



**PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA**

**SADC-PF**

**REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF THE 55<sup>th</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 55<sup>th</sup> SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly Session was held in Luanda, Democratic Republic of Angola from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024 under the theme “***Curbing Energy shortage and Promoting Renewable Energy Policies in the SADC Region and creating a single Regional Energy Market***”

At the end of the Plenary, Resolutions were passed for Member Parliaments to track implementation of progress made in the various key topics that were discussed. Botswana recognizes that these resolutions serve as a roadmap for parliamentary commitment and action, affirming the need for multi-faceted efforts that encompass gender inclusivity, cross-border cooperation, sustainable practices, and capacity building. By addressing these issues, SADC member states can work collectively to ensure that the region addresses energy shortage and promote renewable energy policies that will ultimately ensure energy sufficiency to drive the economic activities in the region.

At this time of worldwide energy deficit, there is a need for Parliamentarians to leverage their constitutional mandate as MPs to set the machinery of energy reform into motion. Attaining energy security is today a puzzle which consists of various interconnected pieces, notably the implementation of low-carbon policies, the adoption of enabling laws that unveil go-green measures, the provision of fiscal incentives for wind and solar power equipment, to mention but a few.

## **1. RESOLUTION ON THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES IN THE SADC REGION AND CREATING A SINGLE REGIONAL ENERGY MARKET**

To understand how Botswana as a country is performing with regard to renewable energy development and energy access more broadly, Parliamentarians must ask parliamentary questions. Research should help contextualize these questions to account for national or regional specifics, but the following `model questions may help:

- To what extent are we meeting the population's energy needs? What percentage of the population remains without secure energy access?
- Is intermittency an issue? If so, on what scale, and to what extent is this deterring economic development and investments?
- What do projections indicate with regards to future energy demands? Will we be able to meet growing energy needs with our current generation capacity? How much added capacity do we expect to need, and what strategies are in place to secure this?
- What percentage of the current energy creation is generated through renewable energy?

Botswana has got a national energy policy 2020-2040 which guide the development and management of the energy sector. The vision of the policy is to create an energy system that would ensure secure and reliable supply of modern energy services for all the sectors of the economy and to significantly reduce energy related atmospheric emission by the year 2040.

Currently, installed electricity generation capacity in the country is 892MW. This is made of coal fired power stations, accounting for 732 MW, and the balance of 160MW is from emergency diesel power plants.

There are however programmes for promoting renewable energy and reducing greenhouse emissions, namely implementation of the integrated resource plan (IRP 2020-2040), Bio Gas project, Biodiesel production, off grid solar programme and rooftop solar programme. The rooftop solar programme is being implemented by government to create an environment in which end users can generate their own electricity and sell any excess they may have to the Botswana Power Corporation. The programme is an alternative suitable mechanism to facilitate private sector participation and increase the uptake of solar energy. In this regard, the Botswana Energy Regulatory Authority was established through an act of Parliament to provide an efficient regulatory framework. One of its responsibilities is to ensure that tariffs in the regulated sector are fixed in an effective and transparent manner.

## **2. RESOLUTION ON ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN THE SADC REGION AND REMOVING BARRIERS TO FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF WOMEN**

Studies by the World Bank have shown that when women participate fully in the economy, GDP growth accelerates, and poverty levels decrease. However, in the SADC region women face systematic barriers that restrict their economic activities. For example, women in rural areas often lack access to formal banking services due to infrastructural limitations and cultural constraints. Parliaments play a pivotal role in shaping policies, enacting laws, and fostering an enabling environment that removes barriers to financial inclusion for women. There are some strategies that can help Parliaments achieve this goal

In Botswana, the National Financial Inclusion Roadmap and Strategy was developed using key insights from FinScope and Making Access Possible (MAP), and research to gauge the level of financial inclusion, according to

the Ministry of Finance. The priority areas were developing the payment ecosystem, facilitating low-cost accessible savings products, developing accessible risk mitigation products, improving the working of the credit market, and consumer protection. Through the strategy, Botswana was able to achieve growth in e-money and remittances; expand targeted savings products; and improved accessibility of insurance products, among others. Promoting gender equality and granting men and women equal opportunities to participate in the economy are key components of the Government reset agenda for inclusive development.

Just Last year, *Women, Business and the Law*, the World Bank's Office in Botswana, and the Botswana Ministry of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture as it was then called, hosted the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment workshop in Gaborone. The workshop launched the *Women, Business and the Law 2023 report* and convened representatives of the government, private sector, and civil society to address critical gender gaps currently hindering Botswana women's economic empowerment. At the workshop, *Women, Business and the Law* highlighted the country's achievements on legal gender equality over the past 50 years and discussed remaining legal barriers to women's employment and entrepreneurship.

