facilities and tools of trade to the SRHR researcher.

Mr President, I so submit.

Thank you.