



Seychelles Country Report for the 56th SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly

INTRODUCTION

This report reflects Seychelles' achievements, ongoing efforts, and challenges in addressing the resolutions adopted by the Forum.

Seychelles remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering regional cooperation, upholding democratic principles, and contributing to the shared goals of the SADC PF. Through collaborative efforts involving key institutions, civil society, and the National Assembly, we continue to align our national initiatives with the objectives of the Forum.

1. TRANSFORMATION OF THE FORUM TO A SADC REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

Resolution: *Update on national progress regarding the draft Protocol for the establishment of the SADC Parliament and signing the Agreement to amend the Treaty to establish the SADC Parliament*

Achievements:

- Seychelles has proudly signed the Agreement amending the SADC Treaty to transform the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a fully-fledged SADC Regional Parliament. This milestone marks a significant step forward in strengthening parliamentary cooperation and integration in the region.

- President Wavel Ramkalawan has personally pledged Seychelles' unwavering support for this transformation, ensuring the country's commitment before, during, and after the transition process.
- The National Assembly has actively participated in consultations to provide feedback on the draft Protocol, ensuring that the framework aligns with both Seychelles' national interests and the broader goals of SADC.

Challenges and future plans:

- Seychelles recognizes the operational and financial adjustments required to support the new Regional Parliament and is committed to streamlining its domestic legislation to accommodate this transformation.

Commitment to resolution:

- Seychelles stands united with the SADC PF in its journey to establish a Regional Parliament and remains ready to contribute to shaping its structure and future.

2. ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF INFLATION ON THE BUDGET OF THE FORUM

Resolution: *Addressing the impact of inflation on the budget of the Forum: Increase in mandatory member contributions*

Achievements:

- Seychelles remains focused on its commitment to the Forum and has finalized all its payments for SADC PF subscriptions including the fee for the period 2024-2025, ensuring that the National Assembly supports the Forum in fulfilling its mandate.
- The National Assembly of Seychelles participates actively in the decision-making processes of the forum and through its parliamentary diplomatic undertakings it lobbies for monetary viability of the Forum.

- Through prudent fiscal policies, Seychelles is stabilizing its economy, which will enable it to meet its obligations even amidst challenging global conditions.

Challenges and future plans:

- Seychelles continues to address the potential impact of future global economic instability on its financial commitments. Strengthening fiscal resilience remains a priority.

Commitment to resolution:

- Seychelles will remain a reliable contributor to the SADC PF's budget and will work to sustain its financial commitments in the years ahead.

3. SECONDMENT OF SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY

Resolution: *Secondment of senior Parliamentary Staff to the Programmes and Parliamentary Business and Languages department*

Achievements:

- Despite its smallness in terms of human resources, the National Assembly Service of Seychelles has assisted the SADC PF Secretariat in the past through the secondment of a HR staff to the Human Resources Sub-Committee of the Forum.
- The National Assembly Service revised its organizational structure this year, adopting a more strategic approach to enhance efficiency and service delivery. This restructuring involved merging certain divisions to streamline operations and some senior staff responsibilities have been expanded to include greater accountability and leadership roles.
- The new structure also introduced a Board of Directors, with the Clerk assuming the Chairmanship role on the board. This governance framework aims to strengthen decision-making processes and align operations with the strategic goals of the National Assembly.

- The National Assembly will continue to explore the possibility of seconding experienced staff members to the Forum, particularly in areas of programmes and parliamentary business

Challenges and future plans:

- Limited human resources within the National Assembly Service pose challenges for regional contributions in the future.
- Seychelles is keen to propose a staff exchange program among SADC member parliaments to foster professional development and knowledge sharing.

Commitment to resolution:

- Seychelles is committed to supporting the SADC PF and may consider seconding staff in the future and contributing to the development of solutions for addressing vacancies.

4. ELECTION OBSERVATION

Resolution: *Contributions toward supporting election logistics and sponsorship of MPs for Election Observation Missions (EOMs).*

Achievements:

- Seychelles has a strong history of promoting democratic principles and has hosted election observers, such as during its 2020 general elections, ensuring transparency and fairness.
- The National Assembly remains an advocate for election observation missions as a key tool for upholding democratic values in the region but with this said, it also recognizes the valuable resources required to invest in this important democratic process, specifically its logistical preparations.