### **3. RESOLUTION ON A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH IN ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS (VAWE) AND POLITICS IN THE SADC REGION: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT**

Violence against women in political life, including in and beyond elections, is any act of, or threat of, gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, that prevents them from exercising and realizing their political rights, whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret and to freely campaign to associate and assemble, and to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression. Such violence can be perpetrated by anyone (family member, community member and/or by the State). Perpetrators in relation to VAWE are political actors, societal actors and state actors.

Botswana laws do not specifically address violence against women in elections. VAW is dealt with the existing laws that address violence such as the Penal Code Chapter 08:01 and the Domestic Violence Act Chapter 28:05.

Section 114 of the Electoral Act prohibits disorderly behaviour during political meetings. It speaks to the conduct of people during meetings of a political nature and also the sanctions which will be imposed on any perpetrator. This is an indication that the Electoral Act does not address violence against women in elections specifically, although these provisions may be deemed enough to protect women in elections.

However, there is still more to be done in order to specifically address violence against women in elections. Below are some of what parliament can do in order to mitigate VAWE.

- Lobby for a Constitutional Review: a comprehensive constitutional review in this sense will trickle down to the penal code and impose penalties that are in relation to violating women in politics as provisions would have been made in relation to their political rights
- Forge partnerships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): Parliament should work collaboratively with CSOs to strengthen their monitoring, lobbying and advocacy roles. Before the 2024 General Elections, The Parliamentary Caucus on Women convened and interacted with several key Development Partners and Civil Society Organisations. In its interactions, the Committee sought to establish the progress made in achieving gender equality, increasing women in political participation and protecting children's rights. In that regard, as per its terms of reference, key development Partners such as United Nations Resident Coordinators Office and UNICEF interacted with the Committee together with civil society organisations such as the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisation (BOCONGO), Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV and AIDS (BONELA), Gender Links, Childline Botswana, Emang Basadi and Sisonke.

#### **4. RESOLUTION ON ADVANCING THE AU AGENDA 2040 FOR CHILDREN: STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT FOR CHILD-CENTERED LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

The Africa's Agenda for Children 2040 emanates from the conclusions of the High-Level Conference to assess the status of the rights of children in Africa 25 years after the adoption of the Charter, that was held in Addis Ababa, from 20-21 November 2015. National Parliaments are as a result, required to formulate or review legislation on adoption and human trafficking, emphasizing the promotion and prioritization of kinship care to ensure the best interests of the child are upheld; Parliaments are further encouraged to enact and enforce laws to eliminate harmful cultural practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, accompanied by public awareness campaigns and community engagement strategies.

The Government of Botswana has just recently established a new Ministry responsible for Child Welfare and Basic Education. It is the first time that a whole ministry responsible for child welfare has been set up, and this is because the Government recognises the importance of ensuring that children's rights remain at the heart of the national agenda.

Botswana faces high rates of violence against children, adolescent girls and young women. Reports from UNICEF Botswana indicate that 43% of boys and 28% of girls experience physical violence, yet only 10% of these cases are reported, revealing a significant hidden crisis. Botswana therefore continues to hold Children's rights in high regard, providing free Education for all and ensuring that that schools in Botswana provide a welcoming and secure environment where children can thrive.

The Government has further pronounced a national health insurance where every citizen will have medical aid. This will extend also to Children and further buttress on the Children's right to receive medical care. I must hasten to state that over the years HIV/AIDS related mortality and new born infections have reduced significantly, leading to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission which earned Botswana a silver tier from the World Health Organization.

**5. RESOLUTION ON ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN MITIGATING ELECTORAL RISKS AND BUILDING GREATER RESILIENCE INTO ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN THE SADC REGION**

Electoral planning is a process led by the Independent Electoral Commission. Key considerations of electoral planning are the timing of electoral events and the resources, financial and human, needed for the implementation of specific activities. Specific considerations include, among others, the costs associated with different activities, the recruitment and training of election staff, the procurement of electoral materials, logistical organization, communication and security involved. In conflict-prone societies, an Electoral Management Body (EMB) will benefit from conducting a risk assessment to identify potential process weaknesses and security threats, both internal and external to the electoral processes.

Parliaments enact and oversee electoral laws, ensuring their effectiveness and adaptability. It is also the duty of Parliament to conduct oversight, monitor electoral processes for compliance with legal frameworks and best practices. Active Parliamentary involvement is essential for developing and maintaining robust mitigation strategies and contingency plans to safeguard electoral integrity.

In Botswana, we intend to have a comprehensive constitutional review, one of the things which will be looked at are our electoral laws and how to best improve them.

**6. RESOLUTION ON PROMOTING CLIMATE ACTION IN PARLIAMENTS TO STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE; ENHANCE SRHR OUTCOMES; AND GOVERN NATURAL RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY**

The interlinked challenges of climate change, food insecurity, and inadequate access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) calls for urgent action from Parliamentarians, especially in developing countries in Africa.