Challenges and future plans:

- The National Assembly currently lacks budgeted funding to participate in election observation missions but aspires to allocate resources in the future to enable active MP participation.

Commitment to Resolution:

- Seychelles remains fully supportive of this resolution and looks forward to contributing to election observation missions as part of its future priorities.

5. DOMESTICATION OF SADC MODEL LAWS

Resolution: *Designating a focal person within Parliament for monitoring and ensuring implementation.*

Achievements:

- Through its oversight mechanisms, the National Assembly engages actively with the Ministries, Departments and other Agencies of the Executive to domesticate model laws. The Women Parliamentary Caucus of the National Assembly is collaborating with the Attorney General's Office and the Family Department to amend the Domestic Violence to include clauses from the SADC PF Model Law on Gender Based Violence.
- The Electoral Commission of Seychelles is currently amending the Elections Act in preparation for the eminent national election in 2025. The stakeholder engagement process includes all political parties with proposals mirroring the SADC PF Model Law on Election to strengthen the electoral framework governing elections in Seychelles.

Challenges and future plans:

- Seychelles acknowledges the need for enhanced capacity to monitor the implementation of domesticated laws. Strengthening oversight mechanisms remains a priority.

- Seychelles will consider, in the near future, appointing a focal person in the National Assembly to oversee the domestication of SADC model laws but in the meantime, all affairs of SADC PF are coordinated through the Desk Officer for SADC PF.

Commitment to resolution:

- Seychelles is committed to accelerating the domestication process and aligning its national legislations with SADC standards.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2023-2026 SRHR AND GOVERNANCE PROJECT

Resolution: *Progress on the Agreement to implement the project, recruitment of researchers, resource allocation, and activities.*

Achievements:

- Seychelles has signed the Agreement to implement the third phase of the SRHR, HIV, and AIDS Governance Project, which focuses on capacity building and community engagement.
- The SRHR Committee has organized advocacy meetings with different stakeholders to influence policy and actions related to SRHR.
- Numerous committee visits to health institutions have allowed for a deeper understanding of the challenges being faced by these institutions. These visits have also led to actionable solutions, ensuring that the issues identified are addressed effectively and promptly.
- Local partners, including the Ministry of Health, the Family Affairs Department, and the National AIDS Council Seychelles, have pledged solidarity and committed resources to support this important project.

Challenges and future plans:

- Sadly, the National Assembly of Seychelles lost a valuable Member of the SRHR Committee last year. The late Honourable Rosie Bistoquet, who served as

Chairperson of the Committee, was instrumental in advancing the work of the SRHR mandate. Despite this loss, other Members of the Committee remain steadfast in carrying forward her legacy through their ongoing commitment and engagement towards the Committee's objectives.

- Budgetary constraints limit the scale of current initiatives, especially since now Seychelles Parliament does not qualify for funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for the third phase of the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), HIV and Aids governance project. However, Seychelles is working to mobilize additional resources to expand the project's reach.

Commitment to resolution:

- Seychelles remains a dedicated partner in advancing the SRHR and Governance Project and will continue prioritizing investments to promote health and rights across the region.

CONCLUSION

Seychelles is proud of its contributions to the SADC PF and remains steadfast in its commitment to the Forum's objectives. Despite challenges, the nation continues to demonstrate leadership and collaboration in areas of governance, legislative alignment, and regional development. With the unwavering support of its government, institutions, and partners, Seychelles is confident in its ability to achieve its shared regional goals.

Furthermore, Seychelles fully supports the transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a Regional Parliament. This transition will not only enhance the role of parliamentary diplomacy within the region but also strengthen governance, accountability, and collaboration among member states. Seychelles believes this transformation will greatly benefit the SADC region by fostering inclusive development and empowering the voices of its citizens.

Seychelles remains committed to working hand in hand with fellow member states to realize this vision and ensure the continued success of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.