As climate scenarios project increased droughts and erratic weather patterns, Africa faces significant threats to agricultural productivity and food security. In this context, Parliamentarians play a crucial role in securing sufficient resources for interventions that not only promote climate action but also prioritize health services and education. Ensuring that agricultural policies foster sustainable practices is essential, as evidenced by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocols, which aim to enhance agricultural productivity amidst climate change

As part of its commitment to enhance Investment finance in Agriculture, the Malabo declaration resolved to uphold the commitment to allocate at least 10% of public expenditure to agriculture and to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness.

In the pursuit to align with this commitment, the Parliament of Botswana in the financial year 2023-24 accorded the Ministry of Agriculture with a total budget of Two Billion Five Hundred and Forty Million Three Hundred and Fifty-Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Pula (P 2 540 352 990). This comprises of One Billion Four Hundred and Fifty-One Million Two Hundred and 14 Thirty-Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Pula (P 1 451 232 990) or 57% and One Billion Eighty-Nine Million One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Pula (P 1089 120 000) or 43%, for Recurrent and Development Budgets respectively. This budget was allocated to encourage investment in agricultural programs and other initiatives that are mandated to improve the status of agriculture in Botswana.

The Legislature, through its Portfolio Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Housing is responsible for scrutinizing relevant Government ministries, departments and agencies with portfolio responsibilities in relation to Agriculture, Lands and Housing. This Committee recognizes the crucial role that the agricultural sector plays on the economy and it will continually securitize programs and policies related thereto, to strengthen the agricultural sector and ensure positive impact on the overall productivity of agriculture. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Housing undertook a study tour around the Country aimed at evaluating the

performance of the agricultural sector and fostering mutual accountability among stakeholders so as to identify capacity weaknesses, enhance mutual accountability, and develop strategic action plans so as to come up with recommendations to drive agricultural growth and development.

**ANNEX TOPICS**

	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>REQUIRED ACTION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
1.	Transformation of the Forum to a SADC Regional Parliament.	1) Following the 44th SADC Summit of Heads of States and Government held in Harare, Zimbabwe, may the 56th Plenary Assembly be informed of the progress at national level for giving comments on the draft Protocol on the Establishment of the SADC Parliament? (2) May the 56th Plenary Assembly be informed of the progress on signature of the Agreement to Amend the SADC Treaty to establish the SADC Parliament? (for countries which have not yet signed the Agreement)	Following the courtesy call on the Former President of the Republic of Botswana, Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, the Botswana Government commenced the necessary process to facilitate the signing of this protocol.
2	Addressing the Impact of Inflation on the Budget of the Forum: Increase in Mandatory Member Contributions	(1) Following the inflationary period in 2022-2024, whereby there has been an increase in the prices of goods and services in Namibia and generally across SADC, coupled with the depreciation of SADC currencies <i>vis à vis</i> the Euro and the USD, may the 56th Plenary Assembly be informed if the Member Parliament is agreeable to a (twenty) 20% increase in Mandatory Member Contributions to ensure that	The Government of Botswana will engage further on this matter and look if the proposed increment is feasible.

		the Forum continues to operate without impediment?	
3	Secondment of senior parliamentary staff to the Programmes and Parliamentary Business and Languages department	(1) Having taken cognisance of the organogram of the SADC-PF which indicates that there are several vacancies in the Programmes and other departments of the Forum, may the 56th Plenary Assembly be informed if the Member Parliament may plan to second, at full cost, senior parliamentary staff to service these positions in view of supporting the Forum's Parliamentary Business and Programmes operations?	Parliament of Botswana is committed to partner with the Forum in driving its objectives and will continue to collaborate in all areas possible.
4	Designation of focal person to monitor the domestication of Model Laws	In line with a recommendation enshrined in the Terms of Reference of the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee (RPMLOC) of the Forum, may the 56th Plenary Assembly be informed if a focal person within Parliament has been designated to assist the Committee in the monitoring of the domestication of Model Laws adopted by the Forum?	Designating a Focal person responsible for monitoring of the domestication of Model Laws adopted by the Forum is essential in ensuring that Model laws are cascaded to National level and receive the widest possible publicity. There is need for National Parliaments to appreciate the Forum`s Model laws in order apply them at the national level.
5	Implementation of the 2023-2026 SRHR and Governance Project	In line with communication sent to parliaments in October 2023, may the 56th Plenary Assembly be advised on the following: (1) Signing of the Agreement to Implement the SRHR and Governance Project in collaboration with the SADC PF; (2) Recruitment of the SRHR Researchers;	Parliament of Botswana has just recruited a team of four Research officers. These are yet to be trained and we have since requested the Forum to help in this regard.

		<p>(3) How much your Parliament has drawn down on the Resources allocated to your Parliament to implement activities;</p> <p>(4) Number of Activities already implemented, # of staff trained, # of MPs Trained and # of CSO's trained under the Project; and</p> <p>(5) Any Recommendations in line with the Project Agreement that must be considered by the 56<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly.</p>	
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